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Maine Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club
14 Maine St., Suite 0126
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PORTLAND, ME
PERMIT NO. 454

WILDERNESS MATTERS

VOLUME XLV • NUMBER 3 • SUMMER 2020

The AMC is Working to Preserve the Dark Skies of the Maine Woods

By Kristen Grant

As a child growing up in rural Connecticut, my favorite summer activity was to drag my sleeping bag out to one of my Dad's fields and sleep under the stars. No tent for me in those days, as I didn't want anything to obscure my view of the glorious night sky above me. I would huddle in the bag, leaving only my eyes exposed as ravenous mosquitos attempted to find a fleshy landing spot on which could indulge their need for blood.

I would stay awake as long as I could, marveling and wondering about the mysteries of the stars as the constellations wheeled their way across the sky above me. Eventually I would fall asleep, and wake in the morning wet and cold and covered in bug bites. These annoyances were a small price to pay for the chance to contemplate the majesty and mystery of the cosmos.

In the years since then, I have been troubled by the decline of starry skies in many places in the world. As we have become more and more industrialized, it's impossible not to notice the brightening of the night and the seeming disappearance of stars from the sky above. The stars haven't disappeared, of course, but have become cloaked by the massive amount of light pollution that we generate. The rapid brightening of the night sky over the past 100 years not only diminishes our joy in seeing the stars, but has negative health and environmental impacts as well.

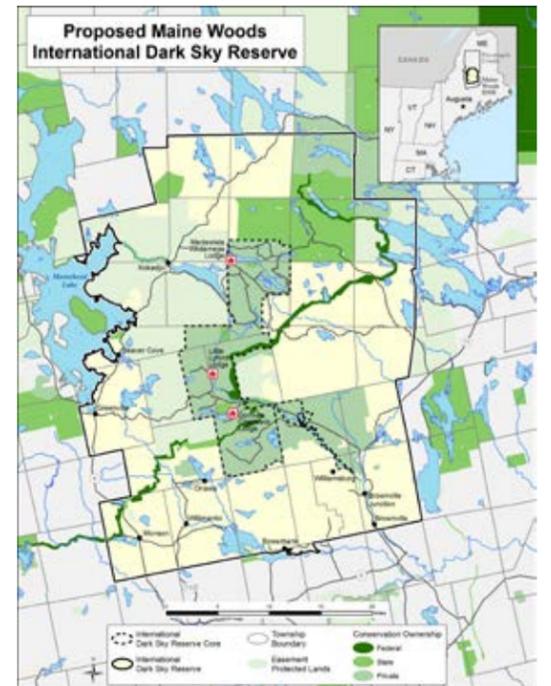
I'm not the only one who is concerned about this. Walter Graff, former Senior Vice President of the Appalachian Mountain

Club, had it on his radar screen, and all the work he did to preserve the Maine outdoors over the years inspired Jenny Ward, AMC's Maine Business and Community Relations Manager, and others at the AMC, to take on the conservation of the Maine night sky. No small task, right?

I was able to connect with Jenny in early June and she brought me up to speed on how this initiative is going.

It turns out there is an International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) that has similar goals on an international level and provides a process to receive a Dark Sky certification after undergoing a rigorous application process. Jenny is coordinating the effort by AMC, in conjunction with the Piscataquis County Economic Development Council (PCEDC), to successfully complete the application process.

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Proposed Maine Woods International Dark Sky Reserve

A Fine Hike on Dedham Bald Mountain, One of 15 "Bald" Mountains in Maine

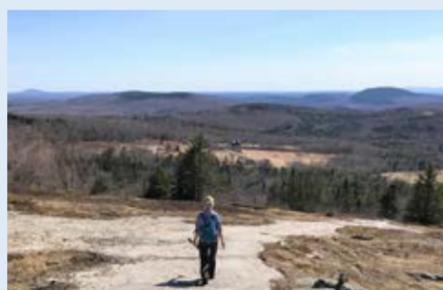
By Carey Kish, editor, AMC Maine Mountain Guide

With 17.7 million acres of woods cloaking 89% of Maine's total land area, our state is the most heavily forested in the United States. As such, we hikers are accustomed to ambling under thick canopies of beech, maple and birch, spruce, fir and pine, and we delight when the path leads to the open shore of a pond or river for a chance to spy a moose, loons or maybe a beaver.

For many of us, we climb the trails in search of the higher places, those precious outcrops, ledges, ridgetops and summits where the sky really opens up, and for a few glorious moments, you can experience that on-top-of-the-world euphoria that comes



From the huge north-facing ledges atop Dedham Bald Mtn, you can see Katahdin 75 miles away (upper L) as well as the Lucerne Inn and Phillips Lake (R center). Carey Kish photo.



The open bedrock slabs on Dedham Bald Mtn offer fine views of Blue Hill (L) and Grest Pond Mtn (R). Carey Kish photo.

from dangling your boots over a cliff edge as you gaze in wonder across a sublime sea of wild and scenic country.

Any mountain with "bald" in its name is, of course, a natural draw for hikers, conjuring up images of an exposed crag with expansive vistas in every compass direction. Thumb through the index of the Appalachian Mountain Club's *Maine Mountain Guide* and you'll discover a grouping of seven peaks named Bald Mountain and seven others with "bald" as part of the name. Add Boundary Bald on the following page and you've got a total of fifteen balds.

