

# Wachusett Views

## Worcester Chapter Appalachian Mountain Club

Fall 2017

*A close-up view of our chapter's vibrancy and dedication.*

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### Fall issue 2017

#### *Letter from the Editors*

The fall issue is loaded with neat articles ranging from two pieces in the history corner in anticipation of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kickoff to a bicycling trip journal, an update from the Chapter's endowment chair, an article on climate change, a young member's report on a recent trail crew weekend, and more.

We are continuously inspired by the dedication of volunteers and depth of insights provided to the world of the great outdoors through the compelling prose and photographs of our contributors. Having the privilege to read the more personal accounts, such as trip journals—this month a story about a seven-day bike ride from Massachusetts to the grueling hills of New Hampshire—truly opens up the readers' perspective to the activities in which we don't ourselves partake and to trips we may want to plan in the future.

We hope you enjoy reading fellow chapter members' stories, and keep the article ideas coming for the winter edition.

Happy Fall!  
Zenya and Alex

*Alexandra Molnar*  
*Zenya Molnar*  
Worcester Chapter Communications Chairs

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## Trip Journal: Cycle Tour to New Hampshire

By Denny LaForce

In the last few years, the Worcester Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club has offered a number of two, three, and occasionally four day long cycle tours. I thought it might be time to offer something a little longer. I had cycled across New Hampshire in an east/west direction as part of my cross country section bike in 2008 and traveled the length of the state north/south in 2010. The plan was to start from Sutton, MA, and use portions of both routes with a different route to return home. In cycle touring, the goal is to have a daily destination that's scenic and challenging with a campground



available at the end of the day. With a New Hampshire campground guide in hand, I was able to accomplish my itinerary including a few campground alternatives for “just in case” situations. With the very helpful AMC “Ride with GPS Club Account” the route was developed including the Que sheets. The final task was to enter the tour on AMC’s event listings.

The event listing description of the riding conditions may have discouraged many of my previous touring companions. I clearly stated there would be hills, steep hills, long hills, lots of hills. I was looking for adventurous souls who appreciate the well-earned view from a bicycle



seat after a quad burning uphill. I answered a few responses and signed up three accomplished riders, Fran Buffone, Mike Perkins from the Worcester Chapter, and Jeff Cohen from the New Hampshire Chapter. We started on Saturday August 19th at 10 AM with Jeff traveling from his home in North Conway the night before and staying with me. We gathered in my driveway for pre-ride pictures and then started off.



I had toured with Jeff last year and found him to be an exceptionally strong rider, but within minutes of the start he seemed to struggle and fall behind. We had traveled less than a mile when he abruptly stopped so he could collect himself. He was overcome with a feeling of light headedness and loss of balance. We returned to my house to rest and reassess the situation. Jeff had never suffered these symptoms before and thought it best if he canceled, not knowing if his symptoms would continue and unnerved by how he

was feeling. He decided he would rest awhile and then carefully drive back home. We offered to put off our start— we only had 50 miles planned for the first day—and then reassess in an hour. He assured us we should continue without him and he was not about to risk touring while not feeling well. We promised to keep in touch as we started off again with Jeff resting in the cool of my house.

Our first day's plan was to travel north along Routes 122, 140, and 70 to Lunenburg, make our way on back roads to Rt. 13 and then Pearl Hill Campground in Willard Brook State Forest. We stopped for lunch in Clinton and then for ice cream in Lunenburg. There were a few Massachusetts hills along the route to stretch out the leg muscles and our first real climbs to reach Lunenburg Center and then over the Howard Street hill just before the campground on a very warm afternoon. We arrived and signed for a campsite around 4:30, set up tents, cooked, and were sleeping as darkness fell. Before dark, I received a text from Jeff that he had made it home safely and would make an appointment with a doctor to be checked out.

**Day 1- 53 miles @ 11 mph with  
4hrs 47 min. saddle time.**

Fortunately, Mike is an early riser and was willing to help us get an early start. It was still somewhat dark when his mulling around woke us at 5:30 AM. I would have needed to set an alarm clock to



do what he does naturally and, when I'm solo, will often do so and enjoy an early start to the cycling day. Much like when backpacking, cooking breakfast and packing equipment for the days travel usually takes around one and a half hours so we were about ready to roll before 7:00 AM. For the first few miles through Townsend and into New Hampshire, we had mostly flat roads. We turned east towards Nashua on Rt. 130 and the hills started. Not terribly long hills, but they were numerous and sometimes steep. As we were entered Nashua, Fran notices a small diner at the bottom of a hill. It's always hard to analyze the potential of a restaurant by its looks from outside. We were hungry for a second breakfast, so we parked our bikes and headed in to find an old time diner with good coffee and plates loaded with breakfast fare. After saddling up we crossed the Merrimack River and started to follow it north on flat, very bikeable Rt 3A into Manchester. After an ice cream break while passing through busy Manchester Center, we headed northeast paralleling Rt 101 on secondary roads. The hills became more frequent and steeper as we approached and then switched to Rt. 43. In South Deerfield our direction changed to northwest for the last very hilly 15 miles to Bear Brook Campground. We were shown a diagram of available campsites to choose from, as if we could determine from a campground map if site #26 had any advantages over site #34. When in doubt, pick something close to a water faucet and the bathrooms and hope it's not filled with tree roots and stones. Luck was with us as the site was flat, large, quiet, and within a few hundred feet of the bathrooms.

**Day 2- 62.7 miles @ 10.8 mph  
with 5 hrs 47 min. saddle time**

The very cool start of day three was a continuation of the end of day two, frequent sometimes steep hills until reaching the rolling hills of Rt. 28 following the Suncook River downstream on its journey to Lake Winnepesaukee. As I mentioned earlier, it's hard to judge a restaurant from the outside and we passed a few possible stops only to end up late morning eating breakfast sandwiches at a MacDonald's



for lack of other choices. The last 20 miles of Rt. 28 were a series of very long steep hills through Wolfeboro and between the watersheds of Lake Winnepesaukee and Lake Wentworth with views of the peaks of the White Mountains to the northwest. A supermarket at the junction with Rt. 16 afforded us the chance to restock food and purchase lunch and dessert eaten at a picnic table next to the market. The final 12 miles on Rt. 16 to White Lakes State Park were mostly rolling hills with lots of traffic, but a good breakdown lane to ride in. The choice of campsites was limited compared to the previous two nights and the "choosing a site by its number" gamble did not produce a real winner.

