



The MAINEtainer

Maine Appalachian Trail Club

Volume XXXII

Number 2

Spring 2009

Trail crew schedule is set, please join us!

Maine Trail Crew Projects are a joint venture between the Maine AT Club, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Maine Conservation Corps. ATC volunteers join MCC teams each week. Work trips are scheduled Saturday - Wednesday. MATC members are welcome to join us for a day or longer!

Nesuntabunt Mountain

Erosion Control - stone steps/waterbars, June 6.

Nesuntabunt Mt. is a modest hike with extraordinary views of Nahmakanta Lake and Katahdin. The work will involve hand tools such as mattocks, shovels, pry bars and Griphoists to move rocks and make steps. The crew will car camp near a pond, and make 1-mile day hikes to the work site. **Moderate.**

Rainbow Lake

Step Stones and Drainage Ditches, June 6

Rainbow Lake has an impressive view of Katahdin. The team will be placing step stones and digging ditches to improve the trail through wet areas. The work will involve mattocks, shovels, and pry bars. The team will backpack 3 1/2 miles along beautiful Rainbow Stream to a campsite on the shore of Rainbow Lake. **More Difficult.**

West Peak of White Cap Mt.

Erosion Control, June 6, June 13, June 20, June 27

West Peak is one of the highest summits on White Cap Mt. The Crew will be building rock steps, waterbars, and a short relocation. Hand tools and Griphoist gear will be used to place rocks in the trail. The crew will backpack 3-1/2 miles up the mountain to a ridge top campsite. **Most Difficult.**

West Baldpate Mountain

Rock Waterbars and Steps, June 13, June 20, June 27

The two summits and extensive open areas of Baldpate Mt. form the eastern side of Grafton

Notch. The team will build rock waterbars and steps to reconstruct the trail up high near the western summit. Stone cutting tools will be used to shape boulders, and the crew will use Griphoist equipment and hand tools such as mattocks, shovels, and pry bars to move rocks into position along the trail. The crew will backpack 2 miles up the mountain to a campsite, and then hike 3/4 mile farther up to the work site. **Most Difficult.**

Flagstaff Lake

Side hill trail building and stone steps, June 13, June 20, June 27

Flagstaff Lake is the 5th largest lake in Maine, and borders Bigelow Mountain. A new section of the AT follows the shore of the lake and needs to have steps and side hill trail built before it can be opened. The work involves tools such as mattocks, shovels, pry bars and a Griphoist. The team will stay at a nearby lodge, and will hike 1 mile to the project each day. **Very Moderate.**



Maine Trail Crew at work.

Maine Appalachian Trail Club
Barbara Gorrill, membership chair
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Continued on page 2.

More Trail Crew opportunities

Moody Mountain

Relocation, July 6 (short week), July 11, July 18

Moody Mt., with its large cliff face, is one of the most dramatic and challenging places on the Maine AT. A landslide obliterated about 300 feet of the trail in 2008. This team will be constructing a relocation to avoid the slide area. Stone steps, side hill trail, and steel ladder rungs will be built on the new trail. The team will use digging tools, Griphoist and rock drills to accomplish the work. The team will have an easy 1-1/2 mile backpack to a campsite and then hike 3/4 mile to the project each day. **Moderate.**

Katahdin - The Hunt Trail

Rock Steps and Waterbars, July 6 (short week), July 11, and July 18

Katahdin's Hunt trail is the final 5 miles of the Appalachian Trail and suffers from severe erosion. The crew will be building waterbars and steps between Katahdin Falls and "The Cave." Hand tools and Griphoist gear will be used to gather rocks and put them in the right places. The crew will stay in a Baxter State Park Campground and hike up to 3 miles to the worksite each day. **Moderate.**

North Slope of WhiteCap Mountain.

Rock Steps, July 6 (short week), July 11, July 18, July 25, Aug 1, Aug 8.

