

Wachusett Views



Worcester Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club

Summer 2023

A close-up view of our Chapter's vibrancy and dedication

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Summer 2023

Letter from the Editor

Summer is finally here and I hope you're enjoying every moment of this beautiful season. Being active means planning ahead for hot sunny days, bugs and ticks, afternoon storms, and even chilly nights. Remember to start your activity early, and plan for shade and water. Wearing a hat and sun-screen, and light moisture-wicking clothes are important as well.

In this issue, you'll read about plans for wonderful summer nights of music at the Highland Center. These fun nights should not be missed! You'll also read an exciting recent announcement from the DCR on funding approved for 68 trail improvement projects across Massachusetts. You'll also see who was awarded Volunteer of the Month, and much more!

If you want to share a story, or contribute to our combined knowledge, please consider submitting an article to me at newsletter@amcworchester.org. I'd love to hear from you.

My hope is that in reading this newsletter, you'll be inspired to get outdoors and join us. Together we need to protect the great outdoors, and enjoy it responsibly.

Enjoy the summer, enjoy our newsletter, and get outside!

Nancy

Nancy Cahn

Wachusett Views Editor

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Under the Red Felt Crusher



To all of my fellow outdoor enthusiasts, happy Summer! I don't know about you, but to me, it seems like each year the seasons pass more quickly than before. As we enter into this new season of life, I encourage you to not only look forward to whatever activities you have planned for the warmer months but to also hold dear the memories of seasons past, gatherings enjoyed, and experiences shared.

The community of the Worcester chapter is made up of folks who don't sit still for very long, and who are always thinking about that next hike, paddle, bike, or volunteer opportunity that will bring people together with a common goal. Remarkable, really... that a chapter of our size can have the impact that we do. I remain always impressed and proud of the work being done, collaboration being planned, and the day-to-day fellowship that is a staple

of our organization.

I'm eager to cross paths with fellow adventurers on the trails, or the roads, or wherever our activities may take us. I look forward to hearing stories, telling stories, and doing it all again in the fall. New England gives us that blessing of a never ending show from mother nature, always changing and keeping us interested.

Be well, see you out there.

Chris P

Chair

LYNDA COHEN PERFORMING ART SERIES AT CRAWFORD NOTCH



Article and photo submitted by Andrea Muller

The 3rd Annual Lynda Cohen Performing Arts Series will offer four free concerts this summer at the AMC's Highland Center in Bretton Woods, NH. The evening performances will feature renowned local and regional bluegrass, soul/blues, and Americana artists: Della Mae; Dwight + Nicole; Jim Kweskin and Friends; and Serene Green.

The concert series successfully debuted in 2021, thanks to the vision of AMC member and long-time supporter Lynda Cohen. Originating from her love of music and the mountains, Cohen imagined a concert series where people from far and wide could come together, nestled among the peaks of Crawford Notch, to experience one of her lifelong passions, music. As a musician herself, Cohen understands how the arts can help create connections to the natural world.

Pre-registration for attendees is encouraged through Eventbrite:

<https://amcmusic.eventbrite.com/>

The 2023 Lynda Cohen Performing Arts Series lineup is as follows:

LYNDA COHEN PERFORMING ARTS SERIES at CRAWFORD NOTCH

Music in the Mountains

FREE OUTDOOR CONCERTS

Saturday
July 15, 2023

An Evening with Della Mae

AMC Highland Center

Saturday, July 15 - 7-9pm
An Evening With Della Mae -

[Della Mae website](#)

Della Mae is a GRAMMY-nominated, all-women string band made up of founder and fiddle player Kimber Ludiker, lead vocalist/guitarist Celia Woodsmith, guitarist Avril Smith, bassist Vickie Vaughn, and mandolinist Maddie Witler. Hailing from across North America, and reared in diverse musical styles, this charismatic, engaging roots band has traveled to over 30 countries spreading peace and understanding through music.

LYNDA COHEN PERFORMING ARTS SERIES at CRAWFORD NOTCH

Music in the Mountains

FREE OUTDOOR CONCERTS

Saturday
July 22, 2023

Dwight + Nicole

AMC Highland Center

Saturday, July 22 - 7-9pm
Dwight + Nicole -

[Dwight + Nicole Website](#)

American soul/blues band Dwight + Nicole has been touring the Eastern U.S. since 2017. They have been steadily on the rise ever since - nominated for nine Boston Music Awards, ten Daysie Awards, and ten New England Music Awards, winning “Band of the Year,” “Vocalist of the Year,” “Best Blues/R&B Band,” “Female Vocalist of the Year,” “Blues Act of the Year” and “Video of the Year.”