**Day 3- 66.3 miles @ 11 mph with 6 hrs 29 min. saddle time**

There had been little of anything for restaurants the last few hours of the previous day so we were quite surprised to pull out of the campground, ride for about two minutes, and pass what would have been a wonderful place for first breakfast. My oatmeal and half a bagel could have been saved for another day. By the time we reached Conway, we were hungry and settled for breakfast sandwiches at a convenience store rather than to continue, take a chance, and find nothing. I will say they were better and less expensive than those at MacDonald's. Instead of starting the Kancamagus in Conway, we took West Side Road across the Swift River to Passaconway Rd. For about eight miles, we were on a little traveled road winding through the woods just on the other side of the Swift River and the Kancamagus Highway. Passaconway finally merged with the Kancamagus at a wonderfully restored covered bridge.



On the Kancamagus and following the Swift River we were starting to gain elevation, but at such a moderate ascent we hardly noticed. That continued until about the time we passed Bear Notch Road where the climb started, and climb it was. Partway up Fran thought he remembered a well pump at the trailhead of Sabbathday Falls Trail. We pulled into the trailhead parking lot but couldn't find the well pump. It may have been up the trail some distance or perhaps for some reason taken out, but we did not get to replenish our water bottles with cold, clear, mountain water. While there, two cyclists heading in the opposite



direction pulled in and we chatted. They were doing a large loop starting from Toronto, Canada across to Portland ME, south to Washington, D.C. and then northwest on the C&O/ GAP trail to Pittsburgh, PA and then back to the start. A few minutes later, another couple on a tandem bike pulled in who were cycling the Northern Tier, starting from Washington State a few months before and were now almost finished. If we hadn't stopped to look for water, we would have passed on opposite sides of the highway with them probably going downhill too fast to stop and chat.

The road became steeper, probably around 8 to 10 percent for the last few miles to the top. Long steep hills are not new to me after crossing the U.S. and I've found the best method to get over the top is to keep repeating to myself "one pedal stroke at a time, one pedal stroke at a time, one pedal stroke at a time." Finally I could see the picnic area just before the pass and shortly we parked our bikes to take in the very well-earned view from the top. While you're climbing, your whole being is focused on the one hundred feet of road ahead. It's not until you reach the top that you can look back and down to appreciate your accomplishment. The Kanc is especially satisfying because, from the top, you can see the serpentine route off in the distance for many miles below.



We mounted up and with just a few turns of the cranks passed over the top and started our downhill plunge. Going steep downhill on a bicycle is equal parts of exhilaration and fear. I scan the road ahead looking for potholes, debris in the road, a crack in the pavement. I look down at my skinny tires wondering what I would do if I had a blowout, if the heat generated by the rim brakes I'm briskly applying will raise the tire pressure high enough to cause one, what will I do if the brakes were to fail. The climb up was filled with glancing views off into the distance, the plunge down I'm white-knuckle focused on the road without a chance to gaze off for the views. A mile after the hairpin turns, the plunge starts to gradually level off and I can pump the brakes and give the rims a chance to cool. Finally, I don't need to apply brakes and I can just let the bike seek its natural speed, still fast, but not scary fast. We passed over the Pemigewasset River and now it's just a downgrade and we sometimes pedal, sometimes not, all the way to Lincoln.



We had planned to stay at one of the USFS campgrounds on the Kanc but it was still early and we decided to continue. In Lincoln we stopped for pizza and I made a phone call to check availability at the next campground on our route. With full bellies, we turned off the Kanc and headed

down Rt 3 along the Pimi River until we reached the Pimi Campground in Thornton. At check in, we were given a choice of one of two sites next to each other. While still trying to evaluate the pros and cons of each, the manager drove up in a golf cart to advise us that a weather alert was in effect and serious storms were headed our way. He suggested we set up on the deck under a roofed picnic pavilion in a nearby playground. We took him up on his offer and were glad we did. After setting up and eating, the skies became dark and the rain started. An hour later the wind howled and the rain came down in buckets. The overspray wet our tents, but the additional roof protected us from the torrents of rain. An early morning "nature call" revealed a clear starlit sky.

**Day 4- 65.2 miles @ 10 mph with 6 hrs 30 min. saddle time**

We were up and out early again, heading south on Rt. 3 until we turned west onto Rt. 25. This exposed four lane highway with a wide breakdown lane pointed us directly into 20 mph headwinds. Hills are hard on a bicycle, but headwinds just sap your strength. Stop pedaling and the bicycle just stops. Pedaling up hill is harder and the need to pedal downhill is demoralizing. After ten miles we reached Rt 3A and slightly changed direction so we now had combination head/ cross winds and the road was tree lined so headwinds became a



little less of a problem, but the hills returned. Our route took us past the shore of Newfound lake and a switch to Rt 104 to Danbury. In Danbury we had a double treat, first the Danbury General Store had a deli that rivaled any I've ever eaten at and across the street we found a stone dust bike path heading in our direction. We lingered at the store, already feeling like we had put in a full day's mileage and then finally set out on the bike path. The next ten miles were a treat on the hard packed, easy to ride, stone dust rail trail, with little wind, as we traveled through a tunnel of trees.

