



# WACHUSETT VIEWS

## Letter from the Editor

### Executive Committee

Chair	Wendy Dziemian
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Communications	Carol Waren
Conservation	Connie Sanchez Morillo
Families	OPEN
Hiking	Walt Lazarz
Historian	Dave Laska
Leadership	Don Davies
Membership	OPEN
Midstate Trail	Mike Peckar
Paddling	OPEN
Programs	OPEN
Skiing Chair	Ruth Langh
Social	Ingrid Molnar
Climbing	OPEN
Third Wednesday	Joe Massery
20s & 30s	Luke Chapdelaine
Trails	OPEN

Happy Spring! Welcome to one of my favorite seasons ... when everything blooms and comes back to life after the ice and chill of winter. Actually, every season is my favorite season, just because of the new opportunities each one brings.

I'd like to personally thank Nancy for all her hard work and dedication through the years publishing this quarterly newsletter. Going forward, I'll be taking over to share all the exciting news that our chapter has going on.

That said, a newsletter does not write itself. When I reached out for content, our leaders responded in a big way. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you. I truly hope you enjoy a few glimpses into what our chapter has been up to these past few months as well as some exciting upcoming events.. We in Worcester pride ourselves on Community, and that can be seen throughout this newsletter.

I welcome your feedback, critique and encouragement in my continual effort to share all that is absolutely amazing about our very own Worcester Chapter.

*Carol, Communications Chair*  
 Carol Warren, Wachusett Views Editor

WE NEED YOU!  
 Please consider volunteering

# Under the Red Felt Crusher

**Wendy Dziemian**

**AMC Worcester Chapter Chair**

Hello AMC Worcester Chapter Friends.

As March winds and April showers wash away the snow and slush, the sense of the season of renewal is energizing. Winter has its own beauties while spring is filled with possibilities. Spring is in the air!

In January, our executive committee met to begin to plan for the year and moved our monthly meeting location to the Northborough Historical Society on Main Street.

Meetings are the last Wednesday of most months and open to the public. Please reach out if you'd like more information.

Jon Cocina, AMC Director of Membership and Brand Partnerships, joined us in February to share the results of the club wide 2024 membership survey. He highlighted Worcester specific details that make our chapter special. One important take way is that people who are interested in volunteering are unaware of how to get more involved. How can we help them find the volunteer magic that happens in our chapter?

Speaking of magical volunteers, we gathered at Peppercorn's on Park Avenue in Worcester in March to recognize and celebrate more than forty of our outstanding leaders. We have more than one hundred active leaders who collectively led over three hundred trips! I am in awe of the dedication we have to spreading the AMC mission.

April and May are filled with opportunities to learn new skills. The Backpacking and Cycle Touring Workshops, Leadership Training, and the first round of Wilderness First Aid are just around the corner. The spring and summer fun is just beginning.

With joy and appreciation,

*Wendy, Chapter Chair*

Wendy Dziemian, AMC Worcester Chapter Chair



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# Celebrating 150 Years of AMC

**Save the date.. Save the year...** Since 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club has been inspiring people to connect with the outdoors. From pioneering trails and protecting wild spaces to fostering a love of adventure across generations, AMC's story is one of conservation, community, and discovery. As we approach our 150th anniversary in 2026, we invite you to celebrate this incredible milestone with the AMC 150th Relay—a one-of-a-kind journey linking the iconic trails and landscapes we cherish. Together, let's honor our past and shape the future of outdoor recreation and stewardship. For all the latest, visit our [AMC150 Page](#) .



## We are always looking for....

- **volunteers, leaders and committee members.**

Contact anyone on the Executive Committee or any of your friendly leaders.

- **content for this newsletter**

please consider submitting an article  
Email: [newsletter@amcworchester.org](mailto:newsletter@amcworchester.org)

### Mark your calendars:

[Backpacking Workshop](#) - April 5  
[Leadership Training](#) - April 12-13  
TRAILPOCALYPSE - April - June  
Trails Day / TrailsFest - June  
[August Camp](#) - July & August  
Annual Meeting - November  
Annual Summit - January

Be sure to check [Outdoors Connector](#) for all event listings.

## Find us on social media

[Website](#)  
[Meetup](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[Facebook 20s & 30s](#)  
[Instagram](#)  
[YouTube](#)  
[TikTok](#)

# Introducing...

## Worcester Trail Maintenance Committee

Hello. How are you now?

Do you like trails? We like trails.

We like working on trails. Would you like to work on trails?

Well, we would love to make that happen.

In 2024, a group of Worcester leaders who (as mentioned above) like trail work put their heads together and decided to see what they could do to get more people involved in volunteering and maintaining the trails we love so much.

Thus the Worcester Trail Maintenance Committee was born.

As we approach the 2025 season we wanted to give you a little taste of what is to come this year.



## Trainings

- **Critical Trail Maintenance:** are you interested in learning the basics of what goes into maintaining a trail? Corridor clearing, tread assessment, waterbar installation, and more!
- **Rock Work:** Rock bars, grip hoists, oh my! Here's how to learn how to move one large rock from point A to point B.
- **Axe Workshop:** It's got one moving part and is one of the maintainer's best friends. Learn how to care for and properly use an axe.



## Trail Work Weekends

- 20s & 30s volunteers come together for a weekend of trail work and instruction. This year we are planning on **three** Trail Work Weekends at the following locations: Noble View in Massachusetts, Camp Dodge in New Hampshire, and the Maine Woods 100-Mile Wilderness in Maine (shocker).

## Project Days

- Trail Work Volunteer Leaders will be scheduling ad hoc work days throughout the season based on the needs of land trusts and adopters in the Worcester Region.



Dates are still to be determined for most of these, but we're just so excited we wanted to share with all of you. All Trainings, Trail Work Weekends, and Project Days will be posted on Outdoors Connector. For most, no prior experience is needed and on-the-ground instruction will be provided.

So, do you want to volunteer with us? We want to volunteer with you.

