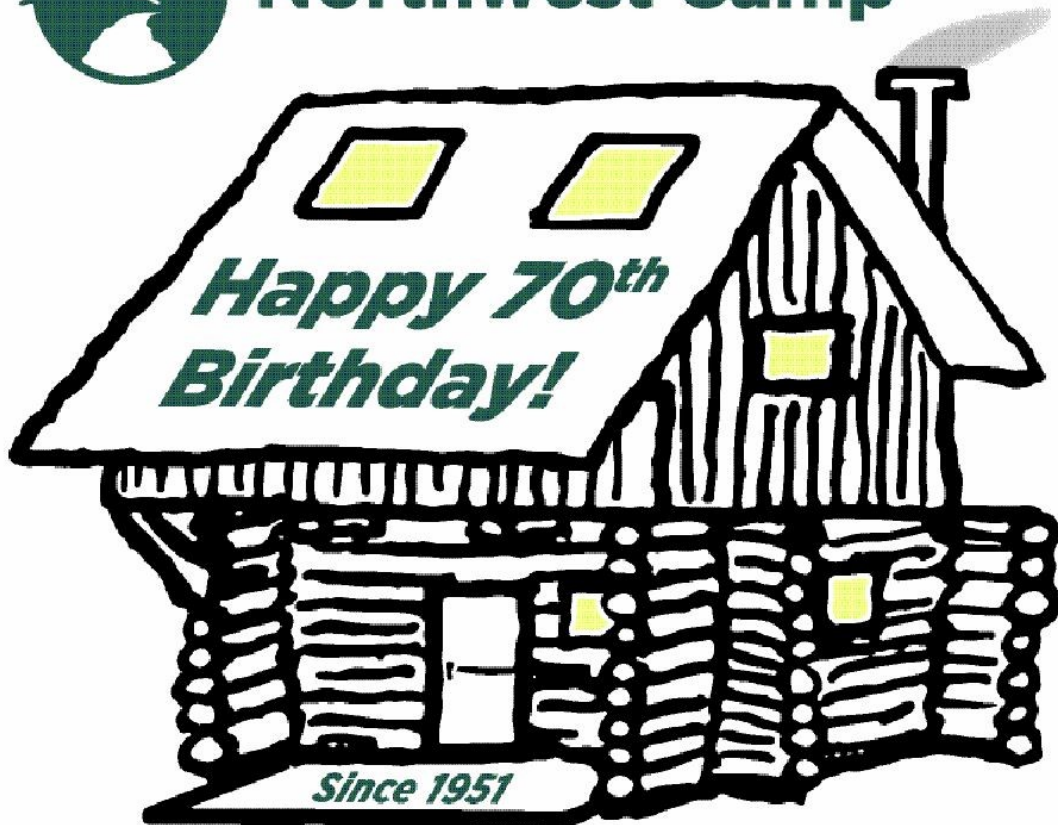




Northwest Camp



Northwest Camp Committee Annual Report for 2021

Submitted by Rod Parlee, Chair

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

The sparkling pristine stream adjacent to the cabin drains to Sage's 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, national environmental organizations, and public agencies. In support of recognizing this protection, the Committee continues to seek professionals that will volunteer their services by conducting an inventory or study of avi-fauna, botany, entomology, fish science, forest ecology, geology, herpetology, hydrology, invasive plants, lichenology, impacts from climate change, mycology, natural history, old-growth preservation, stormwater run-off, vernal pools, wildlife, etc. Continuously understanding what makes this fragile and vulnerable property and watershed so rare is a high priority of the NW Camp committee. The results of these inventories will help manage the property sustainably and heighten the awareness

of guests. Helping encourage this awareness, guests will have the continued ability to ID flora and fauna on their own thanks to the donation of twenty-seven books (mostly field guides) to the cabin library thanks to Brenda Cataldo of Bolton, CT.

After closing and locking the cabin for eight months on March 17th, 2020, due to the pandemic the cabin reopened to 50% capacity on December 4, 2020 and opened to full capacity on May 19, 2020. Fourteen months of challenging changes to our reservation protocol was a long time. Special thanks to VCC Director and COVID Compliance Director, Jess Wilson of the AMC and Northwest Camp Registrar, Craig Kennedy who helped us weather the storm. Even with all the time spent dealing with reopening restrictions, the Committee was able to celebrate its 70th anniversary as part of the Perseids cookout thanks to organizers Paul Thoma and Carol Langely. A tasty cake was custom baked for the occasion with the “Happy 70th Birthday” cabin logo on top.

Big-time kudos to the Committee as well, who met throughout the year with six productive virtual meetings, two annual workparties, mini-work-parties, and annual events such as Ridgerunner Orientation session, Perseids Meteor Shower Extravaganza (70th Anniversary) and CT AT Day. Members also attended CT Chapter Meetings, VCC meetings and submitted a PPT for the AMC Annual Summit. In August, the cabin roof was replaced by Aardvark Roofing but involved a frustrating two-week delay. The Caretaker Don Klein and John Hicks made twelve trips to the cabin during the construction process. Overall, considering how difficult it was to find a contractor during the pandemic it all worked out well.

Everyone was quite impressed with the results of the revegetation area project planned by botanist/lichenologist Steve Messier. Steve volunteered his services to the Committee by conducting a botanical inventory of the impacted areas around the cabin. The Committee purchased locust posts and constructed a perimeter fence targeted around select plants. In one year’s, time it seemed the native plants knew they were protected! They expanded right to the edge of the perimeter with a luxuriant growth of flora. More revegetation areas are planned around the cabin.

On July 19th Committee members met with two Executive Board members of the neighboring property owners MT Riga Corporation at NW Camp. The meeting (and tour of the camp) was related to the exploitation of trails on private property thanks to crowd source data such as OpenStreetMaps.org that link to several cell phone apps. It was agreed that the internet has no business managing the location of trails. Both parties agreed to designate representatives from each group and other outdoor stakeholders and meet with US Congressional Leaders.

The highlight of the year was the new book published by the CT Chapter’s Centennial History Committee, “A Century Outdoors, The AMC in Connecticut Story: 1921-2021”. Included in the book is a section with a great collection of events and memories of the NW Camp since 1996. Special thanks to the Committee, especially Darcy Witham who worked on design and production.

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.

2021 NWC Committee Roster with Volunteers

Executive Board

Rod Parlee (Chair) *
Art Mauger (Secretary) *
Craig Kennedy (Registrar) *
Donald Klein (Caretaker) *
Paul Thoma (Treasurer) *
Tom McGrath (Outgoing Co-Chair)*
Al Puches (Chapter Treasurer)

Members

John Hicks (Past Chair/Caretaker/Registrar) *
Carol Langley (Cabin Monitor)*
Joel Blumert (Cabin Monitor)
Roy Hoffman (Past Chair/Caretaker/Registrar)
John Rek (Past Chair/Caretaker/Registrar)
Trent Link (Past Chair/Caretaker/Registrar)

Volunteers

Joe Parenteau
Ethan Rain
Eric Harvey
Tom O'Connor

* Denotes AMC CT Stewardship Award with more than 30 volunteer hours