These bald mountains are scattered across the state from the Mahoosucs to far eastern Washington County, in Weld, Denmark, Woodstock, Camden and Amherst, for example, so there's likely one near you to explore on foot. There are three balds within a short drive of my home on Mount Desert Island, so a couple weeks back I chose to visit Bald Mountain in Dedham, an old favorite I've hiked many times.

Dedham Bald Mountain, as it is locally known, rises to 1,261 feet. A short 0.6-mile hike via an old fire road gets you to the top. It's

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Wilderness Matters

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Newsletter submissions and photographs: Send to Carey Kish, Editor, at newsletter@amcmaine.org | (207) 838-9669

Deadline for submissions to Wilderness Matters (Fall Issue) is September 1, 2020.

Submission info: Wilderness Matters is your chapter newsletter. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to contribute, be it stories, news, opinions, photos, or whatnot. We want to hear from you! Please email submissions to newsletter@amcmaine.org. **Submission guidelines:** Articles, opinions, stories and should be limited to 400-500 words maximum (word counts greater than that may be edited or may not be accepted) in an attached Word or similar document that is clearly labeled. Images should be reduced in size to 1024 x 768 pixels or thereabouts and include a photo title, captions and any other identifying info plus proper photo credit. Use of Dropbox to send images would be great too. Thank you!

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Message from the Chair: Charting a Course through Uncertain Times

By Cindy Caverly

As we continue on our COVID-19 journey, the Maine Chapter has been able to make a nice transition to online webinars. I am proud of our Executive Committee for stepping up in many ways: hosting webinars, presenting webinars, increasing our social media presence and just having good ideas. We will continue our online webinars over the summer while we step gingerly into the waters of in-person, volunteer led trips. Elsewhere in the newsletter, you can read about AMC's policies concerning the restart of volunteer-led outings. Any policies are fluid and you can get the latest information at outdoors.org.



I am proud to be part of an organization that has conservation as its highest priority. But I am also worried. This pandemic seems to have put a hold on, in many people's minds and many government's policies, any progress we have made toward healing our planet. I am worried when I walk into a grocery store

and I am not allowed to use reusable bags and I walk out with multiple plastic bags that will end up who knows where. I am worried when I hear the CDC recommending that people not use mass transit and instead drive to work solo in their private cars. I am worried when decades of conservation policies are being rolled back without regard for the consequences. It is right that we worry about saving as many human lives as possible, but it is equally right to worry about saving our home, Earth. The two should not be mutually exclusive. The pandemic will not last forever but I fear that the policies put in place now may last a very long time.

I implore you to keep abreast of conservation issues, do your part personally and locally to improve the health of the planet, and encourage lawmakers to not only think of human life, but also the welfare of our planet when making policy decisions.



I hope you all have a safe and healthy summer. Keep checking our calendar, amcmaine.org/calendar, for updates on webinars and in-person activities. And be sure to check out our new YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/channel/UCsKrBOnKCLuUO4n-5uvGSgQ, to see all of our webinars and online workshops.

Be Well and Get Outside,

Cindy

"We are working to apply for the 'Dark Sky Reserve' designation for the 173,000 acres that surround AMC's ownership core and many neighboring towns," Jenny explained. "We partnered with the PCEDC because the designation will encourage astro-tourism and increase economic activity in the area while conserving our dark skies."

The application process involves identifying sources of light pollution in the area, estimating the cost to reduce



The black areas represent the remaining natural dark skies in the United States, including AMC's Maine Woods. Map by Katie Metz

that pollution and applying for funding to accomplish the reduction. Some of the pollution can be reduced by simple measures, such as putting a light on a timer so that it shuts off when not needed. Other measures include replacing current street lights with Dark Sky friendly lights. When this process is successfully completed, the Maine Woods will be only the second place in the U.S. and the third in North America to receive this highest and most complete designation.

"The solution does not have to be high-tech or expensive," Jenny stated. "I am noticing Dark Sky friendly lighting at big box stores like Lowe's."

From the AMC Maine Woods International Dark Sky brochure... "The deep Maine Woods of Piscataquis County, which the AMC also calls home, offer the last remaining naturally dark sky in the Eastern US. Together we're advocating for the permanent protection of the night sky, educating the public about night sky conservation, and promoting the environmentally responsible outdoor lighting that will help get us there. Our goal is to secure this rare piece of Earth as a designated International Dark Sky Reserve as a gateway to a stronger understanding of our connection with the environment—and of our place in the universe."

The group is making headway on the application process and has received a letter of support from the IDA to apply. Right now, they are pursuing funding for the infrastructure changes needed and anticipate making those changes in 2021.

Jenny notes that "it really is a win/win for the communities involved. They save money by reducing waste and inefficiencies, maintain the integrity of their towns and receive the immediate benefit of seeing the stars by removing the light pollution from the environment."

MORE INFO

International Dark-Sky Association: www.darksky.org

Appalachian Mountain Club: www.outdoors.org/articles/preserving-the-dark-skies-of-the-maine-woods

easy for a couple hundred yards beyond the trailhead, then very steep on bedrock for the remainder of the way to the cluster of seven communication towers atop the mountain. The open route offers fine views over the farmlands below to Great Pond Mountain, Blue Hill, Mount Waldo and the Camden Hills.

From the base of the highest tower on the summit, bear left and walk 100 yards to the huge ledges that face north. On the right just before the ledges, you'll pass the concrete stanchions of the old fire tower that used to stand on this spot. Erected in 1921, the 60-foot steel tower was dismantled in 2009 and moved to Canada.

