



MAINE

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Appalachian Mountain Club
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WILDERNESS MATTERS

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Thoughts on the Coronavirus and the Abundance of Places in Maine to Safely Recreate *By Kristen Grant*

On the evening of March 10, I quickly stopped at our local grocery store to pick up some last-minute items in preparation for an AMC Maine Chapter trip to spend a few nights in a cabin in Baxter State Park. My mind for the past week had been running through the list of things I needed to remember to bring, as well as busy with the frenzy prompted by just a few days of being offline. I remember noticing that there was no toilet paper at the store, and thinking, "gee, they must have had a really good sale on toilet paper," as well as feeling a little chagrined at having missed out on what must have been a fabulous bargain.

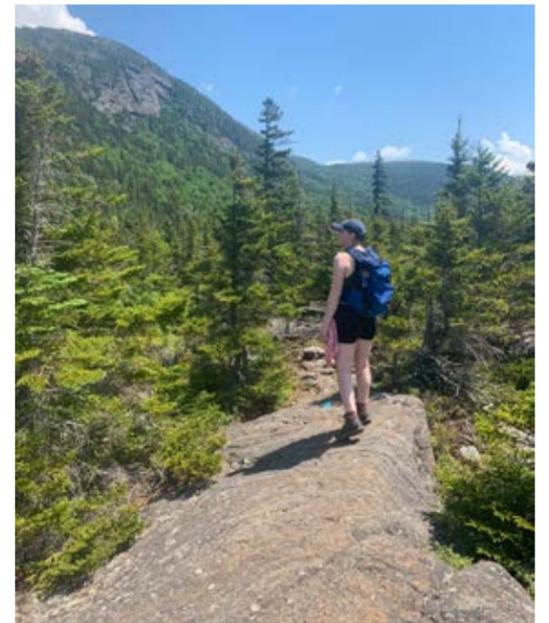
Our group of 8 or so individuals spent the next several days enveloped in the silence of the interior of Baxter State park in late winter. We had no communication with the outside world and were innocently unaware of what was happening outside our peaceful oasis. We shared a cabin, lots of stories, meals, and even finger food!

Everyone knows what happened next. As we re-entered the world, we were quickly filled in on the lockdowns and closures that were happening across the country. At the time it seemed unreal to us. I stopped at the grocery on the way home and was shocked

by the empty shelves and the people scurrying down the aisles trying to fill up their grocery carts as quickly as they could.

At first, there were many conflicting guidelines and lots of shaming on social media about the kinds of activities that were and were not permitted. I remember reading one post that admonished, "Nobody should be hiking! If you want to hike, do it inside your house!" This seemed rather extreme.

As I write this at the end of August it seems that many have settled into a "new normal" even in the midst of so much loss and
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AMC'er Mary Forst hiking on Tumbledown this summer. Photo taken by socially-distant friend, Andrew Gibson.

AMC Maine Policy Updates *By Eliza Townsend, Maine Conservation Policy Director*

The year 2020 has been wildly unpredictable, and that the term "topsy-turvy" has applied as much to public policy as to other parts of life. While results have been mixed, we do have a number of exciting achievements to announce and celebrate.

Land Conservation

On August 4, President Trump signed into law the *Great American Outdoors Act* after it passed through both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House with strong, bipartisan support. The GAOA fully and permanently funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million a year and provides \$1.9 billion annually for five years to address maintenance needs on federal lands, including national parks, national forests and national wildlife refuges.



The NECEC transmission corridor will forever negatively alter this wild vista from atop Coburn Mtn in Enchanted Township. Carey Kish photo.

The *Great American Outdoors Act* has widely been seen as the most important conservation legislation in a generation. It stands in stark contrast to other environmental actions taken by the Trump administration,

which have included weakening auto emission standards and suspending enforcement of industrial pollution standards.

Passing the GAOA culminated decades of work by a broad coalition of interest groups that the AMC has been proud to lead. The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established in 1965 to safeguard natural areas, water resources and our cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. The funding comes from royalties payed by energy companies drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf. Yet over the 55-year history of the program, Congress has repeatedly diverted the revenues to other uses.

That funding will now go to conservation and recreation projects small and large, remote and close-to-home. Here in Maine, LWCF has funded investments in state and local parks, and a component fund, the Forest Legacy Program, has helped in the conservation of working forests, including part of AMC's Maine Woods Initiative. We can also celebrate potential investments at Acadia National Park, the White Mountain National Forest, the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, and national wildlife refuges across Maine.

