

Appalachian Footnotes

Delaware Valley Chapter • Appalachian Mountain Club

Fall 2023 • Volume 61 • Number 4

Valley Forge trail crews: DV chapter leaders and volunteers and National Park Service staff working together to improve and maintain these very popular trails



**They hiked more than 50 miles in a day!
The stories of two separate 50 mile hikes**

Plus:

Annual Dinner and Meeting, October 29

AMC teaches outdoor skills workshop at PEEC

Paddling on the Perkiomen Creek

August Camp 2023 story and pages of photos!

Annual Dinner and Meeting, October 29, Doylestown, PA

5 PM to 9 PM at the Central Bucks Senior Center

700 N Shady Retreat Road, Doylestown, PA 18901

Dinner is \$25 per person, and will be catered by Lindinger's Catering. Then it will be followed by election of chapter officers for the upcoming year and recognitions for service.

If you are new to AMC, come meet other members and learn about all the outdoor fun we're having. Bring your own wine or beer for cocktail and dinner hour.

Featured speaker and honored guest: Nicole Zussman, AMC's CEO

Climate change presentation by Professor Anthony Broccoli, Co-Director, Rutgers Climate Institute; Director, Graduate Program in Atmospheric Science; Department of Environmental Sciences, Rutgers University.

Advanced registration is required. Register and pay by major credit card or check at:

<https://amcdv.org/dinnerpay.html>



FallFest

FallFest is coming to the Mohican Outdoor Center in the beautiful Delaware Water Gap on Saturday, September 30. Plenty of hiking and a wide variety of other activities. Food, fun and festivities for all members of your family. For more information and registration:

<https://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm/action/details/id/145593>

Wilderness First Aid

There are still openings for the WFA and CPR Certification classes at French Creek State Park, October 6-8

Free tent site or rustic cabin included with classes. Bathroom, shower and kitchen facilities available.

Friday evening October 6 is the optional CPR class.

Saturday and Sunday, October 7-8 are the WFR classes.

Contact Larry Priori by email at Larrypriori@gmail.com or call or text 484-459-5445 for more information.

Appalachian Footnotes

news from the

**Delaware Valley Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club**

published using recycled electrons.

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AMC-DV volunteers and NPS staff work together to maintain, build trails in Valley Forge National Historical Park

By Susan Weida

A tree has been growing in the middle of the popular Mount Misery trail in Valley Forge National Historical Park and after several years of little trail maintenance a twisted tangle of exposed roots has emerged threatening to trip hikers. Erosion from recent severe rain storms is eroding the soil around the roots and will continue to make this hazard more dangerous.

On a late August day, AMC-DV trail work leaders began planning a remedy. Remove the tree and build a check step. A 4x4 inch wooden post would be partially dug into the ground and secured with a rebar stake driven deep into the soil.

As they proceeded to install the check step a steady stream of hikers and trail runners of all ages passed them on the trail and in most cases paused for a moment to thank the team for their service to the trail. It was going to be a busy day on the trails in Valley Forge National Historical Park, where recreational opportunities are available for a large population living in Philadelphia, the suburbs, and beyond.

Some of the regular trail users at Valley Forge are AMC members, whether participating in the several AMC group hikes per week that take place at Valley Forge or hiking there informally.

Jose Ibarra is the current AMC-DV trail work coordinator for Valley Forge. Prior to that, Jose served on the AMC-DV Valley Forge trail crew under Phil Mulligan. Jose has close ties to the park through his involvement in Boy Scouts and as a park volunteer.

Prior to 2017, the AMC-DV trail crew performed regular work on the Mt. Misery and Mt. Joy trails at Valley Forge. This regular trail work lapsed for a few years and was about to restart in 2020. However, the COVID pandemic began and brought all activity in the park to a halt.

There is now a backlog of maintenance on the trails in Valley Forge. These older trails had heavy use during the pandemic.

