

Annual Report 2023

Appalachian Mountain Club
Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter



**BE
OUTDOORS**
APPALACHIAN MTN CLUB

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Cover photo of Wattupa Pond by Kathleen Nash

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Summary page photo of New Zealand forest by Robin Melavalin

CHAPTER CHAIR REPORT

Organizations, like nature, go through seasons of challenge and new growth. I think of the COVID years like a winter season during which, like the deer in the woods, we endure, we survive, and we hope for Spring to come soon. I appreciate our past chairs: Len Ulbricht, who turned the chapter on a dime when COVID hit; and Diane Simms, who led us through and out of this time with strength and purpose. By the end of Diane's term, it was clear that SEM had exited COVID well and was again picking up the pace with plenty of activities and new leaders being trained.

When Spring arrives, we're thankful but we don't claim credit that it arrived because of anything we did. It came because of the turning of the seasons. So, standing on the hard work of our past chapter chairs, leaders, and members, I am honored to offer a report that shows the Southeastern Mass Chapter of the AMC is in a season of growth and that the chapter is thriving.

This year we offered 366 trips in total, up from 325 last year and 275 the year before. This included 87 Cape Hiking trips, 236 Off-Cape Hiking trips, 28 Bike rides, four Paddles, three Ski trips, three Conservation events, two trails work events, and five leader training workshops.

We have 85 active leaders, up from 50 the year before. The 85 active leaders include 47 hike leaders, 21 Cape hike leaders, eleven bike leaders, two paddle leaders, two ski leaders, and two conservation leaders. More than 20 of those leaders posted 10 or more activities! We trained 27 new leaders this year, up from 20 last year.



Photo by Diane Simms

Our website averaged 2,933 unique visitors a month, up from 1,977 the year before, a 48% increase. The increase in unique visitors indicates a growing interest in the chapter and is a forward-looking predictor of new members. In addition, our Facebook page has grown to more than 1,700 followers, and our Meetup has more than 1,000 members.

Our growth in the number of trips offered, as well as the number of active leaders and the jump in visitors to our website, are all indicators that our chapter is strong.

For several years, it has been a goal of the chapter to have more weekend activities. I want to announce that in 2023 a full 44% of our activities were held on Saturday or Sunday. While there is always more that we can do, we are no longer weak in this area. In addition, 11% of our activities had the word "Beginner" in the title.

Please read the individual committee reports in full, but to give a sense of all the great things the chapter has done, here is a sampling of just some of the accomplishments of the committees:

Biking put on 28 bike rides, held two Roadside Emergency Bike Repair clinics, led a series of themed Biking and Brews rides, a series of Sunset and Full Moonrise rides, and a series of Beginner Bike Path rides. In addition, they trained two new bike leaders.

Cape Hiking offered 70 hikes during their hiking season, a season that runs from Labor Day to Memorial Day annually.

Communications produced 10 monthly issues of our flagship newsletter, the *Southeast Breeze*, the best publication I have ever seen from a volunteer organization. In addition, they run our social media and continue to add useful content to our web site. Working with our committees, they added a [brochure](#) for prospective members, a [Fall River Hikes](#) page, and a [Map and Compass](#) page. Next year Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) will be getting its own webpage.

Conservation reformed itself after a period of low activity and is reinvigorated and poised for great things in 2024. Plans include more articles in the *Breeze*, conservation lectures, film screenings, nature walks, trails clean-up, and guest speakers.

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CHAPTER CHAIR REPORT

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is now 18 months old and provides DEI education at our Leadership Training. They led two wheelchair accessible hikes and led monthly hikes in urban areas with large BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) populations. In addition, in 2023, SEM started a gear loan program so that our activities are accessible to those who cannot afford specialized equipment. I am proud of the start we've made and am committed to helping the chapter continue to grow in our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Education organized Basic and Advanced leadership training, a two-day Map and Compass workshop, and Spring and Fall Wilderness First Aid training. SEM handed out 13 scholarships to participants. They also taught an introduction to Backpacking, trained two new Backpacking leaders, and ran three multi-day backpacks.



Photo by Barry Young

Hiking offered 236 local and destination hikes, and organized the series that are a staple of our chapter. This included the Winter Hiking Series, Spring Conditioning Series, Trail Trace the Blue Hills Series (including Winter Trail Trace), Summer Hiking Series, Full Moon Hikes, Thursday Morning hikes, Beginner hikes, Bioreserve hikes, and the ever more popular Bioreserve 20-mile Loop Trail hike.

Membership had a very successful Open House on Memorial Day weekend. The event was presented as an interactive trade show with educational exhibits and a free gear table. It drew large crowds, and more than 40 people signed up for an "interested in joining" email distribution list.



Photo by Ben West

Padding had a slow year, due in part to poor weather that forced many cancellations. Despite this, they trained two new paddle leaders and look forward to more paddles in 2024.

Skiing put on three weekend destination trips to Stowe, Vermont, in December; Waterville Valley in January; and Grafton, Vermont, in February.

Trails maintained our adopted trails in the Blue Hills, as well as less-used paths in F. Gilbert Hills State Forest. Trails is looking for opportunities in Ames Nowell State Park, as well as on our section of the Bay Circuit Trail.

20's & 30's trained one new leader and is now looking for a new Chair. (The recent chair is now living in Hawaii).

Beyond the sheer number of activities and trips that we offer, what I am most proud of is all the participants who tell me how kind and considerate our leaders are and how safe and looked after they feel on our trips. No wonder we are called "The Friendliest Chapter in the East."