The *Great American Outdoors Act* became law because Americans made clear to our elected leaders that we value

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Wilderness Matters

is the newsletter of the Maine Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of the AMC or its Maine Chapter. Not responsible for errors or omissions, except to acknowledge them in a subsequent issue.

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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 (Winter Issue) is December 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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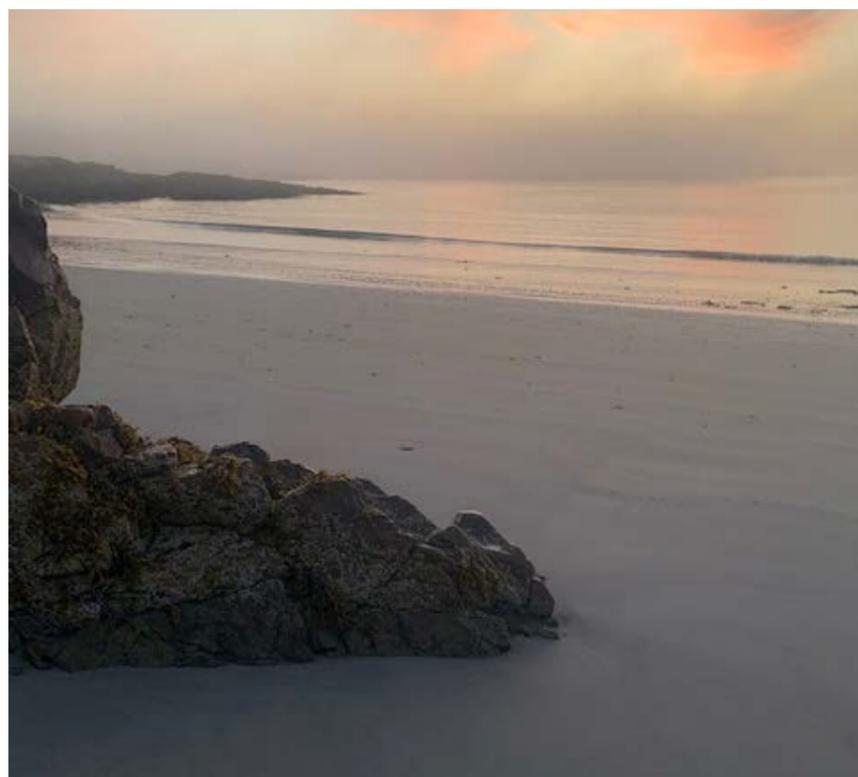
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Coronavirus *continued from page 1*



Sunrise on Marshall Island, one of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust islands that has remote campsites. Douglas O'Heir photo.

uncertainty. Most people have figured out how to reduce the risk of exposure and spreading of the virus and still lead a relatively normal life. Nothing is perfect but the Golden Rule seems to be to "Try to stay as safe as you can."

We all know that the benefits of being outside are legion. If you put "benefits of being outdoors" into your search engine you will come back with over 188 million results. A short list includes "improving energy and mental outlook" and "reduction of anxiety" (something we could all use right about now). Similarly, the health benefits of exercise can't be overstated. Every day there is a new study finding yet another health benefit of exercise, whether it helps you keep your weight down, reduce heart disease or again, significantly improve your mental outlook.

We are so lucky here in Maine to have access to so many places where we can be outdoors and get some great exercise without having to worry about infecting others or becoming infected ourselves. For example, we can go hiking in a place where you can maintain social distance and avoid those places with overflowing parking lots.

Let me remind you that the AMC Maine Woods Initiative in the 100-Mile Wilderness has over 70,000 acres of forested land and 120 miles of recreational trails. Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument is undergoing a phased re-opening, and you can find up to date information about that at the Katahdin Woods and Waters current conditions page.

You can also go bike riding. The Bicycle Coalition of Maine has an easy to use tool that can help you decide where to ride, using whichever filters you choose. Other resources at your disposal are the Maine Island Trail Association, a 375-mile water trail for small boaters that connects over 200 wild islands and mainland sites for camping. In addition, the Maine Coast Heritage Trust offers information about their preserves, which are open. Finally, the Maine Trail Finder offers info on over 1,000 trails and local preserves. This is a good time to branch out and explore something off the beaten path.