When the rail trail ended we emerged at Potter Place and started to ride Rt 11, the headwinds were again a factor. A few miles ahead of us, Rt 11 merged with, and became part of, Interstate 89 requiring us to find a back road alternate route. That route included a series of long steep climbs to reach New London with another supermarket stop to resupply. The long downhill that followed only led to more steep, long, ups and downs. My GPS indicated we were close to our campground, but when we reached where I



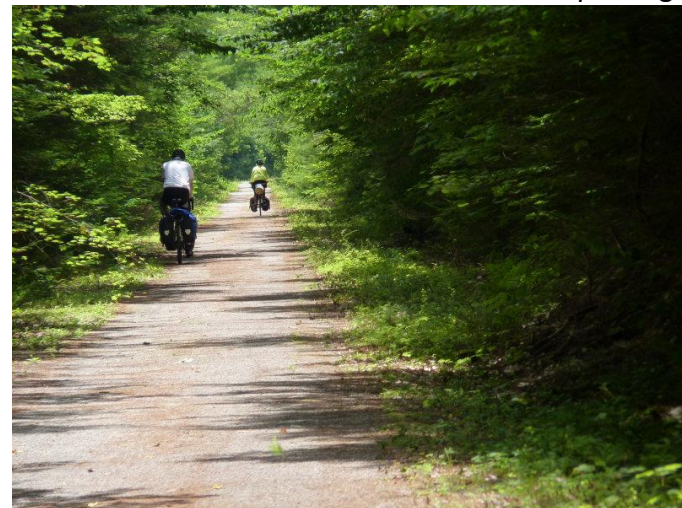
thought our turn off point should be, there was no sign or indication we were at Mt. Sunapee Campground. I tried to call the number for the park, but it was after 5 PM and no one answered. My smart phone map indicated perhaps we should continue south and a visitor information kiosk we passed a few minutes later seemed to confirm my phone map. Still, there was uncertainty on my part that we were headed in the right direction. At the south end of Lake Sunapee, we found a sign with a campground logo and arrow pointing up the Mt. Sunapee ski area. At the end of the ski parking lot was another sign pointing uphill to what looked like an

abandoned, mostly gravel, potholed road. It was too steep and rough to ride so we walked, finally reaching the campground office that was nothing more than a tool shed. The ranger assigned us a spot and we wearily made our way to the site to set up, cook, and finally crawl into our sleeping bags. I had expected the climbing of the Kancamagus to be the hardest day but, hands down, it was today.

**Day 5- 65.5 miles @ 8.7 mph with 7 hrs 31min. saddle time**

We did linger a little the

next morning, not getting up until around 6:00 am. After breakfast and packing, it was a slow downhill at no more than 5 mph to return to the valley on the rough gravel road we had push our bikes up the previous night. My tripmeter indicated that last night's grueling climb was 1.4 miles long. We followed Rt. 103 until the intersection with Rt. 114 over a series





of long climbs and descents. A second breakfast in Bradford at an old converted train station, with a caboose in the yard, was both satisfying to the belly and pocketbook. The prices on the menu were astoundingly low for the amount of food we were given. We switched to Rt. 77 and then Rt. 13, still with the constant ups and downs. We took an extended early afternoon lunch break at the Milford, NH bandstand before heading back into Mass. in the late afternoon. I had planned our last night to be at Willard Brook Campground, but a primitive campground without showers seemed less inviting after the Mt. Sunapee primitive campground without showers, so we decided to stay at Pearl Hill CG for the second time on our trip.



**Day 6- 65.2 miles @ 10.3 mph with 6 hrs 19 min. saddle time**

We knew our return to Sutton would only be around 50 miles, so we weren't in a hurry to pack up and start out, the first pedal turns happened a little before 8:00 AM. I tried to re-route us to avoid the Howard Road hill we had climbed on the way up, but still did some steep short climbs in Fitchburg just before reaching Rt. 13. When Rt. 13 ended at Rt. 12, we continued south until reaching West Boylston and a lunch stop. The restaurant was very busy and it took some time to get our food. At the Old Stone Church in West Boylston, we switched to Rt. 140 along the Wachusett Reservoir shoreline. I should have turned off on Maple Street to travel along the west shore of Lake Quinsigamond but wasn't paying attention to my GPS and missed the turn. When we reached Rt. 70, it seemed best to just return using the reverse of the route we took on day one. We arrived back at the start around 2 PM to self congratulations, hugs, and goodbyes at the end of a fun but very demanding ride.

**Day 7- 50.2 miles @ 11.3 mph with 4 hrs 26 min. saddle time**

**Total- 428.1 miles**



*6th in a series of articles highlighting initiatives supported by the Chapter's Endowment Fund.*

## **On the Road with the Endowment Chair**

*By Pat Lambert, Endowment Chair*



In celebration of our illustrious Chapter's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and to honor the memory of Colleen McLaughlin, an active Chapter member and former Bike Chair, who passed away earlier this year, we will run a series of hikes on the [Bay Circuit Trail](#) (BCT).

The BCT stretches 230 miles from Newbury, MA to Kingston, MA. Colleen was a great advocate for the BCT, led hikes on some of the sections for the Chapter, and completed about half the trail before she was no longer able to hike.

In 2013, our Chapter provided an Endowment grant to Larry Garland, a Cartographer for the AMC, to do work on the BCT to support an assessment of the baseline trail and corridor data. This included gathering GPS coordinates for the trail heads.

The purpose of this series is to (1) Complete the journey Colleen started and (2) Educate our Chapter members on this project supported by our Endowment fund.

Eleven Chapter leaders have volunteered to make this series a reality. We will be posting trips in the near future with titles which will start with "Worcester 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Bay Circuit Trail...." Be on the lookout for these hikes and come join us as we explore eastern Massachusetts!

If you want to join me on my next "On the Road with the Endowment Chair" adventure, please contact me at [plambert119@yahoo.com](mailto:plambert119@yahoo.com).

