Chapter Chair’s Corner

By Cindy Crosby

“This land is my land, this land is your land, from California to the New York island, from the redwood forest to the gulf stream waters, this land was made for me and you.”
—Woody Guthrie, recorded 1944

Who’s Land Is It?

Is this land really for everyone? Who once strolled our local trails and fished our waters? Where do the names Chickatawbut, Ponkapoag, and Wompatuck come from? I find myself pondering these questions as I spend more time outdoors in Massachusetts, finding ways to safely embrace this pandemic lifestyle.

My journey to discover whose lands I inhabit started when I spent a recent cold, winter weekend in one of AMC’s Ponkapoag cabins, located less than 30 minutes from my home. The rustic cabin offered me ample opportunity to hike, snowshoe, and to read beside the warmth of the wood-burning stove. Here I discovered some books and pamphlets about the camp that inspired me to learn more about our local history.

Still feeling the effects of the racial injustices suffered last year—Christopher Cooper, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor—and still reeling from today’s Covid-19 racial and ethnic health disparities, I was saddened to learn of the similar injustices placed upon the indigenous people of Massachusetts. “Through broken treaties,

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pillaging, and disease, white settlers stole the land of Indigenous people…”2

**America's Early History**

Many myths about our early history need to be dispelled.

For example, the Pilgrims were not the first to settle in Massachusetts in 1620. Europeans had been visiting New England for hundreds of years, engaging in peaceful trading with indigenous tribes of New England.

“The Confederation of Indigenous Massachusett lived and thrived in what is now called the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.”3 They hunted, fished, planted, and harvested fields of grain, corn, squash, and beans. They sourced stone from the local quarries to sculpt their tools and weapons. They lived in villages, raised families, and enjoyed prosperity. One Massachusett tribe was the Neponset, and their Sac’hem (chief) was Chickataubut.4

The Pilgrims arrived seeking both religious freedom and ways to maintain their English identify and make money.5 We need to correct the myth that their arrival was peaceful. They were motivated to secure land for themselves, king, and country. The 1629 Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony made the colonists’ purpose clear: “reduce or convert to submission the indigenous people of New England.”6

**Affect on Indigenous Population**

Over the years as thousands more English sailed across the Atlantic in search of new homes, the Neponsets of the Massachusett Tribe were decimated by plague, removed from their lands, and forced over the Blue Hills to the area known as Ponkapoag. The Neponsets lost their way of life—access to the quarries for tools, the ocean for fishing, and the fields for planting—and adapted to fresh water fishing, hunting, and trapping at Ponkapoag.7

“All of our national parks and even our state parks (were) created by the dislocation and, in some cases, the ethnic cleansing or genocide of Indigenous people,” wrote Danielle Williams, founder of Melanin Base Camp and Diversify Outdoors. The Blue Hills Reservation is an example of this in Massachusetts.

I recognize that I am not responsible for my ancestor’s actions, but how do I come to terms with this injustice? Don’t I have a responsibility in today’s society, which is a product of that past? Perhaps Sena Crow says it best in her blog, “Outdoor Recreation is NOT an Escape from Racism.”8 Perhaps it’s time that I ask myself before I set out on a hike or walk, “Whose land am I on?” What can I learn from the amazing perseverance of a beautiful people who adapted, remained strong, and held onto the beauty of their culture?

If you’ve never spent time strolling the extensive trail network of the 8,500-acre Blue Hills Reservation and explored the beauty of its surrounding hills and ponds, I highly recommend you do. And when you do, remember that the Massachusett Tribe is still here with us today.

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**End Notes:**

8. Ibid 2
Finding Trips and Activities Online

Trip listings are now exclusively online!

**Boston Chapter trips:**
- Visit the Trip Listings Digest at [www.amcboston.org](http://www.amcboston.org), where you’ll always find two months’ worth of trips.

**All AMC trips** (including Boston Chapter-led trips):
- Log in to [https://activities.outdoors.org/login](https://activities.outdoors.org/login) with your AMC account (your AMC Member Center account or AMC Online store login).

If you have not yet created an AMC account, go to the above link and fill in the information in the box on the screen’s left side to create one.

If you have an account but have forgotten your username or password, scroll down and click the *I forgot my username or password* link at the bottom of the screen.

After signing up for a trip, you will receive a registration confirmation via email, which can help coordinate carpooling with other participants. You can also use your account dashboard to keep track of your upcoming trips.

