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Charles River **Mud**

The Quarterly Newsletter of AMC's Boston Chapter

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Photo credit: Cindy Crosby



Chapter Chair
Cindy Crosby

Chapter Chair's Corner

By Cindy Crosby

Accessible and Environmentally Friendly Trips: Your Decision Today Impacts Our Future

Our fates are linked. Nature and human lives are entwined. When a plastic bag hanging from my backpack flies away in the woods, it impacts wildlife and others who tread behind me. When I drive 250 miles round-trip solo to paddle in a pristine wilderness pond, I contribute to rising carbon emissions, global warming, and rising water levels that flood homes and change the future of our waterways.

However, when I view myself as part of nature, I am more aware of my connectedness to it and others who inhabit and depend on it. I've learned that the climate crisis disproportionately affects the world's poor [and] people of color (*The Effects of Climate Change*, Steve Holt, August 10, 2020, <https://www.outdoors.org/articles/amc-outdoors/the-effects-of-climate-change>).

Air pollution and higher temperatures impact African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics living in urban areas with fewer green spaces. The rate of early deaths has increased (Holt).

I hear from those who don't own cars. Some hope for more outdoor events accessible via public transportation or within walking distance from their homes. Others hope for more ride-sharing opportunities to/from events post-pandemic.

Through them I've become more aware of the inequitable access our outdoor events may pose for urban and people-of-color communities.

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“Our decisions today as outdoor leaders have the ability to bring the outdoors to more people while minimizing environmental impact. . . .”

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Some of our outdoor events contribute toward the growing climate crisis we're facing, especially with solo car travel and increasing numbers of out-of-state events. Trails and parks are highly frequented, used and abused, yet outdoor events continue at a high frequency.

Our decisions today as outdoor leaders have the ability to bring the outdoors to more people while minimizing environmental impact—a positive step for our future. Won't you join me in taking the first step to make our events more accessible and environmentally friendly?

Please send your ideas to Cindy@amcboston.org.

Boston Chapter Annual Meeting

The Boston Chapter held its Annual Meeting on November 8, virtually via Zoom. The meeting hosted four presenters:

- Cindy Crosby, Boston Chapter Chair
- Karl Fries, AMC Director of Executive Office & Strategic Initiatives
- Mike Barry, Nominating Committee
- Featured speaker Steve Tatko, Director of Maine Conservation and Land Management

Cindy Crosby, Boston Chapter Chair

Cindy kicked off the meeting with the results of an Executive Committee poll. Questions included: *When Covid is no longer a threat, what is your preferred method of travel to AMC events?*

"Carpool wins, with public transportation and car/solo travel tied for 2nd place. We'll use this information in planning for next year," said Cindy.

Cindy thanked volunteers who tirelessly donate their time. "Some positions are coming to the end of their terms; on behalf of the Executive Committee, I wish you all the best. For those continuing on, I look forward to working with you again. Volunteer leaders are important to us, and we value your stewardship of the AMC mission," said Cindy.

"We're adjusting to a new wave of Covid infections, but this is just a temporarily setback. As outdoor enthusiasts, we'll slow our pace, take stock of our surroundings, and be hopeful for the future," added Cindy.

"It's time to open our doors and bring in new people, and emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion. Everyone is welcome to join the Executive Committee, or attend our monthly meetings," concluded Cindy.

Karl Fries, AMC Director of Executive Office & Strategic Initiatives

Karl helps AMC's leadership team stay organized and coordinated. He also advances AMC150, the organization's latest strategic vision.

Karl thanked all AMC members for renewing their membership and often making additional contributions.

"You, as volunteers, keep AMC thriving and help move its business. We fulfill our mission around the world, and volunteers continue to step up in different circumstances with enthusiasm and creativity," said Karl.

Due to the pandemic, the AMC has moved to online events. "This has had an overwhelmingly positive, with higher attendance than expected," added Karl.

The Boston chapter has hosted 46 virtual events so far—everything from yoga to outdoor skill-building workshops—and events are available to all members.

Mike Barry, Nominating Committee

Mike, along with Brooks Sherman, runs the Nominating Committee, which actively seek a third member.

"It's a key effort, and we'd like another person who has trip or committee leader experience, and we're looking for diversity," said Mike.

"In late spring and early summer, we reach out to recruit interested people. This year, we're very happy with quality of people who responded," added Mike.