Jose began to appreciate the special nature of Valley Forge when he used the park as a Boy Scout leader to prepare the Scouts for trips. The varied trails, all in close proximity, provide an assortment of challenges for groups from easy to difficult.

Jose describes the park as an oasis in an area that is rapidly becoming more and more urbanized. AMC-DV is working to develop the leadership capacity for several trail work teams in Valley Forge so they can attend to the deferred trail work on Mt. Joy and Mt. Misery. They will also take on maintenance of additional trails that are not currently being maintained, such as the Chapel Trail. There are about 35 miles of trails in Valley Forge National Park.

Building this additional trail work capacity began in spring of 2023 at the AMC-DV Leadership Training weekend. Four future Valley Forge trail leaders attended the training and became certified as AMC leaders. They then attended a second training with the AMC Trail Maintenance staff.

Valley Forge sent Hannah Tyburski, one of their employees with a special background in trail work to the training. She will be a liaison between the park and AMC. She is a member of



Eric Pavlak photo

Hannah Tyburski, NPS employee and park trails coordinator took AMC-DV leader training. Here she drills a hole the check step for a rebar that will anchor it in place.

the Valley Forge park maintenance department with a focus on trails and roads. She has a fascinating background that includes working on trail crews in diverse places: Siberia and John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge.

Hannah has a step-by-step organized approach to building her trail crews. Since leadership training was completed, Hannah has been planning leaders-only trail work sessions to prepare leaders for their role and to fully orient them to the trails at Valley Forge.

Check step construction

Hannah has helped develop skills for her trail leaders, under the guidance and tutelage of Jose, a master of trail construction. And even as work progressed on the step, Hannah listened to a concern of a hiker about a very slippery bridge in need of work. In all areas, Hannah is professional, engaged and open to suggestions.

Christian Morrow worked with Hannah and Jose on the check step. Christian is a newly trained AMC leader and preparing to lead at Valley Forge.

Valley Forge Trails, continued

When asked what motivated him to take on this role, Christian said that he grew up in the area close to Valley Forge and has been hiking and recreating in the park since he was a child. He has great memories of time at Valley Forge and wants to give back to the park by leaving a legacy for future hikers. Part of this legacy involves having the knowledge about the special place that Valley Forge holds as a national historic park where you are walking through some of our country's most compelling history.

Archeologist needed

When asked why trail workers haul buckets of dirt to the trail to use in repairs, Jose noted that any off-trail digging is not permitted until an archaeologist examines the site to avoid destroying valuable artifacts.

Zhenya Nalywayko is a Valley Forge enthusiast who is scheduled to take AMC-DV Leadership training in order to become a trail leader at Valley Forge. Zhenya lives in center city Philadelphia and frequently rides his bike on the Schuylkill River Trail to Valley Forge where he then spends time on the forest trails. He noted how special it is to have a park like Valley Forge accessible to people without a car living in a major city center.



Eric Pavlak photo

Zhenya has the big picture in this area, as he is a project manager for the Pennsylvania Environmental Council in charge of trail development in southeastern Pennsylvania. He often visited family in the Philadelphia area when he was growing up and pointed out that the historical significance of Valley Forge makes it a special place to protect.

While his day job includes higher level planning, he is interested in doing the hands-on work of maintaining a trail. He said that if people wonder how trails got built or how they stay there, they can gain understanding and a sense of ownership by working on them.

When asked how they feel after a day of trail work, team members cited the physical gratification of doing physical labor, of feeling sweaty and tired but with a great sense of accomplishment, a sense of "We did this!"

Hannah said that what motivates her to do this work is the passion of the volunteers and the satisfaction of making a real



Susan Weida photo

Above: Jose Ibarra, a master of trail construction and maintenance, takes a good look at the placement of the step prior to the start of work. **Left:** Jose, in the orange hard hat, works with trail crew members, assuring the step is level.

improvement. Her goal is to make constant improvements with regular maintenance and taking on the work little-by-little. This seems like a great formula for success.