Moving on to SEM governance. Your Executive Committee is a tight team. It has had a very low turn-over and the members are younger and more diverse. For the first eight months of the year, all 16 of the voting positions have been filled with Officers and Chairs. Starting in September, all the positions remained filled other than one.

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CHAPTER CHAIR REPORT

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The Executive Committee met seven times by Zoom and once in-person for a day of in-depth planning and discussion. We brainstormed ideas for growing our membership, promoting conservation, and fighting climate change. We look forward to working on these in 2024.

As well as running their own committees and attending the ExComm meetings, the Executive Committee personally organized three chapter-wide events:

- In June the Executive Committee put on a Leaders Appreciation Celebration, hosted at the house of our Chapter Vice Chair. Thank you, Jeannine and Paul Audet.
- In September we held our Fall Chapter Hut Weekend at Cardigan Lodge. It was a great success with 34 participants attending. Next year will be at Cold River Camp.
- And of course, November 4 is our Annual Meeting and Dinner.

The members of the SEM Executive Committee are a high performing team, and I am truly thankful for their dedication and commitment to our chapter.



ExComm in-person planning day. *Photo by Paul Brookes*

Our financial position is strong. The balance of our bank account grew significantly during the COVID years, thanks to the continued support of our members' dues and the low level of expenses (since our outdoor programs had to be cancelled). Because of this, for 2023 we ran a planned deficit. This allowed us to invest more in scholarships, leadership appreciation, projects that support the SEM region, and projects that support the broader AMC. The plan for 2024 is to run a deficit again. If you have an idea for a project, please send in a [proposal](#).

I am excited that we are partnering more with external organizations and would like to highlight two examples.

The first was a partnership that we initiated with the Town of Bourne Conservation Department. We expressed interest in funding improvements at the Leary Property and Four Ponds Conservation Areas. Materials were provided to the students at the Upper Cape Technical School where, under the supervision of their instructors, they proudly assembled and installed new benches and signs.

I highlight this partnership because it involved young people, and we want younger members.

UCT students made new benches and signs using materials from the SEM Development Fund.

Photo courtesy of UCT



The second happened when a reporter from the *Fall River Herald* contacted us for an article about the newly created Bioreserve loop trail. SEM volunteers helped clear and blaze the trail. The *Herald* article included a link to our next Loop hike. Two days later, when we checked our registrations for the hike, they had jumped from six to 40, and ultimately grew to more than 80. We quickly pulled in eight other leaders and got everyone who wanted to hike out on the trail.

I highlight this partnership because it illustrates the impact of local media. Almost everyone on the hike was from the area and was new to hiking with us. We are looking forward to many becoming SEM members.

So I am happy to report that the Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club is vibrant and strong.

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

TREASURER REPORT

We developed our 2023 Budget last October and with unanimous acceptance by our SEM Executive Committee we then reviewed highlights with our membership during the November 5, 2022, Annual Business Meeting and Dinner. In that Budget we planned for expenses to exceed revenue by a significant amount (\$16K), enabling us to focus on leader training and development, as well as projects that support both the SEM chapter region and the broader AMC. We were able to plan this approach recognizing that our chapter's bank account had significantly grown during the COVID years and provided us with the necessary financial resources to increase spending in specific areas.



Several key events, activities, and investments occurring in late 2022 and 2023 worth mentioning are:

- The return of the in-person Annual Business Meeting & Dinner in November 2022.
- Successful participation in the AMC Annual Financial Audit in January 2023.
- AMC Chapters Committee Retreat (June 23) attended by SEM Chair / Vice Chair.
- Increased funding for developing and celebrating our leaders (scholarships) and recognizing our volunteers.
- Completed Training Sessions—Spring WFA (April), Leadership (April), Map & Compass (June), Fall Wilderness First Aid (September).
- Other SEM Events—Open House (May), Leaders Appreciation Celebration (June), Chapter Hut Weekend (September), Executive Committee (ExComm) In-Person Planning Day (October), Annual Meeting (November), ExComm Holiday Party (December).

- SEM funding provided for the following projects:
 - Supported the WFA Training required for some SEM Leaders and encouraged for all Active Leaders (\$1K)
 - Supported the AMC Bay Circuit Bonney Trail Project (\$1K)
 - Supported the Bourne Conservation Project for Four Ponds and Leary Property Repairs (\$0.7K)
 - Supported the establishment of the SEM Gear Loan Development Project (\$1.5K).
- The ongoing cost of running our chapter—Administrative expenses such as chapter insurance costs, Zoom, Meetup, QuickBooks, Memberships, etc.
- The transition of SEM money to Chase Bank checking accounts, a requirement for all AMC chapters as of Q4 2023. This maximizes efficiency in managing AMC finances, including tie-ins with Outdoors Connector (replacing ActDB) to allow all members to pay for chapter events with a credit card.

Our plans and financial budget for 2024 were approved by the SEM ExComm at our in-person planning meeting held on October 21 at the Pocasset Community Building and will be discussed at our Annual Business Meeting and Dinner on November 4, 2023.

*Respectfully submitted,
Earl Deagle
AMC-SEM Treasurer*



Photos from Pixabay

BIKING REPORT

Thanks to all our great volunteers for planning and leading the rides this past year. We now have eleven active bike leaders and hope to add more next year. Joseph Tavila and our Chapter Chair Paul Brookes joined the ranks of our biking leaders this year.

Biking Committee leaders doubled the number of rides from last year with 28 rides throughout the 2023 year. Ride locations stretched from Wrentham and Easton to Sakonnet Light and South Beach in Little Compton, RI, and places in between.

