

Appalachian Footnotes

Delaware Valley Chapter • Appalachian Mountain Club
Summer 2022 • Volume 60 • Number 2



White Mountains, Rich Pace photo.



Leader Training 2022

On Saturday it rained hard; Sunday was merely soggy. Another photo and the story on the next page.

Wilderness First Aid

course will be offered at nearby French Creek State Park on Saturday and Sunday, August 21-22.

Earn your Wilderness First Aid certification (WFA) or re-certify at reduced AMC prices. Join us at French Creek State Park for two days of classroom and hands-on practice.

People get sick and people get hurt in places where definitive medical care may not be available on a timely basis. With a basic understanding of first aid YOU may make a positive difference. Space is limited so sign up soon.

The \$100 cost includes camping at the park. Optional CPR certification is available for \$30. For more information and to register, go to:

<https://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm/action/details/id/139919>

Despite torrents of rain, leader training went on

Jeff and Barbara Fritzingler took charge in April, and in May we held leader training

We completed a very successful two-day in person leader training on May 7 and 8.

For the first time in three years, we have had the opportunity to do this. The prior two annual sessions could not be held in person due to COVID.

The weather was horrible, but like any good leader we pivoted to our plans B and C. We had 14 trainees turn out and you could tell they were completely energized and motivated to move to the next step: leadership. They were fully engaged from the start, with an opening short video showing our COVID zoom training at high speed to a "We are Back" welcome to our future leaders.

After over 14 hours of interactive training, they were still engaged and asking questions. The ending feedback we received was excellent! The sole reason this was such a huge success was the visible friendships, camaraderie and fun our DV family is to be with. Several trainees commented to me on this aspect of the group. This feedback reflects "who we are" as a chapter and we should all be very proud. But this also reflects the hard work and many hours of those who came out to showcase our culture for these trainees. We want to give a truly sincere thanks to all who drove this success:



Trainees:

Danielle Guttman
Tim Zaengle
Jason Clouser
Roger Brown
Dave Hoke
Rich Weber
Patricia Exley
John Kunz
Jan Summers
Jareth Shirk
Amy Kolsky
Jeff Arnold
Caitlyn Handlin
Curtis Moeckel

Leader Volunteers

Jeff Fritzingler
Barbara Fritzingler
Pete Jarrett
Denis McCartan
Susan Weida
Karla Geissler
Adrian Noble
Midori Wakayabashi
Larry Priori
Tammy Brown
Lennie Steinmetz
Ron Phelps
Margaret McDonald
John Rowen
Greg Bernet
Lisa Chou
Katie Barok
Kathy Anderson

Lois Rothenberger
Mike Ahern
Eric Pavlak
Julie Watson
Lisa Lombardo

Dave Hoke and Curtis Moeckel, who completed leadership training this spring plus their two required co-leads have already become new hiking leaders. Congratulations!

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news from the

Delaware Valley Chapter Appalachian Mountain Club

published using recycled electrons.

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A Simple, Harmless Product? Not So!

By Richard Puglisi

It's been around for as long as I can remember. My brother once took a big chunk and carved it into a ball. While it made a great looking ball, it was so light that it didn't travel very far when you threw it. And I just can't remember how many coolers made of it that I've seen over the years.

Invented in the 1940s in Dow Chemical's Physics Lab, Styrofoam is the trademark name for a chemical compound called polystyrene. Polystyrene is a petroleum-based plastic made from styrene monomers that contains about 95 gas. [Up until the 1990s, it was expanded with ozone layer depleting CFCs. These were later replaced, at first with climate warming gases, and later with less harmful ones.]

It is often used for food containers, coffee cups and cushioning material in packaging. And because of its good insulation properties, it is also used in building materials.

The problem is polystyrene does not degrade or break down over time, and it is unknown how long it does take to biodegrade. Some experts estimate 500 years and every day, approximately 1,369 tons of polystyrene is being buried at U.S. landfills. In addition, when exposed to sunlight, polystyrene creates harmful pollutants contaminating these landfills.