We're all hoping that things will return to normal as soon as possible. In the meantime, please join me in thanking all the people and organizations who have conserved or donated land, worked on trails, or supported in any way the great outdoors of Maine. It's through their efforts that we have an abundance of options that will help us stay safe.

Find us on  www.facebook.com/MaineAMC/

outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, and unspoiled places. This success serves as a testament to what we can do when we come together.

Land for Maine's Future

State lawmakers could learn a thing or two from their federal counterparts. Sadly, another year has passed without an investment in the popular and successful Land for Maine's Future program. Voters will not have the opportunity to choose whether to support a bond question on this fall's ballot, because lawmakers failed to address the issue before adjourning early last March due to COVID-19 concerns, and a reconvening of the legislature increasingly seems unlikely. It's a darn shame.

LMF has protected some of Maine's most cherished places in every county, ensuring access to the places we love, protecting wildlife habitat, supporting food systems, and contributing to both our economy and our unique sense of place. Funds have often served as match to the Land and Water Conservation Fund and have helped attract philanthropic support. Permanent, dedicated funding to support land conservation is the top recommendation from the Maine Climate Council's Natural and Working Lands Group as a strategy to combat climate change.

Maine Climate Council

The Governor's 39-member Maine Climate Council continues to accept public input as it begins to form a Climate Action Plan, due in December. Policy proposals to implement that plan will go to the Maine Legislature, which will convene in January.

We are experiencing a severe drought across the state, enduring record temperatures, living with invasive insects and watching as the Gulf of Maine warms faster than 99% of the world's oceans, with devastating consequences. We know that we need to act boldly, decisively, and swiftly to slow and mitigate climate change. Please stay alert for further information on when, where, and how to weigh in.

New England Clean Energy Connect

The NECEC is a proposed 145-mile power line to carry electricity from the Quebec border to a substation in Lewiston. Of those 145 miles, 53 would be newly cut through the Maine woods in the vicinity of the Moose River, Spencer Lake and the upper Kennebec River. AMC has opposed the project because

of its impact on wildlife habitat. Maine's North Woods lie at the heart of the largest intact temperate forest in North America. It is the largest globally significant Important Bird Area in the continental United States.



The Forest Legacy program assisted in the conservation of AMC's MWI lands. Pictured here is pristine Long Pond as viewed from Gorman Chairback Lodge. CMK photo.

In August, Maine's Supreme Judicial Court ruled that a proposed ballot measure to reject the transmission corridor was unconstitutional, and the Secretary of State declined to add the citizen-initiated question to this November's ballot. Nevertheless, the fight is not over.

AMC and our partners who testified against the proposal before the Department of Environmental Protection have appealed its decision in favor of the project. The Natural Resources Council of Maine has filed suit, claiming that the decision should have been made by the Board of Environmental Protection. NRCM and a number of other plaintiffs, including current lawmakers, have filed a separate suit challenging a lease that allows the power line to cross a parcel of public land without legislative approval. As of this writing, the Army Corps of Engineers has not issued a finding, nor has the U.S. Department of Energy issued a presidential permit.

Election Day

November 3 is Election Day! This year we'll choose a President, a U. S. Senator, both congressional representatives and each state senator and state representative. Many communities will have local issues as well. Make a plan for how you will vote.

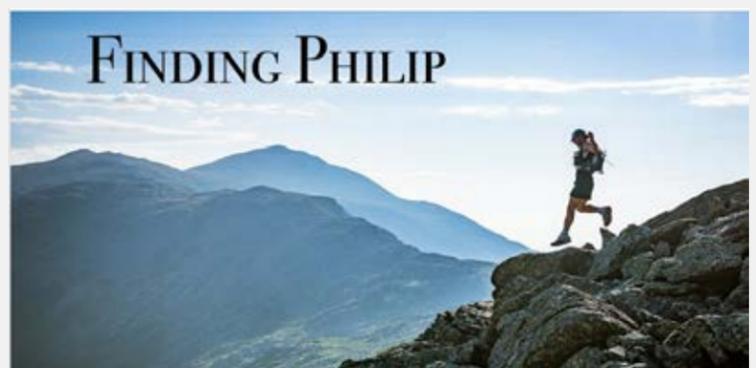
Officials expect high demand for absentee ballots, and the U.S. mail is running slow. Request your ballot now at: apps.web.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl. You can also vote absentee in-person until the Thursday before the election (October 29). FMI, contact your local municipal clerk.

