



Trails & Waves

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News from the Appalachian Mountain Club
New York – North Jersey Chapter

Trail Update

HARRIMAN

Forest Ghoul



Trails & Waves

Appalachian Mountain Club
NY-NoJ Chapter
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Contents



FEATURES	
4	Ode to Harriman
10	Trail Maintenance
CHAPTER UPDATES	
3	Message from the Chair
15	Membership Update
17	Train the Trainer
CONSERVATION	
8	Conservation Update
14	Forest Ghoul
19	LASTING IMAGE



Message *from* the Chair

Like always, summer is flying past. It's hard to believe it has been months since I had the pleasure to spend the weekend with so many of you at our annual picnic at the incredible Harriman Outdoor Center. That sold out event was such a huge hit that many people suggested we do it twice a year! That idea nearly made my vice-chair, Nathan, keel over. He's still recovering from all the work he did helping make our first all-weekend picnic such a smashing success (I can still taste the pig he roasted).

So much of what makes the AMC a unique and special organization is the volunteers who donate their time and expertise every week leading events for members (and future members.) The calendar is full of activities for any kind of outdoor enthusiast – and I strongly encourage everyone to check out what has been planned for the rest of the summer. You can go to the online list of activities by [clicking here](#) or go to Meetup.com and search for AMC events [you can also download the [Meetup app](#) for your phone or tablet].

While the wide range of activities are an incredible benefit of AMC membership, it's important to remember that, at its core, the Appalachian Mountain Club is a conservation organization – the oldest such group in the United States. We all take pride in the Club's mission to “promote the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters, and trails of America's Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.” But in terms of fulfilling that mission, this has been, to paraphrase John Steinbeck, ‘the summer of our discontent.’

Protection of the environment seems to have fallen out of favor in Washington, DC. National monuments, including Katahdin Woods and Waters in Maine, are under review. Rules and regulations designed to protect air and water quality are being rolled back. And our country's exit from The Paris Agreement makes the AMC's mission ever more critical.

Our club makes a difference. And in our chapter, every time we take part in the [Erase The Trace](#) campaign, we contribute to the AMC's efforts to protect the natural world and keep it available for generations to come.

I look forward to seeing you on the trails.

Cynthia Tollo Falls

Chair, NY-NoJ Chapter





story & photos by **YELENA UDLER**

ode to **Harriman**

A hiker's treasure in Manhattan's backyard



My love affair with Harriman State Park began over a decade ago, when you could still pull up to Reeve's Meadow Visitor Center after 10am on a Saturday morning and easily secure a spot in the lot.

Nowadays, you're almost guaranteed a half mile walk along the road littered with cars in order to get to the trailhead. I remember first coming to the park with a friend, and not knowing a thing about hiking, or trails for that matter, and just bushwhacking around Lake Skannatati until we found the perfect napping rock in the sun. I brought my parents to the park a few weeks after that. Since immigrating to Brooklyn in the early '90s, we were confined to the city for lack of a vehicle (not that we would know where to go if we had one). That's why we were so excited about discovering the wilderness of Harriman. For our first visit, I led my parents on the same bushwhacking loop around the lake and beyond. And of course, inevitably, we proceeded to get lost.

It was after that experience that I learned about trails, and trail markers. Subsequent trips to the Harriman and Bear Mountain areas saw me armed with a map, excited to explore and find out where each trail led. Over time, I discovered the existence of hiking groups (big thank you to AMC leader Richard Seibel, who at the time was leading the Young Member hikes), and learned the do's and don'ts from the experts. Harriman has since remained one of my favorite spots, *a*) because it was the site of the first exposure I've had to the outdoors as an adult, and *b*) because it's a one stop shop for all things outdoorsy – hiking, camping, biking, climbing, boating, swimming ... you name it, the list goes on and on.

