

# Wachusett Views



Worcester Chapter  
Appalachian Mountain Club

**Fall 2022**

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

**Fall 2022**

***Letter from the Editor***

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20s & 30s	Zenya Molnar
At Large Social Media	Karyn Marciniac
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)	Alexandra Molnar

We love fall. The weather is just about perfect, which makes it absolutely ideal to get outside in New England.

In this issue, you'll read highlights on a Young Members' trail weekend, concerns on climate change, and you'll also get some great ideas on camp stoves.

Also included this issue: find out who the speakers are for our upcoming 3rd Wednesday socials, see our posting for a Diversity Equity Inclusion Chair, find out about *HistoryThon*, and 'Save The Date' for our gear swap!

If you want to share a story, or contribute to our combined knowledge, please consider submitting an article to me at [newsletter@amcworchester.org](mailto: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. We need you to help us protect the great outdoors and to enjoy it responsibly.

Enjoy our newsletter and get outside!

*Nancy*

Nancy Cahn, Wachusett Views Editor

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# Under the Red Felt Crusher June 2022



Greetings fellow AMC Members!

I hope everyone had a chance to get outside this summer to enjoy the warm weather! I had a chance encounter with some old friends I haven't seen in 5 years who, coincidentally, were hiking the Tripyramids in New Hampshire at the same time I was. It was great to reconnect and reminded me of how important it is for both our physical and mental health to have protected, outdoor spaces to explore.

I was also very fortunate this year to have the opportunity to visit State and National Parks in Colorado, California, and Utah. Out of those adventures, my favorite activity, by far, was hiking Angels Landing in Zion National Park a five-mile, 1500 feet elevation gain out-and-back trip. While the first two miles are paved and easy compared to the White Mountains, the final half mile to the summit is a steep knife edge trail: only two feet wide with 1000-foot drops on both sides at its narrowest point!

As we come to the end of our fiscal year in the Worcester Chapter, several of our Chapter Committee members will be stepping down from their roles; however, the Nominating Committee has been hard at work finding talented new members to fill the open positions. Be on the lookout for an event posting for our chapter's annual meeting where we will say goodbye to our retiring committee members and welcome the new ones!

See you in the outdoors,  
Michael Morin  
Worcester Chapter Chair

## Worcester Chapter Upcoming Events

### 3rd Wednesday Speakers and Holiday Gear Swap

October 19- Philip Garcia, who is working on his third attempt at hiking all the trails in the AMC White Mountain Guide in a single season.



November 16 - Denis Boudreau will give an interactive presentation about early mountaineering equipment and practices, and how it's changed over the years.

### Dec. 21 - Holiday Celebration & Gear swap

"Third Wednesdays", the Chapter's Monthly Meeting Potluck dinner & socials, and "Holiday Celebration & Gear Swap" are at 7 p.m. in the Northborough Historical Society, 50 Main Street, Northborough. For the potluck dinner and socials, please bring a dish to share. A presentation that is both educational and entertaining will follow the dinner. New members & visitors are welcome. Questions? Please contact the Third Wednesday Chair Erin Doolittle at [thirdwed@am-worcester.org](mailto:thirdwed@am-worcester.org).

# A weekend that stretched our muscles and minds

By Zenya Molnar, Worcester Chapter 20s & 30s Chair,

photos courtesy of Jesse Waites and Aaron Sager

16 crew members, 6 bog bridges, 2 days. Over Fourth of July weekend, 16 individuals, mostly 20- and 30-something year-olds, plus two professional AMC crew leaders partook in a volunteer trail program to install bog bridges in the White Mountains as part of a Worcester Chapter 20s & 30s trip. Thanks to a generous grant from the Worcester Chapter, my sister, Alexandra, and I were able to offer the trip at a low cost to first time trail maintainers, therefore introducing folks to trail work who may never have otherwise taken the chance.



Based out of the newly renovated Camp Dodge Trails Training Center, we were assigned to construct bog bridges on a ski trail on Mount Washington called George's Gorge, which is off Old Jackson Road, also the Appalachian Trail. Our group represented two chapters, Boston and Worcester, and was comprised of people who were AMC leaders and others who made this their first AMC trip.