AMC Maine Chapter 2020 Annual Meeting to be Held Virtually on November 14

Please mark your calendar and register for the 2020 AMC Maine Chapter Annual Meeting on November 14, 2020 at 6 pm. This will be an online Zoom meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic considerations. There is no cost to attend.

The evening will include a business meeting, election of officers for the coming year, awards and recognition of members, all to be followed by our featured speaker, Philip J. Carcia.

An extreme hiker, Philip J. Carcia, also known as "Finding Philip," has logged over 15,000 miles on some of the most iconic trail networks in North America. Locally, Philip has also completed the NH 48 Single-Year Grid and is currently redlining the Whites in a single season, which is hiking all 652 trails listed in the *White Mountain Guide*, a total of 1450 miles, in one year.



2020 AMC Maine Chapter Annual Meeting Nov 14, 2020 6-8 pm

Advance registration is required. <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcqfuCuqTgtHdXwLdzyxzwYpSq7> (link is also on our website and Facebook page). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. The meeting is limited to 100 participants on a first-come, first served basis.

FALL 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

Sat, Sept 26: Caribou Mountain Loop, Evans Notch, ME
(Subject to AMC COVID-19 Policy/Phase at time of hike) -
WAIT LISTED <https://amcmaine.org/calendar/#119079>

Join us for a 6.9-mile loop hike with 1,900 ft. elevation gain and a beautiful summit view from Caribou Mtn. and of Kees Falls, a 25-ft. waterfall. Although the mountain elevation is modest, there are some areas of scrambling and exposure and the trail crosses a brook several times. This hike is rated difficult. We will move at a moderate pace and stay together as a group. Registration is required. ***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.

ONLINE WEBINARS

**Tues, Sept 22, 7-8:30 pm: BeOnlineWithAMC Webinar -
How to Plan a Family Bike Trip**

Cycling vacations are a terrific way to spend time with your family. Anyone who knows how to ride a bike can design, plan, and embark on a bike tour. Join us for this informative and inspirational webinar where we'll lay the groundwork for you to begin to plan your own adventure. This webinar is geared towards families and beginners, but it's meant for anyone interested in bike touring. Please join us, get ideas, and share your experiences! Sarah is a trip leader with the Maine Chapter of the AMC, an Adventure Cycling ambassador, and an active member of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine's Community Spokes program. In addition to the bike trips she leads for the AMC, Sarah has pedaled thousands of miles with her husband and sons. Please register in advance at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XeuEIQ8S9SG6hwQeKrspw.

**Wed, Dec 2, 7-8:30 pm: BeOnlineWithAMC Webinar -
Introduction to Winter Hiking**

Experienced Maine AMC winter hiking leaders will discuss clothing, gear, snow travel, and other essential knowledge and techniques to prepare you for outdoor outings in the

winter. This event is intended as an introductory course for new and experienced three-season hikers and a refresher for experienced winter adventurers. Although the focus of the workshop is on hiking in the winter, many of the topics apply to any outdoor winter outing. This workshop will be an excellent "things-you-need-to-know-before-you-go" for anyone who will be spending time out of doors this winter. Please register in advance. More info here: <https://amcmaine.org/calendar/#119432>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Become an AMC Trip Leader for one or more outdoor activities. You can start the process of becoming a leader anytime of the year and you choose how much or how little you want to do. The AMC provides leadership training and Wilderness First Aid certification to active leaders. Find out how you can get involved. Contact us at outings@amcmaine.org for more info.

Executive Committee Chair & Subcommittee Openings. Get involved with the AMC on the Executive Committee. Several open chair positions include: Membership, Outings, and Vice Chair. Contact us at outings@amcmaine.org and find out how you can get involved.



Joe Dienes, a Maine AMC member and trip leader candidate, thought this picture might provide some incentive for people to get outdoors and be active at any age.

Joe and three friends, plus an 82-year old dad decided to hike the Ammonoosuc Ravine Trail up Mount Washington. The trek took the hardy group just over 5 hours.

Pictured is Joe Dienes (left) and Lee Moody, his friend's dad (right).

