



Appalachian Footnotes

Delaware Valley Chapter • Appalachian Mountain Club
Spring 2012 • Volume 50 • Number 2



Why you probably can't name this flowering tree.

Hint: It used to be very big around here. *Hike to help it, page 3.*

Spring Events: Leader Training, Activities Social, Spring Fling and more!

Weekday hiking, car shuttles, paddling training and a bicycle event.



Appalachian Footnotes

the magazine of the
Delaware Valley Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club
published using recycled electrons.

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Footnotes to again accept advertising

We will accept advertising from companies and individuals that provide products and services that may be of interest to our readers. The largest size ad accepted will be a half page, and the smallest will be a sixth page. No animated ads will be permitted, but hot links the advertiser's web site will.

Income from the advertising will be used to offset our modest production expenses, then go to our chapter's public service programs including trails, conservation and education.

If you are interested in advertising, please e-mail: newsletter@amcdv.org for rates and mechanical specifications. All advertising materials are subject to acceptance by this publication, and will be reviewed for appropriateness for our readers.

Members are reminded that they can advertise used gear and similar items for free in our Weekly Activity Schedule. Contact: web@amcdv.org

Cover: American Chestnut flowers bloom in the Delaware Water Gap area in New Jersey between Sunfish Pond and Raccoon Ridge. Mike Manes photo.

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DV Paddler's Web Site: paddlenow.com
Chapter E-mail: info@amcdv.org
E-mail Hotline: hotline-requests@amcdv.org
AMC General Web Site: outdoors.org

Chapter Ombudsman

Questions, complaints, concerns or comments about the Delaware Valley Chapter of AMC should be directed to Chapter Ombudsman, Bill Steinmetz, 610-694-8677, or ombudsman@amcdv.org.

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American Chestnut: Fighting the Hundred Year War on the Blight

By Mike Manes

The war started in 1904. Not exactly then, it actually started earlier but was not recognized or declared until 1904 in the war room of the Bronx Zoo in NYC. The aggressor was an imported blight; the victims were the native American Chestnuts tree (*Castanea dentata*).

The war is not over yet, and may well become the Two Hundred Year War, but you my friends, readers, and fellow AMC members can help to bring a cessation of the dreaded war.

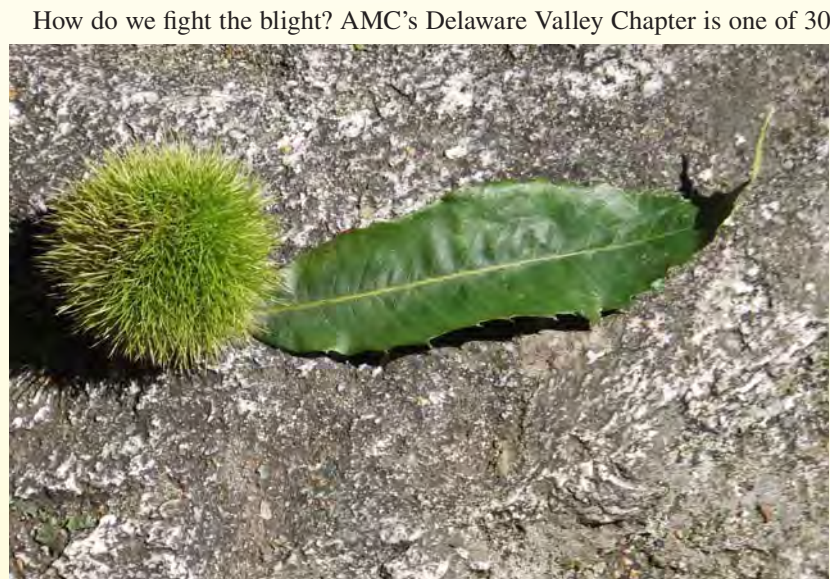
Prior to 1904, the American Chestnut was the king of the forest in the Appalachian Mountains, it ranged from Georgia to Maine, the same area that the Appalachian Trail does today, including our home area in the Delaware Valley. In much of this area it was the dominant tree, accounting for about one quarter of the hard wood, with estimates of up to four billion trees growing. The trees were large, and those with diameters of over six feet and over eighty feet in height were common. Now when The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) talks about large chestnuts they refer to trees with circumferences of 13 inches —about 4 inches in diameter — or more.

