

Wachusett Views

Worcester Chapter Appalachian Mountain Club



Summer 2020

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Social	Mike Foley
Technical Climbing	John Grote
Technical Climbing	Dave Brainard
Third Wednesday	Fred Mezynski
Trails	Stephen Crowe
Trails	Don Hoffses
20s & 30s	Ben Coon
At Large Social Media	Lisa Buckley

Summer 2020

Letter from the Editors

The start to summer certainly has been different this year, but it hasn't halted the dedication of Worcester Chapter volunteers and leaders. Although we may not be connecting as much through the actual outdoors, our Chapter has continued to offer wonderful programming virtually, including the Third Wednesday Speaker Series and various socials from 20s & 30s to climbing, to name a few. You'll find more information on the re-launch of volunteer activities in this issue.

As you enjoy the summer issue, we encourage you to think of ways you can contribute to the conservation movement—perhaps it's partaking in [Plastic Free July](#)—and play an active role in bringing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into your outdoor activity.

Thank you to all our writers, photographers, and contributors. We are always looking for content and photos! If you'd like to contribute to the next edition, please send your submission to: newsletter@amcworchester.org.

Have a happy and healthy summer!
Zenya and Alex

Alexandra Molnar
Zenya Molnar
Worcester Chapter Communications Co-Chairs



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A Message from the Chapter Chair: Under the Red Felt Crusher

By Kim Beauchemin, Worcester Chapter Chair

Hello everyone! I hope you are all well and that you are getting outside to enjoy some of the beautiful weather! It's been an odd start to summer for all of us, but the Executive Committee of the Worcester Chapter is still meeting monthly to discuss how we can continue to serve you all from a distance. I hope you've enjoyed some of the distance learning and remote programming we've been providing you—it's certainly been our pleasure!

Some good news to share with you all is that our Chapter and the entire AMC organization has been working hard to prepare for our return to volunteer-led programs, and we'll be ready to go when we can safely do so, which is looking like it may be very soon! When we are given the green light, I very much look forward to seeing you all in the outdoors!

All the best,
Kim



Bigelow Hollow State Park, May 2020

Alternative National Trails Day

By Steve Crowe, Worcester Chapter Trails Chair

The AMC shutdown due to COVID-19 gave us an opportunity to work with the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT). So instead of a National Trails Day project, we worked to improve the parking lot at 1461 Main Street in the Webster Square area of Worcester. Several Worcester Chapter volunteers, including John Grote, Malcolm Beauvais, Mike Peckar, Executive Director of the GWLT Colin Novick, a few others, and I worked on the morning of Saturday June 6.



GWLT had Bond Sand and Gravel deliver a load of ground asphalt to improve the parking lot surface. Sunshine Landscaping Co, Inc. donated their mini-excavator and spread out the new gravel to level the parking lot.

The volunteers worked to clean up the large Japanese Knotweed along with other weeds and debris to remove any organic material not suited for the parking lot.

Since it was a hot morning and the sun was shining brightly, we also worked in the woods of the Kettlebrook Conservation Area to reclaim the trail along the stream below the parking area.

More work remains to be done to the parking lot and to establish a trail system at Kettlebrook Conservation Area.



What connects you to nature, and how can you help protect our lands and ecosystems?

By Jon DiRodi, Worcester Chapter Conservation Chair

What connects you to nature? All outdoor enthusiasts have different ways of connecting to nature. We all explore local, state, or national parks during our lifetime. Most of us love to connect with nature whether participating in recreational activities such as hiking, camping, biking, running, and many more outdoor adventures. Others may escape to the wilderness because nature brings peace to the mind and body. Imagine sitting on a summit overlooking the mountainous terrain or walking through a calm, ambient forest. Do you ever just stop and listen to the sounds of bird calls, hear the wind blow through the trees, or even take in the moment of silence? This Zen is what everyone needs in their lives. We sometimes need to escape the world, as we are all get caught up in our everyday lives and forget to take time to ourselves. Life is too short and precious, and we sometimes need to take a short walk through a forest or hike in the wilderness. Connecting with nature is what brings all of us together.

