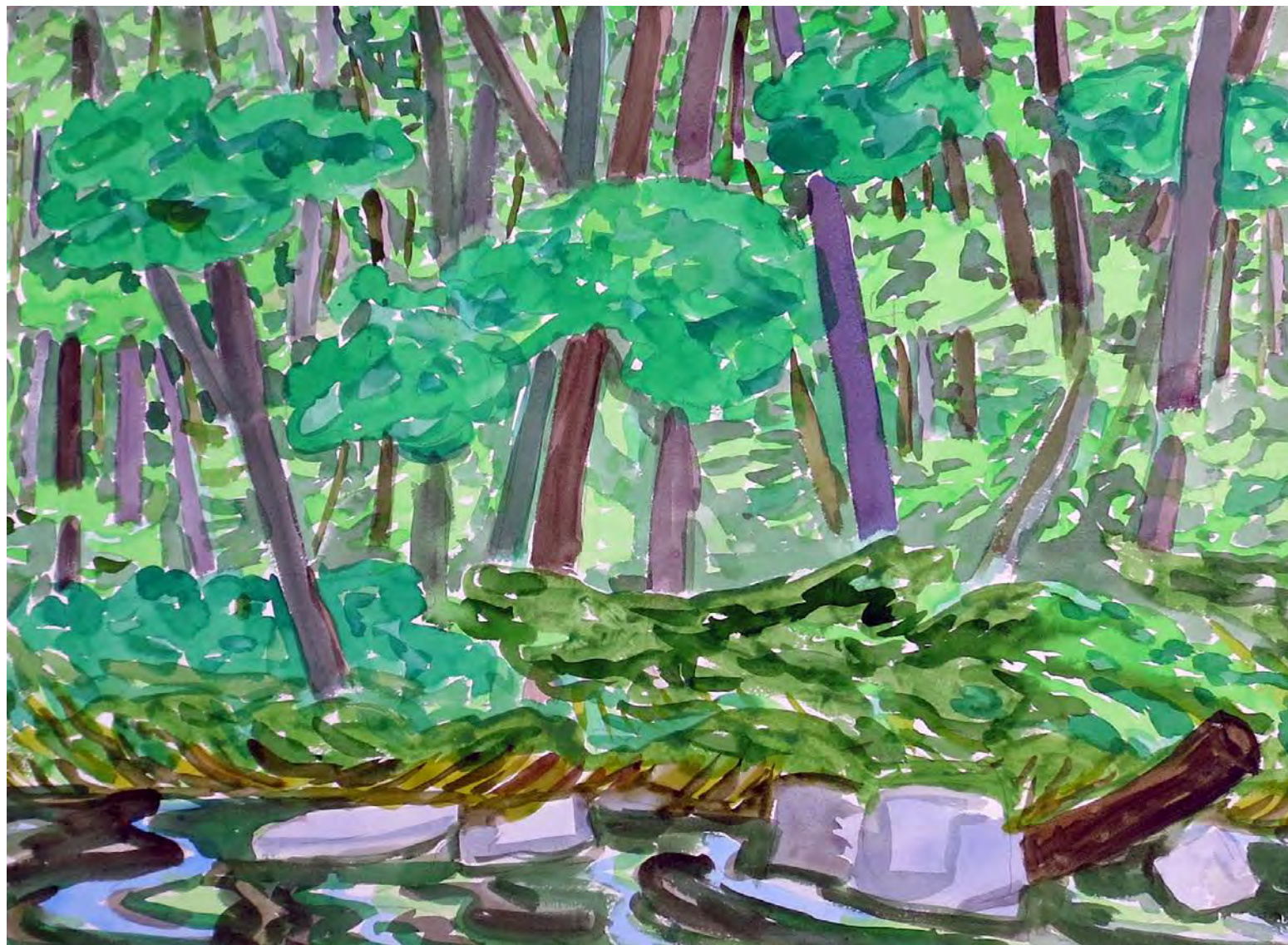




Appalachian Footnotes

Delaware Valley Chapter • Appalachian Mountain Club

Summer 2025 • Volume 63 • Number 3



"Pennypack Summer", Jim Schaefer, watercolor 2014. AMC-DV member Jim Schaefer notes that the Creek Trail at Pennypack Preserve is one of his favorite hiking spots. Used with permission schaeferfinearts.com.

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Bluebirds Find Happiness at Nockamixon State Park

By Joanie Schultz



Photo by Marla Burke

Nockamixon State Park is very well known to our AMC Delaware Valley Chapter, since AMC-DV has been instrumental in building the PA Highlands Trail section that runs through the park, as well as the installation of the adaptive kayak launch, and numerous conservation projects and clean-up activities. But you might be surprised to learn that, scattered among the open areas of Nockamixon State Park, are 60 nest boxes that provide safe nesting areas for beautiful Eastern bluebirds and other cavity nesting species such as tree swallows and wrens.

