

Bigelow District - 2014 Annual Report

Twenty six Bigelow District maintainers reported 115 trips this past season. A total of 99 individuals tallied 2465 volunteer hours working on the trails and campsites from Rt. 4 to the Long Falls Dam Rd.

Highlights include;

Ian Fitzmorris was the Horns Pond caretaker again this past season. Ian was very efficient as a caretaker and ridge runner in the area. In addition to being a friendly and helpful host to many hikers, Ian continued to tackle projects above and beyond his care-taking duties.

Rachel Cole will be the Horns Pond caretaker for the 2015 season. Rachel thru-hiked the AT in 2011, the PCT in 2012, and the Continental Divide in 2013

Six tent platforms were replaced at Bigelow Col by twelve girls from Camp Tekawithka during the last week of June. This was a eleven hour long project that included dismantling and removing the old platforms before constructing the new sturdier platforms. Ian Fitzmorris contributed major help during and after this project was completed.

Major clipping was completed along the AT over the summit of North Crocker, a distance of 1mile. The two mile trail section from the summit north towards Rt. 27 is available this coming season.

A Maine Conservation Corp crew worked for three weeks constructing drainage structures and stone steps on the south side of Saddleback Jr.

The Maine Trail crew spent 3 weeks installing 22 rock steps on a steep section of trail about ½ mile from the Rt. 4 parking area.

Returning during the last wet weekend of July the Camp Tekawithka boys did extensive drainage work on the AT between South Horn and West Peak with help from MATC caretakers Ian Fitzmorris and Grace Glynn. Additionally these lads hauled wood chips up to Horns Pond for use in the composting privies.

The annual mid season mixer at Horns Pond was accomplished by MATC caretakers, Grace, Ian and Carol Wellman from Gulf Hags.

Grace Glynn was the Piazza Rock caretaker this season. Grace was very effective as a caretaker, site maintainer and ridge runner in the area, plus being a friendly and helpful host to many hikers. Grace returns with enthusiasm and plans for engaging Rangeley as a trail town, and developing a music program for working with kids around the campfire, using old logging camp songs and Pete Seeger sing-a-longs.

Grace Glynn along with John Towey replaced a dozen rotted bog bridging sections just south of the Beach Hill Rd. This is a ¼ mile section of wet trail that cannot be relocated hence the ongoing bog bridging repairs.

Major projects next season include;

Poplar Ridge to Saddleback Junior Reconstruction

This original section of the Appalachian Trail, opened by the CCC in the mid-1930's, has numerous trail erosion problems that have developed over the years.

The area of focus of this project is between Poplar Ridge Lean-to and the alpine summit of Saddleback Junior. It is expected that about 200 stone steps and 20 or more stone water bars will be built during this coming season.

Berry Pickers Trail

Dave Field has proposed and the MATC exec committee has accepted a new side trail that will connect the AT with the Fly Rod Crosby trail in Madrid. Dave has flagged a route along the prominent ridge on the south side of Saddleback. Dave has often referred to this as the original trail up Saddleback for the berry pickers from Madrid. It will be called the Berry Pickers Trail and hopefully will be opened by the end of next season.

Safford Notch side trail

A couple dozen sections of bog bridging will be installed on the lower section that was relocated several years ago. This is likely a Camp Tekawithka project.

Moose Falls campsite

Repair tent platforms and privy and build a short trail relocation around a wet section about ½ mile south of the campsite.

Many thanks to all the District maintainers and volunteers who do the vast majority of routine work that includes; blow down removal, water bar cleaning and blazing, without which there would be no Appalachian Trail in Maine.