Steve Tatko, Director of Maine Conservation and Land Management

Steve described what the Maine Woods Initiative has become over the past 17 years, and how it still resonates with the AMC.

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Finding Trips and Activities Online

Trip listings are now exclusively online!

Boston Chapter trips:

- Visit the Trip Listings Digest at **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** with your AMC account (your AMC Member Center account or AMC Online store login).

Boston Chapter Annual Meeting continued from previous page...

AMC's conservation strategy involves:

- Landscape-scale conservation
- New outdoor recreation destinations—public access to land
- Responsible forestry
- Economic development, community partnerships, and local environmental education

"Maine offers many opportunities, especially in the north, which is largely unpopulated. Maine has 10.4 million acres of undeveloped land, more than half the state," explained Steve.

The Maine Wood Initiative has the following objectives:

- Build a recreational infrastructure
- Ensure public access for traditional uses
- Responsible forest management and carbon sequestration
- Economic development, community partnerships, and local environmental education
- Landscape scale habitat restoration

Since 2003, the AMC has built 130 miles of trails, three lodges, and 92 miles of groomed ski trails. Carbon stocking has increased about 17 percent in the last decade. The AMC is a leader in carbon-credit projects.

The centerpiece of AMC's conservation efforts is the Pleasant River watershed. "We're working to remove the fish passages. So far, we've completed 64 fish passage projects, 22 of which were AMC-funded. Since 2011, \$1.4 million has been invested in fish passage on AMC lands, and 66 miles of stream have been reconnected. The AMC aims to remove all fish passage barriers by 2024," added Steve.

"The Maine forest is everyone's forest. You're all as much a part of the success here as anyone else, and I thank for what you do to advance the AMC," concluded Steve.

Boston chapter website:
www.amcboston.org

Questions, comments, or suggestions about the Boston Chapter? Contact:

membership@amcboston.org

For membership changes and electronic newsletter sign-up, contact AMC Member Services:

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Charles River Mud

Published 4 times a year. Feedback and contributions from members is welcome and appreciated. Please send your trip reports, photos, articles, letters, book reviews, and so forth to the Mud editor (info below).

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Comments or complaints about a chapter trip? We encourage you to contact the Chair:
cindy@amcboston.org

Back Country Ski Touring at its Best in the Maine Woods

Photo credit: Mike Barry



Chapter leaders' trip to Mt. Katahdin

Imagine in only 5 hours from Boston entering a remote winter wonderland of 100+ miles of trails and homey lodges full of hospitality and ambience! The AMC Maine Forest Preserve provides 70,000+ acres for you to explore with a wide variety of trail types that accommodate novice to skilled skiers.

The preserve is approximately 25 miles long and 5 miles wide, and the surrounding land is all forest, much of it in a conservation easement. There are also several lodges, all conveniently located 6 to 12 miles apart.

The trail network is a coordinated network of "main" trails that link the lodges. These trails typically include wider dirt roads, and many side and linking loop trails, that range from dirt roads to trails laid out for skiing to challenging hiking trails.

For grooming, the AMC has a state-of-the-art Bombardier that grooms the main trails between the lodges to flat "corduroy." Many side trails are also groomed, and others are left to nature for an ungroomed experience.

The AMC has been developing trail networks mostly in the south (Lyford-Gorman) and the north

(Medewisla) parts of the preserve. In the middle, privately run West Branch Pond Camps is a favorite of leader Mike Barry, who's been running chapter trips out of there since 2010. They typically work with groups one-on-one on their expanding network of trails and groom with tracks (or not groom at all), depending on what you want to do.

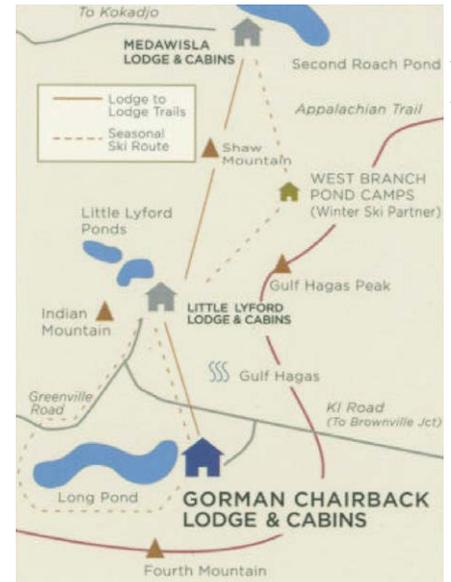
As for the skiing, it's all up to what you want to do. You can ski lodge to lodge (your baggage will be happily transferred for a charge), or base your adventure out of one lodge or do a mix! The roads are plowed into West Branch Pond Camps and Medewisla so you can drive there. To get to Lyford and Gorman, there is about a 6-mile ski in (but your gear can be transferred, of course).

