

Appalachian Mountain Club, Mohawk Hudson Chapter

Annual Report-Year 2012

2012 was a year of steady growth, major changes, and new initiatives. We ended the year with some 790 members, a growth of more than 10% over the last two years. A good step on the way to the 1000 members by 2015 suggested to us by AMC President, John Judge, the speaker at our Annual Dinner. Thanks to the injection of \$ 2000 over a 3-year period from the Chapters Special Fund our cash balance is about \$ 8000 and we are no longer considered to be on the edge of bankruptcy.

A major change occurred when our Chair Stacey Michon decided in August to go back to school and consequentially resigned her Chapter position. As a result the officers team slated for 2013 made its premature and, somewhat precocious, early appearance. The undersigned became Chair, Mary Folsom Vice -Chair, and Sharon Bonk remained as Treasurer and Acting-secretary. In November Chris Grossman took over the Secretary position. When the new team took stock of the various action items and opportunities requiring our attention, one stuck out and that was the work our Trails Chair, John Tifft, had initiated to clear the trails and general public accessibility of Hollyhock Hollow Sanctuary, HHS. This forever wild area is located some twelve miles south of Albany. Completing the project on a reasonable time -scale required an unusually large effort for our small Chapter. We made it a joint task for the Trails and Conservation (Mary Folsom, Chair) committees, obtained a grant from the AMC Conservation Special Projects Fund, and during the next couple of months let HHS absorb much of the Chapter volunteers time. It was found necessary to provide new signage and mapping of the trails for which we received the expert help of Jean Laverdure, one of our members, and Dan Driscoll. A culminating celebration was held October 27, attended by over one hundred people from the membership and the local communities. The help and interest of Paula Realbuto, the HHS liaison, is gratefully acknowledged. Very welcome byproducts of the festivity are that it led to the establishment of valuable contacts with local specialized outdoor activity clubs, such as caving and geocaching, and provided our first steps towards organizing family outings. We need such activities to play our part in realizing the AMC 2020 Vision.

Our most basic function is to provide outings and to provide leaders with participants. The latter are sometimes disappointingly few and the executive committee plans to take steps in 2013 to change this. The most popular frequent outings are those provided on Thursdays or Fridays by the HARP (hiking at a relaxed pace) group organized and led by Frank and Dee Wind. At a somewhat more demanding level are the Wednesday trips organized by Gerry Weber. Frequent leaders for these and/or the, most

demanding, weekend trips are Sharon Bonk, John Tiff, Kevin Cox (our Outings Chair), Ken Hubert, and Nancy and Will Crowther. We lost a major hike leader when Wally Herrod moved to Wisconsin. Wally, a former Chapter Chair, also led our leadership courses. His shoes are hard to fill, but new leaders have to be found and produced. It is worth noting that while "outing" till recently almost automatically meant hiking, including its snowy manifestations snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, more and more of the summer trips are now biking. Paddling has also made its way onto the menu thanks to Randy MacDonald, who this year organized two flat-water kayaking weekends in addition to his annual summer and winter hiking weekends in Vermont.

In addition to their already mentioned HHS activities, Trails and Conservation were very active again this year. Thus, we participated in the Rensselaer Land Trust led clean up of the Tomhannock Reservoir, and cleared trails on several occasions in and around Thacher State Park. These trails included sections of the Long Path for which we have been given responsibility by the NY-NJ Trail conference. At the initiation of the Chapter, the Club actively signed on as a co-sponsor of the ADK's successful petition to Gov. Cuomo to complete the purchase of 69,000 acres in the Adirondacks. This area will be designated as "Forever Wild" and be reserved for Outdoor Activity. We participated at Mabee Farm Historic Site, in a family activity designed to educate children and their parents in the outdoors and conservation.

Much of our activities depend on our ability to communicate with our members, Joy Street, and the public. Here is where our other executive committee members come in. Chris Boucher, the editor of our quarterly newsletter "On the Western Slope" did much to make it an increasingly useful, handy guide for keeping our members in regular contact with all our activities. Our website (Jeff Carden, webmaster) received over 500 hits a month, mostly from people looking for specific information on outdoor areas in our region. Enhancements to the site this year include a page specific to Conservation and a site map to make navigation easier for those with mobile devices. Sandy Andersen was responsible for publicity but because of a move to England had to leave at the end of the year. We are looking for a successor; Mary Folsom is temporarily taking over the task. Finally, our Membership Chair, Martha Waldman, is the first contact for new members and to her will increasingly fall the task of steering them in the right direction to becoming active participants and leaders.

Special thanks are due to Henry Schreiber, our regional director, who several times undertook the lengthy ride from New York City to the Capital District to attend our Executive Committee meetings. He continued to provide us with useful advice, especially during our discussions updating the job descriptions of the committee members. Thanks are also due for the support provided by Faith Salter, Cindy Martell, and Terri Morrow of the AMC headquarters staff and their assistants.

Arthur Fontijn, Chapter Chair