Once per week, from April to mid-August, volunteers monitor the nest boxes by opening the side of the box and peeking in with a small mirror attached to a handheld wand. The season starts by clearing out any bugs, wasp nests or other unwanted debris that is found within. For each of their assigned boxes, they continue to make careful written notes about nesting materials, bird species, number of eggs, hatchlings and fledged young birds. In 2024, the team reported that 197 bluebirds fledged, 52 wrens, 104 tree swallows and 6 chickadees, for a total of 359 fledglings at Nockamixon.

Jan Hardner began monitoring bluebird nest activity as a volunteer more than 20 years ago, while she was working in a busy career as an IT professional for a large pharmaceutical company. "I wanted to get out in nature and improve my well being. It's hard to be stressed when surrounded by the beauty of Nockamixon State Park," she says. For the past five

years, she has coordinated the team of volunteers who look after the nest boxes and report their findings to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) as part of its Cavity-nesting Trails Program.

Hardner says the bluebirds are her favorites. "It's so much fun to watch them, and I love to see the progress of these amazing creatures, from box possession, nest building, eggs, hatchlings and finally fledglings," she explains.



Bluebirds typically have more than one brood per season, so the volunteers clean out the nest after the first brood fledges. "It could be reused, but the birds prefer to build a new one", says Hardner.

Coordinating the care of the nest boxes is a year-round commitment, since the off-season is spent building, maintaining and repairing the equipment. "My husband Bob builds all the boxes, using scrap boards of untreated pine donated by local mills," says Hardner. Bob creates the boxes using a design endorsed by NABS (North American Bluebird Society), which allows for ventilation at the top, drainage at the bottom, a side panel that pivots to open, and a 1.5 inch hole with no perch. A metal pipe baffle is added to the post to deter raccoons and other critters who might harm the bird family.



Bob and Jan Hardner installing a nest box in the off-season

Eastern bluebirds, once quite common, faced a steep decline in the mid-1900s, due to habitat loss, invasive birds, pesticide use and other human activity. Thanks to conservation efforts that began in earnest in the 1970s and continue today, the birds are thriving again. “I love the birds, and they were declining and I wanted to do whatever I could do to help them,” says Hardner.



The PA State Park monitoring program was conceived in the early 1980s. The nesting boxes are essential for bluebirds and other so-called cavity nesters, because these birds do not have beaks that are strong enough or long enough to make their own spot for nesting. They might nest in holes made by woodpeckers, but then the opening size may not be suitable to keep out predators. The nesting box supplies just the right elements, and monitoring increases the probability of successful fledglings by addressing any problems as they arise, according to Hardner. “Monitoring enables documentation of activity to track population trends and understand environmental impacts. Counts also help to predict how bird ranges will shift with climate changes,” she explains.

Carly Broder heads up the Cavity-nesting Trails Program for PA State Parks. She noted that since the program started in 1980, volunteers have helped fledge almost 190,000 birds. “We are so fortunate to have such amazing and dedicated volunteers like Jan [Hardner],” she says. “They are truly the reason the program is so successful.”

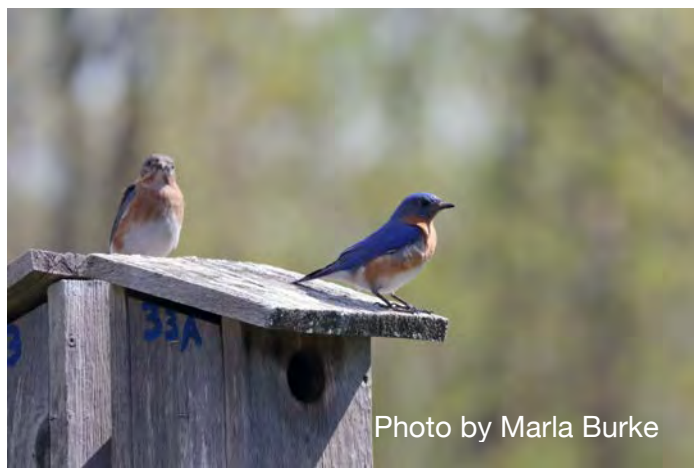


Photo by Marla Burke

As part of her coordinator role, besides monitoring nest boxes, Hardner also recruits and forms relationships with the other volunteers, promotes volunteer recognition, and collaborating with Rachel Nazurak at Nockamixon Environmental Education

Center, she teaches informational workshops, which offer participants a chance to actually visit and peek at the Bluebird hatchlings in the nearby nest!

Hardner is a Bucks County native and lifelong resident, and she lives just a few miles from the park. She and her husband Bob are active members of Friends of Nockamixon, and in addition to the Bluebird program, they help with the butterfly garden, trail maintenance, and removing invasive species. “I love Nockamixon State Park and cannot imagine living anywhere else,” she says. When she’s not volunteering at the park, she can be found there enjoying many of the same activities as do so many AMC-DV members: hiking, kayaking, biking, cross country skiing, to name a few.



Jan Hardner uses a mirror to check a nest box.
Photo by Joanie Schultz

Hardner says the bluebird program is rewarding and meaningful, and she is grateful to be part of it. “I couldn’t do this without the other monitors and my husband Bob, who builds and installs all the boxes,” she says. “I appreciate the opportunity to lead the group and give back to Nockamixon for all the park gives me.”