**Keep an eye on Outdoors Connector or reach out to [tmc@amcworchester.org](mailto:tmc@amcworchester.org)!**

Interested in representing the interests of trail maintainers and trail workers on the Worcester Chapter Executive Committee? The position of Trails Chair is open! Reach out EMAIL for more information.



See you out there!

*Dirk Auman  
Rob Gonzalez  
John Mangano  
Alexandra Molnar  
Zenya Molnar  
Jake Scoggin*

# Map & Compass

article by Joe Ciras

Welcome to the Map and Compass area. I will be using this area to give tips and tricks about navigation. I will be discussing the five D's of navigation along with other practical navigational tips.



**Distance:** How far is the next leg of your journey?

**Duration:** How long will it take to reach the next point?

**Direction:** Which compass bearing or general direction should you follow?

**Description:** What features or landmarks should you look for along the route?

**Destination:** What will your final destination look like when you arrive?

True or False: moss only grow on the north side of a tree?

This statement is false. Mosses tend to grow in damp places, damp places tend to be darker, the heat from the sun dries out bright sunny places sooner than dark shady ones, therefore the north side of the tree, which gets less sunlight should have more moss. This is not always true but can be used as a guide.

When hiking in a damp area, such as a subtropical or tropical rain forest, or even some areas of New England that do not get much sunlight, moss can grow on all sides of a tree. Moss growing on the north side of a tree is just a quick reference.

One way to determine north during the day is by using a stick and some stones. Place the stick straight into the ground and place a stone at the end of its shadow. This will mark west. Wait 10 to 20 minutes and then place a stone on the end of the shadow, that will mark east. Now place your left foot on first rock (west) and right foot on the second rock (east). You are now facing north.

In the next issue I will discuss how to determine north at night and the different types of north on a map.

If you have any topic you would like me to cover, please contact me through the chapter.

Want to learn the basics of map reading? Do you own a compass and need to learn how to use it? Do you need a refresher on reading a map and compass? There will be training at the John Hitchcock Visitor Center at Wachusett Mountain on Saturday, May 31. The training will start in a classroom setting and then we hit the mountain to practice. The training will be posted in the activity database so keep an eye open for it.

*Joe Ciras*

Joe Ciras, Map & Compass Chapter Guru



## Photo Contest....

We'd like to solicit photos of AMC Worcester Events... Post them on our Facebook group or share directly with [newsletter@amcworchester.org](mailto:newsletter@amcworchester.org).

Winners and notable mentions may be incorporated into this or future newsletters, our website, our annual slideshow or on Facebook.

Help us share what we do.



## And the winner is....



*Congrats to Tamara Huston for her exquisite Black and White image. Anyone know where this is? Pretty sure I do.*

# Early Morning Fitness Hikes 2024-2025 Edition

article by Pat Lambert, Past Chair

Get up, get out and boogie down the trail is our motto!

From October through the first week of March, each week a merry band of hikers explored local areas to jumpstart our day. Some of us are still working, others are retired and we all are bonded by our love of the outdoors.



Past Chair, Pat Lambert



Sunrise from the South View, Mt. Pisgah

In early October and late February, it's light enough at 6 AM that we don't need to start out wearing our headlamps. As October progresses, we don our headlamps at the start of the hike. Each week, we keep the headlamps on for slightly longer periods of time before the "turn" in early January.

Sometimes we're the only people on the trail. We have hiked into mountain bikers, dog walkers, and occasionally other hikers

These hikes provide the opportunity to push the pace on mixed terrain (flat, rolling hills and some surprisingly steep pitches) while carrying full packs. Think of it as interval training for the Whites! It's easy to stay in bed and just wait for the weekend to hit the trails. Why lie in bed when you can be with like-minded souls, enjoy the beauty of the early morning, and see some beautiful sunrises? Sunrises are not guaranteed but you're guaranteed to miss them if you don't get out there!

Plus, the last week of the month, I provide home baked cookies for the group. Can't beat that!

If you missed the 2024-25 edition of the EMFH series, they'll be back in October! Keep your eyes on the Chapter's trip listings 😊.



Hey - wait for me! Park Road, Upton State Forest

## 2024-25 edition of the EMFH series

Month	Location	Cookie 🍪
October	Mighty Mt. Pisgah, Northborough	Gingersnaps
November	Sawink Farm / Cedar Hill, Westborough	Craisin Oatmeal Chocolate Chunk Cookies
December	Upton State Forest, Upton	Snickerdoodles
January	Wayne F. McCallum Wildlife Management Area, Westborough	Snowballs
February	Week 1: Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area, Upton Week 2: The Desert Natural Area, Marlborough Week 3: Mt. Pisgah, Berlin (cancelled - unsafe driving conditions) Week 4: Callahan State Park, Marlborough	Gluten-free Chocolate Cracked



*Ascending Gibbs Mountain,  
Callahan State Park*

*Pat Lambert*

Pat Lambert, Worcester Chapter Past Chair

## Did You Know

### How many pairs of socks should you have in the wilderness?

Three pair, or three sets if you wear sock liners. One to wear, one pair drying and one pair ready to wear. Wash often. Dirty, sweat-stiff socks can act like sandpaper.

# 20s & 30s Update

*article by Luke Chapdelaine, 20s & 30s Chair*

The start of the Spring season brings an exciting period for the AMC Worcester 20s & 30s group! As usual, we will be running monthly 20s & 30s socials and a variety of local hikes. In addition, we had an uptick of 20s & 30s leaders become upcountry hike certified at the end of last year, so you can expect to see many more out-of-state trips being offered as well. We also have a handful of 20s & 30s folks planning to attend Outdoor Leadership Training, with our first leader-in-training hike of the season being planned to take place April 1st. Quite a lot to look forward to!

To give a taste of what is to come, I have described below one upcoming 20s & 30s event per month for the next few months that we expect to be highlights. Most of these events aren't posted to Outdoors Connector yet, so details are subject to change slightly - treat this as a sneak preview!

