

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB
SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

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CHAIR REPORT



Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Appalachian Mountain Club-Southeastern Massachusetts chapter had an active year. The Executive Committee, activity leaders, and committee members were resourceful in meeting the challenges posed by the COVID-19 restrictions. We had a full slate of activities: hiking locally and in New Hampshire and the Berkshires, snowshoeing, biking, paddling, and trail work.

In addition, the Conservation Committee created a conservation activities challenge and collaborated with MA Department of Conservation and Recreation to prepare Leave No Trace promotions for the Blue Hills. The Education Committee augmented AMC's online training, leading to the certification of nine new leaders; held fun and engaging online scavenger hunts; and managed our first Wilderness and First Aid Training workshop since 2019. The Communications Committee did not miss a beat in issuing the monthly *Breeze* newsletters, chapter emails, and social media updates, also creating a new [AMC-SEM Instagram account](#). Please read this report in full to learn about our committees' many achievements.

This past year, AMC-SEM started leading regular hikes at trails that are close to the major population centers of our region. We are bringing our hikes to where people live. These are sneaker-friendly hikes meant to appeal to newcomers who have not hiked before, as well as longtime members who enjoy a beautiful stroll in the woods. The first Fall River Bioreserve hike was in late March. Through late October, eight leaders have led fourteen of these hikes. Thanks to the outreach help of the city of Fall River, many new hikers have joined us and learned about AMC-SEM, as well as about the amazing 16,000-acre Bioreserve that is in their backyard. We have also held three hikes at Brockton conservation properties and plan to make this a monthly event.

We've added to diversity of activities in other ways. We started a Beginner Hike series, held our first 20's & 30's hike, and increased our weekend activities, while continuing our long-running traditions of the Winter Series, Trail Trace the Blue Hills, and Cape Hiking. We want everyone—longtime members, as well as those new to outdoor group activities—to feel welcome on [SEM activities](#).

Thank you for being an AMC-SEM member.

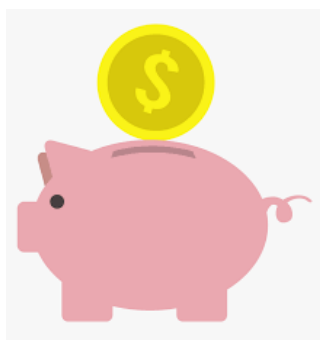
*Respectfully submitted,
Diane Simms
AMC-SEM Chapter Chair*

TREASURER'S REPORT

Greetings! It has been another challenging year for all with the ongoing impact of the pandemic. We did see some return to normalcy, but many of our typical chapter activities were moved to Zoom or otherwise redesigned and/or postponed. Despite this, new leaders were engaged and membership in the chapter continues to be strong and has rebounded from a slight dip in 2020, which is great news!

As we approach the end of 2021, we again expect to have a budget surplus, due to lower levels of spending, a shift to remote/Zoom, and limited activities. On a cash basis, we expect to have a surplus for the year of around \$5,000-10,000. Dues allocations, which have increased slightly from 2020, are helping to drive the net surplus for the year.

We began 2021 with a successful annual financial audit of 2020 books by AMC headquarters. We then went into 2021 with a tentative plan to spend some of our prior year surplus and \$6,000 of our previously withdrawn invested reserve funds for special projects; we therefore budgeted to have a planned deficit of \$9,800 for 2021. But much of this activity did not occur, leading to the aforementioned surplus through eight months, and expected through year end.



5-10K
SURPLUS

Leadership training did continue online to develop new activity leaders, and additional efforts were made by many committees to reach people virtually and in person. Trail work continued in the Blue Hills and the team helped to replace and improve bridges and trails. We also continued to focus on recognizing our leaders and volunteers, who make everything possible. Investments made in 2021 include:

- Patch redesign and inventory replenishment for the Hiking and Conservation Committees
- A packed Wilderness First Aid course in September
- Developing and celebrating new leaders
- An annual donation to the Friends of the Blue Hills
- Administrative expenses such as chapter insurance, Zoom and Meetup Membership, and Volunteer Recognition

Overall spending has been low through the first eight months but will pick up with planned activities in September through December.