In 1900 the chestnut was probably the most important tree growing in the eastern forests. Its wood was the most abundant, was excellent for construction and furniture, and had high resistance to decay even without a protective coating. Large trees produced vast quantities of nut that supported a variety of animals, including humans, hogs and pigs, squirrels, wild turkeys, and other rodents and birds. While no reliable data exist, the loss of the chestnuts produced many changes in the ecosystems, and many species of wildlife decreased in number.

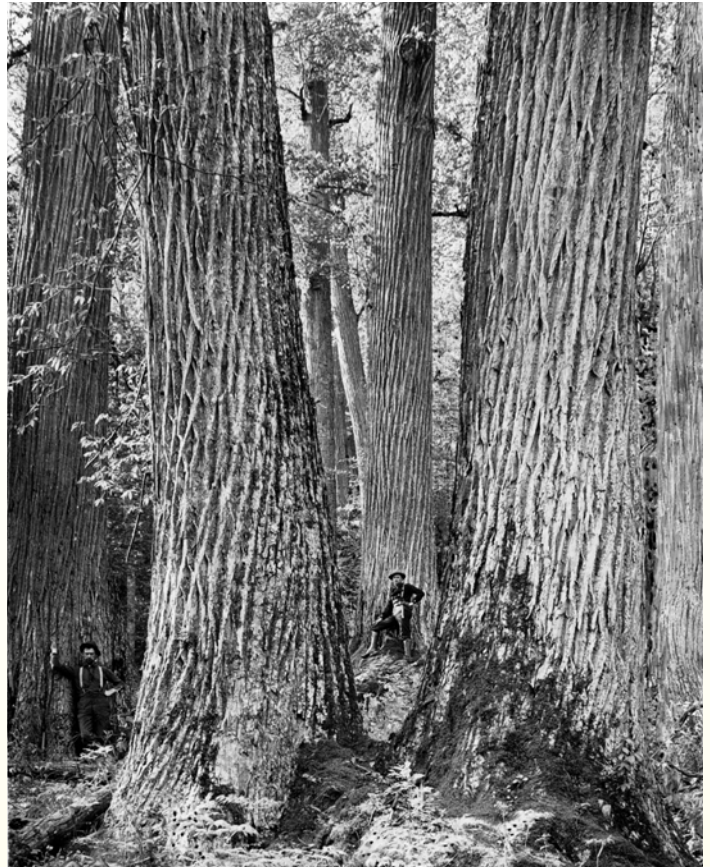
Four billion chestnut trees died in the blight that swept the forest beginning about 1900. By 1940, they were almost all gone.

After it's discovery in 1904 the blight spread rapidly, leaving almost no large living chestnuts in our area by 1915. Then it continued spreading south and west. The blight gets into the bark of mature trees, killing the trees. Various methods and tools were used in efforts to stop the blight but unfortunately none were successful. The slight bit of good news is that the blight did not affect the roots of these mighty trees, and the roots continued to produce small sprouts, but these sprouts rarely matured fully to produce the delicious nut or the precious lumber.

How do we fight the blight? AMC's Delaware Valley Chapter is one of 30 outdoor clubs that maintain sections of the AT under the guidance of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). We maintain a 15.4 mile section between Wind Gap and Little Gap (near Palmerton) in eastern Pennsylvania. ATC is partnering with TACF in surveying chestnuts along the AT, and we intend to assist with this survey. We also intend to assist in finding large (13 inch or more in circumference) trees.



Chestnut seed pod, which contains the nut, and leaf. All photos, except for the historic image above, are by Mike Manes.



Before the blight, the American Chestnut was the largest and most dominate tree of the Appalachian hardwood forest. It produced the world's finest chestnuts, and gathering its nuts for both human food and livestock consumption was an important industry. They were a major food for wildlife.

Chestnut wood made excellent, straight-grained lumber that was naturally resistant to rot and decay. It was used for everything from railroad ties to structural beams to fine furniture. Chestnut lumbering and millwork were a major industry and employer in rural Appalachia.