In late June or July, you can bump into Appalachian Trail thru-hikers, and quiz them about their adventures or be a Trail Angel and bring them some treats in exchange for their stories. Bear Mountain Bridge in the adjacent Bear Mountain State Park actually happens to be the lowest point on the AT. If you're not quite ready to commit to 2,000 miles of trail but are in the mood for a challenge, there are two trails that cut diagonally through the length of the park (Ramapo-Dunderberg and Suffern-Bear Mountain). These traverses are about 22 miles long, with over 5,000 feet in elevation gain, and can be completed as a rite of passage or broken up into a two day backpacking trip provided you shuttle cars.



Into camping? There are three-sided shelters all over the park, and camping is permitted in their vicinity. Some are less than a mile from parking lots (Dutch Doctor, William Brien Memorial, or the one near Hippo Rock along the Long Trail) and others are more remote and less utilized. West Mountain Shelter is an extremely popular one for its views of the New York City skyline, and also for sights of the fireworks on the Fourth of July. Slightly more civilized camping options are available in the form of the newly reopened AMC cabins at Breakneck Pond or the bungalows at Lake Sebago.

Yelena at the [Lemon Squeezer](#)



Pine Meadow Brook
after a heavy rain

If rock climbing is your thing, Claudius Smith Den is a great spot friends have used for canyoneering practice, and the newly opened 'Powerlinez' offers ample opportunities for climbing. Plenty of scrambles exist in the park as well if you're not into using equipment. Seven Hills Trail has almost as many scrambles as its name implies, and then there's also the Lemon Squeezer, and Pingyp.

For the bikers out there, paved roads crisscrossing the park offer lots of hills for a great workout. Riding up Arden Valley Road from Route 17, you are rewarded for the tough climb by a refreshing swim at Lake Tiorati. Some of the woods roads in the park are also mountain bike friendly, and are marked as such. The same paved roads present a good challenge for the runners as well, because of the constant ups and downs. An interesting fact – the distance from Reeves Meadow Parking area to Silvermine Lake Parking area is nearly

a half marathon distance, with 1200 ft elevation gain. There are also plenty of options for trail running throughout the park, and North Face sponsors an annual challenge event with races from 5k to 50mi around the Bear Mountain Area.

Fauna and flora enthusiasts will find plenty of wildflowers and berries in the park. Springtime is especially gorgeous with pink and white mountain laurels reflecting in the lakes and ponds. Summertime brings myriads of fruitful blueberry bushes. Just be careful you don't accidentally stumble onto a rattlesnake as you're berry picking. The park deer enjoy grazing by the roadside. So much so, that driving through the park via Seven Lakes Drive at dusk becomes a rather treacherous activity. Bears co-habitate with humans within the park boundaries. There was an evening hike where we encountered a mama and her cub just minutes after leaving the parking lot.

Even the non-hikers can find entertainment in the park. Just taking a drive through the park during fall is a treat – the grey ribbon of pavement winding through a tunnel of yellows, reds and bright oranges. Also in the fall, the annual Oktoberfest festival takes place – with brats, beer and fresh air, you can't go wrong. Fishing is allowed at some of the lakes as well (with a permit, of course), and I've even seen people try their hand at ice fishing in the winter.

Over the years, I've visited Harriman more times than I can count, picnicking with friends by a lake, or hiking with my parents for some family bonding, or leaving Brooklyn at the crack of dawn to hike an all-day traverse. A few years ago I was even fortunate enough to live a stone's throw from the park, working remotely for my employer, and exploring the park and the surrounding village of Sloatsburg in my free time. Mornings were spent kayaking Lake Sebago

and watching the morning mist rise from the water, lunch was a jog along Seven Lakes Drive or a quick hike that literally started behind the house where I lived. Evenings consisted of hikes with friends to watch the sunset and the shooting stars, and weekends were filled with sleepovers with friends from the city and lazy morning spent brunching at restaurants nearby. It was one of the more memorable years in my life, where I felt like a kid in summer camp, waking up every morning to a beautiful park filled with adventure.

If you haven't already visited Harriman (this season), I highly encourage you to do so. The hiker shuttle bus ferries visitors from the train station to various points in the park, and the AMC camp at Breakneck Pond provides rustic overnight accommodations in a superb setting. Or, if you're no stranger to the park, why not pick a random corner to explore that you haven't previously visited?