I want to thank the Executive Committee and Committee members for working together, pivoting to respond to pandemic limitations, and being fiscally prudent.

Looking forward to a return to normalcy at some point in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
David Yampanis
AMC-SEM Treasurer

20'S & 30'S REPORT

The SEM 20's and 30's, like the other committees, faced challenges with planning of in-person trips and activities due to COVID-19. In lieu of in-person activities, the Committee had a couple of virtual meetings and hosted a successful online trivia night. Many AMC 20's and 30's members from different chapters took part in the trivia game, making it a great inter-chapter activity. Furthermore, being virtual allowed us to all gather easily on a week night without needing to travel. There will be some 20's and 30's hikes this fall, and we look forward to engaging more 20's and 30's SEM members in the coming year as we continue to recover from COVID-19 setbacks.

*Respectfully submitted,
Susan Schobel
AMC-SEM 20's & 30's Chair*



Photo by Jeannine Audet

BIKING REPORT

After a long hiatus due to the pandemic, this past year has been a challenge to start up our bike routes and postings on Outdoors.org. In May 2021, we had our first posting in well over a year by Jodi Jensen, and since then we have had a few more posted by Jodi and Jeannine Audet — including my very first led bike trip in Lakeville. Jodi and Jeannine's rides included rides of 25 miles from Norwood to Farm Pond in Sherborn, 28 miles from Wompatuck State Park through Cohasset and Scituate, and some trips through a winery in Dartmouth. My Lakeville ride included a tour around a few of the lakes in Lakeville, as well as riding through some scenic areas of Southeastern MA.

Each ride has proven to be a lot of fun in getting outdoors, enjoying local venues and scenery, socializing, meeting new friends, and gaining a few members along the way.



Photo by Barbara Gaughan

In closing, I am excited to say that I have heard from a few leaders who wish to post more rides for the fall. Winter is typically much slower, but we look forward to a busy spring 2022!

*Respectfully submitted,
Peter Linhares
AMC-SEM Biking Chair*

CAPE HIKING REPORT



Bourne Sisters Hike; photo by Robin McIntyre

The Cape Hiking Season runs from Labor Day to Memorial Day of the following year. We schedule hikes on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sunday afternoons. The Saturday hikes tend to be slightly longer in length at 3 – 5 hours. Our hikers and leaders are primarily retirees, but we welcome all age groups.



Monk's Park/Little Bay Hike; photo by Nancy Tutko

This past year we offered 55 hikes with one cancelled. With the 10 hikers maximum per AMC guidelines prior to June, our hikes were typically a full complement of participants, often within an hour of registration opening up on the Activities Database. Several hike leaders rose to the challenges under the new guidelines.

Now that the guidelines have eased for the upcoming fall hiking season, we look forward to more participation both by leaders and hikers.

We currently have 25 hike leaders, including those in training, with 13 actively leading during the past year. We have four individuals who have completed leadership training and are at different stages of becoming qualified. We pull from a pool of about 60 individuals who participate in our hikes annually. One of our major challenges is supporting some of our leaders to feel comfortable during the pandemic. Our other challenges are safety concerns regarding an aging population of hikers, and finding and scouting new places to hike. We are continuously encouraging new candidates for leadership training.

In August, a hike leader meeting was held at Jane Harding's house with 20 leaders and leaders-in-training participating. Jane and Robin reviewed materials from the Activities Database and leadership handbook, in addition to welcoming leaders back to the 2021-22 Cape Hike season.

Cape Hikes has actively contributed to several chapter-wide endeavors. Robin McIntyre presented at two virtual SEM Leadership trainings and served on the committee for the Leader Appreciation Picnic.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jane Harding and Robin McIntyre
AMC-SEM Cape Hikes Chair and Vice Chair*

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

It has been an exciting year for Communications! Each committee has worked with our webmistress, Cheryl Lathrop, to update its webpages.

With last year's onboarding of Vice Chair Alanna Halloran, there has been more focus on social media outreach. In February, we created an AMC-SEM official Instagram page which has steadily increased followers and attracts even more people who do not follow us.