**PHOTO: CARRYING A SLINGER UP OLD JACKSON ROAD TO THE WORK SITE**

By the end of the long weekend, everyone felt like old camp friends. Maybe it's because we had to haul tools, including two 18-pound rock bars, 10-foot pieces of tamarack wood from the Maine Woods which are called stringers, and large and heavy logs called sills, one mile up a steep trail for a total of three times in one day.

Type two fun is what it is called. Tough in the moment when your muscles feel like they are about to give out from carrying the near 100-pound stringer but extraordinarily fun looking back. It must have been the mix of the hard work on the trail and pure fun playing board games and homemade scuttle hatch and eating dinner together back at camp that brought everyone together.



**PHOTO: ROB HAULING A SILL UP THE TRAIL**

Working in groups of four, we started by removing the sodden, rotten logs that were the old bog bridges and sizing the area for the new stringers, which are the logs that serve as the walkway of the bridge. The project enabled us to use a variety of tools and learn many skills, including removing and placing rocks, using the ax to level the sills, the logs that the stringers sit on, so that the stringers lie flat, and a double jack to nail in the spikes, or large nails. All of the bog bridges were started and completed on our second day of work, as we used the first day to haul all of the tools and materials to the work site.

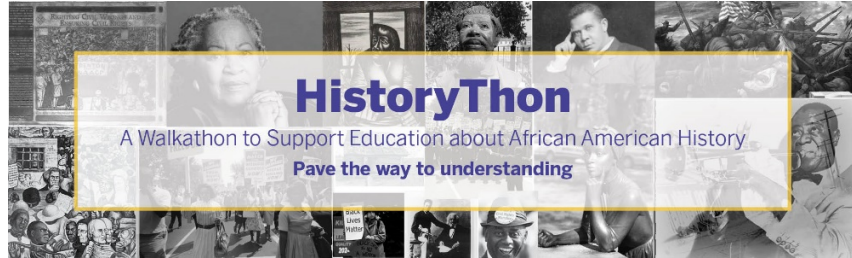
There was even a pair of hikers that walked through on the afternoon of the second day who were the first ones to test out the new bridges.

Part of the incredible team building experience of trail crew is that you can't achieve much as an individual, but you can make a huge impact as a team. Working as part of a trail crew not only builds leadership and technical skills, but it builds camaraderie among people with a shared interest in protecting and conserving the land. The hope of the trip was to instill in young folks a tradition of giving back to the trails we love, and this weekend seemed to do just that.



**PHOTO: THE CREW PROUDLY SHOWING OFF ONE OF OUR FINISHED BOG BRIDGES**

# Lead an outdoor activity for Primary Source's HistoryThon Oct 1- Nov 6, 2022



**What is it?** HistoryThon is a walkathon, on your own schedule, to explore African American history with social and racial justice issues as the foundation. As an AMC leader, you are encouraged to lead a hike, walk, bike ride, or paddle while exploring African American history.

Thanks to the generosity of the Narragansett, Mohawk Hudson, ME, CT, Western MA, Worcester, and Potomac chapters, AMC is sponsoring the HistoryThon this year, and we get to start early!

## Get Started Today!

1. Register (click the “Register” button) at <https://primarysource.secsweet.com/default.asp> using Promo Code AMC2022. Note: Registration is free with the code, thanks to AMC’s sponsorship. You will have an opportunity to donate to Primary Source according to your preference. Feel free to register as an individual (click “participate individually”).

2. Lead a hike or excursion at one of the suggested walks and trails that can be found as part of a curated list of outdoor places in the “[2022 HistoryThon: Explorations](#)” document, available on your dashboard once you register. Use the [HistoryThon: Expedition Guide](#) for discussion prompts to facilitate critical thinking and group conversation while on community outings.