White Cap Mountain is the highest point on the Trail between Bigelow and Katahdin. The crew will build rock steps on the north side of the mountain using rock drills and Griphoist equipment to produce and collect step stones. The crew will backpack 2 miles up the mountain and camp in a ravine carved by Logan Brook. There will be a one mile uphill hike to the project each day. **Most Difficult.**

Old Blue Mountain

Erosion Control, July 25, August 1, August 8

Old Blue Mountain features one of the most sustained climbs along the trail in Maine. The

team will build rock waterbars and steps. The crew will use a Griphoist and tools such as mattocks, shovels, and pry bars to move rocks into position along the trail. The crew will car camp in the valley and hike 1-1/2 miles up the mountain the work site. **More Difficult.**

Gulf Hagas Mountain

Erosion Control, July 25, Aug 1, Aug 8

Gulf Hagas Mt rises above the Pleasant River Valley at the western end of the White Cap Range. The Crew will be building rock steps, and waterbars. Hand tools and Griphoist gear will be used to place rocks in the trail. The crew will backpack 3-1/2 miles up the mountain to a ridge top campsite. **More Difficult.**

See you on the Trail!

NOTE:

Maine Trail Crew projects involve construction conditions. MTC will provide safety gear such as hard hats and eye protection. You must bring sturdy boots, long pants and gloves. Please be sure to contact the Maine Trail Crew before planning to join the crew so you know where to meet them. Many project approaches involve using abandoned logging roads and bushwhacks to save time reaching the site instead of hiking in along the AT.

The Maine Trail Crew
Maine Appalachian Trail Club
PO Box 30, Garland ME 04939
207-924-0133 (after May 11)

Seeking mountain birdwatchers for June survey

Do you enjoy hiking? Are you interested in birdwatching? Mountain Birdwatch allows you to merge two of your hobbies while contributing valuable data to conserve mountain songbirds and their habitat. Adopt a mountain and conduct a bird survey at dawn in early June. Seeking beginning to experienced birdwatchers in good physical condition. Training provided. The available routes in Maine are Old Blue, Surplus, and Big Spencer. Sign up for Mountain Birdwatch by writing mbw@vtcostudies.org or calling 802-649-1431x1. To learn more, visit Mountain Birdwatch at: <http://www.vtcostudies.org/MBW/>.

Mountain Birdwatch is a long-term monitoring program for Bicknell's Thrush and other montane forest birds. From the Catskills to Mount Katahdin, trained volunteers conduct dawn surveys along foot trails that pass through some of the region's most awe-inspiring forests. The typical time commitment is one to two mornings each June, with overnight camping recommended on remote routes. Participants receive training in bird identification, experience the thrill of alpine adventure, and help guide the stewardship of vulnerable mountain habitat. Contact Julie Hart, Mountain Birdwatch Coordinator, at the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, PO Box 420, Norwich, VT, 05055, or call 802-649-1431x1 or email mbw@vtcostudies.org.

Maintainer for Pierce Pond Shelter needed

In the Kennebec District, there is a vacancy for the position of maintainer of the Pierce Pond shelter. This shelter is located a short distance from the Bowtown Road and Harrison's Camps on the shore of Pierce Pond. If you are interested in this assignment, please contact: Peter Roderick, Overseer, Kennebec District (roderick1027@fairpoint.net or 293-2704).



Lester Kenway inspecting an erected tent at the MATC Basecamp while Elsa Sanborn and Bruce Grant make final adjustments. Photo by Tony Barrett.

Tales from Maine AT registers promise to be a good read

By Carey Kish

In early April I pitched a book idea to MATC leadership and members at the annual meeting in Farmington and received a warm and enthusiastic response. The proposed book would assemble selected Maine A.T. register book entries from shelters along the 270-mile length of trail in Maine. Register archives, where they exist, would also be carefully sifted through for their important historical material.

Additional supporting material would be written describing the unique nature of the Maine A.T. experience. Photographs of people, places and things of special interest from the trail will be taken and collected. All will be compiled into a one-of-a-kind Maine book for sale to an interested public – hikers and other trail users, outdoors people of all types, general Maine admirers and enthusiasts – through retail, online and other outlets. A portion of book proceeds will be directed to support Maine A.T. trail activities.

I've wanted to compile such a book for years, ever since my own A.T. thru-hike experience, many years of hiking, and now maintaining a section of the Maine A.T. While thru-hiking the Northville-Lake Placid Trail through the Adirondack Mountains of New York in 2006 I came across a book similar in nature: *No Place I'd Rather Be: Wit and Wisdom from Adirondack Lean-to Journals* by Stuart F. Mesinger (Adirondack Mountain Club, 2006). It was a great read and the idea has again burned bright, so why not do it now?!