COVID-19 Backpacking in the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument

By Stephen Brezinski

“The Lookout,” a small mountain on the western edge of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, appears to be relatively little visited spot compared to the rest of the place. I had been advised a few years ago that the route up there might be hard to follow, but in 2020, I know that trail signs have improved. Planning for a trip like this meant contacting the National Park Service office in Patten for a parking pass and info on tenting and the huts within monument.

During our mid-July venture, Haskell Hut and Big Spring Brook Hut were closed and locked due to inability to properly disinfect them and protect the public during the pandemic, so our group of four had to tent in approved spots. In addition to Grand Pitch Lean-to, there are also a number of tenting sites along the East Branch of the Penobscot River and the International Appalachian Trail.

After meeting at Matagamon Wilderness Camps, we parked at Haskell Gate. Our first day was steady rain much of the time, but Saturday and Sunday were predicted to be mostly sunny and hot. The wide trails—former jeep roads—made the hiking very tolerable in the rain. It was the first time I had backpacked with an umbrella.

The trip south and west to the Lookout is about 14-miles round-trip. While it can be done as a day hike, we



AMCers at the start of a COVID-19 backpacking trip into the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Stephen Brezinski photo.



The grand view from the Lookout, a little-visited summit in Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Stephen Brezinski photo.



The unusual Haskell Rock, an oddly-shaped chunk of volcanic tuff, in the East Branch of the Penobscot River in KWWNM. Stephen Brezinski photo.

chose to do it as a two-night backpack to really enjoy the area. I found it odd that the Lookout didn't have an official name on the map, because at 1,950-feet, it's taller than either Deasey and Lunksoos mountains farther south in the Monument. The view south and west from Lookout is great though Deasey has a much better view of Katahdin.

Seasoned hikers may be surprised by the lack of trail markers and blazes on the trails. The NPS, Elliotsville Plantation and the IAT people have done an admirable job with new signs, but after leaving the Grand Pitch Lean-to, expect no signs, blazes or markings up to the Lookout. For this reason, I advise hikers to be familiar with map and compass despite the wide gradual trail. One spot was thickly overgrown for 50 feet or more and there were several unmarked trail intersections.

The hike out was greeted by another day of rain and a host of fresh mosquitos and deer flies. To better escape biting bugs, you can schedule this trip for August. We made this a two-night venture to relax and enjoy the forest. Many can do this in a single overnight or day hike. The trail is particularly amenable to mountain bikers. Besides the Lookout, my favorite part of the trip is Haskell Rock, a conglomerate rock pillar exposed in the East Branch of the Penobscot River.

An AMC Backpacking Trip in the Age of COVID-19

By Stephen Brezinski

As if organizing a two-night backpacking venture was not challenging enough, throw in a pandemic and requirements for physical distancing and masks. This trip had been planned since winter, and with reopening of AMC trips under guidelines and an hour-long pandemic safety training video required of AMC trip leaders, it was officially open again for July.

Because hiking trips during the pandemic are all new, I sought guidance and ideas from Denise Fredette, Volunteer Trip Leader and Outings Chair, and from the AMC May Volunteer Newsletter and AMC online COVID training for trip leaders. I predict that pandemic education and precautions will be included in future Wilderness First Aid.



AMC backpackers on the trail this summer in KWWNM. Stephen Brezinski photo.

The first thing one of the prospective hikers asked me before the trip was whether AMC would require everyone to hike wearing masks, to which I responded that with appropriate distancing, continuous mask wearing was not required. Before the hike we all read the AMC online *Registration Request Information* form, which replaced the sign-in sheet we used to go over

and sign at the trailhead. This new form includes rules for protecting each other from viral infection.

Because I have never before led a trip during a pandemic, I opted to keep the number of hikers low. I normally follow the management “rule of sevens,” one leader for each seven or fewer hikers.

Hikers were reasonably good keeping a proper distance while hiking. To be honest, the distancing and masks had to often be a thing of constant conscious vigilance; it was easy to get careless, such as when we all bunched up to look at the map. While we normally do an introduction and discussion at the trailhead, due to steady rain we opted to hit the trail and augment the information shared in phone calls with discussion while on the move. All were feeling well and with no obvious symptoms of illness. Having such a small group, and all being experienced backpackers, made this workable.

