



## **NW Camp Committee Annual Report for 2011**

*Submitted by Rod Parlee, Chairman and Conservation Director*

The Northwest Camp cabin, constructed of American chestnut continues to stand tall on the Taconic plateau tucked away in an old-growth Eastern hemlock forest. The sparkling pristine stream adjacent to the cabin drains to Sages ravine and is part of the Schenob brook watershed drainage basin. This rare watershed has been the target of protection for many years by numerous local, state and national environmental organizations and public agencies. The State of Massachusetts designated the basin as an “Area of Critical Environmental Concern” in hopes of long-term preservation and responsible management. The Berkshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy claims it is the most diverse watershed east of the Mississippi river with over forty species of rare and endangered flora and fauna. The Housatonic Valley Association has declared the watershed part of its “Critical Treasures of Connecticut” and the AMC is part of the Highlands Coalition that states, “The Mid-Atlantic Highlands’ resources are severely threatened by suburban sprawl and industrial development”.

Therein lies the challenge of properly sustaining a self-service cabin and tent platform on 125-acres high on the northwest shoulder of Bear Mt. The Northwest Camp committee members are always up for the challenge and continue to successfully manage the property by reducing its footprint and adhering to the Bylaws that govern the committee.

Five productive committee meetings took place in 2011 and one was solely dedicated to planning for the 60-year anniversary. On Saturday, August 13th the Northwest Camp committee hosted a well-planned celebration as a tribute to the long-standing Northwest Camp cabin and the former committee members who made it possible. The night before the celebration, participants and planners were treated to a spectacular viewing of over 20 Perseid meteors from the summit of Bald peak. The cabin was built in 1951 by hand on leased land and after 60 years it still serves as an outstanding destination for many AMC members and non-members. Some might say, its even got better! The Committee offered champagne to toast the 60-year-old cabin with a chocolate raspberry cake along with a miniature (almost identical) cabin made from pretzels and graham crackers. Of the thirty or so participants, some of the original crew was present such as Don Pratt, Joan Ensor Katan, Charlie Katan and Norm Sills. The NW Camp committee expresses sincere thanks to these dedicated long-time AMC members including current Committee members John and Marge Hicks. Special thanks also to Committee members Carol Langley and Paul Thoma who worked diligently for over a year, organizing the celebration.

The Committee continuously seeks new members with fresh ideas to help deal with the never-ending resource demands from camp users. Conserving cordwood has been addressed many times and the most recent planned task calls for the installation of a damper with a fusible link above the woodstove on the ceiling. This will help heat the upstairs loft, comply with building codes and likely reduce the consumption of cordwood used to heat woodstove and cabin. Another challenge is dealing with the constant erosion and soil buildup on the up-gradient side of the cabin. The Co-chair and Cabin Monitor met with Sean Hayden at the cabin in August. Sean is a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control and a Connecticut Certified Soil Scientist with the Northwest Conservation District. He offered a free site assessment based on our concerns and our plans to bring in heavy equipment to deal with the problem. As a result, a new plan was addressed that includes no heavy equipment but probably more than one workparty with many volunteers. The Committee offers sincere gratitude to Sean Hayden for taking the time out of his busy schedule to meet with us on-site.

The Committee donated \$200 to the Ridgerunner program. Regional Trails coordinator, Matt Moore states “The money goes a long way and can help buy necessary gear and supplies to keep the staff supported and happy. Your show of support and the opportunity for our staff to meet committee members strengthens our community and the Ridgerunners' sense of that community. We are proud and happy to work with the Northwest Camp committee and to work to keep it as special and beautiful as it is.”

The hopes remain alive that this treasured piece of property encourages the cooperative support within the AMC to ensure and sustain its long-term health and viability for future generations.

### **Committee Roster**

Rod Parlee (Co-Chair, Conservation Director) \*  
Tom McGrath (Co-Chair, Moldering Privy Chair) \*  
Merri Fox (Secretary/Volunteer Hours Coordinator)\*  
Paul Ives (Past Chair/Caretaker)\*  
Sue Ives (Registrar) \*  
Al Puches (Treasurer) \*  
John Hicks (Past Chair/Caretaker – Camp Trails Committee Chair)\*  
Donald Klein (Cabin Monitor) \*  
Craig Kennedy (Cabin Monitor)\*  
Paul Thoma (LNT Trainer)\*  
Carol Langley (Green Mt Club, CT Rep)\*  
Chuck Doll (Past Chair)  
John Rek (Past Chair/Caretaker)  
Steve Troop  
Ron Zlotoff  
Marge Hicks\*  
Tom Nichols  
Andy Johnson  
Ken Kostak

\* denotes 30 volunteer hours plus

### **The following are NW Camp Committee Events for 2011-2012:**

**November 4-7, 2011 NW Camp Fall Workparty**

**November 12, 2011 CT AMC Annual Gathering - 1 pm - 9 pm Courtyard by Marriott,  
4 Sebethe Drive, Cromwell**

**December 8, 2011 NW Camp committee meeting at CFPA**

**January 28, 2012 AMC ANNUAL MEETING at UMASS**

**March 2-5, 2012 NW Camp Winter Weekend**

**May 4-7, 2012 NW Camp Spring Workparty**

**August 10-13, 2012 Annual Perseids Meteor Shower**

**October 13, 2011 AT Day (tentative)**

**November 2-5, 2012 NW Camp Fall Workparty**