The SEM Facebook page, managed by both Alanna and Leah Brodsky, has also had some growth this year. From February to September, we had average post reach increase 900% and follower increase 12.37%.

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits
Jan 2021	2009	4752	9656	122791
Feb 2021	1887	4402	10369	121984
Mar 2021	2142	5433	11134	148795
Apr 2021	1919	5415	12399	191807
May 2021	2084	5671	13169	160866
Jun 2021	1916	5306	12446	140372
Jul 2021	1684	5080	9947	108084
Aug 2021	1646	5472	12768	93279
Sep 2021	2062	6036	12981	137850

Since our webpages have been updated and linked, they have had more visits.

The chapter has also had a consistent and growing digital media presence by sending out both a monthly newsletter (except a planned summer hiatus) and monthly email blast (chapter-wide notifications and updates).

This September, we had 2,193 recipients of *The Breeze* and 2,389 recipients of our email blast, up 31% and 26% respectively since the beginning of the year. Our average open rate for *The Breeze* is 37.1% and the average open rate for our email blast is 36.9%. In comparison to other organizations, this is a high open rate. Typically these types of emails are only opened at a rate of 18-24%.

Due to the diligence of our email editor, Marie Hopkins, along with the suggestions of Hannah Hergenrather in Volunteer Relations, we have tried to make our email notifications more specific and engaging. And we have all worked together as a team (including Mo Walsh on the *Breeze* and Cheryl Lathrop on the web site) to consistently cross-reference each other's work.

As much as any of these efforts, we have to thank the enthusiasm and involvement of our Executive Committee, participation from our activity leaders, and word of mouth from our members. Thank you for talking about our efforts! Communications is an integral part of getting more members involved in the offerings of our dedicated activity leaders. Once you know, you go!

*Respectfully submitted,
The Communications Team
Nichole L. Nelson, Chair
AMC-SEM*



This graph shows a steady increase of Facebook followers since reposting content from Instagram

CONSERVATION REPORT

One of our 2021 objectives was to add new members to the Conservation Committee. We were very pleased to welcome Ellen Thompson, Kate Sullivan, Barry Young, and Laura Lamar, joining Nancy Coote, Bill Cannon (Vice Chair), and Joanne Newton (Chair).

Another of our goals this year was to contribute to The Breeze monthly, on average. Our committee members have contributed articles on topics such as Leave No Trace, companion planting, how to transition to native plants, and write-ups of our exciting programs. Ellen Thompson began "Conservation Corner – Suggestions for Going Greener," a regular monthly feature.

As mentioned above, the Conservation Committee diligently worked on fun programs, including ways to earn a new Conservation Patch (shown below). Chapter members and friends can receive this patch after completing the Conservation Activities Challenge – the rules for which are posted on our webpage. To date, four patches have been awarded for completing this exercise.



DCR approached SEM to help them promote Leave No Trace principles in the Blue Hills Reservation. With the influx of more hikers and bikers in the Blue Hills during last year, the park was feeling the pains of additional use of the trails and increase of trash throughout the park.

The Conservation Committee was actively involved with DCR to help educate hikers in the conservation-friendly way to use the park.

Follow these simple tips to tread lightly on the land

- Plan ahead and be prepared
- Stay on designated trails
- Carry out your trash, including pet waste
- Take only photos - leave only footprints
- Follow park rules
- Keep wildlife wild
- Share the trails and a smile



For more information and a DCR Blue Hills Reservation trail map scan the QR code.



We worked together to create a kiosk poster (shown above), a rack card, and a trifold brochure.

Friends of the Blue Hills established a Clean Park Committee with the mission of changing behaviors around dog waste bags along the trails and parking areas. AMC is represented on this committee by the SEM Conservation Chair and the Trails Chair. This committee will be rolling out its plan of action in the near future.

In May, SEM's Education Committee was approached by the Thomas Crane Public Library in Quincy, MA, to help develop an educational program on the Leave No Trace Principles. Sue Svelnis, Education Chair, and Bill Cannon, Conservation Vice-Chair, produced and presented an in-depth, hour-long Zoom webinar, which was attended by 90 people.