Since June of 2011, my wife and I found 48 large trees, including six that had a circumference of over 25 inches. Many of these were affected by blight, although a few were blight free. Some of the locations where we found large trees include the Delaware Water Gap area (both the NJ and the PA side), Sourland Mountain Preserve, Mariton Wildlife Sanctuary, Baldpate Mountain, French Creek State Park, Indian Ladders, and along the AT near the Pinnacle and the Pulpit. There were also locations where there were large numbers of smaller chestnut trees. One was along the AT is on the west side of Smith Gap, right in the center of the section of AT maintained by AMC-DV. Continued on next page.

Three kinds of chestnut hike: introductory, survey and large tree searches

Continued from previous page.

Chestnut hikes

On October 2, 2011, I led the first chestnut hike for AMC Delaware Valley. I hope to have several more in 2012, and discuss different problems related to this tree. I plan to lead three types of hikes:

Type 1 – Survey hikes. On these we will count the chestnut trees and sprouts along the Appalachian Trail. I hope to start these in mid May. Limited group size on this type of hike. Smith Gap on our section of the AT will be used as a starting point for the first of these survey hikes.

Type 2 – Large tree searches. This is like a fishing trip. We may find several, we may find nothing. When we find a large tree we will measure it, photograph it, and take its geographic position. We will guarantee a good walk in the woods, with a slow pace. Limited group size on this type of hike.

Type 3 – Introduction to Chestnuts. I will not schedule one of these until the chestnut flowers are in blossom in late June or early July. We will visit places where large chestnuts have been located and talk about the eventual replanting of blight resistant chestnuts.

Wild chestnuts like to grow on hills and mountains, thus all hikes will be on relatively rough hiking grounds. Hikers should be physically fit, although these are not fitness hikes.

Parts of, and possibly the entire hike, will be at a slow pace while we are looking for chestnuts. Hope to see many of you out there to learn about this amazing tree.

Kieu Manes displays a chestnut leaf. Spiked pods contain the delicious chestnuts. The fungal blight that kills the trees is seen on the bark of this tree between Mount Minsi summit and Totts Gap. It spreads by wind-borne spores.

A hundred years ago, mature trees often grew straight and branch-free for 50 feet (sometimes up to one hundred feet), and could grow up to 200 feet tall with a trunk diameter of 14 feet at a few feet above ground level.



About the author: Mike Manes has been a hike and trail maintenance leader for AMC since 1995. He is a former AMC Trails Chair and has been an AT trail maintainer since 1993, and also an AMC lead corridor monitor.

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Outdoor Leadership Workshop: April 13-15

The Delaware Valley Chapter will host an AMC Outdoor Leadership Training Workshop on the weekend of April 13-15, 2012. To make this event easily accessible for DV Chapter members, this session will take place at Nockamixon State Park and the Weisel Hostel near Quakertown.

Everyone is welcome to attend: leader wannabes, new leaders, new members, experienced leaders, members who just want to learn what leadership is all about. Topics to be covered are the elements of outdoor leadership common to all AMC outdoor activities:

- *Activity planning*
- *Leading safe and enjoyable activities*
- *Leadership styles*
- *Group dynamics*
- *Liability issues*
- *Decision making*
- *Accident scene management*
- *Conservation and minimum impact issues*
- *AMC leadership requirements and guidelines*
- *How to become a DV Chapter activity leader*
- *Map and compass skills*

The instructors are experienced AMC volunteers and staff. Attend if you want to step up to leading outdoor activities. The workshop will give you the confidence and skills that you need. If you are already an experienced leader, this workshop will make you a better one.

The cost for the course is \$35 for AMC members, \$50 for non-members, \$20 for AMC members who complete one co-lead by April 1, 2012. If you'd like to stay overnight at Weisel Hostel (where the Friday evening session and Saturday dinner will take place), the cost is \$15 for one night or \$24 for two nights. The Saturday night dinner costs \$15. Contact Lennie Steinmetz, leadership@amcdv.org for additional information and registration.



Flatwater, whitewater paddle courses offered

Four canoeing and kayaking courses for both flatwater and whitewater are being offered by our paddling group during the upcoming season.

An **introductory canoeing** course on canoeing flatwater and basic river paddling, taught in tandem canoes, is scheduled in two parts, with session one on Saturday, May 19, and session two, Saturday, June 9. Both sessions will be in the New Jersey Pine Barrens, on a lake and a river. Members \$75/non-member \$95. for both classes, \$45/\$55 each.