*All Worcester Chapter leaders who post and lead an activity for HistoryThon between Oct. 1 and Nov. 6 will receive a gift card to a local BIPOC and/or woman-owned business.*

*Questions? Contact Alexandra, Worcester Chapter DEI Chair, at [dei@amcworchester.org](mailto:dei@amcworchester.org)  
Thank you for advancing AMC’s DEI vision! Looking forward to seeing you on the trails!*



## **Worcester Chapter seeking Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Chair!**

Are you looking for ways to get more involved with the Worcester Chapter? The Worcester Chapter is looking for a DEI Chair to advance the Chapter's DEI efforts. This role is elected annually and is a member of the Worcester Chapter Executive Committee.

### **As DEI Chair, you will:**

- Ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion is integrated in all aspects of the Chapter
- Develop DEI vision for Chapter (based on greater AMC goals) and make recommendations for Chapter to implement
- Serve on DEI Volunteer Representatives Committee to remain informed about broader organizational goals and exchange ideas with fellow DEI volunteer representatives
- Attend Chapter Executive Committee meetings (9 per year), the Chapter's Annual Meeting, and special meetings of the Chapter or of the Executive Committee
- Help manage the DEI budget
- Prepare DEI Chair's inputs to Chapter annual report.

**Most importantly, we are looking for someone who is enthusiastic and who would like to share their energy volunteering with a vibrant, dedicated group of people.**

All training will be provided.

**Are you interested? We'd love to hear from you! Please reach out to Alexandra at [dei@amcworchester.org](mailto:dei@amcworchester.org) with any questions or for more information.**







## Hot Grub on the Trail

By David Elliot, Paddling Chair

One of the first things you learn about backpacking or paddle camping is that folks rely on itty bitty stoves for hot meals. While it's true that frozen, foil wrapped meat, potato & veg laid right on a campfire like back in Scouts still ranks high for a single overnight, non-perishable food prepared on stoves is the answer for multi-day excursions - boiling water in minutes and keeping pots shiny. Besides, alpine areas and popular routes often

prohibit fires to reduce damage to the forest.

Stoves range from high efficiency pushbutton boilers, thru the old reliable (updated), to slack packer minimalism. They are generally grouped by fuel: 1) pressurized gas canister, 2) hand pumped liquid fuel, 3) alcohol, 4) solid fuel tablets and even 5) tiny wood burners - plus 6) let's talk menu. They'll all turn out hot food - but vary in functionality: boiling water (mostly), simmering stew, operation in winter or not, speed and convenience.

**(1) Pressurize Gas Canister** stoves use a grapefruit sized, dome shaped, disposable steel canister pre-filled with propane. Propane turns to liquid when pressurized, which is why shaking the canister you hear liquid sloshing inside. (If not, it's empty). Propane works down to about freezing. With butane added, it's good down to the low 20's.

They're hugely popular because essentially miniature versions of your gas grill at home, instantly ready to cook and with an adjustable flame. They do however leave empty canisters to carry back out of the woods, puncture, *flatten* and only then place in the regular recycling. ("Flat" tells your hauler it's safe to recycle).

“**Jet Boil**” is for good reason a popular brand in this category primarily for, you guessed it, boiling water *fast*. Plus an adapter lets you cook with any old pot much like competing brands.

(2) **White Gas Pumped Liquid fuel** stoves are “the old reliable” my scout masters used 50 years ago & is still favored by seasoned adventurers fond of winter and long trips. I’ve got the Adirondacks, Maine and Canada in mind. They generate minimal trash and as a couple of our expert outdoor friends chorus, they produce drinking water from snow with capacity to spare. They are literally what Everest climbers use.

But they are more complicated, requiring a bit of study and care, and burning **gasoline** can be *dangerous in careless hands*. Lighting requires an initial warmup process referred to as “priming.” You let in a bit of fuel and light it. Then as that burns off you gradually reopen the fuel valve as the flame transitions from yellow and wavering to steady and blue. Also, like all things not disposable, these stoves eventually require a little maintenance like replacement of o-rings to prevent leaks. So don’t go here if you aren’t ready to engage your inner mechanic.