In August, the Conservation Committee, helped by Karen Foley and Bill Doherty, organized a hike to and tour of the Weather Observatory. The hikers learned more about climate change and the observatory's unique history as the oldest recording weather station.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Newton
AMC-SEM Conservation Committee Chair

EDUCATION REPORT



*Wilderness First Aid Class;
photo by Sue Svelnis*

While 2021 was a very unique, challenging, and busy year for the Education Committee due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were able to complete all of our goals and even created some new learning opportunities using Zoom.

As in 2020, we did not hold any in-person leadership training in 2021, but we did hold two more Zoom classes as a supplement to AMC's online Leadership Training Program. We graduated seven new hike leaders in January and an additional five in June. Most of these graduates completed their co-leads and led many hikes this year.

Because it was not possible during the first half of the year to hold in-person classes, but the chapter believes it is critical to have Wilderness First Aid training in person, the Executive Committee voted to extend WFA certifications for all leaders. We held an in-person class in September in a newly found venue that was less expensive. We held the training, taught by SOLO (Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities, a wilderness first aid school), at Wompatuck State Park's visitor center. We had a full class at 20 students, 13 of whom were SEM leaders.

Also this year, we rewrote the WFA scholarship requirements to reflect the need to approve scholarships for our leaders prior to them committing to the class, as well as ensuring that the scholarship recipients be active leaders in our chapter.

A new activity in 2021 was a joint project. For more information, please see the Conservation Report, page eight. Our presentation so was well received it led to several requests from many libraries. We did a similar presentation for the Newton Library in October, and hope to get the Boston Chapter involved to help present at other libraries.

We also engaged with two of the members from the Northeast Wildlife Trackers. Pam Landry and Pat Liddle helped to identify wildlife submitted by registrants in a Snowtracks Detectives Class. In September, Pat wrote an article on tracking wildlife through apple remains. We hope to continue our educational programs with them in the future.

Lastly, we created a series of virtual scavenger hunts to engage our members who were not comfortable participating in group activities. We gave a seasonal list of items to be found locally. Participants hiked solo or in small groups, spotting and photographing the items. We then shared the photos and stories on Zoom sessions and social media.

All in all, it was a fun and fruitful year for the Education Committee. And we learned a lot along the way!

*Respectfully submitted,
Sue Svelnis
AMC-SEM Education Committee Chair*

HIKING REPORT



Fall River hike; photo by Walt Granda

The year started with our Winter Hiking Workshop as an online event with over 80 participants; 36 participated in the Winter Hiking Series. The state required anyone who left MA to quarantine on re-entry, so we hiked in the Berkshires, ending with a hike up Mount Greylock. We also provided snowshoe hikes, including two weekend getaways. Locally, we put on a series of six winter conditioning hikes.

Statewide restrictions limited the size of group gatherings, so leaders led multiple groups for each hike, which involved a lot of additional planning for them. Hikers had to wear a mask throughout the hike to comply with statewide guidance. Imagine climbing Mount Greylock in the winter, heart pounding, with a mask on! Participants overwhelmingly complied with the safety precautions and there were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported to AMC because of any SEM hike.

In late April, the state eliminated the requirement for wearing masks outside. Two spring conditioning series commenced. The first was an eight-week series to get participants ready for their first mountain hike. The second was an advanced series consisting of six longer distance hikes. Also in April, Trail Trace the Blue Hills started its Thursday evening hikes and ran uninterrupted through

September. Its summer picnic was well attended, and we introduced about 10 new hikers to our chapter. This summer, we offered destination hikes, including a backpack along the Appalachian Trail in New Jersey and nine day-hikes to various peaks in the White Mountains. In total, over 180 hikes were offered.

To increase outreach, we started monthly hikes in more diverse communities. To be more welcoming, we rebranded our long running "Red Line the Blue Hills" series as "Trail Trace the Blue Hills" with a new web page and new patches.