- **April 5th: *Worcester and Southeastern Mass 20s & 30s Ski and Pond Skim Social at Wachusett Mountain*** - This interchapter event will be a great way to end the ski season. A few hours of morning skiing then watching the annual Pond Skim event together in the afternoon.
- **May 17th: *20s & 30s Interchapter Spring Fling*** - The Worcester, Narragansett, Western Mass, and Connecticut 20s & 30s groups are collaborating to lead hikes at the Leadmine Mountain Conservation Area in Sturbridge, MA. Afterward, all of us will come together for a social event for lunch/ appetizers.
- **June 13th-15th: *20s & 30s Summer Camp*** - Many campsites will be reserved together for an opportunity to enjoy multiple days outdoors in the Berkshires with a large group of 20s & 30s folks.
- **July 11th-14th: *20s & 30s Hostel Takeover Weekend in the White Mountains*** - Eight Worcester 20s & 30s upcountry leaders are collaborating to lead hikes in the White Mountains each day at various difficulties. We will all meet back each night at the Conway Hostel, which we reserved in its entirety, for dinner and other evening activities.
- **August 16th-18th: *3rd Annual Interchapter 20s & 30s Trail Crew Weekend in Maine's 100 Mile Wilderness*** - The Worcester and Boston 20s & 30s groups are meeting yet again at the AMC Little Lyford Lodge to spend a weekend doing trail work in the surrounding area.

Other than keeping an eye on Outdoors Connector, another good way to stay up-to-date with 20s & 30s events is to sign up for our monthly [20s & 30s Newsletter](#)

Hope to see many of you on the trails!

*Luke Chapdelaine*

Worcester Chapter 20s & 30s Chair

# Otter River Mini Tour

*article by Denny LaForce*

It's understandable that trips to far-off and exotic places command the most attention and perhaps a 3rd Wednesday talk, but often it's the close by, thoroughly enjoyable outings that are best remembered. An example would be the two day Otter River Cycle Tour.

This 13th annual event had a simple beginning. Worcester Cycle Chair in 2011, Colleen McLaughlin enjoyed fully loaded/ non- supported touring, but was disheartened by the lack of others to tour with. With her outreach, a small group of us formed, but she saw the possibilities of something greater. In 2012, she held the first Fundamentals of Cycle Touring Seminar in her garage for two people. The next year she did it again, but this time for six people. She realized that holding "how to" seminars was just the first step to advance AMC touring and there needed to be a simple, easy, tour for the participants to test their newfound skills. With the help of AMCs Bill and Alice Mullen, a route was developed starting from North Brookfield to Otter River State Campground in Winchendon with a return to North Brookfield on a slightly different route. That hit the mark and has seen little change in all these years.

The seminars continued, with me joining Colleen as a co-leader in 2014. As the list of seminar participants grew, Otter River weekend went from needing one campsite to two and soon after to requiring a group site. We had assumed, as the participants grew their skills, they would go on to bigger and better things, but with it's first of the season start, pleasant country roads, hills that would stretch the leg muscles without lasting discomfort, Otter River became a tour that was usually filled with past participants shortly after it's listing with AMC. It became necessary to hold spots open for the soon to be seminar graduates it for whom it was designed.



We've been allowed to park at the North Brookfield Police Dept. lot where our cars are safe. One of the hardest challenges of leading a cycle tour is finding a safe place to park where our vehicles won't be vandalized, towed, or ticketed while we ride (Thank You Lt. Daily). The first few miles are on the low rolling hills of Rt 148, then on a one mile section of the Mass. Central Rail Trail. After a few more miles on a rural back road we reach Rt. 68, ride into Hubbardston Center, and a lunch stop at a local deli. With all





of us riding in a single line formation with brightly colored panniers and multi colored bike jerseys, we look like a parade traveling up Rt. 68. After lunch we quickly leave Rt. 68 and follow more rural roads with wooded Hubbardston State Forest on both sides. The up's and down's in this section are long, but not steep. We usually regroup and rest in historic Templeton Center followed by Ice Cream a mile beyond and then the long downhill to Otter River in Baldwinville. We then follow Rt. 202 a mile or so to the entrance of Otter River Campground.

Otter River State Forest was acquired by Massachusetts in 1915 and is the first and oldest campground in the state park system. Much of the work to develop the campground was accomplished by the CCC in the 1930ies including the campsites, some buildings, the trails, bridges over Beaman Brook, and its extensive athletic fields. In spite of its many years serving outdoor enthusiasts, it remains rustic and very primitive in nature. It's personally one of my favorite places to camp. By reserving early, we typically get to camp in its largest group campsite next to Beaman Brook at the very end of the campground access road. As a group site, it has multiple picnic tables set end to end and has its own "bear box" to keep our



foodstuffs safe from critters. It's an opportunity for everyone to gather and share recipes and food preparation around the picnic tables. The "newbies" are sometimes amazed at the culinary delights possible using a one burner backpack stove. Unlike backpackers, cyclist aren't limited by the need to carry multiple days of spoil proof food from the start. During dinner we decide our intended morning departure time and set a time roughly 2 hours before to be awake, to eat, and pack up for travel.

The early morning air in June is usually chilly and breakfast is often consumed wearing a light puffy jacket. The one hour to departure announcement is given so no one needs to feel rushed or be packed up prematurely only to wait. We casually gather and start the day's travel, first by retracing the last 5 miles of yesterday's ride and then, in Templeton Center, traveling more westerly heading to Barre Center. There is usually little to no traffic along this "treed canopy of green" section of road. Like many old roads in New England, we parallel streams and wetlands that turn to small rivers and mill ponds. The scene is repeated with each mild climb from one valley into the next. With one final short low-gear climb we reach

Barre Common and a regrouping, a well deserved rest stop, coffee if you're so inclined, and a snack before the long descent to the Ware River in South Barre, where we follow Rt. 67 back to North Brookfield.