The Maine section of the 2,150-mile Appalachian Trail, from the Mahoosucs to Katahdin, is considered by many to be the most spectacular of the entire route, with rugged mountains, pristine lakes and ponds, abundant wildlife and a remote wilderness character. Thousands of hikers take to the Maine A.T. each year to walk for a few hours, days or weeks. Such trips exercise the body and mind, refresh the spirit, renew the soul, and put life in perspective. Few return to the work-a-day world unmoved, as the Maine A.T. evokes strong emotions from novice hiker to seasoned woods person. It is a special place indeed, a place of untold natural and human value.

Shelters or "lean-to's" at regular intervals provide rest and repair, whether for a lunch stop on a day hike or an overnight stay. Each of the shelters is home to a "register book" that serves as a valuable communication and expression tool for trail users. Very often the first thing many hikers do upon arriving at a shelter is to pull out the register, read and write a few notations of their own.

Some will philosophize about life and nature, while others consider the weather; some record the sounds of the night, while others note the hardships of their trip to the woods; some make fun of their trail companions, others describe in detail their latest one-pot meal concoction. It is a literary smorgasbord of reading, always informative, always entertaining, and always fun.

For the thru-hiker, Maine is prominently positioned at either the beginning or end of the long hike. Maine A.T. register books capture the incredible tales of those just embarking on the journey of a lifetime, heading south from Katahdin into the 100-Mile Wilderness and beyond. For northbounders it is the end of their long trek through thirteen states, and their thoughts and words are crystallized, powerful and telling.

Tales from the Trail: Chronicles from Maine A.T. shelter registers (or some similar title, I suspect) will seek to capture these precious writings, scribbling, snippets, notes, quotes and drawings from the very people who use and enjoy, love and revere the Appalachian Trail in Maine.

My plan is to work closely with MATC overseers, trail maintainers and shelter maintainers to gather completed logbooks over the next several seasons. Logbooks, zip plastic baggies and pens can be supplied as needed. I will also work with other MATC members who may have



old register archives, a critical component of the book.

The assistance of the MATC and its members will be of tremendous help in the collection of register books, the review and editing process, and other facets of the book project. I am thankful in advance to any and all persons who may

Continued on page 7

Invite a friend to join MATC

Please check the membership category and the amount of contribution you wish to make.

Individual (\$15) ____ Family (\$20) ____ Organization (\$25) ____

Additional Contribution _____

Name _____

Address _____

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Family member names for membership cards

Check activities of special interest: Trail Maintenance ____, committee work ____,

Other: _____

Send form or just a note with your dues or contribution to:

Barbara Gorrill, MATC, PO Box 55, Gray, ME 04039-211

Your contribution to the MATC makes our work possible!

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On May 2, a crew of 8 people set up tents at the Garland trail crew Basecamp. A record number of trail crew members are expected to start arriving in Garland next week. **Above**, Lester Kenway, Ed Langlais, Bruce Grant, Sherri Langlais & Geoff Shadman erecting a tent. **Below**, Geoff Shadman, Ed Langlais & Lester Kenway are unfolding a tent. Photos by Tony Barrett.



SaddlebackMaine Ski Area replaced the old T-bar to the top of the mountain with a new Quad-Chair lift which operated this past season. The structure housing the lift mechanism as well as the Ski Patrol warming hut are positioned below the ridgeline on the north slope. However, a small communications building with a microwave antenna was constructed higher up the slope. This panoramic photo shows the relative position of this small building in the righthand side of this photo looking up from the north side of the ridge. It is unclear how noticeable (if at all) the structure and antenna are when observed from the AT. Photo and note by Tony Barrett.

Geocaching alternatives offer fun with GPS.

By Tony Barrett

In the last Mainetainer, ATC's new Geocaching policy and guidance on what MATC's role should be was summarized. The geocaching policy attempts to strike a balance between the value of geocaching as an outdoor recreational activity and the possible negative impacts to natural and cultural resources that unmanaged geocaching can cause. However, due to the policies of the land management agencies, almost 80% of the Maine AT is off-limits to geocaching. This second article offers some alternatives for GPS-toting hikers along the AT.

Geocaching is a great family activity and for many, it is an excellent excuse to hike and explore public land where one has never been before. Geocaching is also a great way to get kids outside and hiking in remote lands. These kids are the future land stewards and maintainers of the AT.

The number of geocaching sites and participants are growing weekly. As of January 2009 there were 713,000 active geocaches worldwide (compared with 559,000 in April 2008 and 340,000 in December 2006). There is an active geocaching community in Maine (see www.geocachingmaine.org) and an active AT discussion forum on the site with MATC members participating.