An introduction to **whitewater kayaking** is slated for the weekend of June 16-17, at a local lake and on the Delaware River near Lambertville, NJ. Cost, \$85. Our **solo open canoe** course is set for the weekend of July 7 & 8 on the Schuylkill River near Reading, PA, and will cover basic solo paddling up to entry level whitewater. \$25/\$35.

Our annual **swiftwater safety** session is marked for July 14 at the Lambertville Wing Dam on the Delaware. \$15/25.

All of these courses have modest fees, and all equipment is provided. For the latest information go to paddlenow.com.

Annual Activity Social

Come one, come all to the Delaware Valley Chapter Spring Social and Awards Dinner.

Snacks, dinner & dessert for \$10! BYOB

Prior to the social, several activities are scheduled, including hikes. Social hour (happy hour) will start at 4, followed by a delicious buffet dinner at 5:15. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet and mingle with other chapter members. Dinner will be followed by the ever popular recognition of stewardship and activity awards.

Sat., March 24 — 4 to 8 PM — \$10/person, BYOB
Perkasie Fire Company No. 1, 100 N. Fifth Street, Perkasie, PA 18944

RSVP, Linda Watsula social@amcdv.org or 610-866-2036
Check the chapter website for directions PayPal link:
<http://www.amcdv.org/2012ActivitySocial.jsp>

If paying by check, send check payable to AMC-DV to Linda Watsula, 901 Place Rd., Bethlehem, PA 18017-9344.

No cash please! Checks must be received by March 19

We will be setting up at 3 PM and extra hands are always welcome, so come early and assist.

Picnic to be held June 16, Peace Valley Park

The Delaware Valley Chapter picnic will be held on Saturday, June 16 at Peace Valley Park near Doylestown, PA at noon.

We will provide hamburgers, hot dogs and veggie burgers with all the fixings. Each member is asked to bring a salad or dessert to share. A variety of activities including hikes and bike rides will be held before the start of the picnic.

Additional information will be on the chapter website. Please RSVP to social@amcdv.org with your name and what you will bring or call 610-704-7968 and leave a message. We will have volleyball, horseshoes, quoits, bean bags, etc. Come be a part of the fun!

Leaders offered education reimbursements

The DV Chapter offers reimbursements to DV activity leaders for a variety of specific training programs. This includes Outdoor Leadership Training, Wilderness First Aid, Map & Compass, Leave No Trace, Chapter Youth Program, Water Safety, Chainsaw Safety, and Mountain Leadership School. The reimbursement rate is 50 percent of course fees, not to exceed \$150. Applicants for reimbursement must have led a minimum of two activities within one year before or after taking the training event.

For more information or to apply for training reimbursement, contact the chapter leadership chair at leadership@amcdv.org

Get free weekly list of all chapter activities

If you are not currently receiving our electronic Weekly Activity List every Wednesday evening, you may be missing out on opportunities to find out about many of our scheduled activities.

For those not familiar with the Weekly Activity List, it is an e-mail containing all scheduled DV Chapter activities for the upcoming nine days. It includes announcements, cancellations, scheduled activities such as hiking, paddling and biking; plus advance trip notices and links to important conservation information. It is a great way to stay informed with what is happening within our chapter.

It is a free DV Chapter member benefit. All you need is an e-mail address. To begin receiving the Weekly Activity List, simply e-mail your full name and AMC membership number (which can be found above your name on the mailing label of your AMC Outdoors magazine) to: hotline-requests@amcdv.org. You will receive one e-mail a week. You will not be slammed with a lot of e-mails.

Last year's Memorial Day bike trip on the Great Allegheny Passage trail was a hit; this year's trip will include the Paw Paw Tunnel section along the C&O Canal

Last year's Memorial Day Weekend adventure brought us to a portion of the Great Allegheny Passage. The Allegheny Passage and C&O Canal National Historical Park extends 335 miles from Pittsburgh to Washington DC.

We pedaled on crushed-stone abandoned rail lines through tunnels and across extraordinary viaducts passing a most stunning backdrop of the rugged Allegheny Mountains, the Laurel Highlands and the famous Youghiogheny River.

