

# The Wachusett Views

News from the Worcester Appalachian Mountain Club

## “Under the Red Felt Crusher” Chapter Chair Message

### **Share the Glory!**

Has it been a year since I wrote my first Chapter Chair message? Yes, indeed and the winter solstice is upon us once again. As was the case last year, I see no evidence of even a single flake of snow outside my door. However, hope “winters” eternal and we will have more snow in New England this winter than we did last winter. Make that our mantra!

Share the Glory! is our theme for 2013. Not only will we build on the traction we gained in 2012 in terms of giving back, but we'll provide more programs for our leaders AND members, and expand our educational offerings for our leaders. If you want to help actively Share the Glory! come to our annual planning meeting on January 12. FMI: <http://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm/action/details/id/65808>

I want to thank our Executive Committee members who stepped down this year and also welcome our new Executive Committee members! Thank you to our past EC members,



Pat on  
Monadock

Photo:  
Walt Lazarz

Marie Auger, Midstate Trail, Dawn Foster, Membership, Paul Glazebrook, Secretary, and Johsie Oliva, Chapter Youth Program. We know you'll remain active and we'll see you on the trails, water, and roads! Welcome to our new EC members, Ed Faron, Midstate Trail, Debi Garlick, Secretary, David Goldman, Social, Deb Herlihy, Leadership, and Sharon Whalen, Membership. We know you'll bring your own energies and thoughtful perspectives as we continue to develop and build on our strong Chapter foundation.

Congratulations also to this year's award winners! John Grote received the first Trails Award offered by our Chapter. John is a regular on the Pine Hill Trail reconstruction work weekends and on the trips to the Phoenix Shelter in the Maine Woods. The Volunteer of the Year Award went to Dave Passios, who has spearheaded joint NH/Worcester Chapter Families trips. The Appie of the Year Award went to our Trails Chair Steve Crowe, who was our poster boy for our 2012 Give Back initiative. The Chapter Chair Award was awarded to both Past Chair Steve Ciras and Treasurer Bill Zahavi. As I said when I announced the winners for this award, Steve and Bill have put up with my abuse, yet have also provided me with invaluable insights throughout the years. Thanks to John, Dave, Steve, Steve and Bill for their priceless contributions to our Chapter!

Check our Chapter trip listings early and often so you can get out with like-minded members who enjoy the great winter outdoors. Be safe and have fun as you adventure in the winter wonderland....

**Pat**



## A Long and Adventurous October

*By Neil Schutzman*

My first goal every year is to avoid getting injured, so I usually try to go on up-country hikes once or twice a month. However, October was shaping up as a tough month. First, I had promised to help Renee finish her 48 4,000-footers. Then I had planned on doing a monthly series of Long Trail hikes with Brian. Finally, I had gone along with Walter's great idea of doing a fall backpack. So, it was shaping up to be seven days on the trail in a thirty-day time span. My knees were already aching, but I'm not good at saying no to friends.

It all started on September 26<sup>th</sup> with a hike up Cannon Mountain. This was going to be Renee's 45<sup>th</sup> and Cannon is not that hard a hike. Although it was wet and there weren't any views, we had a lot of fun.

The next hike was a non-AMC backpack trip up Mt. Mansfield on October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. This hike began with the obligatory 4-hour drive. We usually stay

overnight before the Vermont hikes but since this was Columbus Day weekend, all the campsites were filled.

As we started up Mt. Mansfield, we kept running into people coming down who were talking about the high winds and slippery conditions. But, we noticed they were wearing jeans and sneakers, so we decided that we would probably be okay. Once we got to the summit, the wind was blowing at about 60 miles an hour and the rain was coming down in sheets. It was exciting to feel like I might take flight and to realize that I couldn't even hear the person next to me.

Mt. Mansfield is shaped like a face looking upward. We climbed up the forehead, walked over the nose and finally got to the visitor's center shelter near the chin, where we were able to get out of the wind for a while. But, as soon as we stopped, we started to shiver. Not a good sign. We put on all our warm clothing and this kept things under control. Some food and water also helped.