AMC has new trail crews working at French Creek State Park, another special and historic place in our region. We also have crews that maintain two sections of the Appalachian Trail, including two shelters and privies. We have a Highlands Trail crew, and are building and maintaining rails at Nockamixon State Park. We talk more about these in upcoming issues of Footnotes.

If you are interested in being part of the new Valley Forge trail crews, or in volunteering for other trail crews, please check your AMC calendars for upcoming work trips or contact Trails Chair Greg Bernet at trails@amcdv.org.

Hiking 50 miles in one day: Two different hikes

In two separate hikes over Memorial Day weekend, several Delaware Valley Chapter members achieved ambitious hiking goals, each completing more than 50 miles in a single day. Both quests required a significant amount of meticulous planning and training, which paid off in a great sense of accomplishment.

Adirondack 50 mile loop

In New York's Adirondacks, a 50-mile loop trail circumnavigates Cranberry Lake. On Sunday, May 28, starting at 5 AM, a group of seven hikers set out to complete this challenge in less than 24 hours. The group included Julie Watson, Amy Williams, Larry Butler, Dave Soltysiak, Lisa Novy-Wikowski, Ehsan Qiyassi and Varun Patel, who trained together, completing many long-distance hikes over several months.



Their planning included extensive investigation to pinpoint the precise trail, using a variety of electronic and print resources. Larry Butler built spreadsheet models to estimate time on trail at a variety of paces, trail conditions and daylight hours. These calculations established key milestones of accomplishment and facilitated bailout planning.

Water filters and iodine tablets were needed to maintain hydration. Spare filters came in handy during the hike, and the entire group shared electrolytes and trail snacks to maintain energy.

The day of the trip was warm. High mileage goals, filtering water and bug nets created a need for slightly longer breaks. At one particularly beautiful stream, a 20-minute lunch break doubled to allow for removal of shoes, cooling of feet in the water, and photo opportunities, which physically and mentally reinvigorated the group. As they encountered the first serious evidence of beavers at work, several members took unexpected mud baths, and multiple extra pairs of socks and route-finding skills were put to good use.

The unexpected length and challenges of beaver dam crossings made changes of shoes, clothes, as well as water and food left in the mile-40 bailout car highly welcome. An overheated group member dropped out at the car with the full support of the group.



In the final, dark 10 miles, the group avoided wrong turns via concerted efforts to double check maps and GPS units. The group also reaffirmed that all group members would stay together. The first hikers in the group made concerted efforts to establish a steady pace, and checked frequently with the group that the pace was comfortable for all group members.

Dave noted that the camaraderie and relationships developed within the group provided invaluable support in overcoming the physical and mental challenges of such a difficult undertaking.

"I am very proud of these people," he said. "It was a helluva day!"

All the AT in Connecticut

The other hike that weekend took place on the Connecticut Appalachian Trail, where Jeff Fritzinger completed the state's entire section of the trail, hiking nearly 55 miles with 11,500 feet of elevation gain in a single day. Supported by his wife Barbara, he began this trek at midnight, after hiking one mile in from AMC's Northwest Cabin to the sign at the Connecticut-Massachusetts border. From there, he headed southbound toward New York. Barbara joined Jeff for the first 15 miles in the dark, starting with a 700-foot scramble up Bear Mountain.

By daylight they reached their posted car at Falls Village. Barbara took the car to meet Jeff at various trailheads as he progressed over terrain that was rocky in parts, with rock-step climbs, scrambles, and generally constant ups and downs. At 10:30 PM, after 22.5 hours, Jeff reached the Connecticut-New York border with Barbara hiking the last several miles with him.

Planning for this long hike began by breaking the hike into sections based on trailhead access. Jeff and Barbara planned and completed a series of fun exploratory hikes, stringing together sections to determine if this was a realistic goal. In the months leading up to this hike, there was extensive planning into the logistical details of lodging, road access, gear, and items needed for varying conditions, with the flexibility to pivot

He hiked the entire Connecticut section of the AT in one very long day

when necessary. Of course, this also included an emphasis on nutrition and hydration for an entire day as well as communication plans in the event something went wrong.