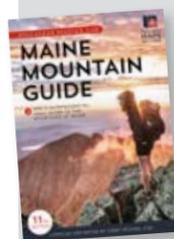
Looking almost due north from the ledges on the beautiful afternoon I was there, snow-capped Katahdin was in full view 75 miles away. Scanning the route of the Appalachian Trail, I could see mountaintops from Baxter Peak all the way to Saddleback, not too shabby for a 15-minute hike. Closer in, the lovely Lucerne Inn stood out above sparkling Phillips Lake. And I see could right up the long runway of Bangor International Airport to boot.

The slopes directly below the big ledges were once part of the Bald Mountain Ski Area, which operated from the late 1930's until 1976. In fact, from this spot, you're looking straight down what was once the corridor of the old double chair lift. With a dozen ski trails, three lifts, snowmaking and night skiing, the mountain was for a while viewed as one of Maine's major ski areas.

If you're up for exploring more, return almost to the highest tower. Look left and you'll see an old track entering the woods. Follow this between several more towers and in less than 0.2-mile you'll arrive at an open slope with views ranging from the peaks of Acadia west to those rising around Donnell Pond, including the summits of Tunk, Schoodic and Black.

On the descent, just below the summit, break through the trees on the left and scamper down the open slabs for a short stretch before returning to the main trail. Along here you'll enjoy some more nice views out to the coast and the mountains of Mount Desert Island.

Explore a "bald" mountain near where you live, have fun, and be sure to follow all current safety and social distancing guidelines.



MAINE'S "BALD" MOUNTAINS WITH HIKING TRAILS

From the pages of the AMC Maine Mountain Guide, 11th ed., a treasure trove of 300 mountains, 625 trails and 1,500 miles of hiking...

Bald Bluff Mtn., Amherst Mountains Community Forest, Amherst, p. 510

Bald Ledge, Francis Small Heritage Trust, Porter, p. 348

Bald Mtn., Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, Baring Plantation, p. 531

Bald Mtn., Coastal Mountains Land Trust, Camden, p. 394

Bald Mtn., Dedham, p. 499

Bald Mtn., Grafton Loop Trail (west side), Grafton Notch, p. 248

Bald Mtn., Bald Mtn. Public Lands, Oquossuc, p. 206

Bald Mtn., Oxford Hills, Woodstock, p. 297

Bald Mtn., Washington Township, p. 217

Bald Pate Mtn., Loon Echo Land Trust, South Bridgton, p. 329

Baldpate Mtn., Grafton Notch (AT), p. 234

Bald Peak, Acadia National Park, p. 451

Bald Peak, Loon Echo Land Trust, Denmark, p. 336

Bald Rock Mtn., Camden Hills State Park, Lincolnville, p. 383

Boundary Bald Mtn., p. 165

SUMMER CALENDAR: OUTINGS | EVENTS | MEETINGS

The listings—presented in date order by category—include only those posted online prior to the submission deadline for this issue of Wilderness Matters. For the most complete and accurate information and up-to-date listings—and so you don't miss spontaneous outings—please periodically check the calendar online at www.amcmaine.org/calendar.

For general questions or comments regarding these calendar listings, please contact Denise Fredette, Outings Chair and Master of the Calendar Listings, outings@amcmaine.org or (207) 939-3670.

Note: Please be courteous when contacting trip leaders by doing so before 9:00 PM unless otherwise specified. Thanks!

HIKING

Friday, June 26: Caribou Mountain Loop, Evans Notch, ME (subject to AMC COVID-19 Policy/Phase at time of hike), amcmaine.org/calendar/#118700 Join us for a 6.9-mile loop hike with 1,900-foot elevation gain and a beautiful summit view from Caribou Mtn. and of Kees Falls, a 25-ft. waterfall. Although the mountain elevation is low, there are some areas of scrambling and exposure and the trail crosses over a brook several times. Hike is rated difficult. We'll move at a moderate pace and stay together as a group. Registration is required. *Note: This hike is contingent on regional conditions at the time due to the Covid-19 virus and any state social distancing orders if still in effect, and is subject to change as the safety and wellbeing of participants and leaders is our priority.* Trip Difficulty: Intermediate/Advanced. Leader: Kim Sanders, kimberlyannsanders@gmail.com.

PADDLE

Sat, Aug 22: Sea Kayaking—Androscoggin River, Brunswick, ME, amcmaine.org/calendar/#118772. From the Water St. boat launch in Brunswick, we'll paddle out with the tide, have lunch on an island and return on the incoming tide. About 5 hours or so. We'll watch for ospreys and eagles. If the downstream river flow is heavy due to recent rains, we'll go to another nearby location. If weather conditions aren't good, we'll go Sunday, 8/23. Trip Difficulty: Moderate. Leader: Carolyn Welch, 207-725-8178, cwelch6789@gmail.com.

Fri-Sun, Sep 11-13: American Canoe Assn. Level 2 Essentials of Sea Kayak Touring, Georgetown, ME, amcmaine.org/calendar/#117746. Level 2 Essentials of Sea Kayaking Touring at AMC's Knubble Bay Camp. Want new confidence as a kayaker? Friendly, experienced kayakers and ACA instructor will lead you through stroke and rescue techniques that can change your game. Sheltered marine environment. Individual and small group instruction. Trip Difficulty: Moderate, Leader: Peter Roderick, 207-293-2704, roderick1027@fairpoint.net.

Sat, Sep 12: Sea Kayaking - Middle Bay, Brunswick, ME, amcmaine.org/calendar/#118773. From the Mere Point boat launch in Brunswick, we'll paddle out with the tide,

have lunch on an island, and return on the incoming tide. About 5 hours or so. We'll watch for ospreys and eagles. If weather conditions are not good, we'll go Sunday, 9/13. Trip difficulty: Moderate, Leader: Carolyn Welch, 207-725-8178, cwelch6789@gmail.com.