The hills of Rt. 67 are the most challenging of the tour. The first climb starting from the Ware River, while not overly steep, seems relentless on pannier laden loaded bicycles. The reward is the miles of ridgeline riding after the climb. The view across the

river valley was made to be viewed from a bicycle seat at 10 mph in a slowly, ever changing panorama. The final mile is the gradual descent down to North Brookfield and our waiting cars. In the Police Department parking lot, bicycles are unloaded, panniers packed away, and bicycles placed on racks to be taken home until the next tour. The conversation usually centers on "What tour is coming up next"? Like to backpack? Like to ride your bike? Why not combine the two? A one-day seminar on Saturday April 26th at the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center in Worcester, will cover the basic information needed to get you cycle touring.

Be sure to check out our [Essentials of Cycle Touring Seminar](#)

*Denny LaForce*

Worcester Chapter Bike Leader

# The Good Old Days

*article by Patrice Thibodeau*

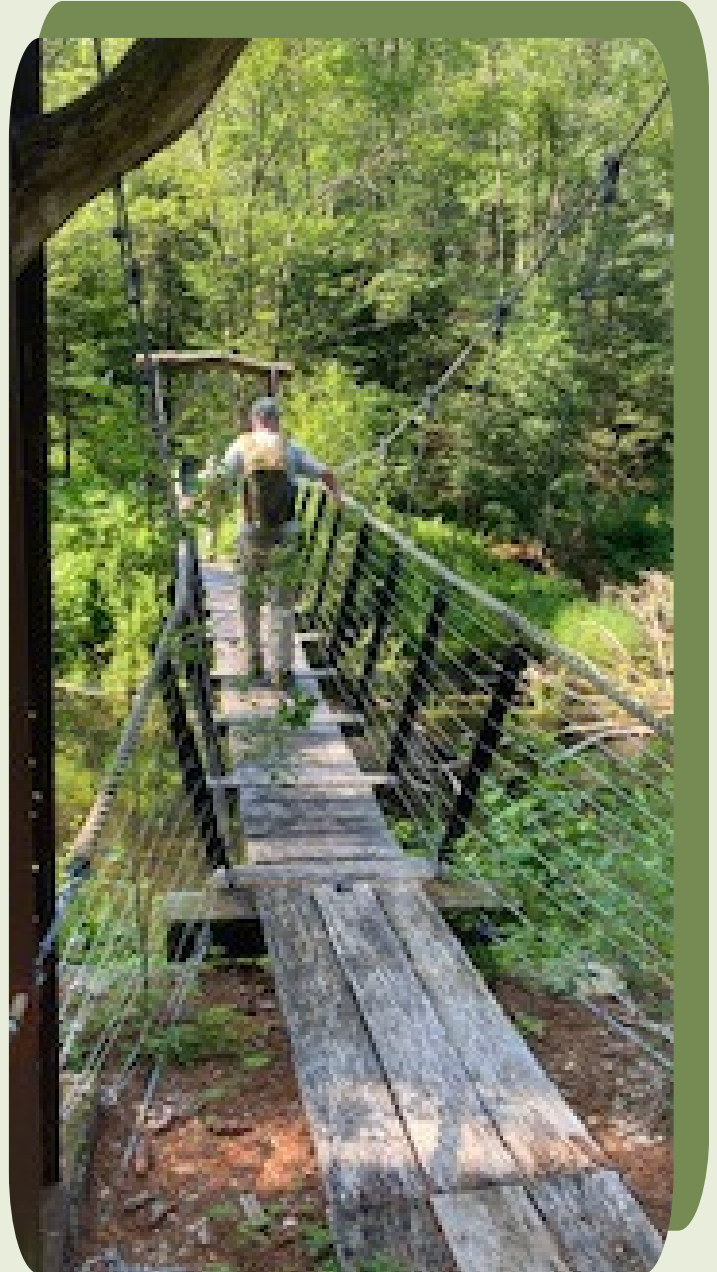
A word about the good old days in the Worcester Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. Back then slower bicycle riders zipped along the road almost every Tuesday evening in the summer, and faster riders zipped past on almost every Thursday evening. Then after the bicycling we gathered at a local restaurant or pub for munchies and brewskis. Each leader picked a different route in a different town so the scenery changed all the time. As with all our trips, leaders tried not to let any riders get lost. Occasionally, a rider would veer off course and end up in Timbuktu. Legendary stories resulted as the lost one described how they got back on track.

Back in the good old days, hiking jaunts included shorter local hikes of approximately 3-6 miles. As opposed to longer more vigorous death marches upcountry. On local hikes you could spy a variety of wildlife and birds, maybe a blue heron, a beaver, etc. Some hikes were offered as one day in length, while killer upcountry backpacking trips might be multiday backpacking events.

Bring back those good old days. That's when every skill level was accommodated for.

*Patrice Thibodeau*

Patrice Thibodeau, Worcester Chapter Leader

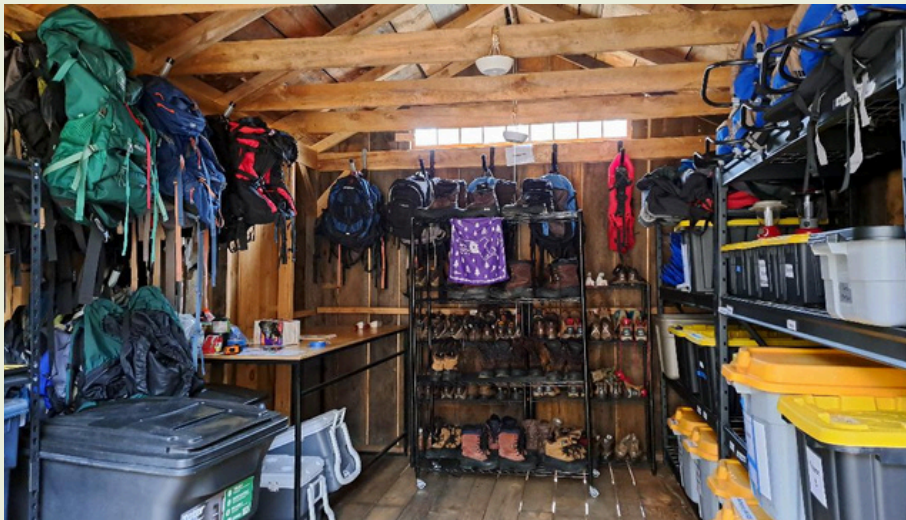




# Need Gear?

**Check out the AMC Worcester Gear Shed and Borrow before you buy!**  
*article by Ingrid Molnar, Worcester Chapter Social Chair*

Are you inspired to sign up for your first-ever winter hike and need snowshoes and microspikes but have no idea what to get? Or are you interested in trying out an overnight backpacking trip but don't have a one-person tent, stove, and cook pot? Perhaps you are a camping enthusiast and want to organize an AMC-led camping weekend and need extra tents, pads, sleeping bags, and all the cooking essentials.