Saturday, August 5 - 7-9pm

LYNDA COHEN PERFORMING
ARTS SERIES at CRAWFORD NOTCH

**Music in
the Mountains**

FREE OUTDOOR CONCERTS

**Saturday
August 5, 2023**

**Jim Kweskin
and Friends**

With Geoff Goodhue & Roland Clark

AMC Highland Center



**Jim Kweskin and Friends featuring
Geoff Goodhue and Roland Clark -**

[Jim Kweskin Website](#)

Jim Kweskin is the founder of the legendary 1960s Jim Kweskin Jug Band. No other group attained their unique blend of youthful energy and antiquarian expertise, tight musicianship, loose camaraderie, and infectious swing. Kweskin continues to perform with next generation acoustic artists. “Mr. Kweskin’s music is a blend of blues, jug music, rhythm & blues and jazz – rag-timey stompdowntown party music.” - Alex Ward, New York Times

**Saturday, August 19 - 7-9pm
Serene Green -**

[Serene Green Website](#)

Winners of 2022 Podunk Festival competition, Serene Green is a traditional bluegrass band featuring Pennsylvania natives Quentin Fisher, Michael Johnson, Steve Leonard, Shane McGeehan, and Maryland-born fiddle state champion, Katelynn Casper. Serene Green's desire is to honor the traditional side of bluegrass demonstrated by the pioneers of the music, while also showcasing its original compositions and uniqueness.

LYNDA COHEN PERFORMING
ARTS SERIES at CRAWFORD NOTCH

**Music in
the Mountains**

FREE OUTDOOR CONCERTS

**Saturday
August 19, 2023**

Serene Green

AMC Highland Center



Beer, alcohol, and snacks will be available for purchase on site; guests are allowed to bring their own food, but BYOB is not permissible due to state liquor laws. Lawn chairs or blankets are suggested. There will be limited parking available in the AMC Highland Center parking lot for concert-goers, but additional parking options is nearby. All concerts will be held rain or shine.

Conservation Highlight

Restoring the American Chestnut

Submitted by Eric Harris and Elli Greenlaw



(Photo courtesy of The American Chestnut Foundation)

The story of the American chestnut tree is one that is both motivating and inspiring among our nation’s conservationists. This so-called “Redwood of the East” was once a magnificent nut-bearing hardwood that dominated Eastern forests both in height and size. For thousands of years it stood tall throughout the landscape and was ecologically important to a plethora of wildlife and people. This tree could be found in its native range following the Appalachian Corridor from Maine to Georgia and as far west as Michigan. Billions of trees existed throughout this region until a fungus disease from Asia known as the “chestnut blight” invaded the country and wiped out the tree.

Chestnut blight is a fungus disease that wreaked havoc on the American chestnut in the early 20th century. It is believed to be derived from imported Japanese chestnut trees shipped to the United States to be used in ornamental plantings. The devastating pathogen was first discovered and documented by scientists at the Bronx Zoo in New York City in 1904. Over the next 50 years, the pathogen spread throughout the land killing more than four billion trees. Entire chestnut stands were destroyed, leaving “ghost forests” or stands of dead trees in their place.

The American chestnut tree was once so plentiful that it was said a single squirrel could travel from Maine to Georgia while only jumping on chestnuts. Today, that reality is now just a memory. The blight fungus can't attack the trees' root systems due to microorganisms in the soil that act as a protectant. To this day, you can find millions of chestnut sprouts throughout the Appalachian corridor, shooting up from root systems over 100 years old. However, these sprouts are just small, regenerated shoots that will die within about five years, succumbing to the blight disease. This happens before the tree is able to produce nuts, therefore the American chestnut is considered "functionally extinct."

Why should we care about the American chestnut? First off, being the Appalachian Mountain Club, we have a connection to this tree. Someone hiking the Appalachian Trail back in the early 1900s would have constantly seen this tree along the entire length of the trail. The American chestnut was considered a keystone species for its seed crop that wildlife of all kinds utilized as a food resource. Birds, insects, and mammals fed on the nuts of the tree, and the crop was abundant during the holidays, sold both roasted and fresh. Unlike other trees, such as the oak, with a varying crop abundance, the American chestnut always produced a massive nut crop every year. Throughout the Appalachian region farmers would employ workers to roam the forest floor and gather chestnuts to sell at markets and street corners. Entire railroad cars overflowing with chestnuts would be brought in from the countryside to major U.S. cities for purchase.