## Families paddle weekend a success thanks to dedicated volunteers

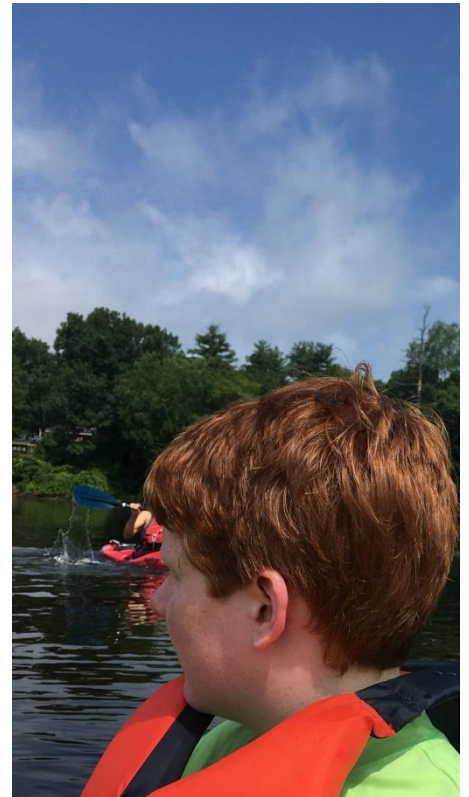
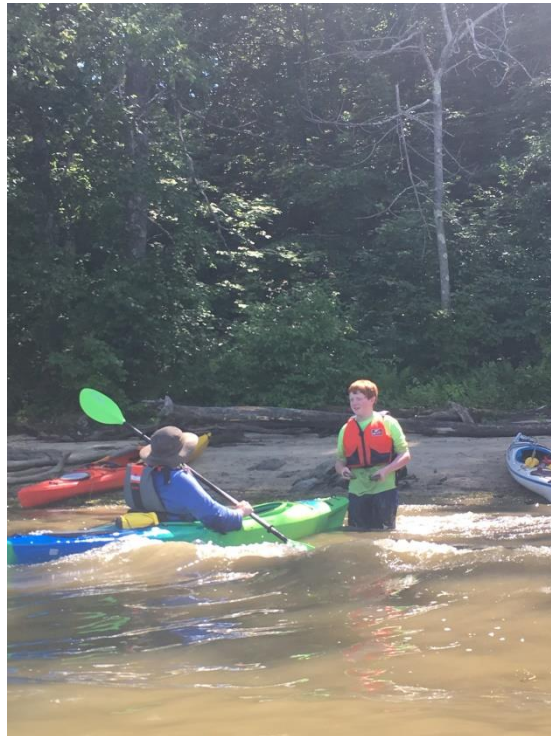
*By Dave Cole*

On the weekend of July 14, 2017 the Worcester and Berkshire Chapter Families programs combined to host a paddle and camping weekend at beautiful Barton Cove campground on the Connecticut River in Gill, MA.

Twenty six attendees were able to rent boats, gain experience on the water, camp, and play for two nights.

Many thanks to so many experienced paddle leaders who came to teach and participate, including: Bonna Wieler, Jeffrey Mayes, Faith Salter, Bill Turner, Deb Wasserstein, and Mike Foley.

And most importantly, the weekend went flawlessly thanks to the organizational efforts of our chapters' Family Leaders: Ingrid Molnar from the Worcester Chapter and Margo Chapski and Dee Dice from the Berkshire Chapter. A special thanks to Margo who organized and purchased all of the food for the weekend and drove packed lunches to a picnic spot for all participants to come off the river and get refreshed. Spectacular.



## Young Members (20s & 30s) trip to Acadia National Park

September 8-10, 2017

*Photos by Jon DiRodi*





*Second article in a series, "Climate Change: from Understanding to Action," that is dedicated to informing you about energy and climate change initiatives in Massachusetts and giving you specific ways you can help. (The first article was: "10 Things You Can Do About Climate Change.")*

## **RPS: Moving Massachusetts to Clean Energy**

*by Paul Dale*

In a renewable energy economy we will not burn fossil fuels; instead we will use clean electricity for everything: cars, trucks and buses, mass transit, and heating and cooling for buildings. So moving electricity generation to renewable energy sources such as wind and solar is essential for meeting clean energy goals and creating local and regional green economy jobs.

Hopefully you saw the call to action on July 28, 2017 from AMC's VP of Conservation, Susan Arnold, to write or call the Governor to strengthen the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). RGGI requires increasing year over year reductions in pollution from fossil fuel power plants.

Massachusetts and the New England states have a second hugely important legal mechanism that creates a demand for electricity from renewable sources, electricity with *no* pollution. This is the Renewable Portfolio Standard, or RPS. RPS is a key driver of renewable energy demand and development. 60% of U.S. renewable electricity generation, primarily wind and solar, and 57% of capacity since 2000 has come online because of state RPS requirements. The problem is that under current law the RPS mandates are not nearly strong enough to stimulate further investments in renewable electricity generation. Massachusetts state legislation is required.

The RPS requires that electric utilities provide a certain percentage of the electricity they deliver to be from renewable sources such as wind and solar. This year it is 12%. Currently the percentage goes up only 1% a year. At this rate we won't get to 100% renewable electricity until 2105. Several states are already above 30% today. The RPS in New York and California will reach 50% renewable electricity by 2030; at our current rate, in 2030 we will be only half that: 25%.

The primary benefit of the RPS is it provides a long term financial incentive for investing in large scale renewable energy projects. Policy support is required in order to ensure the continued, and increasing, purchase of renewable energy. As long as demand continues to increase via the RPS obligation, there is assurance that renewable energy capacity will continue to grow because investors are assured there will be a demand for the clean electricity produced by new renewable energy projects.

### **Why is it important to significantly increase the RPS?**

Three key reasons.

*First*, if we do not increase the rate of RPS growth, we will not hit our legally mandated Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) targets.

*Second*, the 2016 energy bill passed by the Mass. legislature required utilities to solicit and purchase 1,600 megawatts of offshore wind by 2027, as well as several hundred megawatts of additional Class 1 resources. This is terrific for climate change, jobs, and our local economy. It also means, however, that no additional renewable energy development will be necessary to achieve the RPS targets at their

current levels. The supply of renewable energy will outstrip the demand (as set by the RPS), starting in 2018. Existing projects will falter, and investors will exit the market. Instead of flourishing alongside other renewable energy projects, offshore wind will crowd them out. This will have a negative impact on the regional economy and jobs.