Now, can you imagine what our country would look like if we didn't have these precious parks and ecosystems? Currently environmentalists are fighting back and doing their part to protect our precious parks and ecosystems. Just last week, the Senate approved the passing of the Great American Outdoors Act which is a step to fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)! Huge thanks to all the conservation advocates for writing to their state senators to help get this legislation passed! For more information on the Great American Outdoors Act victory or how you can help protect the LWCF and countless other Conservation projects, check out the AMC Conservation Action Network: <https://www.outdoors.org/conservation-action-network>.

Thank you everyone for all your efforts in helping protect our parks, trails, and conservation land!



The Worcester Chapter 2020 Annual Meeting has gone virtual - save the date!

Sunday November 15, 2020

5:30pm

Despite being online, the Annual Meeting will still be a fun evening of volunteer recognition and socializing with fellow Worcester Chapter members! Join us for a good time of celebrating this year's accomplishments.

More details to come.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Corner

A story published by the Boston Globe in 2014 that sheds light on the history of conservation from the perspective of Carolyn Finney, an assistant professor of environmental science, policy, and management at the University of California at Berkeley and author of "Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors."

Hiking while black: The untold story

Why is the American story of nature and conservation so white? Carolyn Finney uncovers a complicated history.



MLADEN ANTONOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Giant Sequoia at Sequoia National Park in California.

By Francie Latour JUNE 20, 2014

EACH YEAR, California's Sequoia National Park draws a million people to commune with nature and be dwarfed by some of the largest living things on earth. Visitors pass trees recognizing presidents and heroes of war:

Washington, Sherman, Lincoln, Grant. A summit trail bears the name of John Muir, known as the father of our national parks.

But few Americans know the name or story of the man who carved this national park into being: Charles Young, a black Army Captain born into slavery in Mays Lick, Ky. It was Young, with his segregated company and crosscut saws, who transformed Sequoia from an impenetrable wilderness to a tourist mecca. In 1903, with teams of mules hitched to wagons, Young's mountaineers became the first to enter the Giant Forest on four wheels.

When we think of great conservationists, or just ordinary Americans trekking in the outdoors, we don't typically picture black faces. There are reasons for that: Today, more than a century since Young's team opened up Sequoia National Park, blacks are still far less likely to explore its trails. A 2011 survey commissioned by the National Park Service showed that only 7 percent of visitors to the parks system were black. (Blacks make up nearly twice that percentage of the US population.) Latinos were similarly underrepresented.

But if African-Americans don't figure in our notion of America's great outdoors, geographer Carolyn Finney argues, it is also because of how the story has been told, and who has been left out—black pioneers and ordinary folk whose contributions to the land have long gone ignored. Reclaiming those stories, she contends, could have huge implications for protecting our wilderness in the future.

Finney, an assistant professor of environmental science, policy, and management at the University of California at Berkeley, spent years researching African-Americans' connection to natural spaces. In a new book, "Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors," she finds that that connection is rich, but also distinct and fraught—rooted in a history of racial violence and exclusion that sharply limited black engagement with nature. Those barriers, Finney writes, would come to shape our most basic perceptions about who cherishes nature and who belongs in it.



CORBIS
Charles Young of the 10th Cavalry in 1916.

Weaving scholarly analysis with interviews of leading black environmentalists and ordinary Americans, Finney traces the environmental legacy of slavery and Jim Crow segregation, which mapped the wilderness as a terrain of extreme terror and struggle for generations of blacks—as well as a place of refuge.

The book comes as the Park Service and other conservation agencies struggle to respond to America's changing demographics and diversify the ranks of visitors and employees. In doing so, they are increasingly turning to a national movement of black outdoor enthusiasts spearheading initiatives that celebrate African-American connections in nature. But to Finney, who serves as chair of the Relevancy Committee for the National Parks Advisory

Board, any serious effort to broaden participation in the parks has to begin with getting the history right.

“There’s this prevailing myth of black Americans as alienated from nature, as urban, as deeply unattached. Well, I push back on that, because I think we are actually very attached,” said Finney, speaking about her work in 2012. “There are people of color who have invested blood, sweat, and tears into the land whose stories aren’t acknowledged at all, let alone being recognized as people who care about the environment.”

Finney spoke to Ideas from her home in Berkeley, Calif.