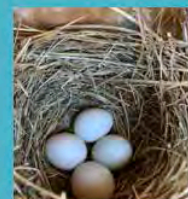
The nest box monitor volunteer positions are currently filled, with a waiting list. For more information: <https://friendsofnockamixonstatepark.org>

Photos, unless otherwise noted, courtesy of Friends of Nockamixon. Marla Burke’s photography is featured in her book *Haycock Township Through Nature’s Lens*.

Did you know?

Eastern Bluebird Nest Material and Eggs

- Grass and pine needles
- Fairly deep nest cup
- 4-6 pale blue eggs, sometimes white
- 1 egg per day
- 13-16 day incubation
- 2-3 broods per year



(Courtesy of Jan Hardner)

Eastern Bluebird Hatchlings

- Bluebird hatchlings are initially blind and featherless
- They weigh approximately 0.08 oz
- Both parents feed the young (insects, berries)
- Both parents clean the nest
- Chicks open their eyes in 5-6 days
- By day seven, the chicks have short feathers on their back and sides
- By day 13, chicks are completely feathered
- Bluebird chicks fledge at 18-19 days
- Parents and young bluebirds stay together after fledging for about three weeks



(Courtesy of Jan Hardner)

Fun Facts

News you can use

- Install a bluebird box in a sunny grassy area or field with scattered trees for birds to perch
- Avoid installing box on a tree
- Provide a shallow water source
- Place bluebird boxes 100 yards apart to avoid territorial disputes
- Monitor boxes weekly, removing old nest after hatchlings fledge
- Attach baffle to pole as needed to prevent predators

(Courtesy of Jan Hardner)

Attracting Eastern Bluebirds to your backyard



Is your yard a good place for a bluebird box? Maybe! Not the best idea if you use pesticides or other chemicals in your yard. The baby birds will be fed insects from the yard.

Advanced Trail Work Training Comes to Delaware Valley

By Greg Bernet

Fifteen of Delaware Valley's Trail Leaders and experienced trail workers were treated to a number of classes in advanced trail work the weekend of April 25-27 at French Creek State Park, conducted by the professional AMC trails staff from New England. Classes were held in Rock Work; Trail Assessment; and "Train the Trainer," to equip Del Val leaders to run their own trail training classes in the future.



Director of Trails, Alex DeLucia, and other Trail Staff starting at Summit in 2024 and kept at it for over a year to bring this trail skills training farther south. And it finally happened! Rather than offer an extensive array of classes as they do at Camp Dodge, we decided that it would be better just to do a few that focus on our immediate needs, and that was the basis for choosing which classes to conduct.

The Delaware Valley Executive Committee generously approved a motion to fund the cost of the group camp at French Creek and the AMC staff did not charge for the event, so the classes were totally free for all who attended! Prior to the classes, Jay Gross and Greg Bernet did some scouting of trails at French Creek after our Outdoor Leadership Training event on March 30 in order to determine good locations for the classes. Jay was also instrumental in securing the group camp for us through his well established relationship with the staff at French Creek. Everyone was pleased with the event and learned a lot, and we are already looking at perhaps doing it again next year, possibly at Mohican Outdoor Center.

The program was conducted by Erik Samia, Trail Training Supervisor, and Jon Szalewicz, Trail Volunteer Programs Supervisor. They were joined by two other AMC staff members for the weekend and had a visit from AMC'S Patricia McGuire from the Bethlehem office, who joined on Sunday. Some participants camped at French Creek for the weekend, while others commuted.

AMC has been holding a Trail Skills College every year for the past three years at Camp Dodge in New Hampshire, but since it is such a long drive for our people and since the curriculum is such that one is limited to only one or two classes over a four day event, Trails Chair, Greg Bernet, lobbied AMC



Making Memories at AMC-DV Chapter Picnic



Peace Valley Park
June 8, 2025

Food, Friends, Fun!
Thanks to our Social
Committee team



Photos by Geri Chmiel



Remembering AMC-DV Leader David Stein



And then there are the hikes and backpacks he did with friends, all around the country.

David gave several presentations to the AMC Lehigh Valley Group on his travels abroad, as well as for the local BATONA club. His last presentation to BATONA was in Oct 2022; I remember the hours and hours of effort he put into that presentation and into all the others he did. Among his presentations to the AMC Lehigh Valley Group were slideshows on Kyrgyzstan, India (which he visited four times) and northern Ethiopia, which he visited in fall 2019.