Getting down off Mt. Mansfield involves four ladders and a fair bit of scrambling, which is always exciting in the rain. But at least for now, we were blocked from the wind by the mountain. We finally made it to Taylor Lodge, which is a really luxurious backcountry shelter, and we ate a hearty warm meal. Fortunately, all our gear was dry and a group of nine teenagers who were already there decided to camp elsewhere.

By the time I got home my knees were really sore, and I only had one week to rest before the backpacking trip on the Monadnock-Sunapee (MS) Greenway.

It rained the first day as we climbed over Mt. Monadnock and everyone complained about the slippery conditions. But after hiking Mt. Mansfield the week before, I thought this was rather easy. We got into camp just before it started to pour and had a nice dry evening. It was interesting to discover that the MS Greenway has pit toilets rather than outhouses. But I figured it was just another experience.

The main difference between hiking with women than men is that with women we spend more time talking about family and kids. I found it funny that when I took a longer than usual time to purify my water, they thought I just needed some time away from them.

The MS Greenway is an interesting combination of trail and backcountry road walks. We did occasionally get lost and we made good use of the blister bandages that I keep in my first aid kit. But it was a fun three-day hike.

Coming into the home stretch, there was only one hike left, Renee's 48th on October 25th. Unfortunately, this was going to be Owl's Head. For those of you who have not done this mountain, it is a fairly flat 8-mile walk leading into a very steep 1-mile climb to the summit. The only problem is there are several stream crossings on the flat part, however these can be avoided by bushwhacking around. But since it had been a dry fall we thought we could get away with following the trail. The first stream crossing proved us wrong. It was wide and deep. Most of us took off our boots and waded across. The water was moving fast enough that I managed to lose one of my crocs.

We all made it across and the other crossings proved easier. The climb was uneventful but steep. We enjoyed celebrating at the top with champagne, which after drinking made my pack lighter. Owl's Head is the kind of mountain people often say, "I'm not doing that again", but course to help a friend you end up doing it several times. I was even the designated driver so Renee could have a celebratory drink at dinner.

On the way back, Dana, who is a master at finding good stream crossings, found my missing croc that had managed to wash up on an eddy with a lot of other gear. Overall, this was a good hike that we completed as the sun was setting.

October was a very eventful month and I even managed to stay healthy. My plans for November? Do some family visiting and stay away from hiking for a few weeks.

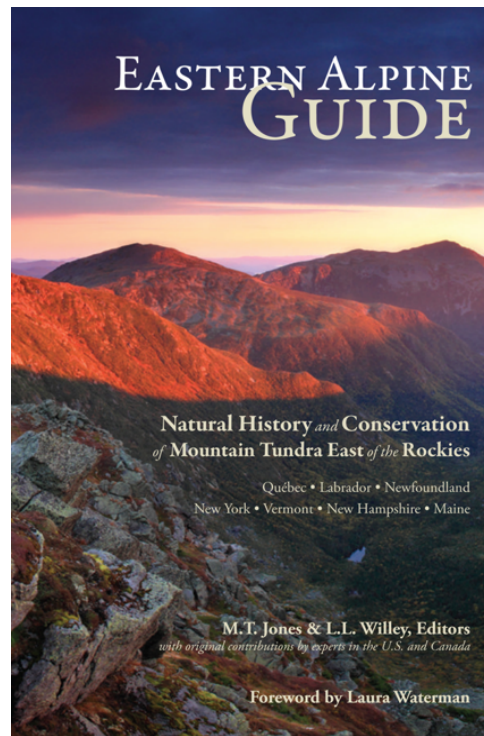
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# Book Review

## Eastern Alpine Guide

*By Paul Glazebrook*



I must confess; I like this book. It is not just another bland trail guide. I enjoyed the book's beauty, and the new information it contains. Of course, according to my wife, one of my character flaws includes spending too much time on planning trips into wild places. The timing of the book's release is perfect. Every winter I pull out my maps and guide books and use the dark time of the year to research places and plan for next year's big trips. This book is now included in my reference book pile.