IDEAS: Describe your relationship to nature as an African-American girl growing up in New York.

FINNEY: My parents grew up poor in the South. When my father came back from the Korean War, they decided to move north to New York. His sister was living there and came up with two opportunities: He could be a janitor in Syracuse, or he could be a caretaker living on a wealthy estate just outside the city. That's where he and my mother moved. The estate was 12 acres, with a pond and lots of fish, vegetable gardens, snapping turtles, deer, geese....I can remember finding the strangest worm, knowing it was out of place and wondering how it got there. I had a favorite rock, which was carved out in the middle, and I would ride it like a horse. And of course I watched my parents tend to the land. The first conservationists I ever knew were my parents.

IDEAS: How did those experiences begin to shape your views about the relationship between black Americans and the outdoors?

FINNEY: After my parents left and moved to Virginia, neighbors of the estate would send letters whenever something significant happened. In 2005 or 2006, my father got a letter saying that there had been a conservation easement placed on the property. In perpetuity, nothing could be changed and no new buildings could be added. And they were thanking the new owner for his conservation-mindedness. In reading it, I couldn't help thinking, where was the thanks to my parents, who cared for that land for 50 years? That got me thinking about all the people in our history whose stories are unsung or invisible. We don't hear about them because nobody calls that "conservation." They don't fit into the way we talk about environmentalism in the mainstream. So how do we recognize and honor those other stories?

IDEAS: In your book you talk about the stereotype that blacks don't "do" nature. When did you start to bump up against that?

FINNEY: I think the first thing I came up against was just that black people are different, period—that being black didn't fit into the dominant culture's picture of a lot of things I wanted to do. "Black people don't do" fill-in-the-blank. So it makes sense that that would roll right into ideas about black people and the environment. In the late '80s and early '90s, I spent about five years backpacking around the world. And often times it was the Americans who would ask where I was from. Even though the way I am is very American, and I was dressed in backpacker gear and all that, it really messed with their

minds that I could possibly be from the US. My presence, in nature, literally colored the way people were able to see me.

‘There were words on paper saying these protected spaces were meant for everyone, but we know they weren’t really meant for everyone.’

IDEAS: Who were some of the African-Americans environmentalists whose contributions surprised you most?

FINNEY: I interviewed so many people with amazing stories I had never heard of, stories I couldn’t believe the mainstream environmental movement hadn’t picked up on. Like John Francis, who spent 22 years walking across the US and Latin America to raise awareness about the environment. He did 17 years of that without talking! Or MaVynee Betsch, a black woman who gave away all her wealth, over \$750,000, to environmental causes. Or Betty Reid Soskin, who at 92 is the oldest park ranger in the country, and who helped to get the Rosie the Riveter National Park on the books. What all of this says to me is the mainstream still has so much work to do to embrace and engage these stories, not just as black stories but as human stories that we can all relate to at a really basic level.



LYNNLY LABOVITZ
Carolyn Finney

IDEAS: Your book draws parallels between pivotal moments in environmental history and pivotal moments in black history. How are they related?

FINNEY: Well, for example, the Homestead Act of 1862 made it possible for European immigrants to come here and go out West and grab large tracts of land, literally just by grabbing it before anybody else did. And you could just live on it for five years, and build a home and grow food, and it could be yours. That's amazing. And they were the only ones allowed to participate. That land, we know already, used to belong to Native Americans. And black people weren't allowed

to participate at all.

On the heels of that, you have John Muir talking about preservation of the land and the idea of the national parks as these beautiful spaces that are going to be public treasures for everyone, every American....But meanwhile, enslaved people had just gotten freed, were given land, had that land taken away, and then were living under the threat of Jim Crow segregation for all those years afterward.

That's a real cognitive dissonance: There were words on paper saying these protected spaces were meant for everyone, but we know they weren't really meant for everyone, because everything else that was going on in the country at the time indicated that.

IDEAS: Your book describes recent efforts by the National Parks Service to broaden participation of African-Americans and other underrepresented groups in recreation and preservation. Why does broadening participation matter?

FINNEY: If you're someone who believes in the protection and preservation of a natural space, who's going to do that? It's going to be people. The changing demographics in this country mean that those people aren't going to look like the people from 60 or 70 years ago who were doing it. If you're going to engage people in terms of stewardship and protecting natural spaces, boy, there has to be a big overhaul. You can't talk about conservation without talking about people and difference and access. And making that connection is part of the big challenge.