On the other hand, economic modelling reveals a *net increase* (accounting for job losses in the fossil fuel industry) of 33,400 jobs with a 3% Massachusetts annual increase combined with a 1.5% Connecticut annual increase (or a 3.75% Massachusetts increase alone). A substantial increase in the RPS (e.g. 3% or greater) is required with very little cost to ratepayers. A minimal bump in our electricity bills is a small price to pay -- literally-- for the significant economic, environmental, and societal benefits Massachusetts residents would receive from an increase in the RPS.

*Finally*, increasing the RPS (and therefore renewable energy generation) can protect us from utility bill increases resulting from rising natural gas prices. In fact, a more aggressive RPS will likely save us money. Massachusetts has become over-reliant on natural gas. If natural gas prices rise significantly as [some expect](#), then increasing the RPS could save New England consumers between \$100 million and \$2.1 billion between 2018 and 2030.

### **Municipal Light Plants (MLPs) should not be exempt from RPS**

Currently the RPS only applies to investor owned utilities, primarily Eversource and National Grid. In Massachusetts there are also municipal light plants (MLPs) that serve all or part of 50 communities in and deliver 13% of the electricity in the state. MLPs are currently excluded from the RPS clean energy purchasing requirement. This is a significant flaw in the existing policy that requires legislative action.

### **Call To Action**

Write, call, or meet with your state representative and senator and ask them to advocate for:

- Increasing the RPS required growth in renewable energy from 1% each year, to more than 3% each year. **An average annual increase of at least 3% is needed to provide a benefit to the Massachusetts economy, and annual increases above this are needed to meet emissions targets.**
- Ending the RPS exemption for municipal light plants.

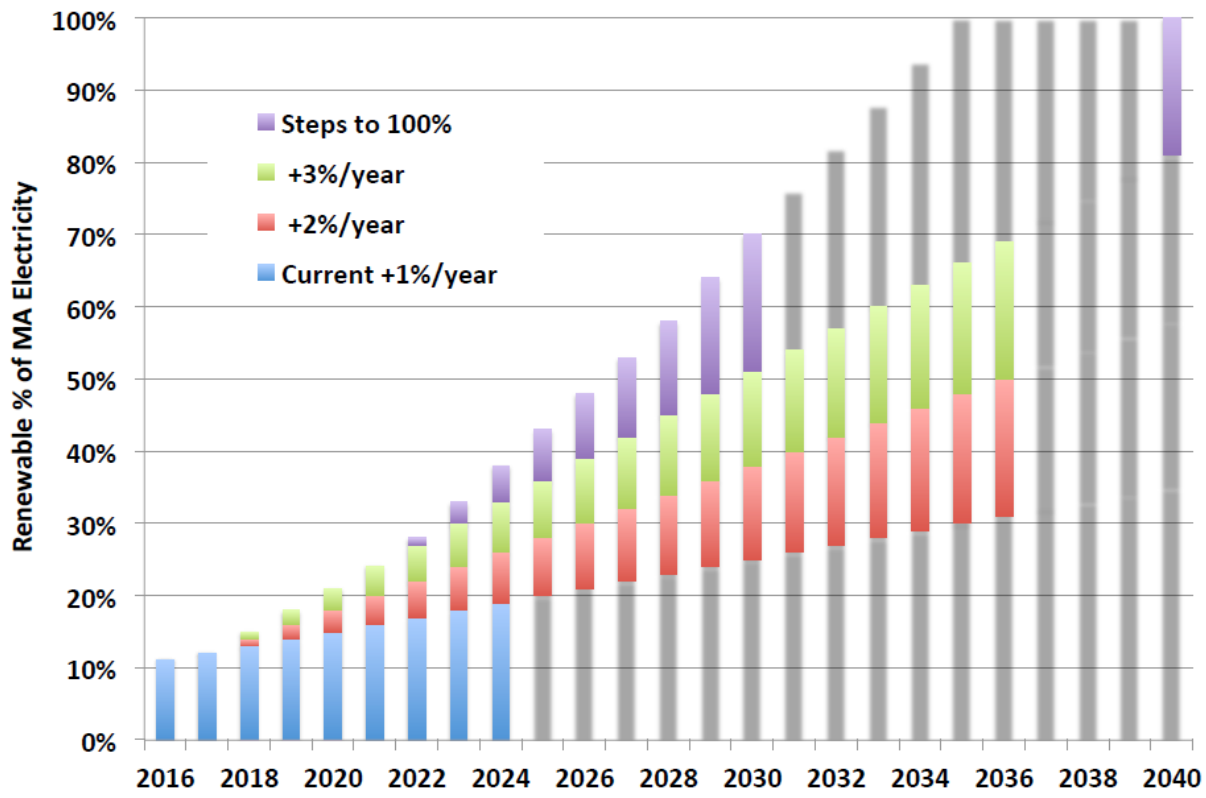
You can locate contact information for your representative and senator by going to

<https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>.

You should also write to the co-chairs of the Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee:

Senator [Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov](mailto:Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov) and Representative [Thomas.Golden@mahouse.gov](mailto:Thomas.Golden@mahouse.gov).

