



Trail Crew Alumni Association Update

Updates for alumni and current crew.

February 2018

Torrential Rain on the AT

There weren't very many sustainably hard, fully-soaked-socks rainy days in the summer of 2017, much to the chagrin of the trail crew. After late spring patrolling rains subsided, we were graced with many a sunny and warm days during woods weeks, with exceptions of course. Relatively good weather allowed for optimal rock work conditions and water bar construction.

One exception to the overall dryness happened at the end of the summer, while I was working on the Twinway trail less than a mile above the Zealand Hut. Fourth year, Maggie "Thor" Lacwasan and I were digging steadily to make trenches in order to replace some of the old and rotten wooden water bars on the trail. We each had a freshly cut roughly 10-foot long native length of felled spruce or fir tree (depending on what was the right size and available near the needed water bar). We had been working on the project for several weeks and had gotten used to a comfortable rhythm of ripping out the old rotten wood, digging a trench, fitting the log to the trench and setting it into the ground, shaping the drain, and finally pinning the log in with large rocks on the up and downhill sides.



On this particular cloudy day, the rain came hard and fast some time in the afternoon. We were both in the process of digging trenches for two particularly large log segments. The patter of the rain started slowly, gradually cleaning off the logs and our dirty and sap-laden hands. Its intensity increased as we tried to combat the relentless force of the water. It started to erode our carefully crafted trenches, custom fit to the size of our logs. We felt our shirts and pants stick to our skin and the wet chill of late August rain sank in. We looked toward to each other as the drops turned into a steady patter, and then to a forceful and driving downpour. We observed our trenches as they each filled with water and started to overflow, eroding the downstream side of the trenches and effectively filling up completely with fine sediment and gravel from up trail. So quickly can mother nature turn thoughtful structure into ruin. We did not dismay, though, since digging a trench is a simple task and we knew that after the rain stopped we could fix it up quick. Therefore, we laughed as we watched the past hour's work demise in front of our eyes, the chocolaty, murky water rushing straight down the trail as if nothing had ever been there. We ran up and down the trail together to stay warm in the pour, and reshaped the drains after the torrential rain stopped.

This amusing sight reminded me of the erosional strength of the weather in the White Mountains, and also showed me that no matter how bad a project can look, it can almost always be remedied after the storm passes. In times like these, it is evident why trailwork is so important in this place, and also that sometimes there is no use fighting the mighty pouring rain.

--Abby "Eugene" Lown
Trail Crew 2015-2017

Happy 2018, Trail Crew young and old!

Up until mid-January the Whites had experienced a very white winter with several large snow events and exceptionally cold temperatures to keep the

white stuff light and fluffy. The skiing was great, whether in the woods, tracks, or on the slopes and then...ice and rain.

With a new year comes a new season of trail work. Marshall "Smathers" Pontrelli, the 2018 Trail Master, has been assisting with first year crew interviews which has been a huge help. We have received many applications and have talked to many well spoken and seemingly qualified men and women. With a handful of openings there will be some tough decisions to make.

Our projects for 2018 are becoming clearer as the winter rolls on. A collaborative effort with the USFS will have a crew working on the Crawford Path for eight weeks- nearly the entire summer season. Additionally, we secured funds to run crews on sections of the Avalon, A-Z, and Mahoosuc Trails. Our hope is to also get the green light to perform some awesome reconstruction projects on the Mizpah Cutoff, which would round out the summer nicely.

In other trail news:

The late October rain storm certainly damaged many of the trails here. It was bad timing to have such an event as the fall crew in the Whites had just wrapped up and most experienced choppers and sawyers were not available. Some camp sites and trail were cleared but not all. Thanks to anyone who got out and helped saw and hack through some of the damage. We'll see how patrols go.

Major improvements to the Lost Pond Trail, across from the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center happened over the fall. After two years of planning and design the ground was broken on the construction of an elevated boardwalk with 36-foot single span bridge. Hannah "Penny" Mellor and George Brown were tremendous and invaluable help from start to finish. Ashley "Switchback" Fife got in on the action as did a handful from the Shelters Department. It was a fun project to work on; highlining three, 1,400 lb. steel I-beams over the marsh will be a lasting memory for me.

Moving forward through the 100th summer and beyond, the White Mtn. Pro Crew will remain a key asset to AMC and the White Mountain National Forest. Our network of trails in the Whites; with the amount of use they receive, the distances they span, and the terrain they cover needs people with experience and skill to tackle the many projects and problem areas out there. AMC's Trails Department here in the Whites has an established model that works well; using a mix of volunteers and professional staff (i.e. trail crew and caretakers) we can accomplish a great amount of work that uses the strengths of each group to our advantage to perform maintenance and reconstruction projects. Not one aspect alone can keep our trails up to their current status, but as a team we can do a far better job.

--Zack Urgese
Trails Supervisor

Reunion - Mark your Calendar!
Saturday, November 10th, 2018



Centennial Celebration- Mark your Calendar!
August 23rd - 25th, 2019

CAMP DODGE
at Pinkham Notch

NH Public Radio wins the regional Edward R. Murrow award for a feature presentation about Trail Crew...

WTF is TFC?

In the Feature Reporting category, NHPR won for the Outside/In story TFC: New Hampshire's Legendary Trail "Fixing" Crew <<http://outsideinradio.org/shows/episode16>>, in which reporter Sam Evans-Brown explored how crews from the AMC Pro Crew use hand tools and sheer effort to maintain hiking trails in the White Mountains. Here are interviews with 2016 Trail Crew and some alumni working on Champney Falls Trail on Mt. Chocorua - an award winning piece of journalism that is not intended to offend but some may find irreverent.

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