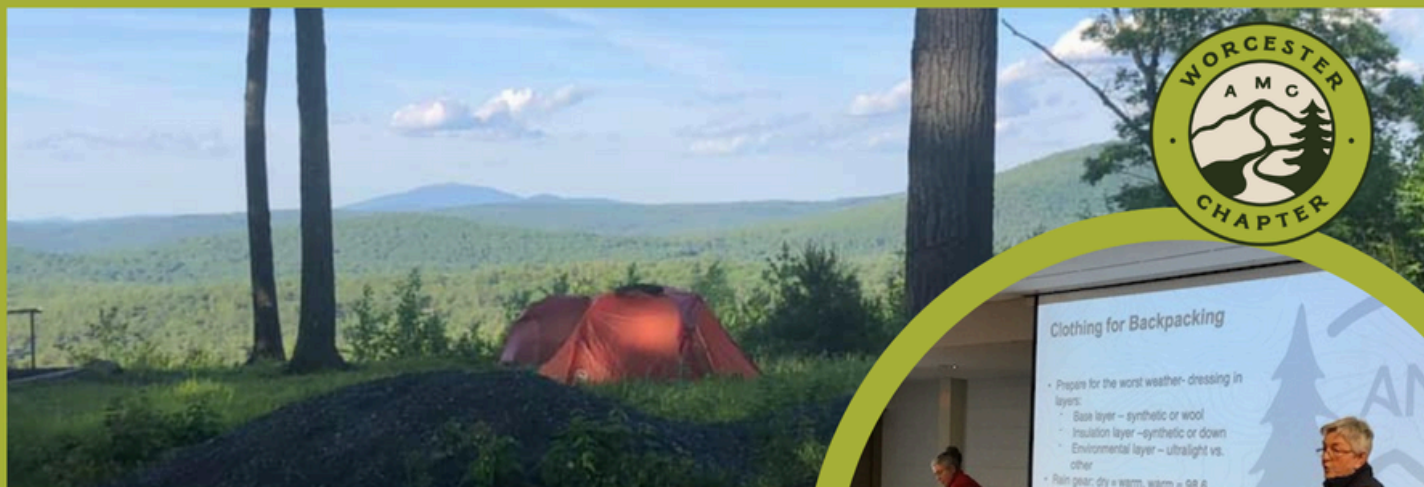
Looking for winter family fun? There is a variety of snowshoes for kids to choose from in different sizes and colors for families outings!

The Worcester Gear Shed, run by AMC Worcester Chapter volunteers, offers a variety of gear for your outdoor adventure in all seasons, be it hiking, snowshoeing, backpacking, and camping. The Gear Shed has all the essentials for both individual and group activities. Equipment includes various sized tents, from one-person lightweight for backpacking to 4-6 person tents for larger groups, sleeping bags and pads, tarps, stoves, cook pots, coolers, lanterns, headlamps, poles, dry bags, and more. There is a variety of personal gear available such as backpacks and daypacks, hiking boots, fleece, rain jackets and pants, wicking tops and bottoms, socks, hats, mittens, and gloves. For your winter needs, you may choose snowshoes, microspikes, crampons, and insulated boots. The gear available is suitable for local outings right in the Worcester area, including Greater Worcester Land Trust trails (the Cascading Waters trail being accessible right from the Gear Shed), and those further afield in the White Mountains.

The Gear Shed works like a lending library and all gear can be borrowed free of charge. Reserving gear is easy. Just let your activity leader know that you would like to borrow equipment, and the leader will put you in contact with the gear shed coordinator, Ingrid Molnar. Or contact the coordinator directly at [social@amcworchester.org](mailto:social@amcworchester.org). Leaders, feel free to advertise the Worcester Gear Shed (see [gear item list](#)) to your participants and reach out to Ingrid if you would like to coordinate a gear loan.

*Ingrid Molnar*  
Worcester Chapter Social Chair

# Upcoming Event - Backpacking Workshop



Upcoming Event.....

## AMC Worcester Backpacking Workshop



April 5, 2025 | 8am - 5pm

Join us for an educational introduction to backpacking. This workshop will cover everything you need to know for fun and safe backpacking: personal and group gear, tent site selection and set-up, food and nutrition, water treatment, trip planning, and Leave No Trace principles. Presentations will be given by experienced backpackers, and leaders will demo various gear options.



# Upcoming Event - Leadership Training Weekend



Upcoming Event.....

## AMC Worcester Leadership Training Weekend



**April 12 - 13, 2025**

The AMC Worcester Chapter is facilitating this program and is open to outdoor enthusiasts who are interested in organizing and leading AMC Chapter activities and trips. Completion of the program qualifies participants to become leaders in training alongside an experienced leader for Hiking/Backpacking, Biking, Skiing, 20s & 30s, Family Outings, Paddling, and other chapter-specific committees.



# Upcoming Event - Essentials of Cycle Touring



Upcoming Event.....



## AMC Worcester Essentials of Cycle Touring Seminar

**April 26, 2025**

Like to backpack? Like to ride your bike? Why not combine the two? This one-day seminar on Saturday April 26th at the Blackstone Heritage Corridor Visitor Center in Worcester, will covers the basic information needed to get you cycle touring. We will cover what makes a perfect touring bicycle, but more importantly, how you can tour with YOUR bike. We will cover the different types of touring (fully loaded, supported, credit card), route/trip planning, finding places to stay, methods and systems for pannier packing, alternatives to panniers, equipment lists, cycling safety, and provide an array of handouts on where to find specific information and resources. We will touch on the new sport of "Bikepacking" and explain what Bikepacking is all about. The morning session will be a power point presentation covering the topics above. In the afternoon, we will have bicycles loaded for travel with their owners to answer questions on equipment, packing, bicycle preferences, and cycle touring in general. We all have preferred methods and equipment for travel by bicycle, this is your chance to talk about and compare what may work well for you.