Besides the impressive scenery we were reminded of the historical significance of the railroad and how it shaped our nation in its pursuit to expand westward for commerce and industry.

We had tent sites right on the Yough and used a shuttle service to facilitate our rides. There were options on ride lengths: 64 or 32 miles on Saturday and 40 miles on Sunday.

Mile markers along the trail designate points of interest and we were able to explore the historical and natural wonders along our daily journey. Our weekend took us through many interesting and memorable sights: over a 1,908-foot-long and 101-foot-high trestle; through Confluence where the Yough and Casselman Rivers and Laurel Hill Creek come together; and over a peaceful wooded trail, lined by multiple cascades and waterfalls, through Ohiopyle State Park.

We were fortunate enough to learn a good deal about the people and how they lived and struggled during the height of the coal industry. We passed remains of "patch" or coal company towns all nestled closely together where up to four families would share each house. We were able to see the rich Pittsburgh coal seam encased by thin layers of shale.

We learned about coke, the fuel derived from bituminous coal. There also was evidence of the devastating environmental impacts of coal mining: many black "gob piles," and acid mine run-off. Imagine living during those days and appreciate the determination and spirit to survive and prosper.

We enjoyed the campground, our camp meals and our time around the campfire. One of our participants did research on Frank Lloyd Wright and presented a campfire chat. It was in preparation for our tour of his masterpiece Fallingwater, designated as a National Historic Landmark and definitely a must see!

We look forward to this year's Memorial Weekend event along the C&O Canal in western Maryland. We will be biking through the Paw Paw Tunnel, an amazing hand-carved project that is 3118 feet long and lined with six million bricks. Fingers crossed for good weather.

— Terry Berntsen, who also provided these photos.



Weekday hikes, where everybody knows your name

Rick Hudson, Hiking Chair

I was reminded a while back of the theme song for the television show *Cheers* that pointed out the patrons like Norm, Cliff and Frasier sitting at the bar “where everybody knows your name” was a little like a certain hiking group within the Delaware Valley chapter.

This came about when one of our leaders was trying to describe “what type of characters show up at these hikes,” and “are they friendly.”

Needless to say when he described our participants this way, it brought a smile not only to the new hiker but also to a few of us who have been instrumental in keeping the hikes going and trying to make them fit, interesting, fun, and sociable.

The hike group I’m talking about is the Wednesday Day Hikers. Many years ago one of our chapter leaders, Billy Newman, saw that there was a need to provide some outdoor activity for retired people, shift workers, or temporarily out-of-work people during normal weekday working hours, so he ardently started to schedule hikes in the Wissahickon and along the Delaware River.

Some additional leaders also picked up the pace and over the years helped him with the weekly schedule. Attendance on these hikes in those days averaged 10 or less, possibly because not that many people were retired or available at that time. Regardless, the hikes provided those of us with time on our hands a way to get outdoors in all sorts of weather without traveling many hours to reach a destination.

Noting that attendance could decline, and the intermediate leaders were now getting on in age, Joan Aichele and Rich Einstein stepped to the plate and took over these hikes and started what we now believe is one of our chapter’s most successful series of low impact local hikes.

Normally on an average day we see 15 to 18 hikers and recently the average (weather permitting) has been around 25 walkers. One Wednesday we actually had 32 people hike 9 plus miles along the towpath in Yardley. In the early days with Billy, we normally would do three to four different hikes. Now, we have a rotation of 10 to 12 destinations that we try to schedule as often as possible with six hikes that are our “bread and butter,” and we make sure we get them into almost every eight week time period. Occasionally, we venture away from Philadelphia and take a day at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area for some real good mountain hiking.

The *Cheers* reference is really quite accurate, simply because we see about 80 percent of the same great folks every week and the list is growing. I’d like to think that it’s due to the personality of the leaders, but I really think it’s that we all seem to get along well, that leaders have scheduled more interesting hikes in new places, and that most of the time **we eat well** at lunch. A large portion of us have commented many times that we wish there was another good day to hike during the week so we could do this more often with our friends, the participants.