*Paul Dale has served as chair and vice chair of the AMC Boston Chapter. He is currently secretary of the Boston Chapter Mountaineering Committee and chair of the Massachusetts Sierra Club's Energy Committee. He can be reached at paulbdale@gmail.com*





## Giving Back: Young Members (20s & 30s) Trail Stewardship Weekend

*By Zenya Molnar, Worcester Chapter Communications Co-Chair*

From September 15-17, 15 Young Members from across several chapters gathered for a weekend of getting dirty and giving back to the trails surrounding Cardigan Lodge, an event that was hosted by AMC staff in conjunction with the Young Members Leadership Training. During one and a half days of trail crew, we were able to install over 12 rocks as part of an effort to restore water bars to prevent erosion



L-R: Connor Hughes, Zenya Molnar, Steph Murphy, Christopher Bope, Alexandra Molnar.

on one of the many back country ski trails. While the task was arduous, the crew members, most new to trail work, were quick to tackle the challenge resulting in completion of one water bar and a solid start to three more along the trail. Installing water bars is quite an intricate project; work involves sighting the bar and determining the quantity of rocks needed, digging up an existing rock bar in some cases, removing rotted logs, quarrying for rocks, setting rocks and stabilizing them with crush (small rocks) and dirt, digging a drainage ditch along the bar, and brushing in, or defining the trail by adding brush and leaves to the sides to ensure hikers stay on the trail. Not to mention that rocks weigh tons and the ones found in the woods surrounding the trail were generally large granite, making it even more challenging to move them from the woods to the trail.



We were guided by trail crew leaders Erik Samia, AMC's professional trail crew coordinator, and Bridget Likely, AMC's New England National Scenic Trail Planner, who shared their expertise in trail maintenance and knowledge of tools throughout the weekend. Five young

members from the Worcester Chapter—Steph Murphy, Christopher Bope, Connor Hughes, Alexandra Molnar, and I—participated in the stewardship portion of the weekend resulting in the Worcester Chapter representing a third of the crew! The camaraderie may be unimaginable at first, but building rock bars is a true team effort that requires you to sweat and cheer alongside your crew mates. Driving an 18-pound rock bar into muddy soil underneath a boulder in order to move it two inches is made much easier when your crew friends are working alongside to achieve the same goal. Physical strength is only a small part; creativity and teamwork equal 90% of the job.

For those who have done trail crew before or those have yet to think about the first step of stewardship, I'd encourage you to participate for however long you can—a few hours, one day, a weekend, or a whole week. Once you delve into the world of trail stewardship, you stop and think about those rock steps that make the climb so much easier or the water bars that divert water off the trail to keep it dry. Next time you're on the trail, admire the handiwork of fellow outdoors advocates. Most trail maintenance is a volunteer effort, and hiking would not be half as enjoyable without the hard work of folks who wish to return the privilege of hiking (and get a little mud on their gloves).

Photo Credits: top—Steph Murphy; middle and bottom—Zenya Molnar

Third in a series of stories celebrating the Worcester Chapter's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

## History Corner: Watatic Again

Transcribed by Michele Simoneau

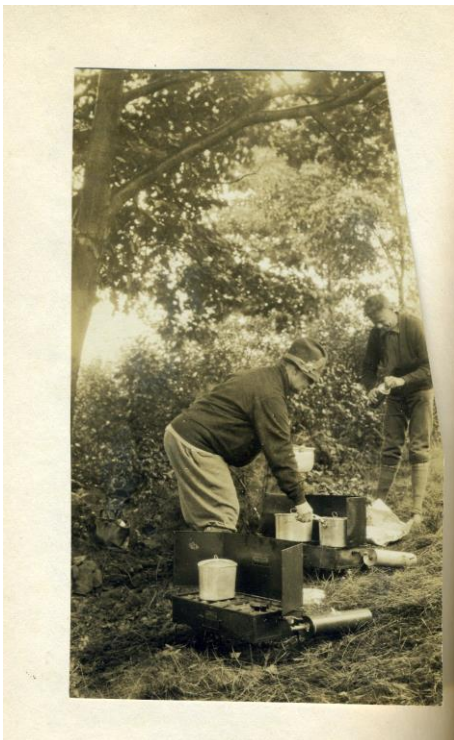
This entry has been transcribed from the journal of Harriet Roe, one of the original Worcester Chapter members, who kept a journal of chapter activities during the years of 1926 – 1928. One September tradition was a camping weekend at Mount Watatic. Below is Harriet's account plus pictures of the camp, the cooks, the hikers, and Watatic.

### WATATIC AGAIN

September 15-16, 1928

William H. Beaumont

A dark and dreary camp-spot? Not at all! Up in the field where the pup tent and the big tent and the shelter and the rest of the paraphernalia were laid out there was plenty of brightness. See the white gleaming beyond the big oak? Ah that oak, beside which reposed the numerous ears, from whose limb dangled the popular swing, and under whose dripping branches Florence Bliss spent her first night out and H. E. Roe found a sleepy hollow.



The kitchen was a heterogeneous affair: two or three gasoline stoves murmured aristocratically in the midst of things; Dickie's fire sent smoke in the direction of anyone who was trying to cook over a stove, and it also periodically went out, but finally lent itself to the fierce flame, volumes of black smoke, and vile smell of K. Knowlton's tire tube; the girls' fire cooked corn and dogs and other things in virtuous style. It also served for the evening campfire. Those of us in front of this fire ate smoke, wept, and were warm. Those of us opposite the back of the fire remained cheerful, but froze. May Rochette curled into a kitty – like ball and kept herself warm, while the canny Clarke girl took refuge with F. Bliss as a windshield. Stories of various sorts went the rounds, from personal experiences to “true” ghost stories. Such convenient firewood as did come from the shingles!

Hike or swim, - that is the question for Sunday morn after a late breakfast and a full review of all the adventures of the night. Some do swim, some merely look on, and some explore the Wachusett – Watatic Trail, finding it a delightful one, but sadly in need of repair.

Then more eat and a pack up. Clouds and mist have prevented a trip to the summit, but now a party sets out for the top and possibly for a little jaunt towards Barrett. The scribe grieves that she knows not the later adventures of the day.