Did I say dangerous? “*White Gas*” generically referred to as “stove fuel” is literally a slightly modified version of that cause of many a *burn unit visit* - **gasoline**. But don’t rule it out too hastily. For one thing, some pumped liquid fuel stoves include a kit to convert to burning **clean kerosene** which is virtually impossible to ignite by accident and is also convenient for its international availability. **Clean or K-1 kerosene** has 90% of the sulfur removed. Sulfur is what gives diesel and #2 heating fuel its particular stink. The down side of kerosene is that it’s a bit more challenging to prime and prone to leaving sticky deposits.

By the way, buy the more expensive stove fuel whether White Gas or kerosene. The brand doesn’t have to match your stove, but it will burn cleaner than the no-name.

Another negative of liquid fuel stoves is most lack a flame size fine adjustment knob. Though experienced users have developed work arounds like operating at low pressure (fewer pumps), I opted for less

learning curve and full flexibility by choosing one of the few fully adjustable models the “**MSR Dragonfly**.”

The downside of the Dragonfly is it sounds like a vacuum cleaner - though my third party “**Quiet Stove**” adapter muffles that by half. Still, it’s best to operate it away from the social center of camp, with wind screen, even behind a tree to deflect some of its racket. Not that it’s ear splitting, but crouched over it you can hear the conversations around conversations.

If you are less intent on simmer capability consider the popular and aptly named “**MSR Whisperlite**.”

**(3) Alcohol stoves** have surged in popularity driven by their minimal weight, low cost and elegant simplicity. They are frequently constructed out of trash - thus having names like “Fancy Feast” - shaped, nested, perforated and presto, a stove. It burns a fuel available anywhere, from pharmacies to gas station convenience stores - **Drygas** (methyl alcohol) burning the hottest. On the negative side, alcohol burns with an invisible flame & in general provides about half the heat per ounce as other fuels.

Online you’ll find excellent designs and manufacturing videos for making your own stove or you can buy one from the cottage industry that has sprung up building quite sophisticated models. Either way, educate yourself on the shapes and sizes out there via the thoughtful, quirky online guide [Zenstoves.net](http://Zenstoves.net). It begins by separating alcohol stoves into 6 categories, explaining their pros, cons and capabilities like flame centered or spread out, adjustable heat and designs that let you pour leftover fuel back into the bottle, etc.

Personally, I’ve deferred choosing an alcohol stove for backpacking - where its light weight shines. That’ll be a study in itself.

Now, you’ll read that alcohol stoves don’t work in winter. If so, how is it Iditarod mushers have adopted them wholesale, fashioning them out of 5 gallon buckets? Mostly, you just have to get the fuel warmed up to work right. You can keep a few ounces of fuel warm in your pocket or

place a shallow preheat pan under your stove. When adding fuel, drip some in the pan, then light both. The alcohol always burns unevenly at first, but as the stove warms - the sooner by being engulfed in flames from the preheat pan - you soon have jets of steady flame.

**(4) Solid Alcohol**, technically Hexamine, trade name **Esbit** and called "Heat tabs" in the military comes in white, waxy blocks the size of a tab of butter. Hold a flame to it and that spot starts burning. The Esbit "stove" is little more than a sheet metal platform to hold the fuel and support a pot. Some fuel packages even include a disposable stove.

Esbit is praised for being a solid and thus unable to leak in your pack - though it eats through plastic bags so should be wrapped first in aluminum foil. It also produces less heat, slightly stains pots, can drip when burning, costs more and - the kicker - is available only in camping stores.

**(5) A Camping Wood Stove** evokes the crackling romance of a campfire in a 5 inch sheet metal box that packs flat. Containing a tiny fire directly beneath your pot, it is quite efficient, a point worth considering for every campfire: small is green.

Of course besides the work of snapping twigs or cutting and splitting logs to finger size - the inside of logs being dry even in the rain - such a fire needs frequent feeding, which will delight some even as it may frustrate folks who have tents to set up. Also a wood fire blackens pots & can burn through aluminum.

**(6) About the menu**, or what kind of cooking have you got in mind?

Typically for **single package dehydrated meals** you just need to boil water. (Tip for rehydrating: after stirring, wrap your pouch/pot of food in a cozy - say a fleece hat - to give it a good hot reconstituting soak). But

as with any meal in a box, brands vary in their quality, and frankly you deserve the best after trekking all those miles to God's restaurant - so don't be stingy.