Hike leaders not yet comfortable leading hikes also played their parts. Some wrote articles for *The Breeze*, including a history of the Blue Hills series. A group worked on updating the Hiking Page of our SEM website. Others helped update our Hike Leader Requirements.

This year, six participants chose to become hike leaders. In addition, two local hike leaders became mountain hike leaders, and two mountain leaders became four-season leaders. Four of our leaders graduated Mountain Leadership School.

Full Moon Hikes have started; Thursday morning hikes are being offered most weeks; Winter Trail Trace the Blue Hills will begin with the Solstice; our Winter Hiking Workshop is Nov. 4; the winter series returns to the White Mountains (including an overnight at Zealand Hut); and Noble View weekend will be held Feb. 18-20.

*Respectfully submitted,
Paul Brookes
AMC-SEM Hiking Chair*

MEMBERSHIP REPORT



Beginner Hike Series Kickoff; photo by Joanne Newton

The Membership Committee had a slow start to the year, due to COVID-19 restrictions and fewer events; however, memberships to the SEM chapter increased, and since February 2021, our chapter has had 263 new members and 148 renewals, totaling 411 new members. We have over 4,000 members total.



Beginner's Hike at Borderland State Park; photo by Ellen Thompson

The Beginner/New Member hiking series had its first kick-off hike on Sunday, July 3rd, at Massasoit State Park in East Taunton. The day began colder and wetter than a typical July 4th weekend. Hikers dressed in red, white, and blue to show their holiday spirit. It did not rain at all during the hike, and it turned out to be a great first of the series.

The second hike was held at Borderland State Park in Easton on Sunday, September 26th. Bill Cannon was the leader of that hike and received good feedback from the participants. The third hike so far was held on Sunday, October 3rd, at Destruction Brook in Dartmouth. It was a smaller group, but a beautiful fall day.

There are many more hikes in the works, and we are also hoping many more leaders will participate in leading. Hopefully, this will be a long-lasting hiking series for many years to come.

*Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Fisher
AMC-SEM Membership Chair*

PADDLING REPORT

The Paddling Committee is still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, because many leaders are still reluctant to lead trips. However, unlike in 2020, we were able to hold a couple of trips. Seven paddling trips had been scheduled this season: three were cancelled due to weather; as of the writing of this report, we are looking forward to the remaining two. Four new paddlers have expressed an interest in becoming leaders, and if the weather cooperates in 2022, they will be able to gain the required leadership training. Thanks to everyone who made our four trips possible and volunteered to be leaders next year!

*Respectfully submitted,
Ed Foster
AMC-SEM Paddling Chair*

SKIING REPORT

Due to the limitations presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the SEM Skiing Committee was unable to run trips in the winter of 2021. There is a cross-country ski trip planned in the Berkshires for December 10-12, 2021. We have booked the Wainwright Inn in Great Barrington, MA. This will hopefully be the first of an annual trip to the area. The trip is currently full (12 registered), with a waitlist. Leaders on this trip plan to run a backcountry ski trip, as well as local hikes.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jeannine Audet
AMC-SEM Ski Chair*



*The southern terminus of BCT in Kingston;
photo by Skip Maysles*

During late December thru March, several trips were made to the South Shore area to finish marking the Bay Circuit Trail (BCT) in Kingston, MA (above). The following towns in SEM area now have new 4" BCT disks: Hanson, Pembroke, and Kingston. Also, SEM and town employees made a site visit to review a broken bridge and discussed future plans for repair. And, finally, in June, some BCT and SEM trail work volunteers rebuilt a part of a bridge in Hanson.

TRAILS REPORT



*Completed Romeri Bridge;
photo by Pete Tierney*

The Trails Committee was busy with many activities this past year!

With some nice January weather, a group of trail work volunteers completed the installation of the Romeri Bridge at the Blue Hills adjacent to Wood Road in Braintree (above).