*Third in a series of stories celebrating the Worcester Chapter's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.*

## **History Corner: History of the Worcester Lodge, Part One**

*Transcribed by Michele Simoneau*

*This entry has been transcribed from the journal of Harriet Roe, one of the original Worcester Chapter members, who kept a journal of chapter activities during the years of 1926 – 1928.*

*A note from the transcriber:* The following article was written by Harriet E. Roe in 1944 and appeared in Appalachia in June of 1946. It takes the history of the Lodge from the building of the Woonnasako Hut in 1920 to the purchase of the Worcester Lodge in 1944. In a future newsletter, I will continue the story from then up to the fire in 1993 and the establishment of the Endowment Committee in 2004.

### **WOONNASAKO HUT**

The walkers stopped by the roadside for an impromptu meeting of the year-old Worcester Chapter. That its members must have a home had been a matter under discussion, so then and there, in the middle of their New Year walk, 1920, they appointed a committee to investigate possibilities. The result was an offer, through a club member, of a perfect site, the top of Nipmuck Hill, close to Worcester's highest spot, Mt Asnebumskit.



*The view of Mount Wachusett from Woonnasako Hut*

To a mountaineer, the view is a “must” among home requirements. This mountain shoulder, 1,100 feet toward heaven, has an outlook to dream of. Brilliant sunsets burn in the west; just a little way off, scintillating city lights vie with the skies in sparkle. In the words of an ardent writer, “The northerly view is the most pleasing. Immediately in front...the ground drops away over rolling slopes toward two of the city's reservoirs, surrounded by evergreen and hardwood growths, with green mowing land and pastures beyond. Farther away to the left, like a great fort, lies Pine Hill, and reaching out to the right is the line of hills which terminates with Mt. Wachusett. On the horizon beyond Pine Hill, in clear weather, can be seen, sharply outlined, the peak of Monadnock, with the Pumpelly Ridge stretching away towards the east. Viewed in winter, with miles of snow covered hills, between or at sunset with its blue shadows beneath a sky tinted with the rosy afterglow, Monadnock furnishes a picture whose beauty is a delight not soon forgotten.” (Quote from Burt Greenwood, Feb. 1926)

Action was prompt. Some seven or eight members outlined the prospective hut with rocks and dug holes for the corners. Work was enthusiastic, though it lagged a bit through summer heat. With the aid of a carpenter or two for fitting the window frames and a mason to tackle the fireplace, the hut rose steadily and sturdily. It was close to midnight, December 31, 1920, that Grey Harris, Roger Holden and Burt Greenwood,



fortified by Mrs. Harris's fish chowder and celery, laid the final boards around the fireplace, and the hut was ready for the New Year party, just a year from the date it was started in the minds of its owners.

It was a pretty little Hut, henceforth to be spelled with a capital H and prefaced by its official name, Woonnasako (Indian word: The-man-who-lives-on-the-top-of-the-hill). A small frame structure, it boasted a big stone fireplace and chimney. (Small boys plugged up that chimney with our own wood, once upon a time!). The boulders had come from the vicinity, dragged to the location on a stoneboat. There was only one room, for the terms of the transaction forbade any overnight use of the place, but for the size of the Chapter, it was commodious and most pleasant, its windows opening toward Mount Wachusett.

A house means most to those who have had some part in its furnishing or care. There was the man who donated the andirons; there were the members who put on the woodshed and reroofed the Hut; some schoolteachers did a fine paint job inside and covered the settle cushions; others made the benches and camp stools gayer than they intended in red and blue and yellow; because of vandalism, the men had to add outside shutters to the windows; one member furnished new shingles after the hurricane. All these things added to the comradeship which always comes to those who work as well as play together, and all these things added to the pride which the Worcester Chapter felt in its little house of fun.

“Bu-r-r-r!” says Burt Greenwood, “But it sure was cold that night we finished the hut!” The remark has been repeated often in the years since. The cold reached its peak on the night of the lecture on the MacMillan expedition, when for one hour, half the company froze slowly, but surely, on the outer edges of the room and the other half sizzled and stewed before the fire. They exchanged places and for the second hour congealed or fried. Then the Chapter voted to line the walls with beaver board. Also as a rule, someone was delegated to get up there early and start a fire for the hikers.

The years went on. The Chapter increased its membership, but the Hut didn't increase its size by very much. To be sure, there was an addition, making the building 19 by 24 feet, with ten windows, but what could a little place like that do for the forties and fifties and sixties that appeared for the famous sugaring off, the sausage-pancake party, the annual oyster stew? The hostess always prayed for good weather when guests might spill into the out-of-doors.



*The Worcester Lodge at the time of purchase in 1944.*

The years indeed went on, and after a few of them, the members began to consider another home, one that would be their own, one that would have a water supply, one that would be big enough for the increasing numbers who would use it. Several possibilities were looked into and rejected, but when an estate adjoining the Hut property was put on the market, the Chapter really bestirred itself. A few members with their ears on the ground of real estate business were able to negotiate a purchase profitable to all concerned in it. Date: March 15, 1944.

Just below the Hut, facing the same glorious view, is the real house, built for a summer home, used for a number of seasons as a rest camp for nurses and underprivileged children. Two rooms on one floor and two rooms above furnish space for big parties and for those who like to stay overnight, to wake up in the country. Electricity has already been installed (no more filling of lamps), but an addition and the house equipment will, for the most part, wait till after the war. There are plenty of plans being made.

About five acres of this estate now belong to a man who for some years has been living in the farmhouse situated on the back road just down the hill. He will be watchdog for the A.M.C. house, will do various odd jobs for the Chapter, and will share his well, which is right between the two sections. Thus are constant care and a water supply assured.

The A.M.C. owns four acres only, but what more does it wish? All the rest of the estate had gone to the City of Worcester as a watershed for the reservoirs, so it will always be wild country, over which the mountaineers may roam at will, as long as they mind their manners. Asnebumskit is owned by two radio companies, which are willing that the trails already made should be used and kept up, as well as others cleared, provided the club attends to its own affairs and does not bother the radio stations.

Thus, with a house, with a perpetual wilderness, with its dearly loved view, with its old Hut still to use, the Worcester Chapter feels happy and comfortable.