Fortunately, their drive to Connecticut was only about three hours, which enabled progressively longer training hikes over the actual route on weekends. This was instrumental in physically and mentally preparing them, as well as highlighting obvious areas that needed some refinements in their plans. For example, by hiking the sections that would be done in the dark, Jeff became familiar with the trail and its potentially hard to see blazes or turns, such as a sharp left of the AT while another groomed trail leads one straight ahead. Rehearsing these sections was not only helpful for navigation, but it was also a huge mental confidence builder knowing what to expect.

In the end, Jeff developed strategies to conserve energy, such as slowing his pace on ascents more than he would normally and being mindful to keep his feet close to the ground. While there were moments where he felt he'd had enough, maintaining mental focus on just the next section carried him through to the end.

Jeff commented he could not have done this without such detailed planning and the unwavering support of his wife, Barbara.

It is clear with both events, that while everyone feels a great sense of accomplishment, none of this could have been



successful nor safe without significant planning and balancing of the many potential risks.

At AMC-DV, we are proud that our leaders have the tools necessary to plan for and assess what could go wrong on an activity. Our chapter hosts new leader training annually in spring, where there is much time spent on these concepts in an interactive manner. If interested in learning the skills, and participating in role-play scenarios, look out for our next leader training dates posted by the end of 2023.

Story compiled and written by Barbara Frizinger. Photos by the participants.

AMC Holds Outdoor Skills Workshop at Pocono Environmental Education Center

AMC's Delaware Valley Chapter presented an interactive and informative outdoor skills workshop on the weekend of June 17 and 18 at the Pocono Environmental Education Center (PEEC) in the Delaware Water Gap.

Last summer, AMC leaders Jeff and Barbara Fritzinger stopped into PEEC while hiking in the area and met Kate Hausman, the Center's Workshop Manager and Volunteer Coordinator. Kate mentioned the need for some visitors to the center's hiking trails to be better prepared for outdoor activities. This led to a collaboration between these two conservation organizations to present a weekend program including sessions on hiking, camping, first aid, trail maintenance, and backpacking.

Jeff and Barbara Fritzinger, led a morning session on hiking essentials, including trip planning, gear, plus map and compass training. Richard Dabal, New York-North Jersey chapter's first aid chair, taught participants useful outdoor first aid skills. Stanton DeRiel and Annette Sheldon, AMC DV's family activities chair, shared valuable information to plan fun family camping trips. Chapter Trail Chair Greg Bernet led an active session on the trail to demonstrate basic trail maintenance, tools and trail building techniques.

On Sunday, participants were treated to a very interactive backpacking clinic with Backpacking Chair, Steve Campanelli and Judy Farrell.

The Workshop also was supported on-site by Karla Geissler, DV Chapter Chair, and Lisa Chou, DV Membership Chair.

The participants were not currently AMC members but did express interest in perhaps joining, as well as looking out for our future events.

Their feedback was exceptionally positive with comments such as, "I learned a lot." Also, "All information was very informative." And, "This was excellent and free."

This was a fun and successful event not only for the participants but also for our dedicated chapter volunteers, who we are grateful for their time and energy to make this happen.

Special thanks goes out to New York-North Jersey First Aid Chair Richard Dabal, who stepped up in a big way when our own expert first aid chair Larry Priori was unable to attend.

Also, a special thanks to Kate Hausman at the Pocono Environmental Education Center for partnering with our chapter to present this program! AMC looks forward to planning future programs with PEEC.

Stan and Annette would be happy to share their syllabus packets for either Planning Family Camping Events or the more inclusive Planning Family Compatible Group Activities. Feel free to reach out to them.

If you have an interest in participating in future AMC-DV events that bolster our outreach efforts and provide valuable skills training to the outdoor community, please reach out to Jeff & Barbara Fritzinger or any member of the chapter executive committee.