The American chestnut was also prized for its wood, which was straight-grained and resisted rot. It had been used from colonial times to build cabins, fencing and flooring, and in more recent times also served to make railroad ties and telephone poles. Due to its natural rot resistance the tree was prized as an effective building material. Many early New England homes from the 1700s were built using chestnut wood to stand the test of time. Today old structures containing chestnut wood are often highly sought after for the wood to be salvaged and repurposed. Between both the lumber value and the nut crop harvest it is estimated that the economic loss would have been up to 10 million dollars as the tree declined.

Luckily, a group of botanists came together in 1983 to establish The American Chestnut Foundation. This organization composed of passionate conservationists formed a goal to use science to restore the tree back to the wild. Using a method known as backcross breeding the goal has been to breed natural resistance from Chinese chestnuts into the American Species. Although with advances in science there are now multiple pathways to create a disease tolerant and genetically diverse population of American chestnut. Known as 3BUR these pathways are: Breeding, Biotechnology, and Biocontrol United for Restoration. Currently there are 16 local chapters spread across different states along the East coast. The MA/RI Chapter consists of a large group of volunteers that work to educate, inspire, and grow chestnuts throughout the many orchards across both Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

This year the conservation committee for the Worcester Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club would like to support the goals of the MA/RI Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation. The conservation chair will be communicating with the foundation in order to have possible orchard workday events. By gathering AMC volunteers, we can support our organization's conservation goals by supporting another organization with similar goals. The story of TACF's mission to return the iconic American chestnut to its native range is truly an inspirational conservation story. As supporters of the Appalachian Trail region, we have a connection to this amazing tree. The restoration of this keystone species would have an astronomically positive effect for the entire ecosystem. Together we can make a difference for the environment by helping to restore the American chestnut tree to the Eastern forests!

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Volunteer of the Month - April



Fred Mezynski

Joe Massery nominated Fred for helping with Third Wednesday each month. He shared that Fred always attends and advises on setup and scheduling. In April, if he hadn't brought his spare key, there wouldn't have been a Third Wednesday! Fred, thank you for all you do for the Worcester Chapter!

Volunteer of the Month - May



Dan Foster

José Schroen and David Elliot nominated Dan for his outstanding performance as a new paddle leader. Here's what they had to say:

Dan, who recently became a paddling leader for the Worcester Chapter was a co-lead on the "Explore the Pine Barrens" trip. Dan repeatedly helped out one of the participants who was really struggling. Ultimately, Dan used his GPS device to locate a possible dirt road along the river bank, to hike the participant out. Once at a paved road, between walking and hitchhiking, Dan was able to get the car and provide the participant a warm ride back to camp.

Our newest paddle leader, Dan has been a voice of outstanding good sense. He engaged an elderly man with a battered truck mysteriously parked down a dirt state park road to find he was broken down, prompting a call to 911. On another occasion he was the first to conclude a kayaker could no longer continue and organized walking him out to the road. Well done Dan!

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor



Rebecca L. Tepper
Secretary

Brian Arrigo
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 14, 2023

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Healey-Driscoll Administration Announces Over \$11 Million in Grant Funding for 68 Trail Improvement Projects Across the Commonwealth

MassTrails Program Funding Will Expand and Connect the State's Network of Trails





BILLERICA — The Healey-Driscoll Administration today announced \$11.6 million in funding through the MassTrails Grant Program to support 68 trail improvement projects. Across Massachusetts, these projects will expand and connect the state’s network of off-road, shared-use pathways and trails to use for recreation, exercise, and environmentally friendly commuting. Today’s announcement was made by Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Brian Arrigo, Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, and other state and local officials in Billerica’s Town Center.

The MassTrails Grant Program provides matching grants, technical assistance, and resources to individuals, municipalities, non-profits, and other public entities. These funds go toward the design, construction, and maintenance of diverse, high-quality trails, including hiking trails, bike-ways, and shared-use paths. The program supports projects that build public-private partnerships. This year’s projects will directly impact over 100 communities, helping to develop new multi-use trails, expand accessibility, create connections between towns and existing trails, support the construction of boardwalks and bridges, design and install new signage, and acquire new land for trails.

“Outdoor recreation is directly tied to the economic prosperity of our state,” said Governor Maura Healey. “By investing in our trails system, we can give our residents opportunities to get outside, commute for free, and showcase all the natural assets Massachusetts has to offer. This is how we grow our economy, cut emissions, and improve health outcomes all at the same time.”

“Our state’s trail network creates connections between cities and towns all across Massachusetts, from the Berkshires to Cape Cod,” said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. “Working with our public and private partners, the MassTrails Grant Program stitches communities together and we provide easier access for residents and visitors to experience our beautiful natural, cultural, and recreational resources.”