OUTDOOR INSTRUCTION

Sat, Sep 19: AMC Outdoor Leader Training, Falmouth, ME, <https://amcmaine.org/calendar/#117991>. Join experienced Maine AMC Leaders and AMC's Leadership Training Manager for a one-day workshop to develop and practice leadership skills necessary to plan and lead safe and enjoyable chapter activities. Workshop is for new and prospective leaders with no prior AMC leader experience and for experienced leaders looking to improve their skills. The workshop format will be a combination of presentations, discussion, and interactive sessions on outdoor leadership including; leader decision making, group management strategies, accident scene management, trip planning, and others. Whether you are an experienced leader looking to make your trips run more smoothly, or are interested in becoming a leader, this workshop will give you the skills and confidence you need to lead a chapter activity. Participants successfully completing this workshop will meet AMC's requirement for chapter trip leader training. Leader: Denise Fredette, outings@amcmaine.org.

A Note from the Outings Committee

By Denise Fredette, Chair

It's hard to believe that just a few months ago we were enjoying each other's company in the waning winter months and thinking about warmer weather AMC activities we'd like to plan. We cancelled our in-person spring events to slow the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic with the safety of AMC participants, leaders, and staff in mind.

Leaders, committee chairs, and AMC members got creative and started offering webinar workshops on backpacking and day hiking, and online talks on conservation, leave no trace, and thru-hiking adventures among others. Now, with an eye on the future and coming together again, things will look a little different.

The AMC waiver you've signed before a hike, paddle, bike in the past will now be digitized so that you can sign it online ahead of time. Screening will include more health-related questions. Leaders will carry a few extra emergency gear items and we will expect participants to be more flexible in how we interact, and perhaps in the activities that we choose. For instance, if a trailhead is full, we'll opt for Plan B so that we're not overwhelming the trails and we'll be able to practice more social distancing.

We may no longer offer to share our trail mix, but we cannot wait to share the trails and waterways and talks with you again. In addition to the calendar listings, we hope to continue offering online webinars on a variety of topics. Look for more "BeOnlineWithAMC" events on the calendar at amcmaine.org/calendar.

A Dozen Great Hikes Paired with Iconic Maine Features to Celebrate Maine's Bicentennial Year

By Carey Kish

This year marks a huge milestone in Maine history, that of 200 years of statehood. In June 1819, Massachusetts passed legislation separating the District of Maine from the Commonwealth, and on March 15, 1820, Maine became the 23rd state of the Union. Celebrate Maine's Bicentennial with a great hike that pairs with some of our most iconic natural, historical and cultural features. Here's a dozen to start with. Enjoy!



A look at the Knife Edge and Pamola from Baxter Peak atop 5,268-foot Katahdin, Maine's highest mountain. Carey Kish photo.

KATAHDIN.

Rising majestically from the Maine woods is 5,268-foot Katahdin, Maine's highest mountain and the crown jewel of 210,000-acre Baxter State

Park. Climb to mile-high Baxter Peak, the northern terminus of the fabled Appalachian Trail, via the Chimney Pond and Cathedral trails, tackle the breathtaking Knife Edge, and descend Pamola via Helon Taylor Trail.

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK. At 1,528-feet, Cadillac Mountain is the highest point not only in Acadia National Park, but on the entire Atlantic seaboard between Labrador and Brazil. Make the 6-mile north-south traverse of the pink granite peak for panoramic ocean, island and mountain views of the eastern side of Mount Desert Island and Maine's only national park.

LIGHTHOUSES. The red-and-white striped Quoddy Head Light in Lubec is one of more than 60 lighthouses that grace the 3,500 sinuous miles of Maine coast. Enjoy the view from the light out over the Bay of Fundy to Grand Manan Island in Canada, then strike off on a scenic 4-mile loop hike around the 541-acre Quoddy Head State Park, the easternmost chunk of land in the U.S.

AROOSTOOK COUNTY. Nearly 7,000 square miles of forests and farmlands comprise Aroostook County, Maine's largest, and bigger than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. For an extensive look out over the "Crown of Maine," follow the International Appalachian Trail from Big Rock Ski Area to the top of 1,748-foot Mars Hill, the site of Maine's first wind power project.



The trails at La Verna Nature Preserve lead to a long stretch of bold oceanfront on Muscongus Bay. Carey Kish photo.

LOBSTER. At the 120-acre La Verna Nature Preserve in Bristol on the eastern side of the Pemaquid Peninsula, a pleasant loop hike winds through old growth forests

and along three-quarters of a mile of bold ocean shorefront on Muscongus Bay. Post-hike, find yourself a lobster shack to enjoy a fresh Maine lobster, with corn, potatoes and chowder, of course.

PORTLAND. The Forest City Trail, Portland's mini white-blazed version of the Appalachian Trail, links many of the wild places and green spaces of Maine's largest city. The hike starts at the Stroudwater River and wends for ten delightful miles to its end at roaring Presumpscot River Falls. Après-hike, Portland's vibrant urban environs offer endless sightseeing possibilities.



The Augusta Nature Education Center is home to 5 miles of lovely trails. Carey Kish photo.

AUGUSTA. Five miles of footpaths meander through the Augusta Nature Education Center, 175 acres of meadows and woods replete with old granite quarries, waterfalls, lily ponds, beaver ponds and wildflowers. After your pleasant stroll, head for a look at the beautiful

Maine State House, which was completed in 1932, a year after Augusta became the state capital.