The Executive Committee approved the purchase of AMC-SEM bike leader jerseys, which were purchased and distributed to our leaders. Thank you, Ex Comm!



Photo by Paul Brookes

Returning Biking Chair Bill Trimble held a couple of Roadside Emergency Bike Repair clinics featuring hands-on flat tire repair, chain repair, brake and derailleur adjustment, and other topics. We will be presenting more of these clinics over the winter months, so keep an eye out for the listings.

We continued the subscription for an annual club membership in [Ride with GPS](#) and made it available for all current AMC-SEM members for free. A link on our AMC-SEM biking web page allows members to join the club. The AMC-SEM *Ride with GPS* club membership includes free GPS access with cue sheets, verbal turn-by-turn directions, and a complete list of SEM rides in the region. The app runs on both iOS (Apple) and Android smart phones.



Photo by Paul Brookes

We continued our monthly biking challenge on *Ride with GPS*, where members can track their miles and meet a 50-mile challenge for a month. Monthly challenges are posted throughout the year. Several members contacted the Biking Chair with praise for the *Ride with GPS* app. Sign up with our club and try it out. You will like the on-bike turn-by-turn directions and the nearly 200 routes in our club library.

Our Biking Leaders led a series of Biking and Brews rides from six different local area breweries. Rides began at the brewery and returned for lunch and an optional brew. Len Ulbricht led a series of Sunset and Full Moonrise Rides on the Cape Cod Canal. Bill Trimble led a series of Beginner Bike Path rides featuring only off-road riding.

Next year, the Biking Committee is planning to have regularly scheduled rides at different locations but on the same week and day of each month (e.g., 3rd Sun).

Another area where we hope to increase our outreach is in bicycle touring.

Contact the chair if you have a suggestion for a ride or would like to be a bike leader. Bill can be contacted at bikingchair@amcsem.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Trimble
AMC-SEM Biking Chair

CAPE HIKING REPORT

The 2022/23 period was marked by many leaders stepping forward to offer another robust program. The Cape Hiking season runs from Labor Day to Memorial Day. We schedule hikes on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sunday afternoons. The Saturday hikes tend to be longer in length, 3-5 hours. Our hikers and leaders are primarily retirees, but we welcome all age groups.



Photo by Robin McIntyre

This past year we offered 70 hikes with fourteen postponed or cancelled. We had 844 participants in Cape Hikes over the course of our hiking season.

We currently have 27 hike leaders, including those in training, with 21 actively leading during the past year. We have three individuals who have completed leadership training and are at different stages of becoming qualified. We qualified one new leader in 2023. We pull from a pool of about 60 individuals who participate in our hikes annually. Our challenges come from dealing with an aging population of leaders and hikers. Safety and comfort become greater concerns, so we are finding and scouting new places to hike. We are continuously encouraging new candidates for leadership training.



Photo by Barbara Gaughan



Photo by Robin McIntyre

Our Volunteers of the Month this year were Keith Magyar and Trish Crocker—many thanks for leading activities and stepping up to the plate often for Cape Hikes!

In September, a hike leader meeting was held at Jane Harding's house with 17 leaders and leaders-in-training participating. Jane and Robin reviewed relevant materials from Board emails, the volunteer newsletter, and Cape Hike updates, in addition to welcoming leaders back to the 2023-24 Cape Hike season.



Photo by Eli Hanschka



Photo by Paula Magyar

Cape Hikes has actively contributed to chapter-wide endeavors, with Robin McIntyre presenting at the spring SEM Leadership training. We have also partnered locally in June with the Barnstable Land Trust, offering a hike for learning to read a trail map and/or use AllTrails. In October, four volunteers staffed an AMC-SEM table at Thoreau's Cape Cod Readathon organized by the Barnstable Land Trust and one volunteer participated as a reader.

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CAPE HIKING REPORT

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Photos by Robin McIntyre

In the fall of 2022, Robin McIntyre and Len Ulbricht approached the Bourne Conservation Agent, Stephanie Fitch, about the chapter's interest in funding improvements at the Leary Property and Four Ponds Conservation Areas. A field survey of the properties determined that broken or degrading benches at Four Ponds and deteriorating entrance signs at both properties needed replacing. Ms. Fitch contacted Upper Cape Technical School (UCT), and a partnership was formed.



This spring, AMC-SEM purchased and delivered all materials for the project to UCT. UCT Carpentry and Environmental Science students, under the supervision of their instructors—Joe Zajac, Wilbur Lavoie, and John Kelly—constructed, assembled, and installed twelve benches at Four Ponds, and designed, engraved and installed the wood entrance signs at both Leary Property and Four Ponds. UCT coordination support with the community groups was provided by Nolan LeRoy, Director of Vocational Programs.



Great Neck Hike, February 2023.