While we often keep some distance with tenting spots, I found it strange and antisocial not to cook and eat together. I purposefully chose a hiking area known to be lightly travelled, compared to, say, the White Mountains and Acadia. We encountered one other couple with dogs during the first day, and two others at the end. Overall, the hike was successful, fun, and no one reported any sign of ailment before, during or after the hike.

Work in AMC's Maine Woods Initiative Quietly Continues Despite Pandemic

By Paul Hahn, MWI Committee Chair



The 100,000 acres of the AMC's Maine Woods Initiative have not been quiet despite the pandemic. The chapter trail work trips at the lodges, scheduled for May and July, had to be cancelled. The October work trip is still on, though limited, because of necessary safety rules due to the coronavirus.



Gorman Chairback Lodge on Long Pond in AMC's Maine Woods Initiative. Carey Kish photo.



Trail sign near Gorman Chairback Lodge in AMC's Maine Woods Initiative. Carey Kish photo.

Chapter trail adopters and other AMC members have been hard at work nonetheless. If you have not heard of or hiked these trails at Little Lyford, Gorham Chairback or Medawisla, you need to experience an MWI trail. Adopters worked on brushing, cleaning water bars, paint blazing and removing blowdowns, and general maintenance on the following trails:

Indian Mtn./Laurie's Ledge, Second Pond Trail, Third Pond Trail, Henderson Brook Trail, Hedgehog Gate Trail, Head of Gulf Trail and the Lodge to Lodge Trails. Those members making it easier to hike these trails are: Cindy Caverly, Jeanine Libby,

Kristianna Sullivan, Kristin Grant, Peter Roderick, Richard Morse, Bruce Brown, Susy Kist, Phil Coyne, Dave and Gail McCarthy. Thank you!

Trail work is only one important aspect of the Club's efforts in MWI. The following reports are a short summary of reports to the AMC Maine Chapter's MWI Committee at their June meeting.

Per Steve Tatko, AMC's Director of Maine Conservation and Land Management:

- 5,000 cords of wood cut on KIW Property and 4,000 cords out on the Roach Tract (KIW and Roach are names of particular sections of the 100,000 acres)
- Continuing two-year project to update forest inventory
- Development of a third MWI carbon offset project
- Ninth season of fish passage work with five projects in the works
- Commenced work on access to the planned Shaw Mtn. hut

Per Jenny Ward, MWI Business Community Relations Manager:

- Continued work on AMC's Maine Woods International Dark Sky Reserve application
- Opened a new AMC office at 127 Moosehead Lake Rd. in Greenville
- Worked with AMC lodge staff to provide food donations to Greenville and Brownville school systems
- Donation of T-shirts that were made into face masks
- Partnering with Greenville and Moosehead Trails Organization on a Ten-Day Trash Walk to challenge people out for a walk to pick up trash.

MWI is a special place and the Maine Chapter is fortunate to have the opportunity to support the Club's efforts in our state. See you on the trails!

Header Image: Long Pond and the AMC's Maine Woods Initiative lands in the 100-Mile Wilderness as viewed from atop Third Mtn. Carey Kish photo.



Be Outdoors with AMC Maine Photo Contest

The AMC Maine Chapter would like to see your photos of you and/or others engaged in outdoor activities, including hiking, biking, canoeing, kayaking, trail or conservation work.

Up to three photos are allowed per submission and they must have been taken within the past five years. Entries will be posted on the AMC Maine Chapter Facebook page where you can vote for, by liking, your favorite photo. Photos will also be judged on their technical and creative merits and how well they illustrate the contest theme. **See Next Page for Rules.** ▶

Exploring the Maine AT: A Backpacking Adventure Weekend

By Denise Fredette

The summer of 2020 was not how I envisioned it way back in January before “social distancing” became the common theme. By the time April was here, my vision for the summer changed some more. I wasn’t leading the usual group hiking and backpacking trips. My own summer trips were cancelled. I wasn’t driving hours to hike in other states. Instead, I took the opportunity to explore more of the trails in Maine.

One such exploration occurred in July with two of my close hiking friends, Sarah and Marielle. We had been playing it safe and taking all the precautions we could to stay healthy. We decided to backpack the AT from Route 26 in Grafton Notch to Route 17 at the Height of Land near Rangeley. It was roughly 34 miles over 4 days and 3 nights and it’s a memory I cherish.