Have a Story or Photos to Share?

*We’re always interested in hearing about your AMC adventures, experiences, and outdoor tips.*


For more information or to submit an article, contact the Mud editor at edex.edit@verizon.net.

Attend an Executive Committee Meeting

*Boston chapter executive committee meetings are open to all AMC members.*

Come meet the chapter leaders and share your ideas. Meetings are held September through June on the first Monday of the month, 7–9 pm, at AMC Headquarters, 10 City Square, Charlestown. However, due to Covid-19, chapter meetings are currently held remotely.

For more information, contact the Chapter Chair at cindy@amcboston.org.
I was losing faith in the AMC.

Active with the AMC for more than a year, I have enjoyed acquaintances, but not made any friends. (This is not a complaint, merely a contrast between my experience with tennis and running clubs, which are very welcoming and through which I developed many good friends.) Nevertheless, I am grateful for the Wrentham and Westboro Charm Bracelet hikes, and the Worcester Chapter Wachusett Reservoir bike ride with the fabulous Amber who, as a Mountaineering Committee member, hosts Monday night yoga sessions via Zoom.

A cloud hovered over my attempts to become further involved with the AMC after I was unjustly denied an opportunity to join a hike after an unanticipated and unpleasant interview with the trip leader. Was the AMC really interested in welcoming new members? Are we a club that wants to reach out to people beyond our current circle of friends? What are our values?

It was time for an attitude adjustment.

This occurred on my recent AMC snowshoeing weekend. As soon as I entered the Highland Center at Crawford Notch, all staff, from the registration team to meal servers, went out of their way to make every guest feel welcome. Emily and Pat, our guides, were knowledgeable, organized, enthusiastic, and kind, inspiring our group to embrace all the White Mountains has to offer. We were a diverse group that required negotiation and adjustments, which Pat and Emily executed flawlessly. As a result, our small group bonded quickly, thus enriching the weekend experience for all.

The key ingredient? Kindness. Our guides exhibited kindness to us, and each participant reciprocated to them and to each other.

The dictionary defines kindness as “the ability to be indulgent, considerate, helpful, and humane.” It’s often overlooked in our daily lives as we attend to business and pleasure. It transforms a relationship or experience, deescalates conflict, and causes friendships to emerge in unexpected circumstances. I was the recipient of kindness all weekend and hope to pass it on to all the friends I intend to make at AMC. Let’s integrate it in every aspect of our work at the AMC.

By the way, the snow and hike were fantastic. The views from mountain tops were awe inspiring. What a successful attitude adjustment!
New Paddling Committee Chair

The Mud recently interviewed Jeff Barrel, the Paddling Committee’s incoming chair, as he assumes his new role.

What are your plans for this season?
Our hope is that things loosen up a bit this summer as the vaccine and warmer weather decreases the spread of Covid-19. We will offer sea kayak clinics for beginners, intermediates, and advanced, plus navigation which can be done partly via Zoom. Whitewater clinics are less certain because rescues require proximity without masks.

The trips posted last year on the AMC website were a fraction of our regular trips. Covid-19 caused many of our volunteer leaders to paddle with smaller groups of friends within the AMC network. Although these closed, private trips are easier to run than open, public trips, this practice leads to a closed group that is hard for newcomers to enter and the network shrinks over time. A healthy network has turnover—new people get involved and are encouraged to make contributions. We want to put this pandemic behind us and be an open, welcoming, and safe place to paddle.

Speaking of new involvement, our flatwater program has been non-existent for many years and we hope to recruit flatwater and paddleboard leaders and trips. If this interests you or someone you know, please contact me at jbarrell2@gmail.com.

What are your paddling safety recommendations during a pandemic?
We led several trips last year without incident. Sea kayak boats are large (16 ft or more), which encourages distancing once on the water. Our groups were generally smaller (4 to 7 people) and wind helps dispersal. Whitewater folks did several non-listed trips with those in the AMC network. We determined that shuttles are safe with three people per car, windows down, and masks on.

Our sport already involves risk and Covid-19 is an additional factor. Each of us have different risk tolerance and younger people generally tolerate higher risks. Of course, Covid-19 is new and it’s hard to assess the risks, but we know more than last April. Remember, too, that there are long-term risks with staying home with limited exercise.