Photos by Robin McIntyre

Bourne Town Forest Four Ponds hike, May 2023



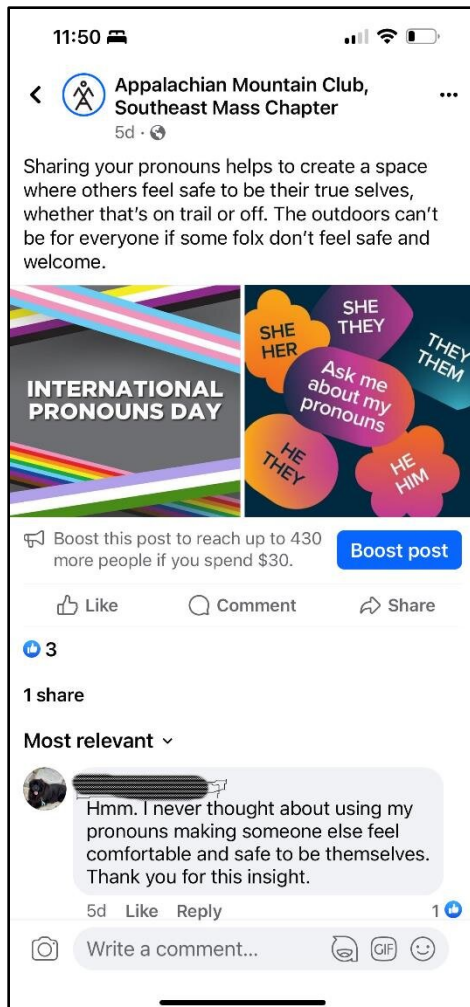
Cataumet Cape hike, May 2023

*Respectfully submitted,
Jane Harding & Robin McIntyre
AMC-SEM Cape Hiking Chair & Vice Chair*

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The SEM Communications Committee had a busy and productive year. In addition to the Chapter's Annual Report, the Committee:

- Produced and distributed ten monthly issues of our flagship newsletter, the *Southeast Breeze*. (July and August serve as a summer break for the newsletter.)
- To keep our members well-informed about the Chapter and AMC, our committee members sent out a monthly message from the Chapter Chair, in addition to the newsletter preview and link.
- Our social media manager and our webmistress kept our members and the general public abreast of all our activities and events.
- Incorporated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) messages into our communications strategy through social media and the *Breeze*.

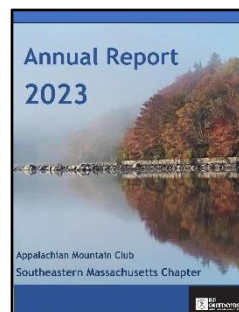


Below left: Post on the AMC-SEM Facebook page.

Left: Page 1 of the October 2023 issue of the *Breeze*.

All of that is made possible by our amazing Communications Committee team. Maureen Walsh is the editor of the *Breeze*, as well as this Annual Report; Lisa Robitaille is our social media manager, responsible for getting our message out to a larger audience; Cheryl Lathrop is our webmistress, ensuring that everything about SEM is available to our members on our website; and Marie Hopkins is our email editor, keeping our messages on point and on time. And we wish to extend a special "Thank You" to Victoria Holland, our former Communications Chair.

The work that this committee does is not possible without the support of the Executive Committee, activity leaders, and members who share their stories, photographs, and wisdom. We hope that our communications are informative, interesting, and, at times, funny.



Respectfully submitted,
Justin Anderson
AMC-SEM Communications Chair

CONSERVATION REPORT

After a brief hiatus after COVID, the Conservation Committee is reinvigorated with two new enthusiastic heads: Zoe Rath (Chair) and Paul Williams (Vice Chair). Zoe comes to us with strong hiking experience and a library background, where she often schedules large and small events. Paul comes to us with a wealth of knowledge gained from his background in public health, policy, and legislative advocacy.

The Conservation Committee is off to a good start. In September we held a Zoom meeting and organized a walk led by Will Saunders, the Conservation Agent for the Town of Norwell. He led us on an interpretive walk through the Cuffee Hill Conservation Area that includes a quaking bog known as Black Pond Bog. Our October Zoom meeting featured *Day Hiking New England* with author Jeff Romano.

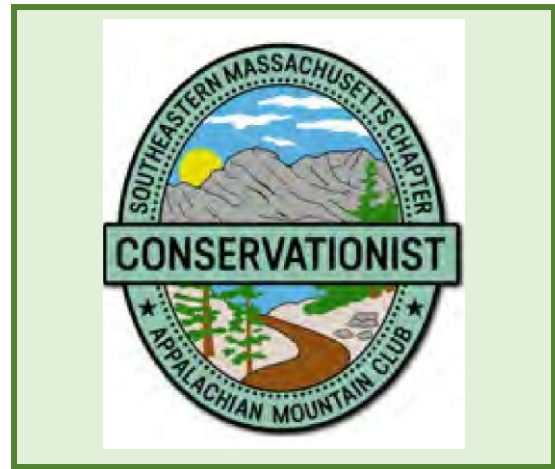


Photo courtesy of the North and South Rivers Watershed Association

Moving forward, we reached out to *Unlikely Through Hiker* author Derick Lugo. He said he would be happy to do a virtual talk about his book and his hiking experience in November or December of 2023. We have also begun the planning of a bigger event for April 2024: an Earth Day panel that will be held in our region.

Event goals for 2024 include planning conservation lectures, film screenings and conservation learning, and clean-up walks.

We will continue to contribute to the *Breeze* with Conservation Corner and longer articles on various environmental issues. Expect articles about leave-no-trace concepts, native plants, the importance of carpooling, AMC club conservation initiatives and more.



Another initiative we will be working on is how to promote the Conservation Patch. We plan to create a Bingo sheet that will list more than 20 ways to lower your carbon footprint. Participants will fill out a number of Bingo spots to qualify for the patch and another, higher, number to qualify to be entered into a prize drawing.

The AMC utilizes a three-pronged approach to its environmental protection work: scientific research, advocacy, and protection. All three are intertwined while being individually critical. Each person in their own way can use this approach to further the work of conservation. The Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of the AMC is committed to ensuring these three prongs are the bedrock of the work of our Conservation Committee.

We also thank our committee members: Kate Sullivan, Bill Cannon, Ellen Thompson, Dawn DiMartino, and Marcella Rippel.