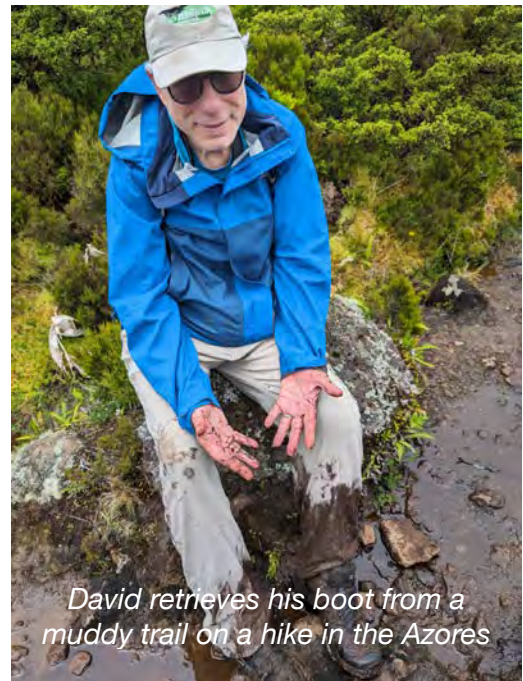
David was truly a people person. He was one of those people who could start a conversation with anyone anywhere and put people at ease, whether it was a random dog-walker on a trail or my kids when he first met each of them. He was humble but comfortable taking command: many of you have surely heard his introduction to a hike with his signature “OK Folks”.

He was also a true mensch – someone who not only went into social work because of his idealism and desire to help fellow human beings, but who went out of his way to help others personally, whether it was spending time with house-bound friends, providing professional advice to an old friend of mine whom he’d met once, or driving my son to the airport at 4AM, when neither his own mother or father would volunteer at that hour. He had also signed up to volunteer with an organization that aids the elderly, before our final trip, and had been looking forward to lending his professional expertise to that effort.

David’s reading was voracious, if slow, and he savored his books, finishing ones he particularly enjoyed with regret. He spent a lot of effort choosing his next reading project – he approached his choices with intellectual curiosity and a serious interest in history, especially political history. He also had a whip-sharp sense of humor, whether volleying puns with his British brother-in-law, no slouch himself, or convincing folks (especially on April 1st) that the implausible-to-impossible was about to occur (eg, the completely irreligious David getting one hiking group to believe he was abandoning AMC hikes for rabbinical school).

I met David through AMC-DV on one of the Monday night hikes in the Wissahickon that he led every week – except when he was traveling around the world – rain, snow or shine, summer and winter and in between. In addition to the Monday night hikes and co-leading an additional weekly hike with Pat Naismith, David led longer weekend hikes for both AMC and BATONA. Pat, his co-leader and “trail wife”, notes that he brought the hikes into the 21st century by listing them on social media to attract new hikers. Hiking and the Wissahickon were two of his great passions.

Lennie Steinmetz, DV Leadership Chair for many years, remembers sending him a number of personal invitations to make sure that he was coming to the DV Leadership Training dinner, so that new leaders would be able to connect with him, since he led so many great hikes for the chapter. David was the recipient of the DV Volunteer of the Month award in January 2016.



Beginning in early spring 2022, David was thrilled to take on the not-insubstantial training to become a ‘Trail Ambassador’ for Friends of the Wissahickon, patrolling trails with a partner to provide information and help to park users, and generally help keep an eye on the trails. He first started working on restoration projects with FoW in early 2020, and once he retired in April 2024, he volunteered at least weekly in the Wiss (and also graciously helped me with my restoration projects in Abington Township).

Please connect with me to share your stories about David, and/or to be informed about a tbd fall 2025 memorial restoration project in the Wiss: robin_eisman@yahoo.com.

Photos courtesy of Robin Eisman, wife of David Stein

AMC-DV Honors Three Magnificent Members

Brian Sisko, Trail Maintenance

Brian attended our Outdoor Leadership Training in 2023, then attended our special Trail Leader training and First Aid training (five days total) at Valley Forge that spring and became a new Trail Leader. Since then, he has regularly led trail work trips on a weekly basis on the trails at Valley Forge. As of the end of April, he had already led 13 trips this year!

The trail leaders at Valley Forge rotate, but when one of them was having medical issues and could not continue, Brian took up the slack and filled in for that person. One of the recent trips he led was



a trail maintenance class for college students from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. When he is not leading the trail work trips, Brian becomes a crew member, which really shows his dedication.

He is passionate about trail work and recently attended our weekend trail skills classes at French Creek, led by the professional trail staff from AMC, in order to increase his knowledge and experience with

trail building. We are very proud to have him in our group of DV Trail Leaders.

(Nominated by Greg Bernet)

Terry Oravec, Mileage Tracking



executed the job of sifting through scores upon scores of chapter trip reports, recording every participant's activity mileage. (The annual tally of individual activity mileage is used to determine member recognition awards at our chapter's Annual Spring Social.)

Furthermore, if anything is discovered to be awry with a chapter trip report – from suspicious information, to tough to decipher waiver signatures, to late or lost submissions – Terry makes every reasonable effort to contact the activity leader, and/or the appropriate Executive Committee person, to try to clear up the matter.

Finally, Terry happily does this huge volunteer job simply because she cares enough to process the information correctly, so that deserving activity participants receive their annual recognition awards.

