Hello Fellow Groundhogs…umm…Appies!

Welcome to Spring….finally! I hope you took the opportunity to have some fun in the snow. I know many parts of New England still have plenty of snow to play in. Chances are pretty good you will still be able to make snow angels in Tuckerman’s Ravine in June.

Like groundhogs, your Executive Committee emerged from a recent planning meeting at the YMCA boathouse and announced three initiatives for this year. The first initiative was to invest in “Trips with a Purpose”. We plan to provide funding for trips that support the mission of the AMC. For example, annually a group of members have traveled many hours to the woods of Maine to perform maintenance and trail work around the Phoenix Shelter. This year the chapter will provide funding for gas and food for this trip.

Perhaps you have a conservation project, trail maintenance idea or educational opportunity that would require some funds. If your trip qualifies, we can help provide funding. If you have a trip you would like to run, contact Pat Lambert with your request for funding.

The second initiative is to invest in our leaders. In the past we have provided many educational opportunities for our leaders that provide the skills necessary to run quality and safe trips. We are going to expand those opportunities to include courses in Leave No Trace practices etc. We are also going to expand our mentor program, offer recognition and incentive programs. Our volunteer leaders are the foundation of our organization and we want to provide them with support and reward them for their efforts. We have lots of good leaders and welcome more. If you are interested in becoming a leader, contact Deb Herlihy.

The AMC promotes the concept of “no child left inside”. One easy way of doing that is to get the families outside. Our third initiative is to foster and support our families program. We want to offer many more and new family programs. I know that recently we held a family cross country ski event. I understand we had over 20 individuals at this successful event. If you have ideas for family events or want to help out, please contact Karen Clark-Hoey our Families Chair. All of the contact information can be found on our website or contact me at worcamchiking@yahoo.com

Finally, I am really excited about what we hope will become an annual event, the Woostahshire Weekend Extravaganza! This will be a joint event with our friends from the Berkshire Chapter to be held on Fri., Jun. 10-12 at Cardigan Lodge in NH. This event is open to all members and we will be offering discounted rates that include food, lodging, hiking, cycling, paddling, campfires, contra dancing and more!

We have lots of events coming up this spring so climb out of your hibernation den and let’s get outdoors!

Keep your feet moving!

Steve Ciras, Chapter Chair
SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2011

MADE WITH ALL NATURAL INGREDIENTS

The theme for National Trails Day 2011, Made with All Natural Ingredients, encourages everyone to get outside and “to experience, appreciate and celebrate the natural places where we can find a spread of scenery, a plateful of peace, and a heap of happiness and health.”

Save the date, Saturday, June 4, 2011 to participate in a local hike, bike, horseback ride, maintenance project, paddle trip, health fair, and more. National Trails Day brings greater awareness to trails, along with their many benefits and pleasures. Whether the event involves one trail or a variety of activities, National Trails Day is a wonderful opportunity to introduce people to trails. We encourage folks to get out and give back one day of trail maintenance each year; you may never look at trails the same again. This year we will have different projects going at Wachusett Mountain and along the Midstate Trail. Join us for a fun filled rewarding day…

DATES FOR THE 2011 SEASON:

Sat. June 4. National Trails Day…Wachusett Mountain State Reservation. Meet at 9:00 at the Visitor Center. Join the Worcester AMC Chapter in a day of trail maintaining projects. No experience necessary. Tools supplied. Bring water, packable lunch/snacks, work gloves, and wear sturdy boots and clothing appropriate for conditions. Pre-registration is required. For Info and to pre-register Contact Steve Crowe (508-450-1091). steve@SunshineLandscapingCo.com

Reconstruction work continues on the Pine Hill Trail at Wachusett Mountain. The Trail was originally constructed by the CCC as a ski trail in the 1930’s, however since it has become very popular, it has widened considerably into a steep, eroded trail. On different days we will be splitting rock, quarrying rock with high line systems or building the trail treadway itself. Join experienced Leaders to learn the fundamentals of safely moving rock, trail stabilization and treadway protection. Learn the mechanical advantage of moving rocks with a grip hoist and highline system. Tremendous opportunity to be involved in a local project whose results will be around for decades. Tools and training are available. Bring lunch, water, and work gloves. Meet at the Wachusett Mountain Visitor’s Center, 8:30am-4:00pm.