The Eastern Alpine Guide is the most recent in a long line of guides to this region. However, this book takes us beyond the well-trodden trails of the White Mountains. Its' audience is not just hikers. Naturalists, scientists, mountaineers and backcountry travelers will find this book a good starting point.

However, it is definitely not something you would want to carry in your day pack. At almost 2 lbs and 348 pages of authoritative text you would not be traveling light.

Although the maps are good they are not detailed enough for a backpacking trip. In fact, most of the areas covered would require significant planning and preparation time to get to and explore these unique land forms and their wildlife.

The book does not, nor is it intended to provide extensive and detailed information on all the locations. The geographic area covered is just too large for that. The book is a primer for additional research. It includes a long list of excellent reference literature.



The book addresses 48 Northeastern alpine areas, some small, some large. Twelve areas are given greater coverage, ten of which are on the other side of our border with Canada. I was surprised that the editors did not include the Adirondack Mountains as a primary alpine area. Perhaps the Adirondack's alpine area is just too small.

Each of the chapters in the book is written by experts who know the subject and the areas. Chapters on specific locations include information on the lay of the land, the geology, access, the ecology (vegetation, fauna), and issues of conservation. All of these topics are supported by beautiful color photographs.

To most of us, I expect the alpine areas north of the St. Lawrence will be new and intriguing. While I have hiked in the Long Range mountains (Gros Morne and the Table Lands) of

Newfoundland, I am far from being an expert.

The book makes the argument that these wild alpine places are unique places. These places are home to wolves and wolverines, caribou and bear but especially vulnerable to mining, massive hydroelectric projects and the supporting infrastructure.

I find it comforting to know that truly wild places exist within a two days drive of Worcester. Let us hope that it remains that way.

The book's best feature is that it inspires. It inspires more research. It inspires you to look at ecosystems verses borders drawn on a map. It inspire you to load up the backpack and go explore these wild places. It will be a good winter for dreams and planning.





## INTERVIEW WITH AMC MEMBER BILL WHITE

*By Nancy Cahn*

*Bill White on Mt Pierce*

### **What places do you recommend to go winter hiking in the Worcester area?**

You can't beat Mount Wachusett. It's every man's Everest! If you were there this past weekend you couldn't find a parking space. There's also Mount Monadnock. It's as challenging as almost any hike in the Whites and you can turn around if you think you may get into trouble.

If you want a long hike on Mount Monadnock, try the Pumpelly trail. It's a killer trail, especially coming out. Mount Watatic is also a nice quick day hike. For a quick flat day hike, go to Rutland State Park or the Rail trail. The Midstate Trail is also a great place for people who just want a nice hike. You can do it in sections, and it can be a ball. Always bring your Microspikes and after a snowfall, snowshoes are a must.



## What about further from home?

Mt Washington is always a great place to hike. There are usually people around if you do get into trouble and need help. If you're going to day hike to Mount Washington, you've got to be prepared. A friend of mine went up there for a day hike and then got into trouble. He jumped into his sleeping bag, hobbled into spruce trap so he was surrounded with snow, and stayed underneath the surface until morning. But, he walked out the next morning with only minor frostbite! So be familiar with the 10 essentials. They have been revised.

1. Navigation (Map & Compass)
2. Sun Protection (Sunglasses and Sunscreen)
3. Insulation (Extra clothing)
- 4 Illumination (headlamp, flashlight)
5. First Aid & Supplies
6. Fire (waterproof matches/lighter/candles)
7. Repair Kit & Tools
8. Nutrition (Extra food)
9. Hydration (water)

## Where would you go snowshoeing?

The first time you go snowshoeing, go some place where you can get used to the snowshoes. For recreational snowshoeing a great place to go is the backside of Mount Wachusett, like Administration Road. It's a FANTASTIC hike.