At the Governor's Conference on Youth and the Natural World, AT hikers Chip Noble and Steve Engle lead a geocaching workshop for 25 young people in Augusta in October, 2008. Photo by Tony Barrett.

With the prohibitions on geocaching within the AT corridor, how can the MATC work with this growing community of GPS-enabled, adventure seeking hikers? Acadia National Park is one of several high-visitation parks that has developed a lower-impact form of geocaching, called earthcaching. Their earthcaching tour (visit

www.nps.gov/acad/earthcache.htm to view the details) keeps participants on hardened surfaces without physical caches. Perhaps a series of earthcache sites can be developed along the AT. Waymarking is another low-impact activity that could be encouraged. There is already an established Appalachian Trail category with 22 registered waymarks along the AT posted on the internet. Benchmark hunting is another popular activity that doesn't involve a physical cache.

Look forward to seeing more GPS-toting hikers along the AT in Maine in coming years.

Chainsaw milling techniques to be taught in August

Join Lester Kenway, Peter Roderick and Craig Dickstein on August 1, 2009, for an on-the-trail workshop that will teach how to mill bog bridging material from whole logs using a chainsaw milling device. The workshop will be held on the AT near Caratunk.

We will take recently fallen trees and mill bog bridging planks from them using a chainsaw and a chainsaw milling device. This technique is useful on remote sections of the trail where it is impossible to use conventional planks and where using split whole logs would be wasteful.

Once we have some freshly milled planks to work with, we will install bog bridging on a section of the AT nearby.

FMI – contact Peter Roderick, roderick1027@fairpoint.net/207-293-2704.

What is Letterboxing, Waycaching & Earthcaching?

A Letterbox (and letterboxing) is similar to a geocache (and geocaching). The activity of letterboxing originated in England over 100 years ago and is the low-tech predecessor to geocaching. A similar hidden container is sought through the use of clues rather than GPS receivers. The traditions are different but the activity poses similar issues for land managers. There are far fewer letterboxes registered in Maine than geocaches. However, two letterboxes and some associated minor vandalism were uncovered in Baxter State Park just this past summer. www.atlasquest.com and www.letterboxing.org are two websites devoted to this activity. 'Questing,' a place-based education program variant to Letterboxing, attempts to engage youth in exploring the outdoors. Programs have started here in Maine. See the following link for more information. <http://www.vitalcommunities.org/ValleyQuest/ValleyQuest.htm>

Waymarking is sometimes called virtual geocaching. The goal in waymarking is the

location itself; that is the 'treasure.' The primary difference from geocaching is that no physical object or container is placed when creating a waymark. This allows certain locations that have previously been off-limits to geocaching to be listed. This time, the entire focus is on what can be gained from the location in terms of education, view, or simply your obsessive desire to document the location of every peak over 3,000' in Maine on the AT. See the existing Appalachian Trail waymarks at www.waymarking.com.

An EarthCache site is a special place that people can visit with a GPS receiver to learn about a unique geoscience feature or aspect of our Earth. Visitors do not find a physical box with contents or logbook. Rather they 'log' their visit by capturing a photo or glean some other information that can only be gathered by actually visiting the site. There are over 68 registered sites in Maine at www.earthcache.org including the earthcache tour in Acadia National Park.

Two new Whitecap maintainers needed

The Whitecap District has a few openings for the upcoming season.

1st: Summit of Whitecap Mtn. to Jct. of White Brook Side Trail and the White Brook Side Trail. This section incorporates 1.1 miles of trail. The White Brook Trail climbs steeply at times from an old logging yard, past the site of a former fire warden's hut to join the Appalachian Trail between Hay Mountain and the summit of Whitecap. Access to this section is difficult and involves driving over many miles of rough roads. A person should only consider taking on this maintenance assignment if they have access to a four-wheel drive vehicle with good ground clearance.

2nd: White Brook Side Trail to the Summit of West Peak. This section maintains a high elevation as it runs westward along the Whitecap ridgeline for 2.2 miles. The easiest access to this section is provided by the White Brook Trail. Access to this section is difficult and involves driving over many miles of rough roads. A person should only consider taking on this maintenance assignment if they have access to a four-wheel drive vehicle with good ground clearance.