Register with Steve Crowe steve@SunshineLandscapingCo.com

April 9 and 10 Saturday and Sunday
June 4 and 5 National Trails Day
September 24 and 25 Saturday and Sunday
November 5 and 6 Saturday and Sunday
Pat Lambert, Vice Chair

Do you know an unsung hero who goes above and beyond the call to duty in helping our Chapter and our members? If so, drop me a line at plambert119@yahoo.com and let me know who they are and what they do. They just might see their name in lights! Or, at least in virtual print.

Congratulations to the following winners:

September  Pete Lane
October    Rob Guilmette
November   Steph Keimig
December   Chris Fogarty
January    Dave Brainard
February   Joe Walsh

Save the Date – Sunday, May 22, 2011
June 15th – 19th - Take your Outdoor leadership training to the next level. This multiday course will provide you with skills and experience in leading multi day trips. Scholarships available. For more info, check out: http://www.outdoors.org/recreation/leadership/mls/ or contact the Hiking Chair, Charlie Arsenault at cca100@verizon.net

A Day at Windblown Cross Country Ski Area
by Karen Clark-Hoey

On Saturday February 26th, AMC Worcester Executive Committee Members Barbara Dyer, David Cole and Karen Clark-Hoey took a group of cross-country skiers and snowshoers to Windblown in New Ipswich, NH, the gateway to the Monadnock Region. The group included several new AMC Worcester families with children ranging in ages from 7-15. Conditions were excellent and the well-groomed trails took the group past snow covered hillsides, across frozen ponds and lakes, and offered stunning panoramic views of Mt. Monadnock. With over 40 kilometers of trails to choose from with an easy-advanced range of difficulty, there was something for everyone and a decent workout was had by all! The day wrapped up with a hearty lunch in the Windblown Lodge and the promise to make the trip an annual family-friendly AMC Worcester tradition!

101 Uses for Bicycle Tubes
by Colleen McLaughlin

Late last year a not-so-funny thing happened. My bike went some 3,000 miles before having its first tire go flat, then suddenly it had a flat, or several flats, on each of several rides. Hmmm, there’s nothing in the tire … hopefully the curse is reversed and Spring will mean less tire levering and more riding. Now, what to do with all the old tubes? Old tire tubes are useful things, as it turns out!

Tire tubes can be used to weather-strip doors and windows, or woven into a new seat for your lawn chair, or sewn into a slinky dress or even a tube top – sorry, couldn’t resist the pun. Cut old tubes into rubber bands. Cut old tubes into rubber bands then deep-fry and serve as calamari. Impress your friends by making a giant rubber band ball. You could make a belt, some suspenders, or both. Make a cover your iPod, covers for your handlebars, or a tiny bike computer cover for those rainy-day rides.

What’s even more fun than re-purposing old tire tubes is getting a new tube onto the bike, and the bike onto the road. Spring is on our door-step and week-day rides begin in May. Hope to see you there!
By Barbara Dyer

The Ayer/Shirley Middle school had an adventure of a lifetime thanks to the grant provided by our chapter for Barbara Dyer’s students to attend A Mountain Classroom at the AMC Joe Dodge Lodge located in Pinkham Notch, NH. 8th grade students enjoyed 3 days/2 nights learning about teamwork, leadership, mountains, and about the World’s Worst weather on Mt. Washington. 12 students snowshoed to Tuckermans Ravine and hiked along the Appalachian Trail and also built a Kwinzy hut, a snow fort that housed 17 of us. A very cool experience for all! Thanks AMC....
Oakmont Hiking Club receives $2,500 grant from Worcester chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club

The Oakmont Hiking Club recently received a grant of approximately $2,500 from the endowment fund of the Worcester chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club.

The purpose of the grant is to provide the newly formed club with the necessary gear and equipment for hiking safely throughout the year, especially during the winter months.

The Oakmont Hiking Club is a new club that began in September 2010.

Students meet weekly after school with two club advisors, Laurie Rheault and Alana Archangelo (both are teachers at Oakmont High School). Students hike weekly along local trails such as Wachusett Mountain, Watatic Mountain, and the nearby Midstate Trail, along with trails located right behind the school.

While hiking, students are also practicing outdoor skills such as map and compass or trail etiquette such as leave no trace. The goal for the first year is to hike for two days in the White Mountains with an overnight stay at an AMC hut. The club is currently planning spring hikes up Mt. Monadnock and along the Wapack Trail as preparation for the bigger hike up north.