*Respectfully submitted,
Zoe Rath
AMC-SEM Conservation Chair*



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION REPORT

The AMC-SEM DEI Committee strives to make our chapter more welcoming to all, especially to people who have not traditionally been members of AMC. We will have hosted eight DEI open meetings via Zoom this year. Fourteen different people joined our meetings so far. An AMC Boston Chapter leader, a Boston member, and the New York–North Jersey Chapter DEI representative have joined us to share best practices.

This year the SEM DEI Committee:

- Voted in Rachel Brown-Eisenstadt as DEI Vice Chair
- Created a Mission Statement: *The SEM DEI Mission Statement is to promote an inclusive culture where diversity is valued so that previously underrepresented people feel encouraged to enjoy the outdoors with AMC.*
- Created a Motto: *Welcome, Respect, Involve*
- Created a statement on Respect that leaders can add to their “trailhead talk” and which includes an activity feedback option: *AMC-SEM has the expectation that participants and leaders will treat everyone with respect during our activities. If anyone has feedback about an activity, please contact the leaders and/or deichair@amcsem.org and SEM will respond to your feedback.*
- Is creating a SEM DEI Committee webpage for our chapter website to link information for leaders, members, and prospective members.

For the third time, the SEM Chapter included DEI education at our Leadership Training Program in April. All members who want to be activity leaders take this training, and we take this opportunity to look at reasons why AMC is not more diverse and possible ways to improve that. We discuss new ways in which we can be more welcoming to all.

As the Chair of the DEI Committee, I attend the SEM Executive Committee meetings and seek feedback from the board on DEI issues. I also attend monthly DEI meetings with the AMC DEI Volunteer Committee and report back to the SEM DEI Committee.

SEM leads regular hikes in the Fall River Bioreserve, an urban area with a large BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) population in which we try to bring the local people out to hike and possibly become members.

SEM also led a wheelchair-accessible hike along the Lower Neponset River in Milton/Boston in May.

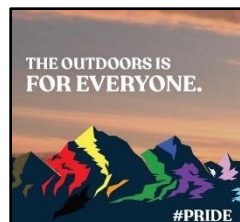
During our SEM Chapter Hut Weekend at Cardigan Lodge in September we led a hike along the new, accessible All Persons Trail to see what an accessible trail looks like. After breakfast on Sunday, 15 leaders and participants at Chapter Hut Weekend took part in a DEI discussion circle. We discussed issues around the use of pronouns, connecting with people beyond any obvious physical differences they possess, being welcoming to those who might not be able to afford specialty clothing and gear, and other subjects. It felt good to talk about these concerns and hear many different perspectives.



Photo by Maureen Kelly

In May, the SEM Chapter ran an Open House in Borderland State Park. The SEM DEI Committee hosted a ‘free table’ with clothing, gear, books, and maps to give away to the public who were interested in our organization.

In October we had an Information/Membership table at Tower Fest in Brockton to connect with local people there and try to interest them with upcoming hikes in their area. Finally, we have posted a series of beginner hikes that are running in October and November, most on a Saturday, that are accessible to working people.



*Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Kelly
AMC-SEM DEI Committee Chair
Ken Cohen and Ashley Stehn
AMC-SEM DEI Committee Members*

EDUCATION REPORT

The committee welcomed Vice Chair Srinu Iyengar and new committee member Sujatha Srinivasan in 2023, joining Chair Anne Duggan and members Doug Griffiths, Eva Borsody Das, and Diane Hartley.

The Education Committee continued its mission of educating new leaders in 2023. Our Spring training, which was held in Rochester, MA, was well attended. Sixteen participants completed Basic Leadership Training and eight attended our Expanded Leadership Training sessions. The curriculum for both programs was updated and was well received by participants.

The committee would like to thank all those dedicated SEM leaders who volunteered to help train our new leaders. They included committee members Srinu Iyengar and Diane Hartley and me. Presenters included Robin McIntyre, Paul Brookes, Bill Belben, Raju Jaldy, Maureen Kelly, Jeannine Audet, Dexter Robinson, and Ben West.

Introduction to Backpacking was again offered in May 2023. With the help of Rhode Island Chapter member Jim Robinson, eight participants enjoyed learning more about backpacking. This course covered areas of interest for both new backpackers and seasoned veteran backpackers wishing to expand their skills. As a result of this program, three backpack trips were enjoyed in the summer and early fall (A fourth trip was planned but cancelled due to weather). Additionally, two leaders qualified to lead backpacks, and two leaders-in-training gained experience towards becoming certified leaders.



Photo by Varma Sarapelli



Photo by Wilderness First Responder participant

Our two-day [Map and Compass workshop](#) was offered in June with eighteen students attending. Small group training was provided by our teachers Paul Brookes, Lindsey Meyers Bertone, Varma Saripalli, and Doug Griffiths.



Photo by Ken Carson

In addition, the Education Committee supported the Spring Wilderness First Aid program offered by AMC at Wompatuck State Park, as well as the Fall Wilderness First Aid program offered by AMC at F. Gilbert Hills State Forest.

The Education Committee is open to new members with an interest in furthering the education goals of our SEM chapter.

*Respectfully submitted,
Anne Duggan
AMC-SEM Education Committee Chair*

HIKING REPORT



Mizpah
Hut.

*Photo by
Bill Belben*

The SEM year started in November 2022 with our Winter Hiking Workshop. This was the first year we have had an in-person event since COVID. We also conducted an on-line workshop using the 2021 recorded session with live Q&A breaks after each segment. The events were well attended with more than 70 participants.