Good luck to all the Whitecap Maintainers in 2009!

Contact: Julian Wiggins,
julianwiggins@gmail.com or cell:
(207) 975-2011.

Register Book

Continued from page 3

wish to assist in any respect. Comments and suggestions are welcome in order to make this a successful endeavor that benefits Maine, the Maine A.T., MATC and all those who enjoying spending time on the trail and reading about the great Maine outdoors.

Carey Kish is a long-time multi-sport adventurer, journalist and photographer from Bowdoin, Maine. Contact: 207-838-9669 or MaineOutdoors@aol.com.

Coming in our next issue:

- Minutes from the MATC annual meeting, held in Farmington on April 11
- The story behind the Bigelow fire tower, by John Parsons

Purchase Trail Guides, Maps, and other items from the MATC

The Official Appalachian Trail Guide to Maine

\$20.00 members, \$25.00 non-members

Qty. _____ \$ _____

Maine AT Trail Maps

\$6.00 ea. members, \$8.00 ea. non-members

Map 1 – Katahdin to South End of Nahmakanta Lake

Qty. _____ \$ _____

Map 2 – Nahmakanta Lake to West Branch of the Pleasant River

Qty. _____ \$ _____

Map 3 – West Branch of the Pleasant River To Monson

Qty. _____ \$ _____

Map 4 – Monson to the Kennebec River

Qty. _____ \$ _____

Map 5 – Kennebec River to Maine Highway 27

Qty. _____ \$ _____

Map 6 – Maine Highway 27 to Maine Highway 17

Qty. _____ \$ _____

Map 7 – Maine Highway 17 to Maine/NH State Line

Qty. _____ \$ _____

Other MATC Items

M.A.T.C. Shoulder Patch - \$4.00

Qty. _____ \$ _____

M.A.T.C. Decal - \$3.00

Qty. _____ \$ _____

M.A.T.C. Pin - \$7.00

Qty. _____ \$ _____

M.A.T.C. Note Cards, set of 8 - \$8.00

Qty. _____ \$ _____

M.A.T.C. Baseball Cap - \$25.00

Qty. _____ \$ _____

M.A.T.C. T-Shirts – green logo on sand or tan

(we select background color according to availability)

Available in Small, Medium, Large or Extra-Large

Long Sleeve - \$20.00 Size _____ Qty. _____ \$ _____

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Make check payable to the Maine Appalachian Trail Club (M.A.T.C.) and mail with this form to Barbara Gorrill, MATC, PO Box 55, Gray, ME 04039. To pay by Visa or Mastercard, fill out information below (please print).

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The MAINEtainer

is the newsletter of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of MATC, its members, officers, or directors. *The Mainetainer* is published five times a year. Our mission as a club is to construct, maintain, and protect the section of the Appalachian Trail extending from Katahdin to Route 26 in Grafton Notch, and those side trails, campsites, and shelters accepted for maintenance by the club. We seek to make accessible for hiking the wild region of Maine through which the trail passes. *The Mainetainer* welcomes letters, feedback, and information from members and friends of the trail. Send your comments, photos, and information to:

Bob Cummings
616 Main Road

Phippsburg, Maine 04562

ellen@clinic.net or *drummor@gmail.com*
MATC Executive Committee

PRESIDENT: Lester Kenway, 15 Westwood Rd., Bangor, 04402-8087, 207-947-2723(h), 278-3310(w), 745-8826(cell)
trailser@verison.net

VICE PRESIDENT: Tony Barrett, 185 Long Pt. Rd, Harpswell 04079, 833-0939,
abarrett@suscom-maine.net

SECRETARY: Janice Clain, PO Box 89, Levant, 04456,
jclain@aol.com, 884-8237

TREASURER: Elsa Sanborn, PO Box 8087, Bangor, 04402-8087, 207-947-2723, *ejask@verizon.net*

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY: Steve Clark, 599 Shapleigh Corner Road, Shapleigh, Maine, 04076, 207-636-1769,
clarkbooks@metrocast.net

OVERSEER OF LANDS: David B. Field, 191 Emerson Mill Rd., Hampden, 04444, 862-3674, 852-7644(c),
meeser3@roadrunner.com

OVERSEERS OF TRAIL

KATAHDIN DISTRICT: Rick Ste. Croix, 17 Kenneth St., Augusta, 04330 621-1791,
ricknrachel@local.net