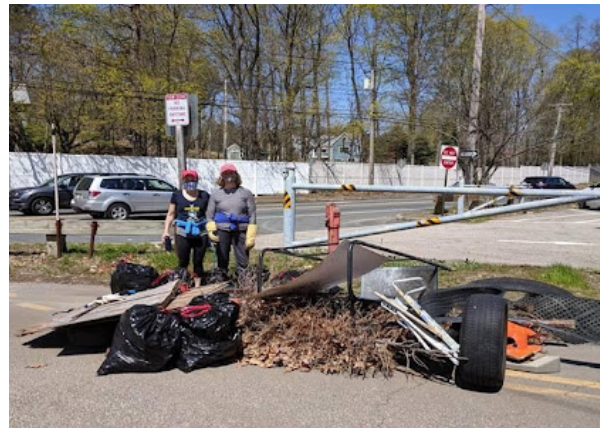


Photo by Steve Scala

In April, SEM Conservation and Trails Committees co-sponsored several trash clean-up activities with Friends of the Blue Hills. The volunteers made a significant positive impact by picking up about 75 trash bags full of rubbish (above)!

(Continued on next page.)

TRAILS REPORT, CONTINUED

Also in April, SEM volunteers performed our bi-annual trail work activity along the Skyline Trail in the Blue Hills. Loose boulders/rocks were removed, brush was cut back, granite stairs were cleaned, and some fallen trees were removed. As we were working, many hikers passed by and said “thank you” to us!

In May, volunteers improved a route of the Skyline Trail adjacent to Dark Hollow Path. This area is mostly wet with the old route not well defined, and one of the crossing paths used an unsafe old fallen tree. After careful analysis, the crew identified a better crossing area and moved some boulders to this new location, blocked off the old unsafe paths, and added more blazing to show the new path.

Also in May, it was noticed that many of the blue blazes along the Skyline Trail in the Blue Hills were starting to fade. A small group of volunteers refreshed the old blazes.

In June, volunteers performed some repairs on two bridges near the St. Moritz Pond (above).



Photo by Skip Maysles

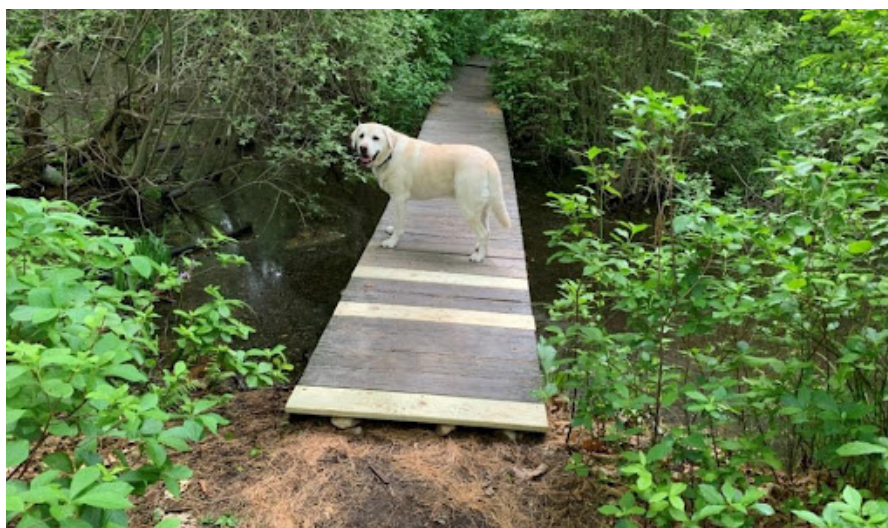
Future trail work will include several bridges and trail blazing in the Fall River area at the Bioreserve, additional bridge work in Milton at the Blue Hills, and trail maintenance along the Bay Circuit Trail.

Overall, it was a very productive year! Many different activities were scheduled and many new people were introduced to AMC-SEM!

Respectfully submitted,

Skip Maysles

AMC-SEM Trails Committee Chair



Sonny; photo by Skip Maysles

SUMMARY

4K+

Members

2.2K+

Email Subscribers

1.4K

Facebook Page Likes

180

Hikes

90

Leave No Trace

Webinar Attendees

54

Cape Hikes

36

Winter Workshop

Hikers

20

WFA Graduates

12

Online Leader Graduates

4

Paddling Trips