Polystyrene can be destroyed if it is incinerated at extremely high temperatures. However, if it is burned in a normal fire instead of in a specialized incinerator, it releases pollutants such as carbon black and carbon monoxide. It also has a way of evaporating its fumes into the air, which is bad for our lungs as well as the ozone layer that protects us from the sun's cancer-causing rays. And when used with food products, especially when heated, polystyrene releases toxic chemicals into the food causing contamination which can be hazardous to your health. Therefore, it has been described as one of the most environmentally unfriendly types of waste that exists today impacting our planet's ecological system.

And in addition to all these problems, polystyrene is not commonly recycled. While some businesses do collect it for reuse and recycling, they seem to be too few and very far between.

[Styrofoam is easy to recycle but, unless you are within a few miles of a plant that does that, the transportation costs both in dollars and the environment are too high. A tractor trailer can only hold about four to six tons of the stuff.]

The good news though is that on May 4, 2022, New Jersey implemented a ban on polystyrene foam. This law will prohibit all New Jersey retail stores, grocery stores and food service businesses from selling or offering for sale any polystyrene foam food service products. It also prohibits all food service businesses from selling or providing any food served in a polystyrene foam product. Businesses that break the law will receive a warning for the first violation, a \$1,000 fine for the second and \$5,000 fines for the third and every violation after that. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection allows for exemptions upon written application but only for a period of two years.

While the New Jersey law does not completely solve the problem, it is a start and a step in the right direction. We still need to urge our state and federal elected officials to do more to completely eliminate the use of polystyrene products for ourselves and future generations. So who would have thought such a simple, harmless product could be so hazardous?



AMC hiking group
at the Trexler Nature
Preserve.
Lynn Fraser photo,

Hit the beaches! Explore the shores!

There's plenty of hiking, biking, paddling, swimming, camping and birdwatching for nature lovers not far from home



Island Beach State Park, New Jersey

If you are looking for a more natural beach or sea-shore experience this summer (or next fall or winter), try one of these largely undeveloped places:

Island Beach State Park, New Jersey, according to the park web site, is a narrow barrier island stretching for 10 miles between the restless Atlantic Ocean and the historic Barnegat Bay. Island Beach is one of New Jersey's last significant remnants of a barrier island ecosystem that once existed along much of the coast and is also one of the few remaining undeveloped barrier beaches on the north Atlantic coast. Over 3,000 acres and 10 miles of coastal dunes remain almost untouched.

Miles of sand dunes and white sandy beaches offer habitat to maritime plants and diverse wildlife that is almost the same as it was thousands of years ago. Island Beach contains outstanding examples of plant communities such as primary dunes, thicket, freshwater wetlands, maritime forest and tidal marshes. The state's largest osprey colony, as well as peregrine falcons, wading birds, shorebirds, waterfowl and migrating songbirds, are found here. Island Beach is nationally known as a unique resource with over 400 plants identified, including the largest expanses of beach heather in New Jersey.

It has the best swimming beach in New Jersey, with hot showers and changing rooms. It offers miles of hiking trails and you can walk along the beach, but be prepared for cars on the beach except in the natural areas and the swimming beaches. Unfortunately, most of the ocean beaches listed here are afflicted with this curse. These beaches allow four wheel drive vehicles onto major sections of the beach, ostensibly for surf fishing, but often just for cruising. And I have seen surf fishers park their cars and walk the short distance

Story and photos by Eric Pavlak

This story is an updated and expanded version of one published in *Footnotes*, Summer 2011

over the dunes to the beach. Good for them!

Island Beach has a great nature center that kids love, and several interpretive trails. There are entry fees, and the park limits the number of users and can fill up on hot summer weekends.

<https://nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/islandbeachstatepark.html>

Cape Henlopen State Park, Lewes, Delaware, offers hiking, bicycling (including rentals), camping, historical WW II fortifications, a nature center and two of the best swimming beaches on the east coast. Located at the mouth of the Delaware Bay, it is a great place to watch for whales and porpoises right from the beach.

Along with beach walking, there are miles of hiking trails behind the dunes and in the woods. The park has bicycle rentals and plenty of activities for children. You can find excellent dinner spots in nearby Lewes, and take the ferry to Cape May.

<https://destateparks.com/Beaches/CapeHenlopen>

Assateague Island, Maryland and Virginia. There is both a Maryland state park at the northern end of the Island, and Assateague Island National Seashore, which extends south into Virginia. Both offer camping, hiking and swimming. The National Seashore offers backcountry camping accessible by either paddlers or backpackers. And yes, there are cars on the beach.