Following the workshop, close to 50 participants took part in the various hikes scheduled for the first Saturday of each month. The final hike in March was an overnight at the Carter Notch Hut. Despite the fact that the hike had to be shortened to one night due to a significant snowstorm, the hearty group of 12 had a fun time. This year we also offered an Intermediate Hiking Series that took place on the first Sunday of each month. It concluded with an overnight at Lonesome Lake Hut to build snow shelters and hike into the Tuckerman Ravine Bowl to watch the skiers.



Left: Snow shelters. *Photo by Tracy Hawes*

Right: Tuckerman's Ravine. *Photo by Bill Belben*

Locally, the Tuesday morning Winter Trail Trace Series in the Blue Hills averaged close to 20 participants. Despite the lack of snow, the hikes covered 74 miles of trails and were enjoyed by 57 unique participants. Fifteen

people completed a winter trail trace map with eight completing their first map. The large attendance rate of the Winter Hiking Series carried over into the Tuesday morning Spring Conditioning Series hikes. This year we were able to offer a beginner and intermediate conditioning series that averaged 12 and 20 participants respectively.

As we moved into summer, we shifted our sites northward into New Hampshire. Our Summer Hiking Series included hikes of the Belknap range, 52 With-A-View, 4,000 vertical feet hikes, and several backpacking trips of the Vermont Long Trail. Despite an unusually rainy summer season that caused lots of cancellations and rescheduling, we were able to offer 22 destination hikes. Building on the success of the summer series, we are building a robust Fall offering with ten hikes already posted and many more in the pipeline.

The ever-popular Full Moon Hike Series continued in November and ran through March for those wanting to experience night hiking.

We continued to offer our Thursday evening Trail Trace the Blue Hills Series that runs from April through September with eight leaders and one leader-in-training leading 23 hikes with an average of almost 17 participants. Over the course of the season, the series covered 86 miles of trails. In August they had their much-anticipated potluck picnic. This is the 18th year of the series, and it always introduces many newcomers to our chapter.

Blue Hills
Reservation
snack bar.

*Photo by
Friendly
Hiker*



Our Thursday morning local hikes series runs all year except for the summer months of June, July, and August. Thirty-nine hikes took us to 21 different woods, parks, and reservations throughout Southeastern Massachusetts.

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HIKING REPORT Continued from previous page

With significant help from our chapter the 20-mile Fall River Bioreserve Loop Trail was officially opened on October 19, 2022. For a limited time, we began offering a patch to anyone who completes the loop. To date we have awarded 61 patches. Word has certainly gone out about the Loop Trail as the last 20-mile hike posted had over 80 people register.



**Feeling
fresh and
ready for
the Loop!**

*Photo by
Paul Audet*

We have seen a steady increase in the number of people working towards becoming certified to lead hikes. Since November of 2022, we have certified ten Level-1 leaders, eight Level-2 leaders, two Level-3 leaders, and one Backpack Class-1 leader.



Intermediate Conditioning Series group at the summit of Buck Hill. Photo by Friendly Hiker

A special shout out to Tracy Hawes who became Level 1 and Level 2 certified and is working on her Level 3 and backpacking Class 1 certifications. She also accepted the important role of Hiking Vice Chair!

In total for the year, 57 hike leaders have led 236 hike activities with 18 of the hike leaders leading ten or more activities. Great progress! And we hope to build on that to deliver an even bigger 2024 program.



Tracy Hawes, fourth from left, led her qualifying hike near Ponkapoag Pond. Photo by Friendly Hiker



Mount Waumbek. Photo by Bill Belben



Trail Tracers summit Little Blue. Photo by Joanne Newton

*Respectfully submitted,
Bill Belben
AMC-SEM Hiking Chair*

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Membership Committee made strides in fostering an engaging environment for newcomers to the AMC Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter this year. Under the guidance of Nancy Piedra, the committee organized a series of Beginner/New Member hikes, showcasing a variety of trails in the region.

On November 26, 2022, Nancy led a post-Thanksgiving hike at the Blue Hills, setting the tone for future adventures. This was followed by a co-led excursion to Walden Pond in Concord, MA, on May 13, 2023, where participants could learn some history, read poetry, and enjoy the outdoors. During the AMC FallFest, a hike through the Jericho Town Forest in Weston, MA, was scheduled for September 24, 2023, but the event was cancelled due to the rain.



Above: Open House leaders and volunteers. Below: Trails work display. Photos by Paul Brookes



An AMCSEM volunteer talks about outdoors gear with an Open House visitor.

Photo by Ben West

This year we introduced a brand new modern looking business card highlighting that we Welcome All. The QR code links to a SEM brochure with more information about the chapter, our activities and AMC.

The Membership Committee's efforts culminated in a resounding success during the Open House on May 27, 2023, with Samantha Fisher, Nancy Piedra, and Robert Branczewski at the helm. The event, characterized by its "fair" style, featured engaging exhibits representing various AMC activities, a "swap" table with complimentary gear, maps, and books, and an exciting raffle for a \$50 REI gift certificate.

With the subsequent outreach efforts to all attendees, the Committee successfully instilled a sense of belonging and enthusiasm among prospective members, further solidifying the AMC-SEM's reputation as a welcoming and vibrant community.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Fisher
AMC-SEM Membership Chair
Nancy Piedra
AMC-SEM Membership Vice Chair



PADDLING REPORT

AMC-SEM-organized paddles were low in numbers this year. However, many SEM paddlers have been out paddling in small groups. Rainy weather and high winds have forced cancelations of many organized paddles, so it's nice to see paddlers getting out on their own when the weather is good.