I guess one of the reasons to share this with the rest of our leaders

and hikers is to perhaps get a few of you excited enough to try to start one of these day hikes series (it doesn’t have to be a Wednesday series) in your geographical area. Most of our Wednesday hikers come from eastern Montgomery County, Bucks County, Burlington, Hunterdon, and Mercer County, NJ, so we schedule our hikes primarily along the Delaware River.

What seems like a natural possibility is forming a series in the Valley Forge-King of Prussia-Norristown-Collegeville area with Valley Forge Park, the Perkiomen Trail, Evansburg State Park, and Horse-Shoe Trail as potential destinations.



The Lehigh Valley area should also be a prime candidate for starting such a new series of hikes. Since most of our hikes are now concentrated along the Delaware River, another idea might be Philadelphia city-based hikes along the Wissahickon, Pennypack Park, Tinicum Heinz Wildlife Refuge, the Schuylkill River Trail and in Center City.

One additional issue that comes to mind with the changes our Wednesday leadership team has implemented is that the pace of our Wednesday series has increased from a 2 rating (moderate) to a level 3 (brisk), which has perhaps isolated some of our hikers who would like to do these at a slower pace. An idea that we have bounced around to satisfy that level of hiking would be to have a different set of leaders set up the same identical hike listed in the weekly digest as level 1 or 2. In that way all levels of hikers will be accommodated and we can still have the fun and social aspects of the hikes on the same day.

Of course, if this new set of leaders and hikers decide to go off on their own, that would be up to them and we would be very happy to help set this idea in motion or as mentioned above help with paralleling the usual Wednesday hike schedule with a slower paced hike. Whatever works best for the betterment of the entire hiking group is what we are aiming to satisfy. The last thing any of us wants is to discourage any age or level hiker from coming out to our hikes.

It seems that over the last three to four years, more and more people are retiring early, many people are working part-time and many seniors are looking for more outdoor activities, and they aren’t all expecting to do all these things on weekends. There are five beautiful days in the middle of the week that we all could get out and participate in an activity such as hiking, bicycling and paddling.

What I would like to see are new leaders take a chance with a new series of activities. Billy Newman took that chance and we’ve grown to over 20-25 routine walkers and friends on almost every Wednesday of the year. Our chapter has many leaders who do a terrific job scheduling outstanding hikes throughout the Delaware Valley on weekends and Holidays, but where we are lacking as a chapter is more regional variety on weekdays.

If you would like to talk about this possibility, please e-mail me at hiking@amcdv.org, or better yet come out to one of our Wednesday hikes and enjoy the wildlife, the scenery, the personalities of our hikers, and of course the lunch!

Fourth Annual Spring Fling at Mohican set for April 27-29; register now

AMC's fourth annual Spring Fling will be held at the Mohican Outdoor Center in the Delaware Water Gap area on Friday through Sunday, April 27 to 29.

Building on the success of the first three years, Spring Fling continues to get better every year. Join your fellow AMC members from near and far for a fun-filled weekend. Take a hike on many of the scenic trails that meander past waterfalls, through beautiful hem-



Spring Fling hikers enjoy walking through the greening forest.

lock forests, rhododendron ravines and historic foundations from a time long ago. Or hike the Appalachian Trail along the Kittatinny Ridge for views that never end.

If hiking is not your thing, bring your bicycle and take a ride on some of the park's quiet roads and rail-trails. All these opportunities are located within the 67,000 acres of the beautiful Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

You can visit the Lakota Wolf Preserve, an enjoyable experience for both kids and adults. Be sure to bring your camera. Spend some time fishing or paddling around Catfish Pond where kayaks, canoes and all the gear are provided. Join guided evening hikes to the ridge to view the night sky and vast valley below.

Bring your favorite musical instrument and join Mohican's own band playing the classics as well as a few originals. Snuggle up Saturday evening around the campfire while making S'mores. Or, new this year, on Saturday night Environmental Educator Brian Hardiman will present "The World of Snakes," featuring a side-show presentation and a live snake. Those brave enough will be able to touch it.

Once again, dedicated AMC volunteers will lead a variety of guided activities including hiking, biking, geocaching and paddling trips for individuals and families throughout the weekend. All meals and two social hours are included. Spring Fling is open to AMC members and non-members. This will be an opportunity to come together to relax and have some fun with no meetings or business agendas!