(Nominated by Welles Lobb, Terry's husband and companion in many AMC endeavors)

Without fanfare, for the past year and a half, Terry has been an in-the-trenches AMC/DV volunteer extraordinaire. Terry has cheerfully and dutifully

Welles Lobb, Outstanding Leadership & Collaboration with External Organizations

Welles is an active DV Chapter hike leader who has used his creativity and love of the outdoors to develop many new and interesting hikes for DV members.

Participants who go on a Welles hike are well prepared from the beginning, due to his careful communication about the nature of the hike and how participants need to prepare. And this focus on hiker welfare continues during the activity; Welles is vigilant in explaining the area being explored and attending to hiker welfare.



After going on a Keystone Trail Association (KTA) trip to Newfoundland last year, Welles took steps to strengthen ties between AMC-DV and KTA. He

has accepted the role of KTA liaison for the DV Chapter and, with two other DV leaders, led hikes during the recent KTA Spring weekend. KTA bonds were further enhanced with programs at Lehigh Valley Group meetings by Welles, and his wife and hiking companion Terry, and also by the KTA Executive Director.

Welles has also completed a personal project, writing a book *He Was Too Young To Die*, about his childhood friend who died while hiking the Appalachian Trail. Welles has generously shared this story with DV members during several social events and has provided an inspiring view of the memory of a friend who loved the outdoors as much as many of us do. The way Welles uses his creative talents to add to the DV Chapter makes him

a Magnificent Member.

(Nominated by Susan Weida)

To submit a Magnificent Member Nomination, please include: Name of nominator (you must be an active, current AMC member), name of nominee (must be an active, current AMC DV Chapter member), nominee email address and/or phone number, the name of the event/events where you observed the exceptional behavior, and at least three sentences describing the behaviors that make this person worthy of recognition. Submit nomination by these quarterly deadlines: March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1. Send nominations to the Chapter Vice Chair and Secretary at vicechair@amcdv.org secretary@amcdv.org.

AMC-DV 20s/30s Gearing Up for Summer Activities

By Liz Danovich

Welcome to the AMC Delaware Valley 20s/30s Group!

We're a growing community of young adults excited to explore the outdoors together through hiking, biking, social events, and more. Whether you're new to AMC or looking to connect with others in your age group, this is the place for fun, adventure, and great company.

We've hit the ground running this season with a fun kickoff hike on May 2 and a great group bike ride on June 1. And we're just getting started! Coming up, we have a scenic hike (June 15), a casual walk through Phoenixville (June 21), and a pizza picnic with yard games at FDR Park to wrap up the month (June 27). There's something for everyone - and even more events on the way. Come join the adventure and help shape what's next!



Find Us on
AMC Outdoors Connector
Delaware Valley Chapter
Keyword 20s/30s



Appalachian Trail Museum Arts & Culture Festival



The Appalachian Trail Museum will hold its first AT Arts & Culture Festival from 10AM to 4PM on Sunday, June 29, at the AT Museum in Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Gardners, PA. AMC Delaware Valley Chapter members Greg Cook and Welles Lobb will be participating, Greg as a panel moderator interviewing two authors who have written about the first AT thru-hiker, and Welles, on a panel talking about AT history and presenting his book *Too Young to Die*, about his friend who perished on the trail as a young man. The festival is a chance to celebrate the AT community's talents, creativity and ties and will bring together authors, historians, storytellers, journalists, musicians and videographers.

The event will offer a chance to meet with AT authors individually and purchase their books, hear about the experiences of AT hikers such as Earl Shaffer, the first thru-hiker, and see some of the most respected AT historians.

An author who has written a children's book about Earl Shaffer, and his biographer, will be among the presenters. Among the historians is the Museum's Gwen Loose, who has written about women pioneers of the AT.

The event will also feature a barbecue lunch and will be located in the park's Furnace Stack Picnic Pavilion down the hill from the Museum. Parking is available next to the pavilion. The Museum will be open from 9AM to 4PM. The event is free but donations are welcome for the lunch.



Join the Pennsylvania Highlands Hike Challenge!

Earn prizes by walking on your favorite trails:



Upper Bucks Rail Trail
in Bucks County



Mason Dixon Trail
in Southeastern PA



D&L Trail
in Northampton County



Find your trail and learn more at:
pahighlands.org/highlands-trail/trailchallenge
#HighlandsHikeChallenge



- Event Dates: May 1 - December 31, 2025
- Event Location: ANYWHERE on the Pennsylvania Highlands Trail
- Event Registration: No registration necessary, just submit miles through online forms after hiking
- Event Prizes: patches, re-usable water bottles, and certificates of completion
- For more info <https://pahighlands.org/highlands-trail/trailchallenge>