It's rewarding and it'll give you a great idea on what it's like. Do that kind of thing first. A recreational snowshoe is good for most trails around here. But when you get into climbing a mountain, you want something more a part of your foot, like Atlas snowshoes, not Tubbs.

## What about Cross Country Skiing?

You can go out to Rutland State Park, pick up the Rail Trail there. It's is a great place to cross-country ski and there's hardly anyone using it. Also Holden Country Club lets people ski out there and it's flat and rolling terrain. Another place is Wachusett Reservoir. It's great for cross-country skiing. You can park at Tahanto Regional High School, step over the fire road chains, and there will be lots of people skiing all over there. There's also Administration Road at Mount Wachusett, which is a great place to go after a snowfall. It takes about 1 hour and 10 minutes to get to the top and 20 minutes to come down. It's a slow swoooosh down so if you fall down, you're not going to get hurt. It's nice!

***Bill White was born and brought up in Worcester. He is owner of the New England BackPacker in Worcester. He's an avid hiker and backpacker, and also kayaks, cycles, and plays hockey. He's also a big Patriots fan, being a season ticket holder for 35 years.***



# Worcester Chapter Trails



**Photos on top left: Steve Ciras and AMC President John Judge getting ready for trail work on National Trails Day. Other photos: Steve Crowe and team working on the trails.**

# Worcester Chapter Trails Update

**By STEVE CROWE**

The Worcester Chapter Trail's Committee had a very productive season in 2012 and we look forward to continuing our success in 2013 with your help. We participated in Park Serve Day and National Trails Day with multiple activities. An Endowment grant paid for the AMC's Roving Conservation Crew to work on the Pine Hill Trail for two weeks in June. We also were able to work with DCR staff along the roads with their equipment. Overall we were able to install additional steps and stabilize several sections of the trail this season.

Next season we will again be associated with the Chapter's 'Giving Back Initiative' by promoting several opportunities for you to get out and volunteer on some Chapter Trips and activities. In addition to the monthly trips on the Pine Hill Trail, there will be a training program for rock work construction on April 27 and 28, sponsored by a grant from REI.

The Mid-State Trail Committee has opportunities to help maintain the trail and will be sponsoring some training sessions for volunteers. Steve Ciras has been working on the Henderson Brook Trail in the Maine Woods as a Trail Adopter and has been running Chapter trips to maintain this side trail to the AT. There is also training available for this program.

The Chapter needs more trip leaders for Conservation and Trail Projects. We have been working to develop leadership guidelines and provide ways for more folks to get involved. The Chapter needs someone to help administer many of these various opportunities and coordinate the 'Giving Back Initiative'.

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**There are many opportunities for next year.**

**Please consider getting involved**

**If interested, contact Steve Crowe,  
Worcester Chapter Trails Committee Chair  
[Steve@SunshineLandscapingCo.com](mailto:Steve@SunshineLandscapingCo.com)**

## Calling all artists...

Plans for an upcoming contest are being made and all Chapter members are encouraged to get involved!

The Worcester Chapter is looking for a logo design that best fits our Chapter's spirit of 4-season irrepressible fun. Keep in mind that the logo will be used on everything from water bottles to T-shirts and the design will become the property of the Worcester Chapter. Stay tuned for more information.

## Join Team Willy...

Are you interested in investing in the future of AMC? Then we hope that you will consider joining Willy Ashbrook, Chair of Team Willy and member of AMC's Board of Directors, as well as other club members in leaving your legacy with the AMC through your estate plans. Please know that a gift at any level will have a major impact on all AMC programs. To learn more, visit [www.outdoors.org/plannedgiving](http://www.outdoors.org/plannedgiving) or call Jim Hamilton at 617.391.6585.

**Editor, Nancy Cahn.** All newsletter submissions should be sent to [njcahn@charter.net](mailto:njcahn@charter.net). We reserve the right to edit for length and content. All contributions are welcome. Spring deadline March 15th.