## Events and Opportunities

### Volunteer with AMC!

Now is the time to apply to volunteer at AMC's Huts & Lodges for the 2018 season. Help others enjoy the outdoors and learn about the natural world!

**Information Volunteers** greet guests in a friendly manner, orient them to the facility, and offer advice about nearby hiking trails, outdoor gear, and activity programming. They provide information about conservation and natural history, promote AMC membership, and may lead evening programs or nature walks. Volunteers at lakeside lodges also help guests with boats and waterfront equipment; and volunteers in the huts and at Hermit Lake also assist with retail sales. Information Volunteers serve at AMC's backcountry huts, at Hermit Lake Shelters, and at these AMC lodges: Medawisla, Mohican, Harriman, Pinkham, Highland, and Cardigan.

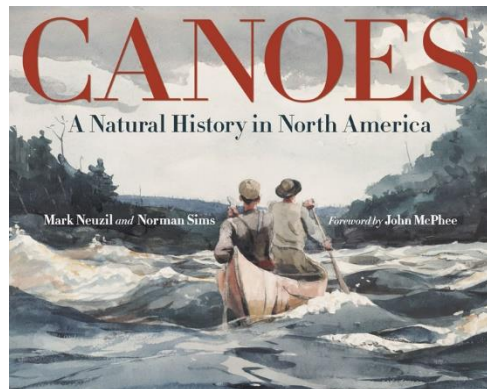
**Volunteer Naturalists** provide outreach in AMC's backcountry huts, primarily by sharing information about local natural history during evening programs. Naturalists can offer a variety of programs over a few days, or focus on just one or two topics; they can gear their programs toward kids, adults, or both. In addition to evening programs, Volunteer Naturalists offer short talks after breakfast, help guests with hike planning, and may offer afternoon nature walks.

For more information, and to request an application, please contact Kyra Salancy, AMC's Outdoor Program Centers Volunteer Coordinator, at [amcvolservices@outdoors.org](mailto:amcvolservices@outdoors.org).

### New England Scenic Trail Event

**Thursday, November 30 at 6 PM - 8 PM, Jones Library, 43 Amity St, Amherst, MA 01002 -**

Come spend an evening with the Appalachian Mountain Club to learn more about the New England National Scenic trail and hear music inspired by the trail, performed by NET Artist-in-Residence Ben Cosgrove. The evening will also include the opportunity to learn about the history of canoes in North America from writer Norman Sims and find out how you can take a canoe on the Massachusetts stretch of the Connecticut River Paddlers Trail.





## **August Camp**

*by Susan Weida, Vice Chair of the Delaware Valley Chapter*

August Camp has been a part of the Appalachian Mountain Club's annual routine since 1887, but my first visit came 130 years later-in August 2017. I had plenty of doubts about whether a 65 year old woman should be taking on this kind of a challenge, but armed with plenty of information provided on the August Camp website and from talks with members who had previously attended August Camp, I decided to take the plunge.

This year's August Camp was held in Washington state, near the Columbia River Gorge. It was an area I had visited many years ago that I knew was very beautiful. August Camp runs for 4 weeks during late July and early August and participants can choose to attend 1 or 2 weeks. To increase my comfort level, I chose to attend Week 2 when several of our AMCDV leaders were hike leaders-Lennie Steinmetz, Mark Kern, and Ron Phelps. Since several other DV Chapter members attended this week I also was fortunate enough to find a tent-mate from the DV Chapter.

Probably the most reassuring factor about August Camp was the amount of advance information available on the August Camp website. (<http://www.augustcamp.org/>). If you have any interest, I urge you to check this out. There are photos from past trips, history of the camp, hike lists, packing lists, daily schedules, etc. here. Although I didn't need to purchase a lot of additional gear, I did need to do some creative work and borrowing to find items needed.

From the moment of arrival at Portland International Airport, I was taken care of by the August Camp volunteer staff. Vans were available to transport us to camp and on arrival we were able to pick out our tent accommodations. The camp is set up by the August Camp Croo (a wonderful group of young people hired to make everything work-more about the food later). Tents are single wall and sturdy and as recommended we brought tarps to make a dry floor. Soon clotheslines and chairs began to appear outside of all the tents. We were beginning to look like a community of the 60 campers who attend each week of August Camp.

Meals are a highlight for all hikers and this year's August Camp Croo did not disappoint. They use a temporary outdoor kitchen and out of it comes absolute magic. Healthy, hearty meals with plenty of options for vegetarians appeared every breakfast and dinner. At the end of the meal a delicious baked treat appeared every evening and two different types of cookies were available for the trail lunch every day.

Mornings begin early with a bugle call for coffee, a polar plunge in the local swimming hole for some hardy souls, and lunch preparation in the lunch tent. Then breakfast and off to hiking. Many of the options available in the Columbia River Gorge involved the wonderful waterfalls and hikes to the nearby peaks of Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens. The weather was crystal clear for the entire week, so views were incredible. And ice cream stops by the volunteer drivers were part of many a day's itinerary.

Following dinner and some relaxation time, the evening campfire begins. First were the hike reports from the day and then hike offerings for the following day were described. August Camp hikes are rated A (most strenuous), B (moderate), and C (easiest hikes). The B hikes worked best for me, especially since we had a significant heat wave during our week of August Camp. After signing up for the next day's hike, there is singing at the campfire and then off to bed.

There were a limited number of additional activities offered at an extra cost during the week- biking along the Columbia River, rafting on the Hood River, and kayaking on the Deschutes and Columbia River. I have heard it said that August Camp is a cycle of sleep, eat, hike, and repeat. That misses one of the best parts of August Camp, which is the chance to meet fellow AMC members who love to hike. Sharing stories, adventures we have had and those we plan to have is one of the best memories I will take away from August Camp. If you want to experience a smoothly run week of fantastic hiking opportunities with fun people, consider signing up for next year's August Camp which will be set in the North Cascades National Park area of Washington. Information is posted on the August Camp webpage in the fall, with **registration beginning on January 2, 2018.**