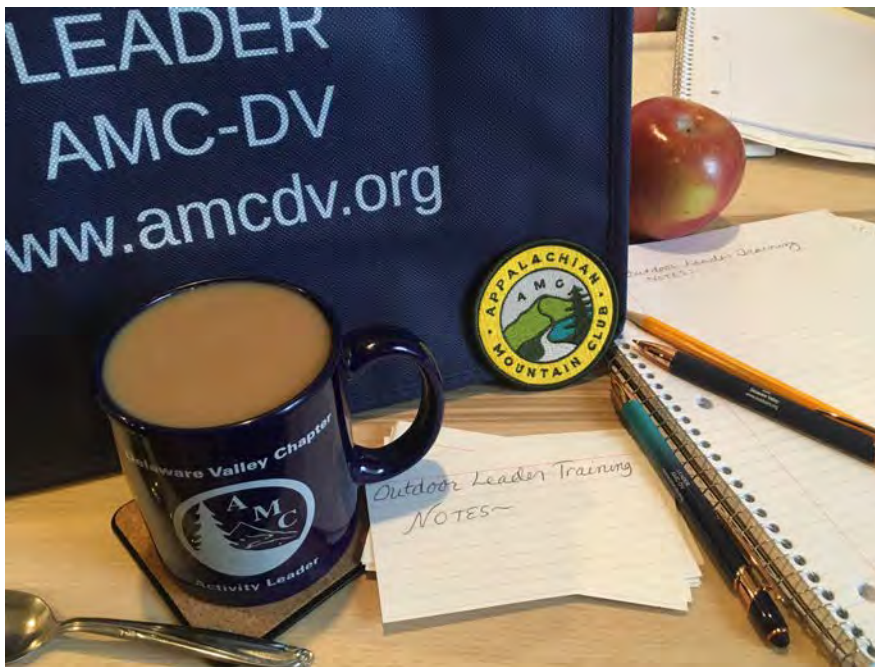


Celebrate AMC's 150th Outdoor Relay

In 2026, the Appalachian Mountain Club will celebrate 150 years! Plans are underway now for the AMC 150th Outdoor Relay—a connected series of outdoor adventures carrying a commemorative AMC flag from Virginia to Maine. AMC-DV trip leaders are invited to adopt a leg of the route that will traverse cherished trails, rivers, and bike routes across the region.

Explore the [interactive route map](#) and select a leg of the route using the [online sign-up form](#). Route adjustments and other changes to the proposed itinerary may be possible based on local knowledge or leader expertise, as long as they align with the relay's direction and intent.

Leaders, act now to secure your adopted route, and start planning to enlist other members to join you by posting the activity in Outdoors Connector by September 1, 2025. For more details, visit <https://outdoors.org/AMC150> or email mzakutansky@outdoors.org



Another DelVal Chapter 2025 LEADERSHIP TRAINING! NEW format!

An AMC joint DelVal/NY-NoJ Chapter Outdoor Leader Training will be held Saturday October 4, 2025 in northern New Jersey. We will be debuting a new format! It will be only one day of in-person training plus online go-at-your-own pace at-home learning and assignments which must be completed prior to the in-person class. The online component will take approximately 6 hours in the comfort of your own home.

Because this is a fairly long drive for many DelVal Chapter members, there will be reasonable start & end times to accommodate people driving up for the day. There are also hotels in the area for every budget, if you'd like to make a weekend of it. There are parks in the area with great hiking trails and beautiful vistas.

Space is very limited, so it is open ONLY to AMC members of either the DelVal or NY-NoJ Chapters who are eager and motivated to complete leadership requirements and start leading AMC activities!

Training utilizes a combination of indoor information sessions as well as an experiential model where you get outdoors and participate in mock scenarios. Not only is this method a more effective approach to learning – it's also fun!

During the training, you will have opportunities to network with current leaders through camaraderie and informative programs. You will instantly feel part of our DV family.

Topics covered are the elements of outdoor leadership common to all AMC outdoor activities:

- Activity planning**
- Leading safe and enjoyable activities**
- Risk Assessment and Prevention**
- Liability issues**
- Immersion in role play scenarios**
- AMC leadership requirements and guidelines**
- And much more!**

Instructors: Experienced AMC volunteer leaders

REGISTRAR for AMC-Delaware Valley Chapter members: For more information, please email DelVal Leadership Chair Mary Toomey at leadership@amcdv.org

Not a member? Join for a discount on our Chapter website at www.amcdv.org



A Conversation with KTA's Kate Prisby

By Welles Lobb

If you've attended a Keystone Trails Association hiking weekend or education program, you know Kate Prisby, KTA's manager of events and programs. She's the friendly face who smoothly handled every detail, checking you in, scheduling activities, making announcements, and pointing you in the right direction when you felt lost. In a word, Kate is a dynamo: energetic, hardworking, proficient and kind.

I caught up with Kate at KTA's Spring Hiking Weekend at Raystown Lake, which offered a wide slate of outdoor activities for 140 attendees over three days. Despite weather and facility concerns, Kate was her usual buoyant self.



Kate pauses after her completion of hiking all of New Hampshire's 4,000-foot mountains.

Footnotes: You seem very go-go in your work life. How do you relax? What are some of your interests outside of hiking and KTA?

Kate Prisby: I start each morning with a French press of dark roast coffee and journaling to ease into the day. I also enjoy sitting outside with a novel, enjoying a fire and pint in the backyard with friends, or baking. Running is my favorite form of relaxing, and I am eagerly awaiting picking it back up (soon, I hope) after rehab for a foot injury.