Thimbleberry harvest at Harriman State Park



Conservation Update



CONSTITUTION PIPELINE UPDATE

The fate of the Constitution Pipeline is still awaiting permits from the NY State DEC, after a federal court dismissed a challenge to the state's permitting system this past spring. Another lawsuit challenging the DEC's authority to require permits for the pipeline has yet to be decided in the U.S. Court of Appeals.

HUDSON RIVER ANCHORAGES

This past June, both houses of the NY State legislature voted overwhelmingly to allow the state to develop conditions and regulations under which ships carrying petroleum products will be able to enter and move upon the navigable waters of the Hudson River. The U.S. Coast Guard suspended its plans to construct new anchorage points along the Hudson, and is currently conducting a Ports and Waterways Safety Assessment (PAWSA) for the proposed anchorages.

The public is invited to submit comments on PAWSA at the [Coast Guard website](#).

If you want to contact the Governor about this issue, you can use [his website's contact form](#).



HEMLOCK WOOLY ADELGID FOUND IN THE ADIRONDACKS

A hemlock wooly adelgid infestation was discovered in a stand of old growth eastern hemlock trees near Lake George, NY this past July. This is the first infestation found in the Adirondack Park. This is an alarming development. The NY State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is making plans to use pesticides to battle the infestation. The hemlock wooly adelgid has killed just about all the hemlock trees in New York City, and has caused very high mortality in hemlock stands in the Hudson Valley, Hudson Highlands, Jersey Highlands and northeastern Pennsylvania. The tiny East Asian insect has also killed many hemlocks in the eastern Catskills (there are many dead hemlock trees along NY-23A following Kaaterskill Creek and up the north-facing slopes of Kaaterskill High Peak). So far, the infestation has been impossible to stop.

TICKS CARRYING LYME DISEASE MORE NUMEROUS THIS SUMMER

This year has seen a pronounced uptick (sorry) in the number of ticks all around the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. Ticks are being found in higher elevations than ever before, including in the Catskill Mountains and in several areas within the Adirondack Park. The Hudson Valley, northern New Jersey and southern New England have some of the highest densities of black-legged ticks ('deer ticks') in North America. Take all precautions to make absolutely certain you have not picked up any ticks on your outdoor adventures. Insect repellents work, but it is necessary to check yourself carefully and wash thoroughly after your time in the outdoors. Carefully remove any ticks that have become attached as soon as you can. It takes about 16 to 24 hours for an attached black-legged tick to transfer an infectious load of the spirochete (bacteria) that causes Lyme disease.

In other tick-related news, a study being conducted by the University of Connecticut suggests that the commonly planted Japanese barberry provides a perfect micro-environment for tick reproduction. Japanese barberry is an exotic (non-native) plant listed as an invasive species in New York and New Jersey. The UConn study gives us yet another reason why no one should ever purchase this plant for their gardens or landscaping. Unfortunately, commercial nurseries commonly recommend and sell this invasive, thorny shrub as a hardy ornamental. You can see fields of these plants growing wild and crowding out everything else in wet spots all over northern New Jersey and the Hudson Highlands, including a part of the Appalachian Trail going through Fahnestock State Park in Putnam County, NY. If you hike through there this summer or fall, be sure to double-check yourself for ticks!



PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE REDUCTION

Purple loosestrife is an exotic (non-native) flowering plant that was introduced from Europe to North America for gardens and plantings along highways. Unfortunately, it has proven to be aggressive and invasive, crowding out native wetland plants like cattails and marsh grasses, which has reduced high quality food sources for wildlife. No native insects or animals are known to feed on purple loosestrife, so scientists have been introducing a beetle native to Asia that feeds on the invasive plant. So far the strategy has reduced purple loosestrife numbers, while the beetles don't appear to be displacing native insects. Time will tell if this plan mitigates the problem and allows populations of our native wetland plants to recover.