A hiker enjoys the view above Billings Falls at Gulf Hagas. Carey Kish photo.

GULF HAGAS. Popularly known as the "Grand Canyon of Maine," Gulf Hagas in Maine's 100-Wilderness is a narrow slate canyon on the West Branch of the Pleasant River, which drops 400 feet in four miles, forming a series of waterfalls, rapids,

chutes and pools. The 8-mile loop hike via the AT, Rim Trail and Pleasant River Tote Road is one of Maine's finest day hikes.



Cooper Farm at Caterpillar Hill in Sedgwick is a great place to hike and pick wild blueberries. Carey Kish photo.

WILD BLUEBERRIES. Blueberry pie, cobbler, muffins, pancakes, or by the handful in the field, Mainers love their sweet, tangy and antioxidant-rich wild blueberries. Cooper Farm at Caterpillar Hill in Sedgwick has 1-1/2 miles of hiking trails

through spruce woods and blueberry fields, where the picking is pretty fine come late July and August.

L.L. BEAN. The sweeping granite ledges of 484-foot Bradbury Mountain, the namesake summit of the 800-acre state park in Pownal, rewards hikers with fine easterly views to Casco Bay and the Portland skyline. Any number of easy trails will get you there. A shopping trip to L.L. Bean in Freeport, the venerable outdoor retailer in business since 1912, is a rite of passage.

WHITE PINES. It's no coincidence that Maine is nicknamed the Pine Tree State, given that lumber from the stately Eastern White Pine, the tallest tree in eastern North America, has played an important role in the state's economy for several hundred years. Saunter along the Ravine Trail at 192-acre Fields Pond Audubon Center in Holden for a walk among the piney giants.

MOOSE. A wonderful system of trails leads through 15,000-acre Little Moose Public Lands just west of Moosehead Lake, connecting a number of pristine ponds and rugged ridgelines as well as climbing to the 3,194-foot summit of Big Moose Mountain. If you don't spy a moose or two on your sojourn here, join a Greenville area outfitter for a moose safari, usually a sure thing.

AMC Reopening Preview

AMC volunteers, members, donors, and staff have responded to COVID 19 prioritizing health, safety, and our mission. We've made tough decisions about closing lodging, cancelling programs, and reducing staff. As we head into summer, we look forward to reopening the parts of AMC that can implement appropriate safety measures. This preview is based on what we know today. The information can change. Keep up with your AMC emails or visit AMC's COVID-19 Update at www.outdoors.org/articles/newsroom/amc-preparations-for-covid-19.

Volunteer Led Programs – Safety First

In order to relaunch volunteer led programs, participants and volunteers must commit to cancelling their participation if they are exposed to, test positive for, or experience the symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days of their event. Anyone taking part in AMC activities will be expected to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and follow appropriate health and safety practices. Those who prefer not to follow these practices should not attend AMC events. New requirements may mean that AMC cannot offer some activities this summer



Find all of AMC's "Be Online with AMC" virtual programs at activities.outdoors.org.

or even this year. It may mean that some volunteers sit the season out. While people make the decisions that work for them, we will look ahead to the day when we can expand our offerings again.

Continued Online Opportunities

By converting so many programs, trainings and social events to online offerings, we've learned that we can reach new people. This is particularly true for people who are safer at home. Throughout the summer and fall, we will continue to offer online programs. Follow the Maine Chapter's Facebook page, [AMC's Facebook Page](#), and review the complete "BeOnlineWithAMC" listings at activities.outdoors.org.

Relaunch in Person Opportunities

Volunteers and staff have defined how we will restart in person volunteer activities. Volunteers receive regular updates through the Volunteer Newsletter and/or from their staff liaisons. We will resume in person volunteer activities in two phases:

1. Phase One: Trail work and other stewardship activities:
Volunteers who adopt trails, maintain structures, etc. as individuals or in groups <4.
 - o Required training
 - o Adopt safety protocols
2. Phase Two – volunteer Leaders groups of <10.
 - o Leaders have required training and safety practices
 - o Participants must register for events and sign an electronic waiver

These new requirements mean that we may not be able to do all of the activities we normally do. Some activities simply cannot allow appropriate social distancing and are inappropriate for wearing face coverings. AMC is committed to upholding best practices for the safety of volunteers and participants and we look ahead to the day when these precautions will not be necessary.



Many AMC facilities, including Lake of the Clouds Hut pictured here as well as the rest of the White Mountain huts in the system, are closed for the 2020 season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of our long-standing traditions will not go ahead this summer and maybe even into the fall. Like the huts, many volunteer-led camps and cabins will remain closed. Some Adventure Travel and other events may be cancelled.

We hope that whatever changes in your AMC, that you will find your local AMC community through your chapter. Reach out! Offer to tell your stories about your favorite part of AMC. Be well.

AMC Maine Chapter Policy Updates

By Eliza Townsend, Maine Conservation Policy Director

The Maine legislature adjourned in March as the seriousness of the COVID-19 outbreak became clear. At that time, there was an expectation that lawmakers would return to address unfinished business, including a bond question to recapitalize the popular Land for Maine's Future program and to invest in infrastructure at Maine's state parks. The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the importance of access to places to get outside, stretch our muscles and soothe our minds.

Unfortunately, at this point there is no clear date for the legislature to return, and we cannot be confident that the bond question will be placed on the ballot, leaving both LMF and our state parks without investment once again. I encourage you to reach out to your legislators to express your support for Land for Maine's Future and much-needed investments at our state parks.