Article Source: Boston Globe, http://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2014/06/20/hiking-while-black-the-untold-story-black-people-great-outdoors/ssRvXFYogkZs2e4RX3z6JP/story.html?p1=Article_Related_Box_Article



CHOOSE TO REFUSE

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC
PLASTICFREEJULY.ORG

Communities around the globe are concerned about plastic ending up in landfill and polluting the oceans ... that's why 250 million people worldwide are choosing to be part of Plastic Free July

Will you join the challenge?

Please join our effort to help the environment. Choose to refuse single-use plastic during July.

Yes, I will join the challenge!

1. Visit our website

plasticfreejuly.org

2. Choose what you will do

- Avoid single-use plastic packaging
- Target the takeaway items that could end up in the ocean
- Go completely plastic free

3. Choose the length

1 day 1 week 1 month Always

A message from AMC's Volunteer Relations Team: What you need to know about AMC's Reopening

AMC Reopening Preview

AMC volunteers, members, donors, and staff have responded to COVID 19 prioritizing health, safety, and our mission. We've made tough decisions about closing lodging, cancelling programs, and reducing staff. As we head deeper into summer, we look forward to reopening the parts of AMC that can implement appropriate safety measures. This preview is based on what we know today. The information can change. Keep up with your AMC emails or visit AMC's [COVID 19 Update](#).

Volunteer Led Programs – Safety First

In order to relaunch volunteer led programs, participants and volunteers must commit to cancelling their participation if they are exposed to, test positive for, or experience the symptoms of COVID 19 within 14 days of their event. Anyone taking part in AMC activities will be expected to wear face coverings, practice social distancing, and follow appropriate health and safety practices. Those who prefer not to follow these practices should not attend AMC events.

New requirements may mean that AMC cannot offer some activities this summer or even this year. It may mean that some volunteers sit the season out. While people make the decisions that work for them, we will look ahead to the day when we can expand our offerings again.

Continued Online Opportunities – By converting so many programs, trainings, and social events to online offerings, we learned that we can reach new people! This is particularly true for people who are safer at home. Throughout the summer and fall, we will continue to offer online programs. Follow the chapter Facebook page and [AMC's Facebook Page](#) and review the [complete listing](#).

Relaunch In-Person Opportunities

Volunteers and staff have defined how we will restart in-person volunteer activities. Volunteers receive regular updates through the Volunteer Newsletter and/or from their staff liaisons. We will resume in-person volunteer activities in two phases.

- **Phase One** – Trail work and other stewardship activities: Volunteers who adopt trails, maintain structures, etc., as individuals or in groups <4.
 - o Required training
 - o Adopt safety protocols
- **Phase Two** – Volunteer Leaders groups of <10.
 - o Leaders have required training and safety practices
 - o Participants must register for events and sign an electronic waiver

These new requirements mean that we may not be able to do all of the activities we normally do. Some activities simply cannot allow appropriate social distancing and are inappropriate for wearing face coverings. AMC is committed to upholding best practices for the safety of volunteers and participants and we look ahead to the day when these precautions will not be necessary.

Please review the [Volunteer-Led Activities Re-Launch Rubric](#) for more detailed information on the process of compliance and phases. Leaders who have access, view the [Covid-19 Training Folder](#) for more information if you plan to lead trips at this time.

Some of our long-standing traditions will not go ahead this summer and maybe even into the fall. Like the huts, many volunteer led camps and cabins will remain closed. Some Adventure Travel and other events may be cancelled. We hope that whatever changes in your AMC, that you will find your local AMC community through your chapter. Reach out! Offer to tell your stories about your favorite part of AMC. Be well.



***Wachusett Views* needs you!**

Did you go on a memorable outdoor trip recently? Did you participate in an interesting training or program? Do you want to share your knowledge about anything related to the outdoors? We want your stories!

Please submit stories, trip reports, photos, and anything else you'd like to contribute to the fall 2020 *Wachusett Views*.

Email all contributions by **September 15, 2020** to: newsletter@amcworchester.org.