Because almost half of the school year involves hiking in winter conditions, it became essential to include winter hike training in the club goals. This is where the club ran into its first obstacle: the cost of the gear needed for winter hiking is beyond the reach for most students.

Students were already required to purchase appropriate hiking boots and clothing (one important rule for winter hiking is “no cotton” - due to risk of hypothermia if clothing gets wet.) Some were able to also purchase appropriate frame backpacks, but most were making due with spare book bags, which lacked hip belts and other necessary supports needed for extended hikes.

Continuing to hike throughout the winter without the appropriate equipment was challenging. One such hike, through the deep powdery snows of January in just boots, gave the students an extra appreciation for the need for snowshoes.

The folks at the Worcester AMC heard about our need for hiking gear, and suggested that the club apply for a grant from their endowment fund. The following quote, as stated on their website, illustrates the chapter’s commitment to the education of outdoor recreation:

The Worcester Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers, and trails of the Northeast. In particular, our Chapter is dedicated to the outdoor resources of Central Massachusetts, for the purposes of education, recreation, and conservation.

The generosity of the Worcester AMC has allowed the hiking club to purchase snowshoes, microspikes, frame backpacks, and other gear that will allow the club to extend its hiking pursuits safely through the winter and into higher elevations. In addition, the Worcester chapter has been an invaluable resource for information and training, without which this club would not have been started.
By Julie T Higgins

The AMC has committed to an energy diet, with a goal of reducing its carbon footprint by 15 percent over the next five years. (Think “15 by ‘15.”) Longer term, the goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent over the next four decades, AMC Outdoors, May/June 2010. Reducing the CO2 in the atmosphere the AMC is hoping that it will slow down if not stop the effects of Climate Change. It is not the only organization that has decide this is a great idea and one can simply do a search on the internet and find ways to reduce their own CO2 out put. A few ways you can reduce your Co2 are use a power cord, car pool, print on both side of the paper…. (Backpacker magazine composed a list of 101 ways and you can read the complete list here http://www.backpacker.com/gear/11030?page=20)

What I was surprised to learn is COWS. I was talking to my local farmer John and Roccio of Applecheek Farm, www.applecheekfarm.com, and they said yes, Cows can help to reduce the Co2 in the atmosphere. One might say that Cows are part of the problem because they produce vast amounts of methane but in reality with proper grazing techniques they can not only reduce CO2 but also eliminate and store Co2 from the atmosphere through proper grazing techniques.

We all know that cows, and their manure provide great nutrients to the soil. If a Cow is grass fed not only is the land covered in grass which absorbs CO2 the cow puts nutrients back into the soil and the soil can also absorb the Co2. Grazed pasture removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere more effectively than any land use, including forestland and ungrazed prairie, helping to slow global warming. In such a system the cows are moved multiple times daily thus allowing the grass to regrow and also the manure from the cows to be spread evenly. Through this process the soil and ground not only become more fertile but also the CO2 is taken from the atmosphere and absorbed by the soil. The farmer is not only making his land into great cropland but also properly removing waster and storing the Co2 in the earth instead of the atmosphere. Who knew cows had so many great uses. A great example of proper grazing technique is Applecheek Farm in VT. However just by supporting farmers that choose to raise their animals through grazing by buying grass fed meet, which you can find locally in many supermarkets. It tastes better too and the cow has had a better life. About 15 people attended this unique informational event and learned about farming and raw milk on a beautiful sunny Sunday. For more information contact Julie Higgins at jthrunner@verizon.net If you want to read further here are two great websites http://www.carboncoalition.com.au/ and http://www.carbonfarmersofamerica.com/Yeomans1.htm.

Learn more about the wonder of Cows, March 27th 2:30-4:30 at Eastleigh Farm Framingham. Email me for more details, jthrunner@verizon.net.
This is our last paper version of Wachusett Views.

To continue receiving Wachusett Views you must register at the AMC Membership Center

http://www.outdoors.org/membership/member-center.cfm

Register at the Membership Center to get all up to date information on what’s going on! http://www.outdoors.org/membership/member-center.cfm

To see the full color version of the newsletter visit the web site at www.amcworcester.org/newsletter.htm

Editor, Barbara Dyer. All newsletter submissions should be sent to barbaradyer@hotmail.com. We reserve the right to edit for length and content. All contributions are welcome. Summer deadline June 15th.

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