But the lower half of Assateague Island is off limits to cars and unfortunately backpacking campers, but you can get there by walking and can have miles of unspoiled ocean



beach all to yourself even in the middle of summer! The best way to get there is to paddle to a remote backcountry camp site and walk.

Warning! Assateague Island is legendary for its mosquitoes, so come prepared. Also, call ahead and ask. In bad years, it can be as bad as the arctic. Or go in October or early November when the bugs are gone but the water is still warm and swimmable.

Assateague is the home of the famous wild horses, the descendents of once-domestic livestock. The ones near the campgrounds can grab food from your hands, but the wilder ones in the southern parts will generally keep their distance. www.nps.gov/asis/index.htm

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/eastern/assateague.aspx>

Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge is on an island in the Chesapeake Bay directly south of Rock Hall, MD. Rock Hall is a good place to rent a basic bicycle if you don't have one with you. It also has a full service kayak outfitter that offers rentals, sales, accessories and guided tours.

This mostly wooded island is home to a large number of bald eagles, ospreys, herons, egrets and other large birds of prey. Geese, ducks, loons and cormorants abound, and songbirds are everywhere. There is even a butterfly preserve near the nature center

Eastern Neck has miles of trails, dirt roads and very lightly traveled paved roads for bicycling and walking. Bird watching blinds and boardwalks allow easy access for good wildlife observation. You can swim from the shore here, but there is no guarded beach.

Eastern Neck affords the paddler miles of coastline that, except for some rocky breakwaters, is free of man-made development. The trip around the island is about ten miles in length; longer if you explore its inlets and coves. Our AMC chapter often runs mid-summer paddling trips around Eastern Neck. www.fws.gov/northeast/easternneck/

In addition to the activities mentioned above, there is also fishing, crabbing and clamming available at these seaside gems. Be sure to check the local fishing regulations before you do so.

All of these wonderful places are suitable for children and families, and many offer special trails and activities popular with kids. They can be done as day trips by many of our members, and all but Island Beach offer in-park or nearby camping.

So you can have your day at the beach in a more natural

setting than the usual resort clutter. You can hike, paddle, bike and explore, and still finish your day with a nice dinner and an ice cream cone.

South Cape May Meadows, Cape May, New Jersey. Owned and maintained by The Nature Conservancy, South Cape May Meadows Preserve has more than 200 acres of critical habitat in globally-renowned birding area of Cape May. The preserve offers dunes, freshwater wetlands, meadows, ponds, and a full mile of protected beach. A wonderful place to spend a few hours or a day. Go to the Meadows web page and learn more about it and the town of South Cape May that was engulfed by the Atlantic Ocean in the 1950s. Click here for link.

Cape May Point State Park, New Jersey, offers miles of beach dune and woods hiking, plus a pond full of waterfowl. (I saw 17 species of ducks and a pair of swans there on my last visit in January). The park offers excellent year-round nature programs for the whole family. Oh, it has a lighthouse, too!

<https://nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/capemaypointstatepark.html>

Higbee Beach, New Jersey, is just north of Cape May on the Delaware Bay. The beach itself is fine for swimming, with no fees, no facilities, no vendors and no lifeguards. Until 1999, it was New Jersey's only nude beach. No nudes now.

There are miles of hiking trails in the dunes and woods of the Higbee Beach Wildlife Management Area, which abounds with birds and other wildlife. It is the only woodland to dune to beach natural area left in New Jersey.

Mosquitoes also abound inland in wet summers. If they become bothersome, walk along the beach.

www.capemay.com/Editorial/june08/HighbeeBeach.htm

www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/higbee.htm

Watching the sunset over the ocean or the bay

takes some effort in our area. Sunrises are easy: on the east coast, the sun rises over the ocean, very early in the morning in summer. To view a sunset over the water, try:

Cape May, Sunset Point or the beach at Cape May
Island Beach State Park on the bay side
The western shore of Eastern Neck
Higbee Beach

Unless you are watching from a breezy beach, be prepared to deal with mosquitoes. If you choose to watch the sun drop below the horizon from your kayak or canoe, remember to carry the Coast Guard required light.