FN: You grew up in PA but landed as a young adult with AMC in New Hampshire as hut croo and in youth conservation leadership at Acadia National Park. What brought you home to Lancaster County and to KTA?

KP: I traded “real work” in my early 30s for seasonal work with the AMC. What I thought would be a brief hiatus from year-round employment lasted for eight years and included thirteen seasons in the White Mountain huts, trail building with youth and young adults in Alaska and Pennsylvania through the Student Conservation Association, and working in Maine with Friends of Acadia. Year-round employment with conservation organizations is a bit like a needle in a haystack. The constant job hunting, and time away from my partner (Eric, in PA) got a bit wearisome. KTA is where I found a full-time position that still had a conservation and outdoors focus.

FN: In your croo work with AMC, several times you overwintered in White Mountain huts. What was that like?

KP: If I could travel to any spot in an instant, it would be Lonesome Lake Hut on a cold, clear Saturday morning with a full guest count of 48 people arriving later in the day. Hands down, winter in the Whites was my favorite season. I loved how the landscape changed with each

snowstorm, the excuse to bake goods for guests to heat the kitchen, kicking back with a book in front of the wood stove, card games with guests, and hosting trivia on Saturday nights. I found winter caretaking magical, which is why I did three winters in a row. Plus, hiking is much easier with a good snowpack that covers up rocks and roots. Some people go south in winter; I head north.

FN: You come off as rather corporate in your professionalism yet seem the opposite of corporate in your ethics and sincerity. What in your educational background and life experience enables you to balance a demanding, detail-oriented work life while maintaining a sunny positivity?

KP: In college (McDaniel, in Maryland) I studied international politics, religious studies, and human rights. During my junior and senior years, I spent time in Tibetan refugee resettlement camps in northern India. At the time, I thought I wanted to do refugee resettlement work, but my living and volunteering there (and in other parts of southeast Asia) made me realize that I was not emotionally prepared for work that held so much human suffering.

Within a few years of graduating, I began working as a religious educator for the Unitarian Universalist congregation I grew up in. In this position, I engaged the values that made me want to do refugee resettlement work, but through nurturing the ideas of human dignity through the programs I was coordinating. I was 24 and running a program for over 200 children and youth and 500 adults. Many of the volunteers I was working with had been my Sunday school teachers when I was a child; some were skeptical that someone so fresh from college, younger than every volunteer she was supervising, was the right fit for the job.

I stayed at the church for over ten years through congregational change and all the things that life throws at people. This was my training ground for professionalism, public speaking, and caring for others in community. Many of the things I learned working at the church I've tried to integrate into my outdoor work; I believe that most of us go to the outdoors for the same reasons we seek out communities, faith or otherwise.

FN: You served as a DV Chapter 20s/30s chair and now work for KTA. What are some ways our two organizations can foster a closer partnership in support of our goals of protecting trails and public lands and getting more people outside to enjoy nature's gifts?

KP: The work KTA and AMC does is very parallel. Three things that come to mind that build upon the strengths each organization already has include:

- Joint Trail Care. You do trail work and so do we! Perhaps there's a joint project on a trail that needs extra hands.
- Advocacy. AMC has a long history in using scientific research to promote conservation. I think it would be great to have a webinar about AMC's research, advocacy, or an in-person workshop on how trail clubs can use Citizen Science apps to help track climate change.

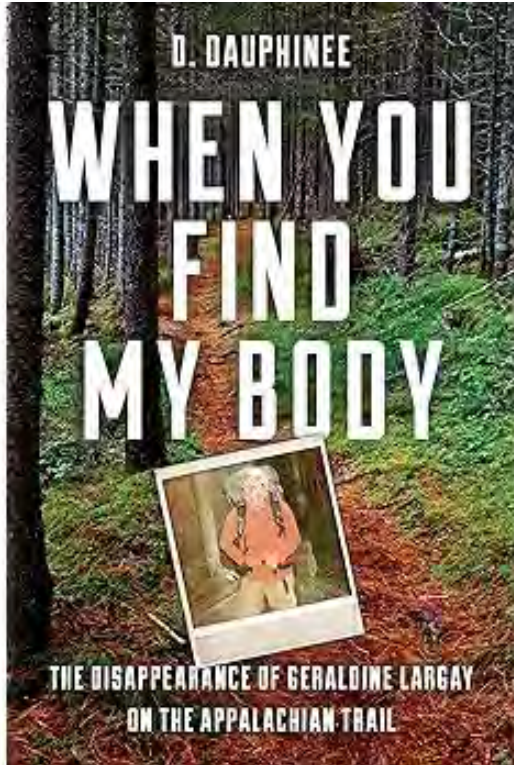
- Skills-Based Trainings. We both offer Wilderness First Aid; KTA will launch its first Leave No Trace Level One training this August. As someone who loves winter, I daydream of a winter skills weekend/hiking getaway. I think AMC does an incredible job training its volunteer leaders by requiring a weekend course and mentorship program before being an official leader.