“The MassTrails Grant program enables the Healey-Driscoll Administration and our partners to grow our trails system and, ultimately, reduce transportation emissions,” said EEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper. “We know our residents want to get outside and enjoy their commute and their communities, but don’t always have an accessible, safe way to get around. MassTrails makes that possible through collaboration and connection.”

The MassTrails Grant Program is funded through two sources. The first is the Massachusetts DCR capital budget. The second is the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program grants, managed at the state level by MassDOT. DCR administers the MassTrails grants. Additionally, the communities receiving funding will provide a proposed match of nearly \$16 million.

“Bicycle and pedestrian paths are a key part of the Healey-Driscoll Administration’s commitment to providing safe and equitable transportation networks which support the state’s transit, economic, climate and public health goals,” said Transportation Secretary and CEO Gina Fiandaca. “This grant money for 68 projects will help cities and towns build out the framework for creating a state-wide trails network and we look forward to seeing the positive impacts new trail construction will have for all those who live in, come to visit, or traverse through our state for work or pleasure.”

“DCR manages a vast trail network that connects communities across the Commonwealth and creates opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism and economic opportunity," said DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo. "The MassTrails Grant program enables us, with our state and local partners, to expand our trail network and create new connections that benefit even more families around our state and help build healthier communities.”

Today, officials joined together in Billerica, which is receiving \$472,000 for the design, engineering, and permitting of the Yankee Doodle Bike Path. This path is a long-envisioned regionally significant non-motorized transportation connection between the Minuteman Bikeway in Bedford and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Lowell.

This year’s MassTrails Grant projects will impact the following municipalities: Abington, Amherst, Andover, Ashburnham, Ashfield, Athol, Avon, Barnstable, Becket, Bellingham, Berkshire County, Billerica, Boston, Bridgewater, Brimfield, Buckland, Carver, Charlemont, Chatham, Chelsea, Clinton, Conway, Dalton, Deerfield, Dighton, Dudley, Gardner, Goshen, Granby, Groton, Hardwick, Haverhill, Hawley, Holden, Hudson, Lawrence, Lee, Lennox, Littleton, Lunenburg, Lynnfield, Malden, Marlborough, Medford, Melrose, Middleborough, Milton, Newburyport, Otis, Oxford, Pittsfield, Plainfield, Princeton, Raynham, Royalston, Sandwich, Savoy, Sheffield, Shelburne, South Hadley, Southampton, Spencer, Stoneham, Sturbridge, Sudbury, Taunton, Townsend, Waltham, Wareham, Washington, Westborough, Whately, Williams-

burg, Winchendon, Winchester, Windsor, Woburn, and Worcester. For a complete list and brief description of each of the 68 projects receiving funding, please visit the MassTrails Grants webpage.

The inter-agency MassTrails Team, which includes MassDOT, EEA and DCR, and the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board (MARTAB) review all grant applications. The program provides essential funding for project development, design, and construction of shared-use pathways, facilitating connections to where people live, work, and recreate. These funds focus on constructing and maintaining recreational trails of all types and use, including both motorized and non-motorized activities, such as hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, paddling, snowmobiling, and recreational off-highway vehicle riding.

Additionally, MassDOT recently announced the new, interactive Priority Trails Network Vision Map for statewide shared-use paths. The map provides a centralized inventory of key rail trail projects that will help support an envisioned comprehensive statewide transportation trail network. It specifically identifies approximately 320 miles of trails that have been constructed and are in use, 24 trails that are currently under construction, and another 60 miles of proposed paths that have been funded but not yet constructed. The map also lists priority shared-use path project locations that either have been proposed for consideration or will be pursued for funding and development to help address key gaps in the network.



SOLO Wilderness First Aid and CPR

This year's final Huntington, MA, SOLO Wilderness First Aid and CPR course will be offered the weekend of September 16 and 17th. Please follow the link to register. <https://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm/action/details/id/142483>

Pine Hill Trail Restoration Project-Final Phase



Kimberly Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor and Steve Crowe, AMC Worcester Chapter Trails Chair
Photo submitted by Emerson Grant

AMC Worcester Chapter Trails Chair Steve Crowe was pleased to meet Lieutenant Governor Kimberly Driscoll and receive a Recreational Trails Program grant. The grant is for AMC's final phase of restoration at Wachusett Mountain's Pine Hill Trail. Keep an eye out for the crews in the coming year!

This is a public/private partnership that spans over 20 years of various crews working on this restoration project to create the Gold Standard in Massachusetts steep Fall Line Trail construction.