# Upcoming Series - TRAILPOCALYPSE

EMBRACE THE END TIMES BRETHREN, TRAILPOCALYPSE IS UPON THEE!!!

Finally, a hike series that sounds harder than it actually is. For centuries, hikers have been bamboozled by notorious ascents, treacherous switchbacks, and hill-climbs of pure evil all masquerading around with names like “Sweet Meadow Pass” or “Lamb’s Tail Trail”.

NO MORE.

ENTER TRAILPOCALYPSE. A SERIES OF THE MOST HARDCORE METAL TRAIL NAMES WE CARED TO FIND AFTER A CURSORY RIFF THROUGH A BOOK OF MAPS THAT WERE ALL BETWEEN 3 AND 5 MILES AND HONESTLY NOT THAT DIFFICULT!!!

- APRIL 6: Mount Misery wants to break your spirit!
- APRIL 23: Chasm Loop & Purgatory Brook are ready to take you to hell!
- MAY 10: Dungeon Road Trail is looking to lock it ALL down!
- MAY 25: Thunderbolt Trail wants to fight THOR!
- JUNE 6: The World’s End Circuit has a cardboard sign that says THE END IS NIGH and it is coming for you!

YES YOU. YOU SPECIFICALLY. THESE TRAILS ARE COMING FOR YOU. SO SHOW YOUR TEETH AND COME FOR THEM FIRST!!!

Join us in conquering the TRAILPOCALYPSE! Hike one trail with us and pay the BLOOD-MONEY fee of \$5 and get a COMMEMORATIVE TRAILPOCALYPSE PATCH. Hike ALL FIVE and get the patch for a terrifying FREE!!!

This ruthlessly accessible hike series WELCOMES ALL!!! BE AFRAID OF HOW WELCOMING WE ARE!!!

Sign up on [Outdoors Connector](#)!!! OR ELSE.

(keywords for search include: apocalyptic, epic, hardcore, metal, praise-be-to-the-great-old-ones)



# Knot Done Learning

## #3 of a Series: Woodcraft & Knots

*article by David K. Elliott, Past Paddling Chair*

The outdoors is a place of infinite exploration for those who seek it. There's always startling scenery (rock scrambles), another season's weather (snow means no bugs) and a different mode of travel - canoe tripping anyone? There's no end of ways to feed your nature curiosity and hunger, to develop both physical and intellectual skills. For which the workshops run by Worcester and other AMC chapters over the course of the year are excellent places to start, as is our monthly "Third Wednesday" speaker series at the Northboro Historical Society. To say nothing of the offerings of other outdoor nonprofits.

### **Woodcraft Skills**

The somewhat neglected area my curiosity is focused on these days is Woodcraft, i.e. skills for "making yourself at home outdoors." Naturally there's a history angle, for example consider that a colonial era fur trapper could survive with no possessions beyond an axe, a "crooked knife" and their skills to make any other necessity - including a replacement birchbark canoe. There's wood and leather working, sewing and tying knots - this last being my big weakness and the primary inspiration for starting the quarterly series you are reading.

While my primary goal is to address recreational needs - call it "Intermediate Woodcraft" versus the "Barely Survival" stuff coming out of Hollywood - you'll find installments are driven by what others may suggest, research stumbles across, or whatever hands-on project I happen to be pursuing at the time. Which lends them an organic, wandering, even circular quality in which a knot previously introduced may find itself reviewed in a different context, which repeating, yet fresh, attention is a proven learning method.

### **Backyard Logging**

My last article (winter) closed with explaining the Timber Hitch for dragging a wood harvest out of the woods, in my case produced by anticipated splitting of logs with wedges a la Abe Lincoln. "Riving" as it's called was the frontier-person's sawmill, how they turned trees into construction lumber.

Yup, Central Massachusetts is frontier enough from that perspective. I live surrounded by forest including many tall, straight Ash trees dying from the Emerald Ash Borer. In a case of opportunity from tragedy, I decided to build a grand woodworking workbench from it.

And what satisfaction is provided by playing successfully at Abe Lincoln! Starting with a tall straight tree, I see no limit to the length of log that can be split, though short is always easier. All you need are ordinary firewood wedges, sledge hammer, a little skill, and patience. Even as I concede years of splitting firewood by hand is good practice. See Figures Horizontal Split 1 & 2 and Results for details.

For those who dream of a bench built from tree species less available for salvage such as Beech or Maple, stop. Because, as with “What’s the best kind of stone for building walls?” the best tree species for benches leans toward, “the free” or at least “the readily available.” Or so says workbench historian Christopher Schwarz. “You can use any wood to make a good workbench. Except for wood that is on fire.” And much besides in his “Ingenious Mechanics, Early Workbenches and Workholding”, available in hardcopy or as a free download from the publisher, Lost Art Press (lostartpress.com), [https://blog.lostartpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Ingenious\\_Mechanicks\\_4.pdf](https://blog.lostartpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Ingenious_Mechanicks_4.pdf).



*Figure Horizontal Split1: You can use saw cuts (shallower than these) to help start wedges in the face. Also start wedges in corners. Advance by striking wedges in turn.*



*Figure Horizontal Split2: As split progresses, move steel and wooden wedges into the split down the sides. Large wooden wedges in the face open it wider. But, easy does it!*

After an initial failure tying a timber hitch (covered in the last issue), I confess I resorted to using a bowline which worked fine as a slip knot for dragging lumber. Even as the next day I looked up the timber hitch on my phone to tie it correctly, illustrating that even the apparently simplest knots have their subtleties. Using the timber hitch you will immediately notice that getting your rope under the frontmost several feet of a heavy log - especially to tie the full 3 part knot shown here - presents less subtle challenges.