FN: We are going through a rough political time for public lands and environmental protection. What should we be optimistic about?

KP: It would be dishonest to say that I don't feel a lot of anxiety and heartbreak about this moment in time; the conservation/outdoor organizations I've worked with have lost funds, had to drop programs that engage youth, and lay off staff. I hike with folks across all political spectrums, and every time the topic of cuts to public lands comes up there is universal agreement that this is not something that benefits the public or conservation. For all the talk about how divided we are, I think there's incredible potential to find common ground right now on certain issues. I have found AMC's Conservation Action Network to be a great resource to share with others that love the outdoors, enabling us to speak up for the places we love and want to steward into the future.



Kate enjoys a moment of relaxation with Delaware Valley Chapter volunteer hike leaders Welles Lobb, Scott Harney, George Cagle, Joe Nanfara, and Lisa Lombardo at KTA Weekend at Raystown Lake.



By Kathy Kelly-Borowski

“When You Find My Body: The Disappearance of Geraldine Largay on the Appalachian Trail”, by D. Dauphinee

Geraldine “Gerry” Largay, trail name “Inchworm”, was a 66 year old retired nurse who was hiking the Appalachian Trail (AT). She disappeared in July 2013 on a section of the AT in Maine.

“Inchworm” had started a flip-flop thru hike from Harper’s Ferry on April 23, 2013 with her friend, Jane. The women planned to head north to reach Katahdin, then return to Harper’s Ferry and hike south to complete the trail. Gerry’s husband was meeting the women at road crossings whenever possible.

But Jane had to get off the trail on June 30. On July 22, hiking alone, “Inchworm” took a bathroom break and could not find her way back to the trail. She texted her husband to let him know she was lost, but the message did not go through. She headed higher to try to get a cell phone signal. Despite an extensive search, her remains were not found until more than two years later, in October 2015, on lands used for training by the U.S. Navy Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) school. Based on Gerry’s journal entries found with her body, she survived 26 days.

This book would be a good read for experienced hikers and outdoor enthusiasts, as well as those who dream of hiking the Appalachian Trail. The book covers AT history, trail terminology and culture, Search and Rescue details, and the mindset of a lost person.

My takeaway is that there is far too much dependence on cell phones these days. When I hiked the AT, years ago, I carried an ATC map of the area, a Data Book and a compass. My mail drops always contained the map(s) needed for the section ahead of me. My friend Jay, who took me on my first backpack, told me to always remember where you saw your last white blaze. It was a helpful tip when I happened to get off the trail. I’d leave my hiking stick and/or backpack near the trail in view if I walked off the trail for a needed separation break. As luck had it, most of my hiking was in the company of two or more companions. We hiked by ourselves during the day, but met up at the designated shelter, campsite or hostel in the evenings. We took care of each other.

The search is now underway for a new volunteer Regional Director (Mid-Atlantic)

to support AMC New York–North Jersey and Connecticut Chapters.

This is a fantastic opportunity for someone who wants to represent Chapters at a strategic level, gain experience in governance and board service, and contribute to AMC's mission at an enterprise-wide scale.

Recent changes to the position description include:

- Location flexibility: The role no longer requires the Regional Director to live in the region they support. What matters is deep familiarity and a strong connection to the Chapters and their communities.
- Streamlined meetings: We've restructured meeting expectations to reduce mandatory attendance and focus instead on the most strategic and impactful engagements.

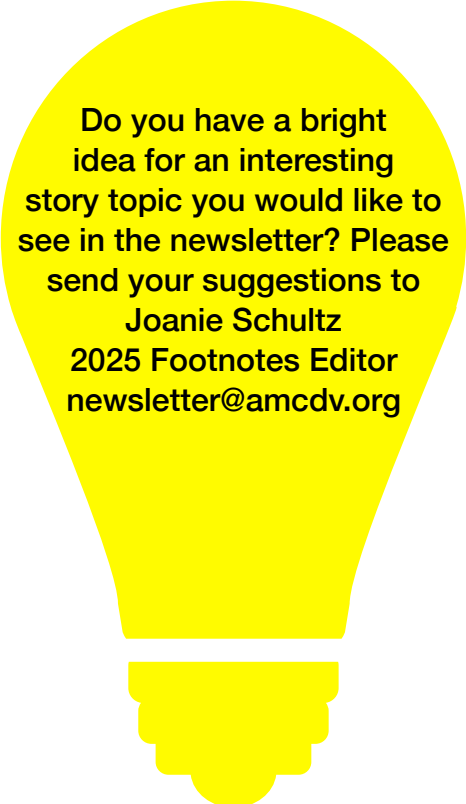
For more information :

Libbi Cinti

VP People, Community & Culture

lcinti@outdoors.org

Interested candidates should submit
their bios by Monday, June 30.



Do you have a bright
idea for an interesting
story topic you would like to
see in the newsletter? Please
send your suggestions to
Joanie Schultz
2025 Footnotes Editor
newsletter@amcdv.org

Appalachian Footnotes

quarterly e-news from the
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