The first day we hiked over the Baldpates in Grafton Notch. Normally, these mountains afford incredible views, but on this day, we were hiking in the clouds and couldn’t see much of anything past the rocks beneath our feet. From beyond the



On the Maine AT, hiking through the clouds on East Baldpate. Denise Fredette photo.

Baldpates all the way to Route 4 was new trail to me and I relished each careful footstep on the wet rock as we descended steeply down. Our destination this night was the Frye Notch Shelter. When we arrived, there was one thru-hiker named Prophet preparing to sleep in the shelter. We greeted him briefly and went on to

find a suitable spot to set up our tents. We went to bed shortly in hopes of starting early the next day to get some miles before the forecasted rains came. Our feet had gotten wet on the first day as the trail was muddy.

We awoke the second day, ate a quick breakfast, broke camp and were on our way. After a couple hours of hiking, the rain came. We pulled on raincoats and covered our packs. The rain was steady at times but intermittent. I had seen on the map that there were several “stream fords” on this route, but so far, the crossings were manageable by rock hopping. We made camp at the Hall Mountain shelter on the second night; having made good time in the rain, we arrived by mid-afternoon. We hung out in the empty lean-to trying to dry out a bit before setting up tents. A couple more thru-hikers passed through and stopped to chat. Due to COVID-19, the number of thru-hikers we encountered was much lower than it would have been in an average year.

We went to bed early again, but woke in the middle of the night to hear someone calling out. My friend had gotten turned around trying to find the tents after visiting the privy. We flashed our lights and continued calling until she found her way back. We laughed about it the next morning, but it happens more than you’d think.



One of a handful of refreshing stream crossings on the Maine AT. Denise Fredette photo.

We delayed leaving camp the next morning, as our shoes were still wet and everything was damp. This would be our higher mileage day and as it was supposed to be sunny and warm, we were hopeful it would dry out the trails. Not long after leaving camp we came to the first of several stream fords where rock hopping was not really an option. We elected to walk through the, at times, knee deep water in our hiking shoes, as they were already wet and it was too dangerous to try crossing barefoot. As the day cleared, we were finally able to get some views of the surrounding landscape, including Old Blue Mountain. This day’s hike took longer than expected up and down some steep terrain. We arrived at the Bemis Mountain shelter hungry and tired. This camping area was quite large, but we kept to ourselves, set up tents, ate dinner and went to bed later than we had the previous two nights.

The next morning, we set about taking down camp. We wanted to arrive at the Route 4 junction by mid-morning as my husband, Matt, graciously agreed to pick us up and drive us back to our cars at the starting point. We had about 5 miles to go on this day and it was by far the most scenic. Each rocky bump above treeline gave us impressive views. We were also not done with stream fords and kept our shoes on for this last one as well. We made it to the highway in good time and hobbled over to the Height of Land, where our driver greeted us with soap, water and towels to clean up a little, and there was a cold-brewed coffee and veggie wraps waiting.

This year so far has been about being flexible with plans and has become more about exploring new trails right here in our own beautiful state. I’ve been lucky enough to avoid crowds of people by choosing less traveled trails and starting my hikes early. Now I also have this new goal of eventually hiking every section of the Appalachian Trail in Maine.

Photo Contest Rules

Theme: *Be Outdoors with AMC Maine*



Entry Requirements:

- Three photos or less per individual submission
- Photo in JPG format not to exceed 10 MB in size and should be in the sRGB color space (photos with low resolution may be rejected)
- Each photo to include the date taken, location of photo, and a brief description of the photo
- Photos must be taken in 2015 or later

To Enter: Submit all photos to conservation@amcmaine.org. Each submission must include your name, address, and email and meet the entry requirements.

Contest Deadline: Midnight October 30, 2020

Categories: Most Liked per Facebook likes (Facebook voting open from Saturday, October 31 at 2 pm to Friday, November 13) and judged based on technical, creative, and theme illustration criteria.

Prizes: Awarding six gift certificates: \$50 for 1st place, \$25 for 2nd place, and \$10 for 3rd place in each category. Winners will be announced at the AMC Maine Chapter annual meeting on November 14.

All entrants agree to allow AMC and AMC Maine Chapter to use their submitted photographs in perpetuity on its website and in the newsletter, social media or other digital and printed marketing or fundraising materials.