The news is better at the federal level, where the Great American Outdoors Act has been scheduled to come to the Senate floor the week of June 8. The GAOA combines full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and funding to address maintenance of federal properties, including national parks, forests and wildlife refuges. The LWCF funds a wide range of recreational opportunities including local parks and trails, even playgrounds and ball fields. Its component fund, the Forest Legacy program, supports the conservation of working forests, and provided critical funding for our Maine Woods Initiative. The bill has bipartisan support, including from all members of Maine's congressional delegation, and is expected to pass.

Meanwhile, the governor's 39-member Maine Climate Council is moving forward. Subgroups will report back on their priorities in June, with a goal of a full set of recommendations made to the next legislature in December. The Natural & Working Lands subgroup's recommendations include creating a dedicated and sustained funding source to conserve working forests, agricultural, and natural lands; and the creation of a voluntary forest carbon program for small landowners. AMC has advocated to expand that program to all landowners and for bold, specific targets on land conservation. We'll keep you informed as the Climate Council makes its recommendations and the legislature considers them. There is no question that climate change is affecting Maine now, with extreme weather events, changing habitat, and negative impacts on wildlife. For example, AMC's scientists have tracked the shortening of our winters and the phenomenon they call "Winter Whiplash." We must act now to slow and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

In May, the Maine DEP issued a permit for the New England Clean Energy Connect, a 145-mile transmission line from the Canadian border to Lewiston, including 53 miles of new corridor cut through the woods north and west of Caratunk. AMC intervened in that process, opposing the project on the grounds that fragmenting Maine's forests will negatively impact forests and the wildlife that depends on them. The project is proposed to help Massachusetts meet its clean energy goals by purchasing electricity generated in Quebec.

Have you signed up for AMC's Conservation Action Network? You can follow issues across the region and take action on them at www.outdoors.org/conservation.

Meet Christo Sedgewick, AMC Maine Chapter's new Programs Chair



I joined the AMC ExCom for a variety of reasons. Most bigly, I have a lifetime of benefiting from the AMC. I use the River Guide on the regular, but the combination of Quiet Water and my Maine Atlas & Gazetteer is my go-to on the regular. I also of course grew up hiking the AT up in the Rangeley area, especially around the Height of Land and Piazza Rock. I feel grateful that I can begin to give back and be a part of such an excellent, thoughtful, and accomplished group.

My primary goal as the new acting Programs Chair is to connect with the other chairs on the Executive Committee, especially Outings, Trails, Conservation, and Young Members. I see the programs position as one that not only serves members and the public, but also the Club. How can we use programs to accomplish and further our club goals? Programs as a part of young member outreach are likely different from programs that further some of our conservation goals. My hope is that over the next few months I can have some conversations with the other chairs to see just what we need to do to best suit everybody's needs.

Slightly longer term, I really look forward to building up the AMC community. I think Programs is a great venue for that. I feel like by the time we can gather again, people will have a lot of energy and excitement to get together, go out and do things. I think we can harness that through programs and really have a fun time. As you know, Maine is a pretty unique place and a club like the AMC attracts some pretty unique and passionate people. Get a bunch of us in one place and who knows what might happen.

I was born and raised in Auburn and lived there until I went off to college. I was lucky enough to spend most weekends in the winter and several weeks each summer up in Rangeley, where I fished, paddled, camped, hiked, snowshoed and skied. Growing up, if I wasn't tromping through the woods, I was eating, sleeping, or reading about tromping through the woods.

I remember working through *The American Boy's Handy Book* by Daniel Carter Beard until the pages fell out. Some of my favorite early camping trips were up to Big Squaw Pond west of Greenville (now called Big Moose Pond), and of course the Lobster Lake-West Branch trip with stops at the Chesuncook Village store for root beer and the Lake House for what still stands as just about the best roast beef dinner I have ever had.

I majored in American Studies at Tufts University, which taught me the critical thinking skills to realize that I would never get a job as an American Studies major. So, I went to law school in Portland, Oregon, graduated, and then worked as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Snohomish County, Washington for the next 7 ½ years. During those years, I got away from my outdoors roots. Growing up in Maine, I was so spoiled by backdoor access to the wilderness, that when I was on the West Coast, I just didn't enjoy driving three hours to a trailhead only to find it cluttered with crossover SUVs even more luxurious than mine. So, when my daughters were getting close to school age, I achieved the pinnacle of my career in advocacy by convincing my Seattle-native wife to let me quit my job and move the four of us back to the Great State of Maine. That was in May 2015. Since then, my primary job has been raising the girls, and it has been a hoot. I have also worked during the summers at the Bike, Boat & Ski store for L.L. Bean, trying to convince people to buy canoes instead of tandem kayaks.

I also take the kids paddling and backcountry camping quite a bit each summer. Some of the recent places we have gotten stuck in summer thunderstorms and caught chubs are Tunk Lake, Third Machias Lake, and Chesuncook Lake. The girls love Flagstaff Lake as well, but there are no chubs there, only thunderstorms. My favorite recent paddling trip has been a tour of First, Second and Third Debsconeag lakes. I spent four nights there a couple Octobers ago and have been trying to find a portage partner to go back with ever since.

Other than paddling and traipsing, I like to hunt with both bow and gun (although never at the same time), mountain bike with the kids, and play music. I play guitar and sing, and have played in rock bands in Boston, Oregon, Seattle and now Maine with very little success. It's the greatest.