For the full range of options, including boutique offerings, look online. At brick & mortar stores scrutinize ingredient lists, being wary of highly processed major brands particularly if you have dietary restrictions. [SectionHiker.com](http://SectionHiker.com) recommends - and I have enjoyed - "**Good To Go**" brand available at REI.

Or push toward the next level of cuisine, **single pot meals**, which require actual cooking so a flame adjustable right down to simmer - plus a pot to wash. Ingredients like legumes, grains, dehydrated vegetables and meat are available in bulk. There's also OvaEasy Egg Crystals - quite good for omelets or scrambled eggs. Explore [www.trail.recipes](http://www.trail.recipes). The truly serious buy their own dehydrator. See [BackPackingChef.com](http://BackPackingChef.com).

**In conclusion**, carefully rank the capabilities you'd like a stove to have as food and drink are critical to your outdoor well being. Particularly in winter, stoves are safety gear you're guaranteed to use. Nor is there an ultimate stove, just good compromises, about which I've only provided an overview. So do your own research, though luckily forums and YouTube are particularly strong on the topic.

Just don't forget good waterproof matches. [www.ucogear.com/firestarting/matches/](http://www.ucogear.com/firestarting/matches/) are the ultimate.

# **The Wrath of Summer's 2022 Drought**

by Jonathan DiRodi and Eric Harris, Conservation Co-Chairs



Photo: Silver Lake in Vermont

The 2022 summer has been relentless with extreme dry conditions and several cases of record-breaking heat; granted we have had many days that have been sunny and we have spent more days recreating outside. As the summer has dragged on we have seen numerous days with high heat and humidity. The extreme heat and drought conditions have not just plagued New England but it has

also gripped our nation, as well as on a global scale. We all have seen or heard that the Colorado River and Lake Mead is drying up at a record pace. This has greatly affected folks living out in that area. This drought also has created a significant effect on wildlife, both water and land species.

Here back home in New England we have not experienced what the west has seen, but we are getting a glimpse of the effects of what the future holds if we do not act. This summer, record highs and record “high low” temperatures” have been broken and or shattered in many cities across New England. We have seen green lawns blow away this summer, rivers slowly drying up, crops wilting, and many of us seeking other methods of recreating due to the oppressive heat and humidity. We all have limits when it comes to being outside in the heat. The issue becomes when temps soar to 95-100 degrees consistently. The places we normally recreate outside in the summer months are being affected including the high peaks of New England or our favorite paddling and swimming spots.

The month of August which is usually known for comfortable summer conditions has seen many dry weather days but with many days still near 90 or above, especially near urban areas. Most locations in Southern New England are under a severe or exceptional drought which has led to scattered wildfires especially near the Boston suburbs. In addition, rivers are drying up which has affected those that paddle throughout the year. Hikers and through hikers coming North on the Appalachian trail are being affected as well. As most people backpacking normally rely on water resources along trail especially when they settle into camp for the night.

These record temperatures and severe drought conditions serve as a warning to what our future could be like. The heat will continue to

increase and extreme droughts will become a more common occurrence. Communities encouraging residents to conserve water will be forced to issue mandatory water bans as our reservoirs and aquifers are depleted. Our native flora and fauna will continue to be under extreme stress as they struggle to survive on a very dry landscape. Summer 2022 should stand as a good mental and physical reminder that something is not right and the global warming issue needs to be addressed.

Instead of complaining about the climate crisis, let us all become stewards for the environment and take matters into our own hands. How can you take on this monumental task of combating global warming? Well, the answer is simple. Let's work to minimize our individual carbon footprint.

The Nature Conservancy offers a free and interactive Carbon Footprint Calculator that you can use to calculate your carbon footprint [What is your carbon footprint? | Carbon Footprint Calculator \(nature.org\)](https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/what-we-do/programs/carbon-footprint-calculator). Give it a try! You may discover ways to reduce your carbon footprint, and help prevent the wrath of summer 2022's drought from happening again.