Take a Hike this Fall to One of Maine's Historic Firetowers for Mountaintop Panoramas and Foliage Colors

By Carey Kish, editor of the AMC Maine Mountain Guide

From 1905 until 1991, the Maine Forest Service used mountaintop towers for fire detection. The era of fire towers and fire warden trails offered marked and maintained routes not only for forest service staff, but for adventurous hikers as well, thereby opening many previously inaccessible remote peaks. Today, over five dozen fire towers remain standing in various states of repair, each offering its own unique piece of history and a pleasant and photogenic goal to achieve on a day's outing on foot in the Maine woods.

Autumn is a fine time for a fire tower hike – a chance to enjoy the cool weather, blue skies and sunny days amid the glorious kaleidoscope of foliage colors, as witnessed from a historic summit fire tower. Here are five classic Maine fire tower hikes with links for more info. All are also described in the 11th edition of the AMC Maine Mountain Guide. Check mainefoliage.com for up-to-date foliage conditions around Maine.



A hiker enjoys the sunset over Long Pond from the ledges on the west face of Beech Mountain. Carey Kish photo.

BEECH MOUNTAIN

Rising steeply between Echo Lake and Long Pond, Beech Mountain is capped by the only firetower in Acadia National Park on Mt. Desert Island. Erected in 1962, the iron tower replaced the original wooden structure built in 1943. From the Beech Mountain parking area, make a 1-mile circuit via the Beech Mountain Loop Trail. The tower's wraparound platform provides a fine lookout eastward to Cadillac Mountain and a host of other pink granite peaks. Continue to the impressive ledges on the west side of the mountain for views over Long Pond to Mansell Mountain. Get there for sunset and a fabulous display of blazing red huckleberry bushes. *More info:* www.nps.gov/acad.

BIG MOOSE MOUNTAIN

Just west of Greenville in the 15,000-acre Little Moose Public Lands unit, Big Moose Mountain dominates the landscape around the lower end of Moosehead Lake, affording exceptional views of Big Spencer Mountain, Little Spencer Mountain, Katahdin and many other peaks near and far. The 1919 steel fire tower (marking the site of Maine's first fire lookout; made of logs, it was erected in 1905) was removed in 2012 and reassembled at the Moosehead Lake Region Visitor Center on Route 15 in Greenville. The Big Moose Mountain Trail leads 2.1 miles to the top. *More info and map:* www.mainetrailfinder.com.



The grand summit vista from the site of the old firetower atop Big Moose Mountain. Carey Kish photo.



Katahdin as viewed from Deasey Mountain in KWWNM. Carey Kish photo.

DEASEY MOUNTAIN

The craggy summit of Deasey Mountain is the highest in the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. Established in 2016, the 87,500-acre property abuts Baxter State Park to the east. The fire tower cabin atop the 1,984-foot peak sits directly on the ground, as it has since 1929. This spectacular vantage point features huge views of the Katahdin massif all the way north to the Traveler summits. From the end of Orin Falls Road, take Orin Falls Trail a half-mile to the International Appalachian Trail. Ford Wassataquoik Stream, then continue another 5 miles to the top of Deasey. *More info and map:* www.nps.gov/kaww

NUMBER FIVE MOUNTAIN

Number Five Mountain is in the heart of the Leuthold Forest Preserve just south of the Moose River in the Jackman area. The 16,934-acre chunk of forestland is owned by The Nature Conservancy and abuts a 50,000-acre swath of other public and private conservation lands. The 1933 fire tower still stands on the open summit ledges, reached via a 3-mile hike on the old firewarden's trail. The 360-degree vista is extraordinary. The trailhead is a 17-mile drive on gravel logging roads from US 201 at Parlin Pond. *More info and map:* www.fsmaine.org.



View north from Number Five Mountain over the Moose River valley to Attean Pond. Carey Kish photo.



Mt Williams firetower as viewed from the approach trail.

WILLIAMS MOUNTAIN

Williams Mountain straddles the town lines of Misery Township and Parlin Pond Township amid the vast forestlands west of Moosehead Lake. The mountain lies on the western edge of the 363,000-acre Moosehead Region Conservation Easement. A steel fire tower, erected in 1914, still stands on the Williams summit, as does the old firewarden's cabin, which is in surprisingly good condition. A 1.5-mile blue blazed trail, constructed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands in 2017, offers a gradual climb over the mountain's northeast ridgeline. *More info and map:* www.mainetrailfinder.com.