Tell us a little about your non-AMC life.
Originally from Utah, I’m an avid skier and lead backcountry ski trips with the AMC. Recently retired from engineering, I miss collaborating with coworkers on technical problems, but not sitting at a computer all week. I’m also a gardener and composter, plus active with my local church, working on streaming services and promoting rooftop solar cells.

Virtual Leadership Training This Spring

Interested in virtual leadership training? Two training sessions will be offered this spring:

• Session 1: April 1, 6, 8, and 13
• Session 2: May 4, 6, 11, and 13

For more leadership information or to register for these and other sessions, visit https://activities.outdoors.org/search/?act=12.

These spots filled very quickly last year, so please register for them at the links above (or search on outdoors.org) at your earliest convenience.

If these sessions fill up, additional virtual leadership training sessions may be scheduled. Check the Leadership Training page on outdoors.org for up-to-date information: https://www.outdoors.org/skills-leadership/leadership-skills.

The Boston Chapter will likely have a supplemental class to introduce people to Boston-specific requirements, and allow attendees to practice their skills via role-plays. We’re just starting to work out the details, but it will likely occur sometime in May or June, and one of the virtual leadership training sessions is a prerequisite.
Julia Khorana Receives Distinguished Service Award

Julia Khorana, Interchapter Paddling Committee Chair, received the 2021 Distinguished Service Award.

Julia is a stalwart advocate for AMC’s paddlers and protecting the resources they care about. She chairs the Interchapter Paddling Committee, is a member of AMC’s Outdoor Leadership Development Committee, and previously chaired the Boston Chapter Paddling Committee.

In every circle of AMC, Julia collaborates with paddling enthusiasts across disciplines to ensure that paddling needs are brought to the fore. This teamwork encompasses conservation and recreational access, as well as leader development and training.

Julia’s first AMC conservation efforts led to a decades-long effort to secure and protect flows on New England rivers. Julia worked with AMC Director of Research Dr. Ken Kimball on several dam relicensing projects to secure fall and spring flows for whitewater paddlers, while also ensuring other recreational access assets such as put-ins, portages, and campsites.

She also works in collaboration with all twelve AMC chapters and individual donors to grow the AMC Waters and Rivers Protection Fund. This fund provided financial support to five river conservation projects in 2020, developing and enhancing river access and enjoyment across the northeast. Julia continues to track whitewater releases, keeping a public schedule on the AMC Boston Paddlers website at https://amcbostonpaddlers.org/documents/river-releases/ so that paddlers can review upcoming dam releases across New England.

From sea kayaking to stand-up paddle boarding and beyond, Julia serves an instrumental role in supporting training, leadership development, and advocating that best practices are adopted and consistent across AMC programs.

In 2020, she worked with the Interchapter Paddling Committee to help develop and improve the Covid-19 Restart Rubric. This checklist supports AMC volunteers and volunteer leaders as they prepare to relaunch activities during Covid-19. Given the emergent nature of the pandemic, volunteers and leaders must be prepared to move fluidly between phases on short notice as directed by the chapter and organizational leadership.

In her professional life, Julia leads sponsor relations for OARS, a nonprofit organization devoted to the protection of the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers through awareness raising, science, and solutions. OARS hosts the Wild and Scenic Film Festival, annual clean ups, educational programs for children, and more. Her experience has made Julia excellent at working with staff and volunteers across chapters and paddling disciplines on topics ranging from conservation to training. AMC’s paddlers can all thank Julia for her Distinguished Service.
Boston Chapter Seeks Volunteer Conservation Leader

Are you passionate about conservation? How about leading the environmental efforts of 25,000 outdoor enthusiasts and a dozen activity committees focused on getting people hiking, backpacking, biking, paddling, taking local walks, and much more?

We seek an individual to promote and lead the chapter’s conservation efforts. Current efforts include: reducing net carbon emissions, promoting leave no trace behind, and generally raising conservation awareness. The leader will work closely with the activity committees to embed conservation awareness in chapter activities, develop and measure conservation goals, provide content to chapter newsletters, and sponsor chapter-wide conservation events such as Earth Day. The position may also coordinate with other local conservation organizations and provide comments on proposed legislation.

The successful candidate will have demonstrated accomplishments leading conservation or environmental efforts. It is an exciting opportunity for an AMC member able to commit an average 5 to 10 hours per month.

For more information, contact Mike Barry, mikebarry657@gmail.com, or Brooks Sherman, rbsherman123@gmail.com.