*Figure Results: Quality of surface is a function of care in splitting and the grain of the log, with zero knots in this one. The Timber Hitch provides for dragging.*

## Winch with a Pinchbar

Another knot from the last issue I utilized was the Marlinspike Hitch, only I substituted a 6 foot steel prybar for the 2 foot long sewing needle that is a marlinspike, as in Figure Lever Winch. Jam one end of the prybar in the ground with the rope attached about a foot above the ground. Pulling back at the top of the remaining 5 feet of prybar provided just enough mechanical advantage to drag a split in half log a few inches at a time. Which with patience was enough to clear sufficient workspace for splitting the next log. See Figure Lever Winch.

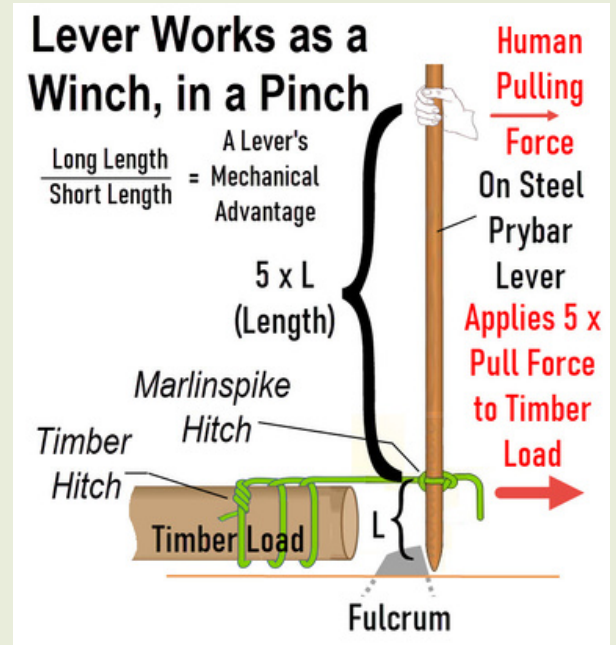


Figure Lever Winch: Woodcraft is about using a minimum of tools to maximum effect



Figure Maasdam: A Poor Person's Infinite Hand Winch

## The Poor Person's Infinite Hand Winch:

I'm sharing information about the Maasdam Pow'R Pull right away because if I'd had it years earlier it would have saved me a lot of work. It is unusual in that it will pull a load a distance equal to the full length of any 3 strand twisted rope no matter how long with a single setup, with one caveat: it has to be under tension at the start, in fact during the whole pull or it can slip.

All this said, the primary lesson driven home by struggling to move green, 6 foot long, 18" diameter logs around as described above was that it required better tools, what with the slightest catch on forest debris introducing another struggle. And I have couple hundred yards of woods to drag across before I reach the driveway.

Which got me back to pondering. Rejecting wheels as complex and problematic without so much as a path, I'm going with attaching streamlining to the front of the log, or more precisely building a short, sturdy sled to lay the front of a timber into. That should prevent digging in. To which I'll add a more sophisticated force multiplier, such as in Figure Maasdam.



To illustrate the Maasdam's capabilities and the reason for this tension quirk, I ask you to picture a slightly simplified version of its operation. Picture 100 feet of 3 strand twisted rope stretched overhead. The Maasdam drum with slots along its circumference "sits astride" the rope not unlike a pulley on a zip line. The plan is to crank the Maasdam to rotate the "pulley" causing it to drive along the rope to drag a load along the ground. Understanding that the pulley needs to grip the rope sufficiently, we add weights to the pulley, anticipating the rope's protruding strands will press into the slots machined into the pulley for just for that purpose. With rope and pulley meshing practically like gears, all goes to plan.

But a minute later, half the weights fall off the pulley, and though still turning, it stops advancing along the rope. Maybe it even slides backwards a bit, startling us. But when we put the weights back on, rope and pulley re-engage and progress resumes.

In actual operation the "traction" between drum and rope described above is first established by pulling slack out of the setup until it is very tight. Keep tightening until the winch operates. Then maintain that tension. No letting the rope go slack, or if it might, have a backup system in place. And yes, requiring your load to fight you before you'll start working is counterintuitive.

Most of this initial tightening is accomplished simply by pulling really hard on the rope where it exits the Maasdam as slack. I've seen video of 2 people pulling in unison to accomplish this, though I will test other final snugging techniques like pushing the whole setup sideways to increase rope tension - as a kind of bootstrapping.

I should also note that while the Massdam is inexpensive, itself costing me \$75 including tax and free shipping - not from Amazon, that price didn't include the cost of rope - as somehow I already own a length of this rather atypical 3 strand twisted variety. Meaning, after including a quality rope the typical user will spend over \$100, or even close to double that, depending on brand (important!) and length desired.

Back to the positive, while capable of a respectable 1500 pounds with a 10 to 1 mechanical advantage, the Massdam costs a fraction of the price for its big brother, the cable Griphoist. For an example of the Griphoist's capability, they were critical for fetching and setting the boulders that make up the steps of the Pine Hill Trail stretching all the way up Wachusett Mountain from the State Park Visitors Center. Check it out. It is absolutely a work of art that took mostly volunteers a quarter century to build by hand, stone by dry stacked stone.

### **Next Issue:**

Knots. Knot thoughts are welcome at [AMCPaddle@gmail.com](mailto:AMCPaddle@gmail.com)  
Attaching a winch on the fly with a French Prusik knot.  
Maasdam and lumber sled performance.  
Lumber splitting update.

*David K. Elliott*  
Past Paddling Chair

# Recent Awards - Congrats all!

## Volunteer of the Month November 2024



### Steph Keimig

Nominated by Joe Massery...

"Steph was one of the presenters for the recent Winter Hiking Workshop. Her official agenda item was Heat Management and Clothing, but she had all her gear on display and answered questions on a wide range of topics related to winter hiking. She got rave reviews from the participants."



Thank you for all you do. We are lucky to have you!