— Barbara Fritzinger

A Perkiomen Paddle

By Richard Puglisi

As I began paddling down the Perkiomen Creek from Schwenksville, Pa., I couldn't believe what a perfect summer day it was. The sun was shining brightly in a blue cloudless sky. It was dry with temperatures in the low eighties and an occasional cool breeze blowing from time to time. There were lush green trees on both sides of the creek and an eagle was overhead turning and turning in widening circles. It was all so calm and peaceful.

The Lenape indigenous people originally roamed these lands and fished this creek. The name, "Perkiomen" is said to come from a Lenape word meaning, "cranberry place" or "where there are cranberries.". Supposedly, cranberry bogs used to dot the landscape, but they were later drained and used for farming. Also, it was thought that Lenape traders used the creek like an aquatic highway traveling by canoe from settlement to settlement. However, in 1684 all this changed when William Penn purchased their land for reportedly "two watch coats, four pairs of stockings and four bottles of cider."

Around 1730, encouraged to come to Pennsylvania by Penn, immigrants from Germany and Switzerland along with French Huguenots were issued land grants to settle here. The early settlers soon discovered the potential of the Perkiomen for operating mills.

Before long there were mills for cutting wood, grinding grain, production of gunpowder, linseed, and other plant oils and mixing animal feeds. Local tradition states that more mills were in operation along the Perkiomen Creek at the end of the 18th century than on any other waterway in the state of Pennsylvania. The mills brought prosperity as reflected in growth and good-paying jobs.

Inns along the creek provided food and lodging to those transporting goods to and from the area's markets. It wasn't long before other industries began to spring up. Ice harvesting was one with several large ice houses located along the creek and ice being regularly shipped to Philadelphia. And the earliest ironworks was Green Lane Forge which was built in 1733 by Thomas Mayburry.

The area is historically significant for two other reasons. The acclaimed naturalist and artist, John James Audubon made his home at Mill Grove located at the confluence of the Perkiomen and the Schuylkill river. And General George Washington and the Continental Army camped in and around Schwenksville in 1777 prior to and immediately following the Battle of Germantown.

Suddenly, my kayak was rocked and jostled as I found myself in the first of a series of small rapids. The clear cool water mixed with rays from the sun splashed in the air as I quickly paddled through to calmer waters.

As I continued on my trip, I passed a wading fisherman in the middle of the creek reeling in a nice size bass. Besides small and large mouth bass, the Perkiomen is also home to catfish and sunfish.

A little further on a half dozen ducks were sitting on a rock and as I approached they one by one jumped into the water and traveled along paralleling my kayak for a while.

It was also a good day for heron sightings. I saw one on my right calmly sitting on a rock as I paddled past. Another on my left got startled and flew off as my kayak got too close. And finally a third flew from left to right directly across my bow.

As idyllic a setting as the Perkiomen is, it is not without problems. In this age of changing climate, excessive rainfall can quickly cause massive flooding in towns along the creek. Such was the case in 2021, when Hurricane Ida damaged residents' houses and commercial buildings, deposited significant amounts of flood debris around the area, and severely impacted historic buildings.

There are many factors contributing to the situation such as uncontrolled stormwater washing too quickly into the creek, and due to development, too much stormwater not properly soaking into the ground where it lands. These issues are being discussed in Harrisburg and hopefully solutions and improvements will be implemented sometime in the future.

The Perkiomen Creek offers 18 miles of beautiful pristine waters from south of Green Lane reservoir to its confluence with the Schuylkill River near Oaks, PA. It is no wonder that in 2022 it became an official Pennsylvania State Water Trail. Further information about the Perkiomen Creek (including maps) can be found on the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy's website [<https://www.perkiomenwatershed.org/>].

And as I reached the end of my trip and put the kayak up onto the shore, I recalled that old saying, "Paradise is just a paddle away."



