

## **Maine Appalachian Trail Club Profile for NERPC Meeting 22-March-2014**

The Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) is a volunteer managed club that was founded on June 18, 1935, by Myron Avery, who remained very active with the club as overseer of the Trail; then as President until his death in 1952. The MATC is not a hiking or outing club - its sole purpose is to protect and maintain the AT.

MATC maintains the AT from Katahdin to Maine Highway 26 in Grafton Notch (267 miles) and 61 miles of related side trails, as well as 44 campsites or shelters. The additional 14 miles of AT in Maine, from Grafton Notch to the New Hampshire border, are maintained by the Appalachian Mountain Club.

We currently have 1369 members. There are 114 trail maintenance sections and 70 corridor monitoring sections. Each of these is assigned to interested individuals or groups for maintenance and/or monitoring. Of course many of these folks recruit friends and neighbors to assist them in their efforts, thus several hundred volunteers work each year on the AT in Maine and as a club we reported 24,506 hours in 2013 to the VIP report. In most years the MATC is the maintaining club reporting the highest number of hours. However MATC was surpassed last year by the PATC on a total hours reported basis. Calculated on a per member or volunteer basis however, the MATC surpassed PATC.

The MATC is governed by an Executive Committee consisting of a President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, Overseer of Lands, five Overseers of Trail and eight Directors. This group meets five times each year to discuss and vote on issues pertaining to the trail. The club hosts an annual meeting each spring and a maintainers and corridor monitors gathering during the winter.

Each season the MATC hires Caretakers and Ridgerunners to fill positions at three sites to help educate hikers in the principles of Leave-no-Trace®: Piazza Rock (near Rangeley), Horns Pond (on Bigelow Mtn.), and Gulf Hagas. We also hire and fill volunteer positions for the Maine Trail Crew that consists of two teams working to do the tasks that

a section maintainer would not be expected to perform, such as rock steps and waterbars. Additionally, when funding and crews are available, the club also coordinates work done on the Appalachian Trail by Maine Conservation Corp and Public Lands Corp trail crews.

MATC continues forward to start a capital campaign to raise funds to build a Trail Crew Center in Skowhegan. MATC started the Maine Trail Crew in 1990 and since that time we have rented land to use as a base camp for the crew. Since 1990, the MATC has had to relocate the base camp four times due to the lack of a permanent site. We have rented space in Monson, on an island in a pond in Dover-Foxcroft, in Dexter, on a sheep farm in Garland, and this year we are moving again - back to the island in Dover-Foxcroft. Every move has meant that the Trail Crew Committee has had to spend many hours researching new locations that the MATC could rent for the base camp. Also, due to the lack of adequate facilities the crews have to sleep in tents and no location we have rented had shower facilities. Thus the crew members must travel to the local YMCA to shower. These, and other disadvantages, are why the MATC will soon start this capital campaign to raise the funds to build a permanent facility for the Maine Trail Crew.

### **Biggest Accomplishments 2013**

During the 2013 season the Maine Trail Crew had one of the best years that it has had in many years. The Maine Trail Crew built 292 stone steps, 41 rock water bars, 160 square feet of retaining wall, 284 step stones, and 100 lineal feet of drainage ditch. Also in 2013 the MCC and PLC crews built 250 stone steps, 22 stone water bars, 14 step stones, 6 ditches, and 225 square feet of rip rap.

One of the MATC Ridgerunners, Ian Fitzmorris, with the assistance of 1528 helpers (mostly hikers) - and even a Maine Forest Service helicopter for the last extremely heavy loads, packed out 10,975 lbs. of trash from Bigelow's Avery Peak and Bigelow Col.

The first ever MATC-built accessible mouldering privy was built at Carl Newhall shelter on the AT by Whitecap Mountain. More accessible privies are to come in the very near future.

Several events were held during 2013 sponsored by the newly formed "Friends of the AT in Maine" to assist the MATC with public relations. These events were held throughout the State of Maine and some of the speakers included Aislinn Sarnacki of the Bangor Daily News, Paul & Asher Molyneaux (long distance hikers), Carey Kish (long distance hiker, club maintainer) and Dave Field.

The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust, after 5 years of work and with funding provided by Forest Legacy, along with the Trust for Public Lands, closed on over 11,000 acres that will permanently protect the Crocker Mountains and the land along 8 miles of the AT. The Orbeton Stream easement is expected to close later this year which will protect the important view shed from Saddleback Mountain. Work is also proceeding to acquire two other small parcels of land adjacent to the corridor (Longley & Long Falls Dam Rd.)

We now have 3 Trail Communities: Millinocket joined the towns of Monson and Rangeley.

Thanks to the excellent work of ATC Conservation Resources Manager for Maine - Claire Polfus (with some assistance from overseers and maintainers) Maine's Trail assessment is now current - in spite of last October's government shutdown.

Also thanks to the efforts of Allison Scheiderer: With assistance from the AHS, Americorp, and CCC, over 20 miles of corridor boundary in Maine were recovered last year.

## **Biggest Challenges**

Residential Sprawl - The breakup of large lots of land, which for many years had been owned by the large paper companies and managed for wood supply to their mill, commenced decades ago. With the break-up of these large lots volunteers have in certain areas found that access to their maintenance or monitoring section is now much more difficult due to new landowners not allowing access that had been historically allowed.

Industrial Wind power projects - The club initiated and introduced to the Maine Legislature the first piece of legislation in its history to attempt to rectify deficiencies in the current wind law.

Trail Deficiency - Maine, like most other states in the North, has very thin soils and much of the AT was laid out in many places along “fall line” routes resulting in steep grades. Add to that many recent years of large storms adding more precipitation and this has created a large number of projects to accomplish to bring the AT and side trails up to standard. Work on the AT in Maine is challenged by difficult access to work sites and the lack of available funding (and thus trail crews) to complete them. At the current rate of trail recovery work, it is estimated that it will take 23 years to address all the trail deficiencies we have at the present time.