Exploring Local: Finding the Beauty in My Own Backyard

By Denise Fredette

Like many people, I had plans this summer that were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of those plans were out of state destinations. Although I was



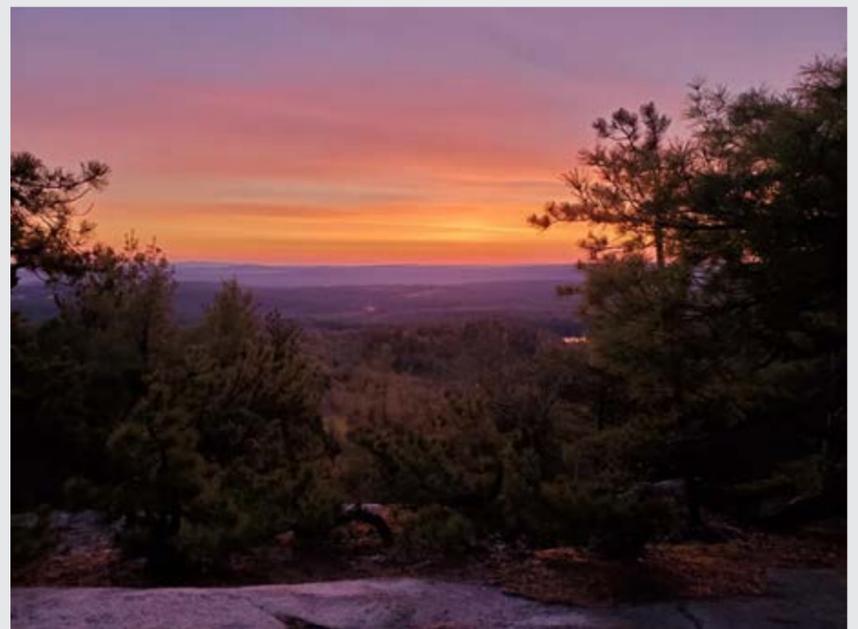
After watching the sunrise.
Denise Fredette photo.

sad to see long-anticipated activities put off even longer, I still wanted to get outdoors and get some exercise.

I realized this was the perfect opportunity to explore more locally right here in Maine. I can't remember the last time I had "free time" to relax and explore. Luckily, we live in a state with an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities.

We pulled the kayaks out of storage and explored nearby waterways. Each week I would consult local land trust maps and mainetrailfinder.com and choose trails I had never been on or

had forgotten were so close by. My goal was to stay low and local and the result is that I have discovered some new gems. I was even able to catch a beautiful sunrise 20 minutes from my home.



Sunrise at Bald Pate Preserve. Denise Fredette photo.

Basic Compass Use for Hikers

By Carey Kish

Many years ago, I picked up a pamphlet from Silva, the compass maker, with the words "Read this, or get lost" on it. Inside is advertised the company's "easy as 1-2-3" system for finding your way in the woods. Impressed by the simplicity of the concept, I replaced my clunky old lensatic compass immediately with a Silva Polaris Type 7 compass and have never looked back.

The ability to read a map and use a compass are essential skills every hiker should have in their toolkit. With some rudimentary knowledge and a little practice with both you can really up the ante on your confidence level and safety factor in the outdoors and better enjoy your time on the trail.

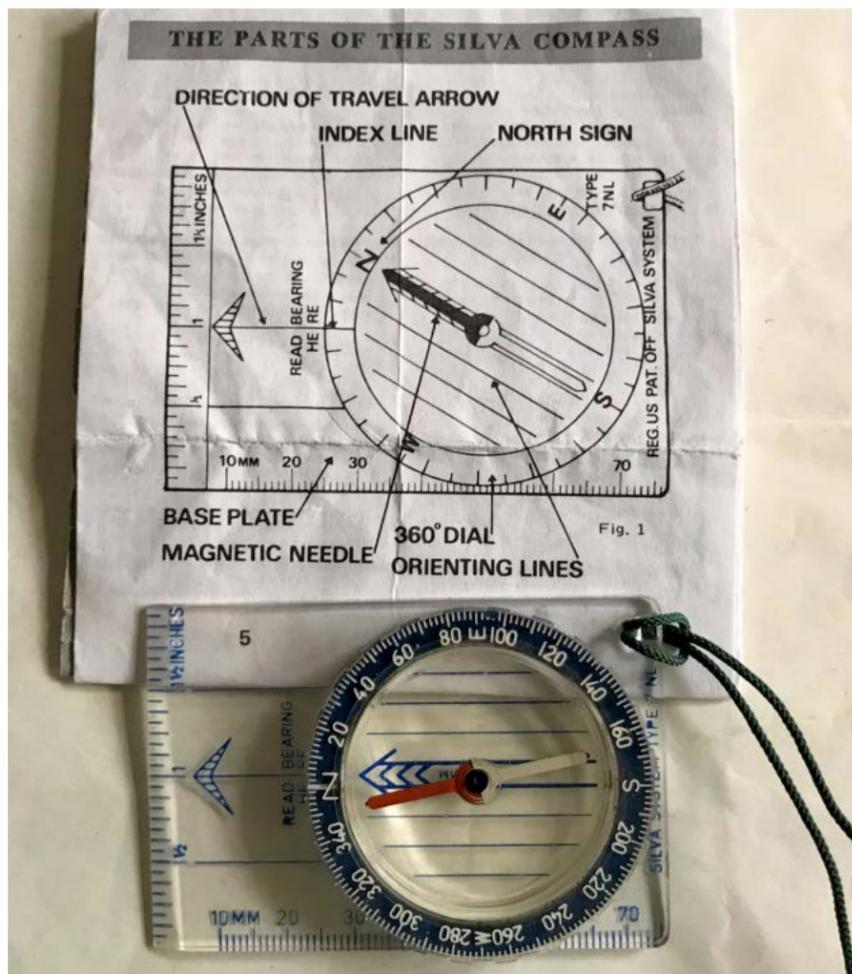


Diagram of the parts of a compass. Carey Kish photo.