Winged loosestrife, a native relative of purple loosestrife that was thought to be extinct, was [recently found](#) in Vermont's [Raven Ridge Natural Area](#) (owned by The Nature Conservancy).

Trail Maintenance **WEEKEND**

*AMC Volunteers
Make Our Trails
Great Again.*



On a picture-perfect June weekend, 11 enthusiastic AMC-ers gathered at the Corman Harriman Outdoor Center for two days of learning about trail design and construction from the pros: experienced AMC trail crew members.

Four young, strong and incredibly patient crew members led by Jonathan Martin explained principles of trail design, introduced trail work tools and guidelines for using them safely, and took the group out to work on a section of the new Pond Loop Trail around Breakneck Pond.

Participants aged 17 to past retirement pried up rocks with heavy rock bars and learned how to work together to move seemingly immobile slabs of stone. There was no shortage of rocks to practice on: one section of the trail is currently more boulder field than Treadway.

Removing a large rock from the trail can leave a pit in the ground. How do you fill that? With more rocks! A large boulder near the trail screened off the “crush pit,” where participants worked off their aggressions smashing rocks with a long-handled sledge hammer called a “double jack.” Once large stones were smashed into smaller pieces, it was time to use the “single jack,” a small hammer for reducing those pieces to gravel.

Safety rules were scrupulously followed: wear a hard hat, safety glasses and gloves whenever working; carry the tools blade-down and place them on the ground the same way; one person at a time on the double jack, with everyone around keeping a healthy distance from the smasher; when swinging the double jack, keep your mouth closed so a wayward stone fragment won't send you to the dentist!

Both Saturday and Sunday, while part of the group smashed and moved rocks, the others were on “side hilling” duty. Side



hilling simply means cutting an almost-level trail into the side of a hill. The group tackled the job using tools with intriguing names: the hazel hoe and the pick mattock. Sweating and increasingly dirt-covered, they hacked into the uphill side of the trail with these implements.

“When swinging the double jack, keep your mouth closed so a wayward stone fragment won’t send you to the dentist!”

Gradually they scraped away soil, rocks and roots until the trail surface was almost flat (ideally, a three percent grade), so that water can drain off but hikers have a stable surface to walk on. A third specialized tool, the pulaski, featured a sharp axe blade which the hard-working crew used to chop out the many roots exposed in the digging process. A small folding saw and pairs of loppers came in handy too—mountain laurel has strong and stubborn roots!

In the trail construction world, dirt is not just dirt. The top layer, called duff, is soft and spongy, a carpet of organic matter. Beneath that is “mineral soil,” brown and firm. Under the mineral soil lies bedrock. Duff is unstable and will erode and wash away, so mineral soil is what you want for a trail surface.

Part of the side hilling task was removing the duff and tamping down a smooth-ish surface of mineral soil. However, in some spots there is no mineral soil. One small slope was left with the duff intact and a plan to build stone steps there later this summer to prevent future erosion. One lesson learned from the weekend: an incredible amount of work and time goes into building even a small section of trail.



On Saturday afternoon Jonathan Martin supplemented the field work with a power point presentation in the camp dining room. He illustrated some of the ways water can damage a trail over time and methods of mitigating water damage. Over time, the trail surface tends to get compacted and dirt builds up on either side. If that edge buildup is not removed, water has no way to run off the trail, “cupping” sets in, and the trail becomes an eroding ditch. So maintainers should remove the buildup on either side of the trail. He explained a variety of trail structures and the reasons for using them: retaining walls, stepping stones, water bars, drain dips, turnpikes, bog bridges, and steps. In situations where they are called for, these structures ensure that the trail is durable while minimizing hikers’ impact on the landscape.

Jonathan also introduced a guiding acronym for sustainable trail building: “HDHV”— High, Dry, Hard, and Visible.

Trails shouldn’t be built in low, wet areas; trail construction should enable water to flow off the treadway; the surface should be firm; and the route should be easy to follow. Instruction and work sessions were interspersed with the leisurely pleasures of camp life: kayaking, swimming, wandering, sharing hearty meals, and listening to the frogs and a noisy whippoorwill while bunked in the lodge at night.

