



Northwest Camp



NW Camp Committee Annual Report for 2017 *Submitted by Rod Parlee, Co-Chair and Conservation Director*

The Northwest Camp Committee had an active year managing the cabin and its surrounding 125-acres, high on the Taconic plateau. The rustic but cozy cabin is constructed of American chestnut logs, tucked away under an old-growth Eastern hemlock forest canopy in a remote and environmentally diverse area in the very northwest corner of Connecticut. The NWC Committee volunteers managing this self-service facility continue to meet the challenge of balancing the needs of its guests with a safe and environmentally responsible self-service camping experience.

The sparkling pristine stream adjacent to the cabin drains to Sages ravine and is part of the unique 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. Continuously learning and sharing what makes this fragile and vulnerable property and watershed so unique is a high priority.

Productive meetings took place throughout the year and the two annual workparties (first Saturday in May & November) resulted in the completion of many tasks. For over ten years now the Committee has been donating funds to the AMC/ATC Ridgerunner (RR's) program because they value the program and how the hardworking Ridgerunners monitor the AT and promote Leave No Trace. In April, the NWC Committee received a return on their investment with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the Southern New England Regional Trails Supervisor, Andrea Franklin and the NWC Committee Co-Chairs. The MOU now helps the RR's become more of a benefit to the NWC Committee as they hike through and monitor NWC cabin and its surrounding property.

A Bylaws subcommittee was formed and after numerous meetings the final draft was approved by Joy Street and the NWC Committee in June. Changes include the tweaking of Job Descriptions, Titles of Officers and bringing it up to date with other Volunteer Camps and Cabins Committee's Bylaws.

The NWC Committee offers its sincere condolences to John Hicks (and family) on the loss of his wife Marge Hicks who passed away at St. Francis Hospital on January 5th. Marge accompanied John on almost every NWC work party and Committee meeting. She was a lifetime member of the AMC and will be sorely missed.

Clouds prevented viewing of the Perseid meteors, but participants were treated to a view of the International Space Station on a predicted path overhead from Bald Peak as part of the kick-off to the 9th Annual NWC Perseid Meteor Showers Extravaganza in August. The Friday night Owl Prowl included Audubon's Fran Zygmonts' in-depth PPT presentation on Strigiformes of North America. Mr. Zygmont called in barred owls over the Bog trailhead under the dry Hemlock canopy during showers on Friday night and again Saturday morning in the sunshine. On Saturday, Rich Michna dazzled the group with his drone demo from the parking lot and later showed a panoramic video with a portable PPT projector from the drone 200' above of the cabin and the Riga plateau. All the RR's arrived for the cookout Saturday night and gave a brief talk on what they experienced for the summer and how they thought the new MOU requiring cabin monitoring worked very well and recommended it again for next year. Many in attendance voiced ardent support for the RR's and stated that they would like them to stay in Sages through Columbus Day. Saturday night after a tasty cookout, cabin monitor and singer/songwriter Joel Blumert entertained the party with his classic songs made possible due to his very light-weight and packable acoustic guitar he hiked up from Rt 41. The highlight of the weekend happened around the campfire Saturday night during happy hour after Fran Zygmont had left, NWC Committee member Rich Michna connected his Sibley's bird calling app to an HMDX speaker and with the volume cranked and with Northern Barred owls caterwauling, in flew a Barred owl 20-feet above the campfire for quite some time. The call apparently roused up many owls in the cabin area as they hooted all night and according to preceding campers they are still hooting!

The hope remains alive that this well managed and fragile piece of property, through the committee's collaborative and information sharing process will ensure and sustain its long-term health and viability for future generations to enjoy.

2017 Committee Roster with Volunteers

Tom McGrath (Co-Chair, Moldering Privy Committee) *
Rod Parlee (Co-Chair, Conservation Director) *
Merri Fox (Secretary) *
Donald Klein (Caretaker) *
Craig Kennedy (Registrar) *
Al Puches (Treasurer) *
Paul Thoma (Financial Liaison) *
John Hicks (Past Chair/Caretaker – Trails Committee) *
Roy Hoffman (Past Chair/Caretaker)
Carol Langley (Cabin Monitor & Green Mt Club, CT Rep)
Trent Link (Past Chair/Caretaker)
Art Mauger (Cabin Monitor) *
John Rek (Past Chair/Caretaker)
Eric Harvey
Josh Michna
Rich Michna*
Tom O'Connor
Joe Parenteau
Ethan Rain*
Tim Stalling
Angel Vega

* denotes Stewardship Award with more than 30 volunteer hours