SEM added two new paddle leaders this year. Monica Bentley finished her paddle leadership requirements, which she started last year, and Paul Brookes completed his paddle leadership requirements in October. Congratulations, Monica and Paul! SEM paddlers look forward to paddling with you in the future.



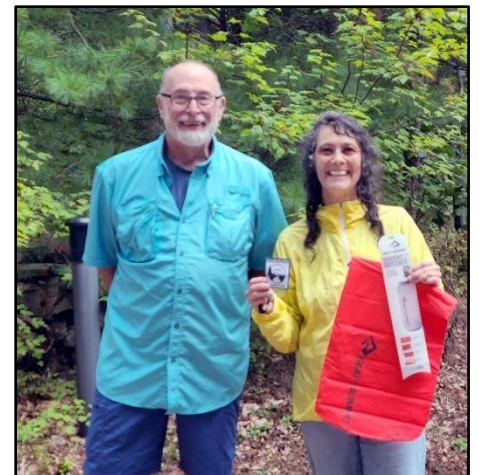
Photos by Barry Young



Photo by Barry Young

SEM Paddling participated in all four Interchapter Paddling Committee (IPC) meetings this year. The IPC consists of Paddling Chairs and Vice Chairs from all AMC Chapters with the mission of furthering paddling, ensuring safety, and setting standards for the Chapters. The IPC worked this year on standardizing leader levels for all chapters, and these will roll out with the introduction of Outdoor Connector in 2024. All SEM paddle leaders will be carried over to the new system when ActDB is replaced by Outdoor Connector. There will likely be several paddle leader levels in the new system, so SEM paddle leaders will be assigned a leader level based upon their experience.

*Robin Melavalin
receives her new
paddling leader
gifts from
Paddling Chair
Barry Young.*



*Respectfully submitted,
Barry Young
AMC-SEM Paddling Chair*

SKIING REPORT

During the winter of 2022-23, three trips were organized across December, January, and February.

We decided to change things up this year by exploring a couple of locations in Vermont. Our December weekend was in Stowe. We thought we might have snow, being a good distance north, but that was wishful thinking! Instead, we had ice and rain, but it did not dampen our weekend. One characteristic AMC participants share is flexibility. Our ski plans were now a winter hike weekend! Mt. Elmore was the destination for Saturday's hike, which had one section that was quite steep and icy. Even though we were in microspikes, if we had come to the ice on the descent, we would've had to turn around. Luckily, we planned it clockwise and got it right! While the views were cloaked in fog, the hike was energizing and beautiful. Many people enjoyed the B&B (and their bowls of Lake Champlain chocolates!), the town, and the outdoor hot tub.

January's destination has been a perennial favorite to the Mountain Fare Inn in Waterville Valley. Again, the



Photos by Paul Audet

conditions were less than ideal, but we did have options. Some of the group cross-country skied at the Waterville ski area where the trails were perhaps a bit icy, but groomed and open. Others chose to snow-shoe along Cascade Path and Beanbender trails. Cascade Path had

stunning vistas where frozen sections of the Slide Brook were broken through with running water and waterfalls. Looking at ice formations is simply amazing!

At the end of both Saturday and Sunday, two large sitting areas at the inn allowed our group of about 25 to enjoy happy hour together. One group challenged themselves to finish a puzzle over the weekend, and they

did—minus a single missing piece, which led to another challenge of finding it. Eventually it was discovered under the carpet! We ended our weekend, as always, with a short hike along the Smarts Brook trail, which again awed us with the frozen ice formations along a granite wall.



February's snow coverage was—you guessed it—light as well. However, there was still enough for snow-shoeing and cross-country. We returned to Vermont and played at the Grafton Inn and Outdoor Center. The temperatures were in the single digits, but the days were sunny. The Grafton Inn was very comfortable with fireplaced common areas and the quintessential general store in town. There were plentiful breakfasts in the morning to start our day. The outdoor center close by offered various trails through the woods, as well as a warming hut with a fireplace to take a break for lunch before taking a second excursion in the afternoon. Of course, many of us also left with delicious Grafton cheddar cheese, since its facility was right next to the outdoor center!

Alas, we did not have the soft and heavy snowfalls we all wished for, but we still had wonderful weekends. The thing about winter is one can always be hopeful for more snow the next year!

*Respectfully submitted,
Dia Prantis
AMC-SEM Skiing Chair*

TRAILS REPORT

Our Trails Committee was busy working on several projects this past year. In the spring, trail work volunteers did maintenance on SEM's adopted portion of the Skyline trail. On another day, we worked on a second trail, both in the Blue Hills. We cut brush to make the trails wider, cleaned water bars, re-established a detour around a wet area, reinforced a slope subject to erosion, and removed tree limbs.



Photos by Skip Maysles

In 2022 and 2023, a group of volunteers worked at the Bioreserve in Fall River, an area with more than 50 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and other types of exploration. The group blazed more than 40 miles of trails and built bridges to cross perpetually wet areas. For his efforts in the Bioreserve and other activities, Paul Audet was recognized as SEM Volunteer of the Month in December 2022.

In the fall, the Trails Committee led a crew to work on some less-used paths in F. Gilbert Hills/Foxboro State Forest. This area requires more significant work than we encounter in other locations. A group of SEM trail work volunteers plans to return there soon.



The Trails Committee preliminarily scouted areas at Ames Nowell State Park, where more extensive bridge work and related logistics are necessary. SEM trail leaders have done significant work on the Southeastern Massachusetts portion of Bay Circuit Trail (BCT) in past years. Completing the majority of our section is also on our list of aspirations.