Mid-afternoon Sunday, as the humidity built and the temperature edged toward ninety, the group finished work, trudged back to camp, and retreated to the dining room deck to learn and practice cleaning, sharpening, and preserving trail tools. (More arcane vocabulary: one sharpening file is called a “mill bastard.”) After the tools were taken care of, the teaching and the work were over. After the exertions of the weekend, boy, did a swim in Breakneck Pond feel good.



OUR NATIVE WOODS:

A FOREST GHOUL

by RON GONZALEZ

If while hiking through a particularly dark, moist stretch of woods, you've looked down to see a ghostly white plant with a nearly colorless flower, you've seen Indian pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*).

Indian pipe is a rare flowering plant that uses neither chlorophyll nor photosynthesis to feed itself. Rather than making its own nutrition from sunlight and air as green plants do, Indian pipe draws the nutrients it needs from the roots of its host tree (in other words, it's parasitic). This is why it can be a healthy, living plant that is nearly colorless and can flourish in the deepest shade. It takes root in fungi that colonize tree roots, usually those of American beech. Unlike a fungus or a mushroom, Indian pipe is a vascular plant that flowers and reproduces by seed.

You'll see Indian pipe growing in clusters of individuals, each individual growing as a single stalk of a few inches to a foot tall. Each stalk has alternating, scale-like leaves, with a single nodding flower at the top.

Because of its other-worldly appearance, the plant has attracted a curious collection of common names, such as Ghost Pipe, Fairy Smoke, Ice Plant, and even Corpse Plant. Some herbalists say the plant can be used to relieve nervous disorders, so it's sometimes called Fit Plant or Convulsion Root. *(Note that I do not recommend experimenting with this!)*

I've seen Indian pipe growing in shady ridge-top forests in the Hudson Highlands and Catskills, and in northern hardwoods forests of the Adirondacks and Vermont. It flowers from early summer to early autumn. The plant looks its best a couple of days after a mid-summer rain.

The next time you see a cluster of these curious little plants, stop and take a closer look. It's a real rarity of our native woods.



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Update from the Membership Chair

My Fellow Members,

I hope you all enjoy the outdoor activities and have started your summer outdoor adventures.

Personally, I joined the AMC Adventures hike in the Colorado Rockies in July. Hopefully, we'll cross paths at some point this summer. This is the time for nice, gorgeous weather. Please enjoy and cherish this wonderful time with your friends and family!

This year's Membership Speaker Series was well attended and a huge success. I can't thank enough the



Membership Speaker Series

- Anne Leonard gave a talk on her journey in Camino de Santiago; 70+ participants witnessed her FIRST ever Camino talk in public.
- Mr. Fabulous (Derick Lugo) completed his solo Appalachian Trail Thru-hike in 2012. He uses his great sense of humor and told us how he got this trail name - Mr. Fabulous, how he met his comrade that was a dog, and shared with us all these funny, touching, unforgettable stories.
- Richard Dabal, our former Executive for Facilities and Services, showed us about the great, old days on the challenging whitewater trips in the Grand Canyon.
- Ian Lewis came all the way from Connecticut to talk about his Bhutan adventure trip. We heard and looked at the beautiful photos on food, sports, Buddhism, schools and students, dwellings from farmhouses to city, while journeying through scenery ranging from rice fields and rivers to Himalayan passes. The smiles of the audience are still in my mind.

HARRIMAN OUTDOOR CENTER

Sep 29-Oct 1, 2017

MOHICAN OUTDOOR CENTER

Oct 20-22, 2017

Click to register for a New Members' Weekend

speakers who gave such fun talks in the first half of 2017. Thanks for your time and effort to share your stories with us. And thanks to all the participants that made these events so successful.

Picnic @ CHOC!

Cynthia, Nathan, Justin, Oliver and the amazing Young Member Committee organized this wonderful event on June 3rd. Thanks for the members and non-members sharing their laughs. I could not remember how much roasted pig and BBQ chicken I ate, but I probably had three to four beers in one afternoon! And we were all excited to meet new friends and caught up with old folks. We were just too busy for taking photos and selfies during the singing performer. Well, I'm sure he is a great singer!