WHITECAP DISTRICT: Julian Wiggins, 79 Bennoch, Rd, Orono, 04473, 975-2011,
julianwiggins@gmail.com

KENNEBEC DISTRICT: Peter Roderick, 1027 Watson Pond Road, Rome, ME 04963. 293-2704,
Roderick1027@fairpoint.net

BIGELOW DISTRICT: Richard Fecteau, 284 Ramsdell Rd.,

Farmington, 04938, 207-778-0870,
rfecteau@midmaine.com

BALDPATE DISTRICT: Tom Gorrill, 27 Wildwood Ln., Gray, Maine 04039, 657-4249(h), 657-6910(w),
tgorrill@maine.rr.com

ATC REGIONAL REP: Jody Carton, PO Box 312, Lyme, NH, 03768-0312, 603-795-4935,
jcarton@appalachiantrail.org

DIRECTORS

Dennis Andrews, 87 Gage St Apt 3, Augusta, ME 04330-6451, 215-7005, *bostondork@roadrunner.com*

Donald Stack, 11 Patten Farm Road, Buxton, 04093, 207-929-5773, 207-749-0370 (c), 883-8155(w),
Donstack@sacoriver.net

Bob Cummings, 616 Main Rd., Phippsburg, 04562 207-443-2925,
ellen@clinic.net or
drummor@gmail.com

William Eddy: PO Box 1011 Rangeley, 04970-1011, 207-864-5782,
eddy52@verizon.net

Bruce Grant, 396 Rddy Rd., Dover-Foxcroft, 04426, 564-3098, 343-0918(c) *brucegme@localnet.com*

Willard Millis (Bill), 421 Azalea Lane, Sidney, 04330, 207-465-7038,
mbm@airolink.net

Craig Dickstein, Box 128, Caratunk, 04925-0207 207-672-4983,
craig.donna@wildblue.net

Steve Gaffney, 124 State House Station, Augusta, 04333-0124, 624-6088, *steven.gaffney@maine.gov*

CLUB COORDINATOR, Holly Sheehan, 231 Maine Ave. Portland, 04103, (207) 615-5794, backup phone, (207) 400-6352
matc@gwi.net

MATC looking for land to build home for Trail Crew Basecamp.

Dear Maine Conservation & Environmental Community, Land Trust Network, area land trusts, land brokers & other non-profit coalitions: LAND WANTED!

In today's real estate market, many potential sellers of land are holding off on listing land for sale. A 501(c)3 conservation organization is seeking to purchase or receive a donation of a parcel of land with 15 to 50+ acres of woods and with a suitable building site in the general area between Farmington & Newport, Maine. The Maine Appalachian Trail Club is seeking to establish a permanent Base Camp for seasonal trail crews that will be working on the Appalachian Trail in Maine. It is envisioned that an environmentally-friendly, low-impact facility would be built for the Base Camp. The remaining land would be used for chainsaw safety and trail building training. The Base Camp could co-locate with existing outdoor conservation or education organizations. If you know of such organizations or know of a conservation-minded landowner in this general area of central Maine who is willing to sell land, please contact Lester Kenway, President, MATC 207-947-2723, *trailser@myfairpoint.net*.

MATC Historian seeks lean to and campsite registers

Hello all, it is Ray Ronan, wearing his MATC Historian hat. We are on the look out for any and all lean to/campsite "registers" that might be lying around out there. I have a bunch of very old ones and would like to gather any others that might be available. So if you have some or know where some might be, would you please contact me at: Ray Ronan, 86 Fall Ridge Rd, Windham, ME 04062, 207-892-2600, *walkinhome1@yahoo.com*? Thanks.

Thank you!

The MATC would like to thank the following organizations for their generous support of the MATC's Trail Crew and Caretaker and Ridgerunner Education program for the 2009 season:

- The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund
- The Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- The Recreational Trails Program, Dept. of Conservation
- The Davis Conservation Foundation
- The Quimby Family Foundation
- L.L. Bean
- Baxter State Park

Help Wanted:

Assistant Guidebook Editor

Duties: Primarily in the area of the business side of the guidebook process i.e. putting together the print specifications, gathering bids and negotiating/interacting with print vendors to deliver the excellent MATC product known as *The Official Appalachian Trail Guide to Maine*.

You can be involved with other aspects of the process.

For FMI: Ray Ronan, Editor *walkinhome1@yahoo.com* 207.892.2600