Register early, as this event sells out quickly. You can rent a bunk in a cabin or camp in the wide-open spaces, falling asleep to the night sounds of the whip-poor-wills. Rates vary depending on whether you are tenting or staying in a cabin with full bathrooms in-house or in a separate building. Register by e-mailing or calling reservations at amclodging@outdoors.org or 603-466-2727, Monday-Saturday, 9 AM to 5 PM.

Family camping equipment sets now available free at Mohican

Two sets of family camping equipment are now available to use for free at AMC's Mohican Outdoor Center. As part of its *Vision 2020* program, AMC hopes to bring 500,000 kids outdoors. To further this mission, AMC contacted the Coleman Company, Inc., and arranged for a donation of two family camping packages. Each package includes a Coleman Northstar four-person tent, four sleeping bags and four air mattresses with pump.

The Coleman Northstar comfortably houses four people in two rooms, one of which becomes a seven-foot screened in porch. This equipment makes it practical for first-time family campers to experience the great outdoors. If you have been thinking of taking your little rug-rats camping, but don't have the equipment, here's your chance!

Two sets of family camping equipment will be available free of charge to parents, grandparents, guardians and the children in their family. You will be asked to sign a liability waiver and security deposit form authorizing a \$100 refundable security deposit when you pick up the equipment. The security deposit form will be returned upon the return of the equipment without damage. Mohican's normal camping rates apply, with a two night minimum.

The Mohican staff will be there to show you how to set up your camp. The three campsites set aside for this program: Place Beyond, Executive Suite and Place Above. All of these are private walk in-sites, close to an outside privy and within walking distance of the Main Lodge, which offers flush toilets, plus hot showers for \$3. Each site has its own charcoal grill, since camp fires are not permitted at tent sites, and a critter lock box to keep food safe from woodland creatures.

There is plenty to do in and around Mohican: hiking in the Delaware Water Gap on the Appalachian Trail and numerous other trails, a wolf preserve, swimming, paddling, or just relaxing on the deck of the boat house while the kids play ping pong. Also, the free camping package includes a half-day's canoe or kayak rental on Mohican's beautiful Catfish Pond.

For more information and current family camping rates, contact AMC Reservations at 603-466-2727. We look forward to seeing you and your little charges wandering the trails around Mohican!



This is winter hiking? I love it!

By Joan Aichele, Membership Chair

According to the calendar, the date was January 7. The hike description included the wording "snow or ice cancels."

Yet, for a new members' hike in the middle of winter the turnout was well above average, 37 attendees. I think it may have had something to do with the weather which was sunny, mild, no wind and in the high 50s. It was a perfect day to get out and enjoy nature in Ft. Washington State Park while fulfilling those recent New Year's resolutions.

Since it was a new members' hike the distance was to be anywhere from five to six miles with two optional drop-out points for those wanting to do less mileage. Some people did drop out after about six miles, but since it was such a beautiful day many wanted to continue hiking.

Due to the warm weather, we just kept going until we realized darkness would set in around four o'clock. So as the remaining 26 weary yet happy hikers returned to their cars, they were quite surprised that the whole hike was actually over eight miles. Now this is the way to enjoy winter hiking!



Ed Sawin photos

Mohican to hold Naturalist Training March 31

AMC's Mohican Outdoor Center will conduct a volunteer naturalist training on Saturday, March 31.

New this year and designed to kick off the 2012 season, the session is offered to introduce interpretive skills and deepen understanding of the natural world. This one-day training will focus on the skills needed to present interpretive programs at Mohican and the surrounding area.

Participants will learn about presenting interpretive programs, working with children, and organizing nature walks. These skills that will be taught, along with the basics natural history of the mammals and plants of the area. AMC naturalist Nancy Ritger will run the program.

During the session, naturalists will refine their own outlines and develop materials to best illustrate their own talks. Materials can be printed, laminated and ready to go by the end of the session. This is an effort to prepare volunteer naturalists for success in presenting programs at Mohican for the upcoming season. Lodging is available March 30 & 31. The \$50 fee includes two nights lodging, Saturday and Sunday breakfast and Saturday night dinner, plus all instruction. For reservations, call 603-466-2727, Monday-Saturday, 9 AM to 5 PM



Mohican Outdoor Center gets a new and improved camp store

If you are looking to purchase AMC merchandise such as baseball caps in various colors, AMC travel mugs, AMC water bottles, a vast selection of AMC books and publications, T-shirts or nice, comfy Mohican fleece pullovers, you need to visit the Mohican Outdoor Center. Stop by the visitors center and check out the new, improved camp store.