Let's start with the parts of a compass. First, there's the flat "baseplate," and near the top center of that, the "direction of travel arrow" at the end of the "index line." Below this is the round compass housing with a "360-degree dial" and "north sign," within which is the floating "magnetic needle," the "orienting arrow" beneath it, and "orienting lines" to either side.

The magnetized red end of the compass needle always points north, not to true north, but rather to magnetic north. True north is the geographic North Pole, where the imaginary 360 lines of longitude meet at the top of the planet, while magnetic north is found at the tip of the Earth's massive magnetic field located in the Arctic Ocean. The difference in degrees between true north and magnetic north is known as "declination."

USGS topographic maps, National Geographic/Trails Illustrated maps, AMC trail maps and the like are all oriented with true north at the top of the map. Each also shows a declination diagram in its legend. In Maine, magnetic declination currently varies between 14-1/2 and 17 degrees west of true north, depending on your location.

Spread your map out on a table and let's do a quick exercise. Choose an obvious place on the map, the intersection of two

roads, perhaps, and mark this as your starting point. Pick another known spot, like a mountaintop, and mark it as your destination. Using the edge of the compass baseplate, draw a line connecting the two points. Holding the compass there, turn the compass dial so that the orienting arrow aligns to true north (the top of the map). The angular difference between true north and your drawn line measured clockwise is the "map bearing." Call it 45 degrees for this example, read from the index line on your compass.

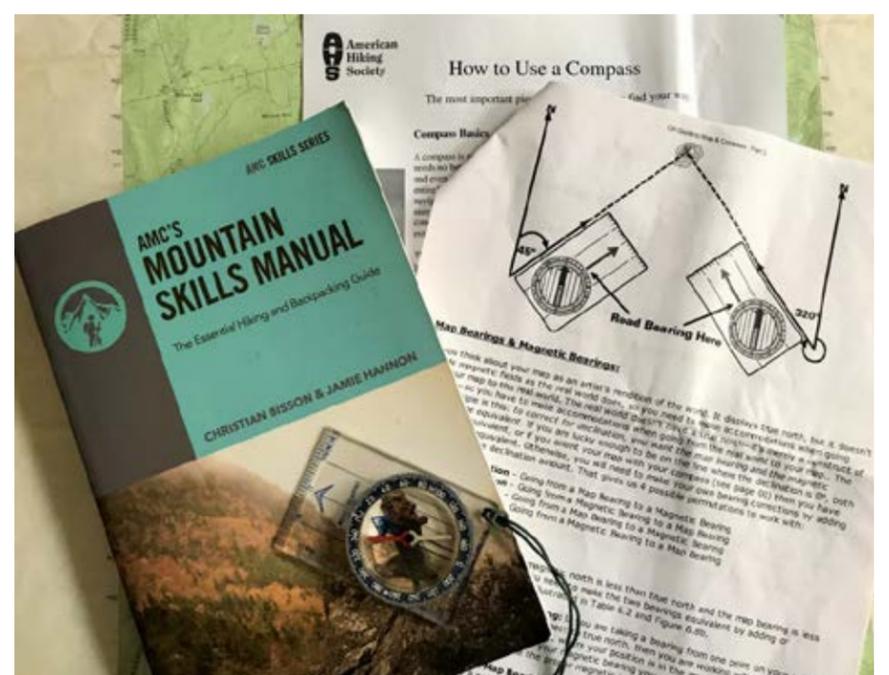
Since your compass points to magnetic north, to actually travel in the field between those two points, you'll need to adjust the map bearing to a "magnetic bearing" by compensating for declination. Use 16 degrees west for the purpose of this exercise. Way back when, I learned the mnemonic "west is best, east is least," and have used this trick ever since to remember to add whatever the west declination is (west is best = add) to the map bearing to convert to a magnetic bearing.

In this case, to add 16 degrees, turn the compass dial to the left until the 16-degree mark is at the top. Notice that doing so causes with the red end of the magnetic needle to align with the orienting arrow, a procedure called "boxing the needle." You should now read 61 degrees at the index line (45 degrees + 16 degrees); this is your magnetic bearing and the direction you'll travel on the ground along your plotted line.

If you were physically at the starting point right now, you'd hold the compass level in your hand, orient yourself with the compass by rotating your body until the red end of the needle is over the orienting arrow, sight on a landmark ahead of you (if possible) with the direction of travel arrow and start walking. To return to the starting point from your destination, simply backtrack by boxing the needle in the reverse.

It pays to refer to your compass and map often to stay on track and properly oriented with the terrain features around you. You might even try your hand at plotting your position en route. To do this, you'll need to identify by sight two known objects and mark them on your map. Then take a bearing to each object. Convert these magnetic bearings to map bearings by subtracting the west declination from each reading. Plot these lines on the map and where they intersect is your location.

Proficiency with map and compass takes some practice. Buy a good reference book and consider taking an orienteering course to get a leg up.



There's a lot of good reference material available to help hikers get proficient with map and compass use. Carey Kish photo.