Cynthia already reserved the camp for next year! (What? I need to wait another 365 days?)

Leadership Training

I attended the Leadership Training workshop at the Corman Harriman Outdoor Center on June 16-18. Some of the instructors are from the Executive Committee, along with Justin, Brittany, and Kristi, who is the Leadership Chair from Boston. We practiced numerous scenarios as hiking leaders, and learned how to deal with the difficult situations during the role-play exercises. It's an intensive workshop to improve (or to refresh) both the technical and soft skills and I highly recommend it! Though I have led New Members weekends, four-day Catskill trip and city walks, I have realized that I have rooms for improvement.

Help!

Last but not least, would you please help spread the words out! If you enjoy all these fun activities offer from AMC, please invite your friends and your family sign up as a Member! As summer is just begun, join the activities with your friends! Or sign up as a Family Member and start bring them to enjoy the facilities of the Corman Harriman Outdoor Center with member's discounted rate!

Carrie

Carrie Ho
Membership Chair



The staff of AMC’s Center for Outdoor Learning & Leadership (COLL), in conjunction with the volunteer-led Outdoor Leadership Development Committee are excited to launch two train-the-trainer (T3) opportunities for active and aspiring chapter leaders and and facilitators.

Both sessions train participants to act as faculty for AMC’s Center for Outdoor Learning and Leadership and host independent training sessions locally across AMC’s region.

T3: Hiking Track

Will be held at the **Steven & Betsy Corman AMC Harriman Outdoor Center** in New York beginning on the morning of **Sat, Sep 16** extending until the afternoon of **Sun, Sep 17**. Attendance is optional on the evening of Fri, Sep 15th. This training is designed for active or aspiring leaders interested in organizing and facilitating close to home hiking series across AMC’s region. Experienced Chapter Facilitators and AMC Staff will collaboratively facilitate the weekend using AMC’s new Hiking Track curriculum package as the foundation for learning and alignment across the participant pool. **Cost:** \$45 fee covers all meals, lodging, instruction, and materials for the entire duration of the training.

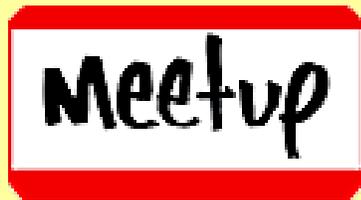
[CLICK TO REGISTER](#)

T3: Leadership Track

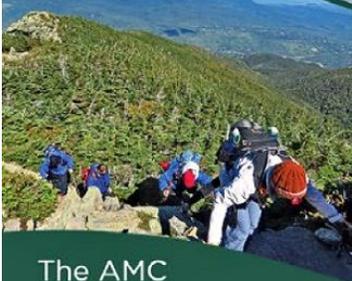
Will be held at the **Prindle Pond Conference Center** in Charlton, Massachusetts beginning on the morning of **Sat, Oct 21** extending until the afternoon of **Sun, Oct 22**. Attendance is optional on the evening of Friday, October 20th. This training track is designed for active or aspiring Chapter Leadership Training Facilitators interested in bolstering their event organization and facilitation skills using AMC’s new Leadership Track curriculum package. Experienced Chapter Facilitators and AMC Staff will collaboratively facilitate the weekend training session. **Cost:** \$45 fee covers all meals, lodging, instruction, and materials for the entire duration of the training.

[CLICK TO REGISTER](#)

Keep in Touch!



136th Annual Fall Hiking Week in New Hampshire's White Mountains September 15 - 22, 2017



The AMC Connecticut Chapter invites you to the 136th Annual Fall Hiking Week in the majestic White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Stay at the Town & Country Inn and Resort in Gorham, NH. Guided hikes daily. All meals & evening entertainment included. Come for a few days or stay the week.

Visit our website for reservations and all the details: www.fallhikingweek.org

LASTING IMAGE

**The Chapter's
homepage in
1998 and 2017.**