All lodges provide showers, toilets, and electric power from 5–9 pm. Accommodations are primarily in cabins, and some camps have bunk houses (but it's quite nice, with common areas, etc.). Heating is by wood stove, or propane heat. The food is awesome, hearty, and tries to feature local/regional food.

The ambience and experiences are waiting for you. This year, due to Covid, chapter trips probably can't be run to the Maine lodges. But, since we can't ski tour in Quebec, Norway, or Austria, it may be a great year to go to Maine with your family or "contact group"!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mike Barry, mikebarry657@mac.com or 617.257.2251. Mike has extensively skied most of the preserve's trails, led AMC trips here since 2008, and

is always happy to talk about skiing in Maine and help you tailor a trip to your needs. Here's a **5-minute video from our lodge-to-lodge trip in 2013**, one of Mike's favorites.



Ski touring map

Map credit: Mike Barry

Links to Resources:

- **Northwoods Outfitters:** they can rent skis if you don't have them
- **West Branch Pond Camps**
- **AMC Maine Medewisla Winter Map**
- **AMC Maine Gorman-Lyford Trail Map**
- **AMC Medewisla Lodge**
- **AMC Little Lyford Lodge & Cabins**
- **AMC Gorman Chairback Lodge & Cabins**

Get Avalanche Educated!

As people who spend time in the outdoors, we understand that the natural environment can deliver a different set of hazards than the urban environment. Learning about these hazards enables us to avoid them and, with winter coming, help us manage our time outdoors so we can maximize the fun and minimize the possibility of something bad happening.

Avalanches are a hazard of winter mountain travel. They do occur in the Northeast and can have severe consequences. In fact, 23 avalanche fatalities have occurred in northeastern states since 1950, and every year numerous people are caught in an avalanche. These incidents aren't limited to "extreme skiers," but anyone who spends time in snow-covered mountains—including skiers, climbers, hikers, and snowmobilers.

Over the past few years, there has been a push to extend avalanche education to as many people as possible. Knowledge is power, and if you spend time in snow-covered mountains, this is a topic you should know. Fortunately, a number of online learning opportunities are available, many of which are free:

- The Utah-based *Know Before You Go* organization has been a frontrunner in providing material for avalanche awareness. They offer a free 1-hour online avalanche awareness program at <https://learn.kbyg.org/>. If you want to learn more, they also provide follow-up courses offering in-depth information.
- The outdoor safety equipment manufacturer *Backcountry Access* also offers free online learning videos on avalanche avoidance and avalanche rescue skills: <https://backcountryaccess.com/en-us/learn-avalanche-safety/avalanche-avoidance> and <https://backcountryaccess.com/en-us/learn-avalanche-safety/avalanche-rescue>.
- The *American Avalanche Institute*, a leader in avalanche education, also offers an online avalanche fundamentals course for a small fee: https://www.avalanche-course.com/courses/avalanche_fundamentals/. Besides explaining avalanche safety, they also incorporate topics related to safe winter backcountry trip planning and travel.
- The Northeast has its own avalanche center, the *Mount Washington Avalanche Center*, <https://mountwashingtonavalanchecenter.org/>. Here you will find avalanche forecasts for the presidential mountains as well as information about avalanches.
- The *National Avalanche Center*, <https://avalanche.org/>, has links to all the various avalanche centers in the country as well as acting as a clearing house for avalanche information.



Photo by Hans Braxmeier from pixabay.com

If online learning isn't your thing, you can still take an in-person course offered by many of the fine guiding companies in New England. A list can be found at <https://avtraining.org/recprogram/>.

There are also books that cover avalanche education, such as Bruce Tremper's *Staying Alive in Avalanche Terrain* and *Avalanche Essentials: A Step-by-Step System for Safety and Survival*.

An avalanche doesn't care whether you are a skier, hiker, climber, or snowmobiler. It can seriously hurt you or even kill you. Taking one hour of your time to learn about this hazard can mean the difference between a day of fun in the snow, or a day going badly. So take that time and get avalanche educated!