AMC-SEM contributed \$1,000 toward building a boardwalk on the BCT in Hanson. SEM has a process for reviewing and funding AMC development projects and initiatives within the SEM region. To learn more, read our [Invested Reserves Funding Process](#).

Overall, it was a productive year, and we thank those who supported our efforts. We have many trail work activities planned in the upcoming year. Please consider joining us to improve the trails we all enjoy.



*Respectfully submitted,
Steve Scala
AMC-SEM Trails Chair*

Sunny inspects a bridge too far gone. Photo by Paul Brookes

20's & 30's REPORT

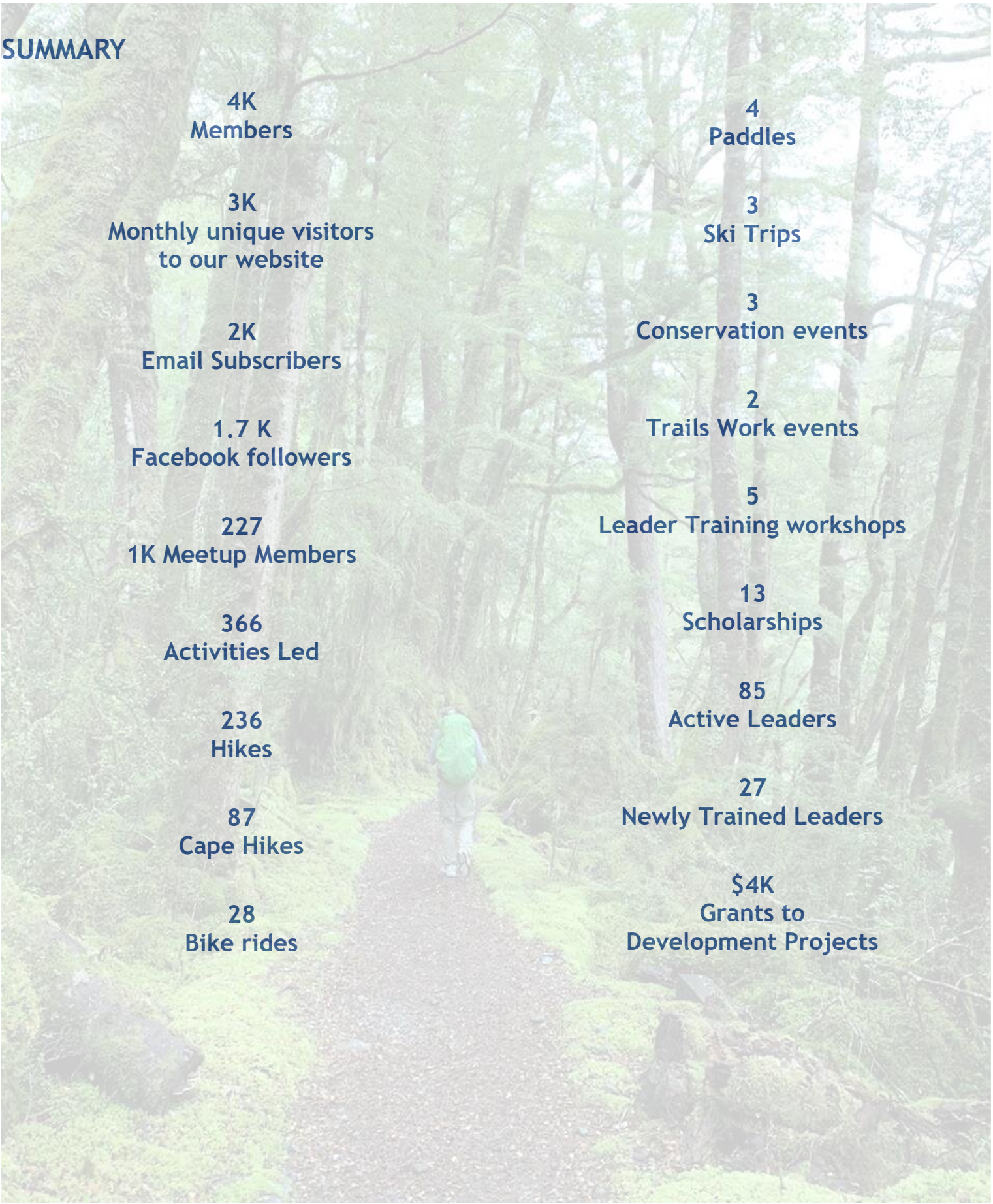
The SEM 20's & 30's group continues to focus on developing activity leaders and increasing participation of members in the age group. In March we hosted a hike on the Bay Circuit Trail, which acted as the qualifying hike for a new 20's & 30's leader. We had a good turnout with multiple participants expressing interest in leadership.

We are hoping to increase interest in the group through more frequent events in the coming year. Currently the 20's & 30's group is looking for volunteers for both the Chair and Vice Chair positions because I have relocated to Hawaii.

*Respectfully submitted,
Natalie Halloran
AMC-SEM 20's & 30's Chair*



Photo by Diane Hartley



SUMMARY

4K Members	4 Paddles
3K Monthly unique visitors to our website	3 Ski Trips
2K Email Subscribers	3 Conservation events
1.7 K Facebook followers	2 Trails Work events
227 1K Meetup Members	5 Leader Training workshops
366 Activities Led	13 Scholarships
236 Hikes	85 Active Leaders
87 Cape Hikes	27 Newly Trained Leaders
28 Bike rides	\$4K Grants to Development Projects