The Mohican staff has been working hard to expand their selection of AMC merchandise. It is always hard when looking at a web-site to determine if you really like a hat or wearable. What size would I wear? If it doesn't fit then I have to ship it back or throw it in a drawer and never use it. At Mohican you can try items on to see how they look and feel.

After your shopping spree try out your new purchases while walking around Mohican or hiking on many of the trails close by including the Appalachian Trail.

All AMC members receive a membership discount on their purchases, and they accept major credit cards.

Mohican Outdoor Center is located near Blairstown, NJ in the beautiful Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. See <http://www.outdoors.org/lodging/mohican/index.cfm>

The car shuttle for hiking: it's an art and science

By John Rowen

In the early days of my AMC experiences we often had hikes which required a car shuttle. Loop hikes are nice and in-and-out hikes are easy to arrange but sometimes you really need to do a hike as a point-to-point trip. This requires a car shuttle. It seems like many of our members (including hike leaders) are confused by the shuttle process so here is a brief outline of the various methods of car shuttling.

Simple Shuttle

The simplest shuttle meets at the end point of the hike whereupon the group loads into as few cars as possible for the trip to the starting point. At the end of the hike the group must drive the morning shuttle drivers back to their cars at the hike start point.

If there are enough cars some drivers will be able to leave directly from the start point. This shuttle requires at least twice the number of cars needed to carry the entire group and thus is usually used when the driving distance is not too far from the hiker's home areas to the hiking area.

Modified Simple Shuttle

If fewer cars are available a modified simple shuttle can be used. In this case the afternoon shuttle will consist of the morning shuttle drivers being driven to their cars and then returning to the end point to pick up the rest of the hikers. This option requires enough cars to carry the entire group plus enough cars to carry the morning shuttle drivers and might be used when the hiking area is a little farther from home or when the hikers show up packed into too few cars for the simple shuttle.

Another Modified Simple Shuttle

Sometimes meeting at the end point is not realistic. One case is when the end point is difficult to get to or difficult to find. In this case the group can meet at an easy to reach "neutral" location. All the cars not needed to get the group to the start point drive to the end along with enough cars to ferry them back. Once back at the meeting place, all remaining cars are loaded and driven to the start. Afterwards this option is identical to the simple shuttle and requires the same number of cars.

Double Shuttle

Another option meets at the start of the hike where all the drivers take their otherwise empty cars and drive to the end point. They then pack into as few cars as possible for the trip back to the start. After the trip, the drivers with cars at the start point are taken back to their cars and return to the end point to pick up their passengers. This option requires only those cars needed to carry the group. Our paddlers use this shuttle, as they typically need all their cars at each end to handle their equipment.

Car Swap

A final option requires trusting hikers. In this case the hikers split into two equal groups. One group drives to one end point and the second group drives to the other. They hike towards each other and when they cross paths, they swap keys. This requires twice the number of cars to carry half the group (think about it). The big advantage to this option is the reduction in driving and may be very useful when shuttles are long and days are short.

General Rules

These options are general outlines and may need to be adjusted due to things such as the size of available parking areas and difficulty in following the shuttle route. Leaders should be careful to make sure that all participants are accounted for. There is nothing worse than having that last remaining driver find that he has to fit eight passengers into his hatchback because all the other cars left half empty.

Unless the route is trivially easy, shuttle drivers should be given printed directions where possible in case they get disconnected from the shuttle caravan. To minimize caravan dropoff drivers should realize that their first responsibility is not losing the following car. Keeping up with the leading car is secondary. As long as all drivers use this rule, the shuttle should be successful.



An example of a hike with a simple shuttle was the Presidents' Day 10 mile big sycamore hike in Valley Forge Park. Thirteen hikers met at the finish point, then drove to the starting point in three cars. At the end of the hike, one car took the three shuttle drivers back to their cars. — Christine Boue photos.