An avalanche doesn't care whether you are a skier, hiker, climber, or snowmobiler.

Local Walks & Hikes Committee Leadership Change

Longtime Local Walks & Hikes chair Lisa Fleischman is stepping down, and vice chair Judith Watson is stepping up.

The *Mud* asked Lisa and Judith a few questions about their experiences and future roles.

Photo credit: Ken Cohen



Lisa Fleischman, Outgoing Chair

1. How did you become involved with AMC, and

what led you to become the Local Walks & Hikes chair?

I've been an AMC member since 1997. Around 2014, after participating in many local walks and hikes, I was asked to become a leader. Several years later I joined the committee and in 2017 was elected chair.

2. Describe your role and committee accomplishments made during your 4 years as committee chair.

The chair oversees the activities of the Local Walks & Hikes committee and other officers; presides at committee meetings; represents the committee at chapter-level Executive Committee meetings, and other meetings, as necessary; fills any office that becomes vacant, and prepares and submits an annual report to the chapter Executive Committee.

Local Walks & Hikes has accomplished a lot these past 4 years. We revised our website, added six new committee members, instituted regular quarterly meetings, recruited 10 new leaders, standardized leader recognition, eliminated

non-member participation fees, and created new specialty walks/hikes such as an Earth Day walk, geology walk, and forest bathing.

3. How do you view the future of Local Walks & Hikes?

The future is bright. Judith Watson, who is moving from vice chair to chair, has been a terrific partner. She is thoughtful, responsive, innovative, and energetic.

4. What are your plans for future AMC involvement?

Judith has asked me to continue in a chair emerita role and I will also continue to lead for Local Walks & Hikes.

5. Tell us a little about your non-AMC life.

I am Regional Development Director at Brandeis University, where I serve on the Major and Planned Giving staff. I enjoy reading, attending theater and films, and traveling and have recently (pre-Covid) taken hiking trips in Yellowstone, the Canadian Rockies, and Newfoundland.

Photo credit: Keith Watling



Judith Watson, Incoming Chair

1. How did you become involved with AMC, and

what led you to become the Local Walks & Hikes chair?

When I returned to Boston from Boise in 2008, I was looking for a way to continue hiking/walking, so I joined the AMC. After participating in many hikes, I completed my

leadership training in 2018 and discovered that there was an active Local Walks & Hikes group. I joined the Local Walks & Hikes committee, working with Lisa to review and enhance our leadership model, specifically recruitment, training, and retention. Last fall, Lisa asked if I would become the vice chair, with a view to taking over from her in 2021—she is very persuasive!

2. What are your goals as the Local Walks & Hikes chair?

We have an enthusiastic Local Walks & Hikes committee that has maintained momentum during the pandemic—reviewing our standing rules/procedures and ensuring our leaders understand the impact of AMC's Covid regulations. My primary goal is to build on this foundation, encouraging existing leaders to plan, post, and lead local walks and supporting our new leaders and co-leaders as they get out on the trails. I also seek to expand our marketing and outreach activities so that we have a presence in as many local communities as possible.

3. Tell us a little about your non-AMC life.

I volunteer as a Conservation Commissioner in Southborough where I am also on the Master Plan Committee. In addition, I volunteer on a mobile produce truck, visiting Boston areas that lack grocery stores. When I'm not hiking in New England, I enjoy trekking further afield, such as exploring Nepal and New Zealand.

Chapter Seeks Conservation Chair

Are you interested in getting more involved with the Boston Chapter? Want to help move the chapter forward toward the club's conservation goals? If so, contact Cindy@amcboston.org and nominate either yourself or a fellow member for this important position.

The Conservation Chair:

- Attends monthly Executive Committee meetings (or submits a report describing recent conservation activities).
- Raises awareness about AMC's conservation mission and priorities—write and submit for publication conservation-oriented content to chapter newsletters, webpages, Facebook pages, and other social media outlets.
- Promotes AMC's mission at events such as Earth Day, National Trails Day, and National Public Lands Day.
- Partners with other local organizations on conservation initiatives that align with AMC's initiatives.
- Explains the Conservation Action Network and encourages people to become members
- Collaborates with AMC's Conservation Policy and Research staff, and reports actual or potential conservation issues that may warrant club engagement.

This position serves a one-year term with a maximum of three terms.

Executive Committee and Committee Chairs

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair Cindy Crosby
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Vice Chair Rami Haddad
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Secretary Marjorie O'Malley
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