## Volunteer of the Month December 2024



### Zenya Molnar

Nominated by Luke Chapdelaine...

"Zenya did an excellent job organizing the annual 20's & 30's Holiday Social in December! This social is consistently one of the most popular 20's & 30's events each year, and this year was no exception. This is a testament to how much returning participants enjoy going and how welcoming it is for newer participants."



Thank you for all you do. We are lucky to have you!

## Volunteer of the Month January 2025



### Pat Lambert

Nominated by Joe Massery

"Pat led a Worcester Chapter Inner Winter Hiker trip on Mount Cardigan that was an outstanding example of how instructional trips should be run. She coached participants in all aspects of winter hiking - it helped that conditions were perfect (single digit temps, wind, good snow, icy/slippery trail, and a tough mountain!!). Feedback from the participants (and from her coleaders) was that Pat made it an invaluable learning experience and loads of fun at the same time!"



Thank you for all you do. We are lucky to have you!

## Volunteer of the Month February 2025



### Christine Crepeault

Nominated by Walt Lazarz

Christine was nominated for her commitment to the Quabbin Historical Hike Series. She always leads an interesting hike and does an excellent job with research... including the crypt, the graves, what was left behind, and so much more.

Be sure to check out a hike with Christine sometime soon.



Thank you, Thank you, Thank you. The Chapter appreciates all you do.

# Have you heard about August Camp?



Enjoy both snow-capped mountains and ocean at magnificent Olympic National Park. Hike, bike, paddle and more, visiting many stunning waterfalls and scenic vistas on dozens of activities for all ability levels led by trained AMC volunteers.

This million-acre park protects a vast wilderness, thousands of years of human history and several distinctly different ecosystems. These include glacier-capped mountains, old-growth temperate rain forests and more than 70 miles of wild coastline.

Camp just outside the park in Quilcene, WA. Arrive and enjoy the activities and camaraderie. Everything's provided: tents, and cots. Hearty, delicious meals including trail lunches prepared by our staff. We provide local transportation and a free shuttle from and to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

August Camp runs from July 19 through August 16. Apply to

attend for one of the four weeks. Detailed information, pricing and registration are available at [augustcamp.org](http://augustcamp.org). The last time August Camp was held on the Olympic Peninsula, it was filled by mid-January!

Online registration opens January 2, 2025 at 9 AM. All applications received between then and midnight on January 12 will be treated equally by random selection.

Week 1: July 19 — July 26

Week 2: July 26 — Aug. 2

Week 3: Aug. 2 — Aug. 9

Week 4: Aug. 9 — Aug. 16

**Each week:** \$1700 for members, \$2040 for non-members, plus Washington state tax

**Questions:** Please visit [augustcamp.org](http://augustcamp.org).



August Camp is a volunteer-run summer program offered by the Appalachian Mountain Club, providing four one-week sessions of group hiking for adults. Each year, we set up camp in or near National Parks, Forests, and Wilderness areas, primarily in the western U.S.

Every summer, August Camp becomes a vibrant tent community of around 60 participants. This base camp is set up near the stunning landscapes of National Parks or wilderness areas, with daily activities located within an hour's drive. Campers stay in comfortable two-person tents, equipped with cots. Your camp experience includes three daily meals, transportation to daily activities, and a nightly campfire that fosters community through storytelling, announcements, and fun activities

You will be out of camp most of the day; even the easiest hikes will require you to be able to hike a minimum of 5 miles with 500-700 feet of elevation gain. Shorter, easier hikes are combined with other hikes or other activities to make for a full day's outing.

# Upcoming GWLT Events

## Wild and Scenic Film Festival - March 28

Join GWLT on the evening of Friday, March 28, for a showing of action-filled environmental and adventure films, as part of the Wild and Scenic Film Festival. In addition to films being shown, attendees will have the opportunity to visit with local conservation organizations and participate in a raffle with exciting prizes! If you are interested in the outdoors and/or conservation community in the Worcester area, this is a great opportunity to learn more and discover ways of getting involved!

Tickets are available now online at [GWLT.org/WSFF](http://GWLT.org/WSFF) or they can be purchased day-of. GWLT Members save \$2! Each attendee receives one free raffle ticket with their admission! Additional tickets are available on-site.

Adult: \$10

GWLT Member: \$8

Child: \$5

College Student (with ID): \$5

Family: \$20



When: Friday, March 28 | Doors Open: 6:30 PM | Films: 7:20 - 8:45 PM | Raffle Called: 8:45 PM

Where: Sullivan Auditorium, Worcester State University, 486 Chandler St, Worcester

Parking: The South Lot is closest to the Auditorium

To learn more about the SYRCL's Wild and Scenic Film Festival, visit [wildandscenicfilmfestival.org](http://wildandscenicfilmfestival.org).

To see the list of films being shown at the event and learn more, visit [gwlt.org/wsff](http://gwlt.org/wsff).



## Earth Day Cleanup - April 26

The Greater Worcester Land Trust is hosting their annual Earth Day Clean-Up on Saturday, April 26 at Cascades East (265 Olean St) in Worcester from 8 AM to 12 PM. We will be working on removing the metal and glass left behind from the vintage landfill. Join in on the fun of restoring the land to it's former glory!

Following the clean-up, there will be a BBQ at the Caretaker's Lodge at Cascading Waters (135 Olean St).

RSVP is not necessary, but is helpful. Please email [Olivia@gwlt.org](mailto:Olivia@gwlt.org) and indicate the number of people attending. All gloves and tools are provided.



## Special Interest

Solicited quarterly from  
Contributing authors....

Stewardship  
Paddling  
Cycling  
Hiking  
Leaders Corner  
Photo Contest  
Recovery  
Fitness  
Conservation  
History  
Map & Compass



please consider submitting an article  
Email: [newsletter@amcworchester.org](mailto:newsletter@amcworchester.org)

## We need you

A community is made great because of it's members. Hopefully this newsletter gives you a glimpse of the depth and breadth of your favorite AMC Chapter. We are always looking for new members, volunteers, leaders and committee members. Reach out; get involved; you will not be disappointed.