August Camp 2023

John Rogers

First Time at August Camp

By Alan Snyder

We didn't really know what to expect.

Of course, certain things were clear and simple: Tent camping with good cots for sleeping off the ground and enough headroom to stand up. Plenty of food from a sophisticated outdoor kitchen. No hot water, but you will be surprised by how effective a solar shower can be. And hiking every day, plus or minus the optional activities, with choices according to interest and ability.

So we knew a lot, but we knew very little. What will it really be like? Will we be able to keep up with the group? Do we have it in us to get breakfast, get organized, and get on the trail every day? Will the food really be so great, considering our dietary preferences?

Will we fit in socially? Putting our names in for August Camp and accepting once our names were picked from the virtual hat was a leap of faith. That leap was informed by the fact that trustworthy folks from the Delaware Valley Chapter told us how great it is.

The materials and other information that came with our acceptance — the detailed packing list, the comprehensive online orientation session — told us something that's reinforced by every aspect of the August Camp experience: These folks have been doing this for a very long time, since 1887, to be exact. They have been keeping notes. August Camp works in well-established ways, even as those ways evolve with the times. It wasn't possible in 1887 to text the transportation coordinator.

Continued on next page

David Hartree



Mt. Hood Oregon

August Camp 2023

Continued from previous page

As new campers (get used to being called campers — it's true, and it's charming) we had an Ambassador who was just a text or phone call away to answer pre-camp questions, and then was nearby, without hovering, to see that we got settled at camp. As first timers, we had green lanyards for our name tags, which signaled "this person might need a pointer now and then."

But in reality, the well-established rhythm of the day makes it easy to catch on: Reveille, coffee time, breakfast, gather your things, meet up with your hiking group, the day's hike, chill time or maybe a swim at the stream where the locals go, dinner, more chill time, campfire, bedtime. The rhythm happily repeats, the days sufficiently full and active that you most likely will be tired when you get back home, yet never at a pace that feels overwhelming or even rushed. The centerpiece of each day, the hike, also felt "just right."

At campfire each evening, our hike leaders described the routes so that we could make informed choices based on our abilities and interests. From our site near Mount Hood, there were trails cut into the cliffs high above the Columbia River, and trails through dense old growth forest. There were routes that required us to keep moving at the planned pace, and routes designed for stopping to identify the flowers.

A hike could include sun-baked stretches that had us remembering to keep drinking, and a half mile later a spot to lie down in the snow. The week's hikes were a curated catalog of what the region had to offer, updated throughout the week as our hike leaders assessed conditions and learned what was most popular with the group.

On the final evening of August Camp, the posting of the next day's hikes on the community bulletin board have been replaced by the airport travel schedule. At campfire, there are no next-day hikes to describe. How do we fill the time? Follies! The annual vaudevillian review of skits and songs and whatever else people came up with.

An hour or so of grown-ups displaying their full willingness to be silly and occasionally deeply touching with each other. A return to the lesser inhibitions of childhood, sprinkled with just a bit of adult emotion. A far better way to spend our final evening than organizing stuff that can easily be crammed into our bags and sorted out when we get home.

At August Camp you will meet people who are super-outgoing, people who are quiet and reserved, people who are outrageously funny, people who are deeply thoughtful, people of different national origins and ethnicities, people with different life pursuits and professions, all of whom are there because they love the land and love walking it together. No one will tell you how to be, other than to be a fellow camper and fellow hiker. The last two items on the official packing list are adventurous spirit and sense of humor. No one seemed to have forgotten those two items.

Dale DeWispelaera



Al Chap

August Camp 2023



Eric Geiger



Muhammad Quershi



Nancy Bernard

August Camp 2024 Central Cascades in Oregon

Week 1 - July 20-27

Week 2 - July 27- Aug 3

Week 3 - Aug 3-10

Week 4 - Aug 10-17

<https://augustcamp.org/>

August Camp 2023



Eric Geiger



Eric Geiger



Roberta Brentabo