

The Southeast Breeze

The Newsletter of the Southeastern Massachusetts Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club | May 2020

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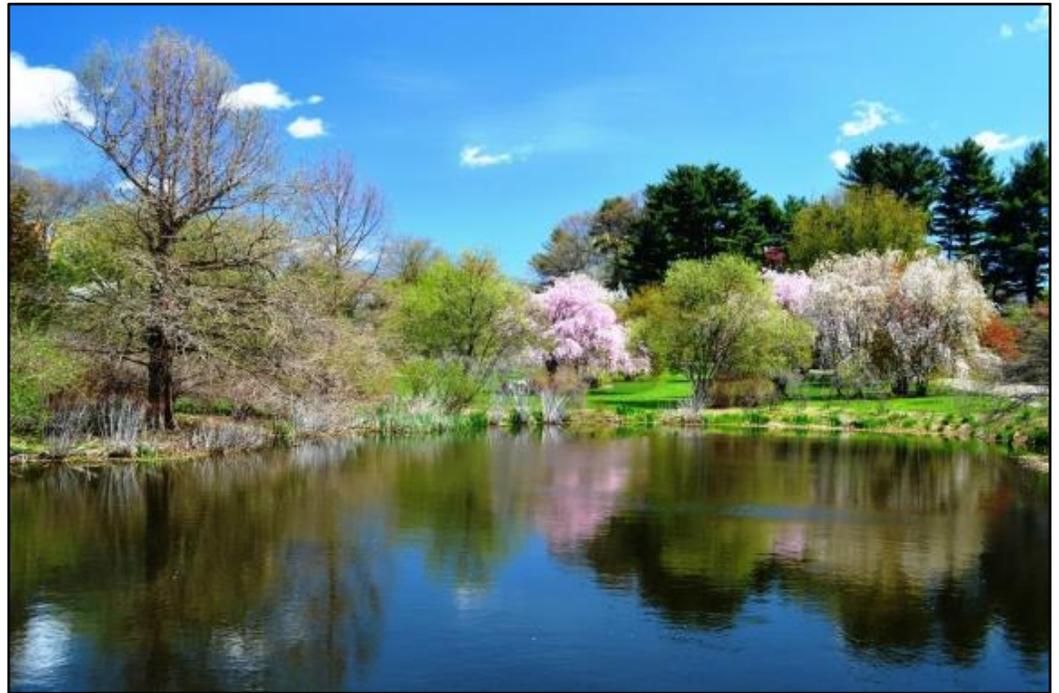
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"Vernal Landscape" at the Arnold Arboretum. *Photo by Ken Cohen*

Mindfulness: 'Notice what you are noticing'

By Pam Johnson, Hike Leader

I miss all of my AMC hiking friends and I know we are all missing the adventures and fun we have together on the trails. We will all be out in the forests and mountains again! In the meantime we can learn to enjoy our backyards, front yards, window sills and sidewalks in mindful ways that will allow us to continue to experience the simple joys of being in and observing Nature.

One of my favorite books is "*Your Guide to Forest Bathing – Experience the Healing Power of Nature*" by M. Amos Clifford. The first sentence in the Introduction is, "You carry a forest inside you." I love this thought! The mindfulness concepts of "Forest Therapy" and the Japanese practice of forest bathing, also known as *shinrin-yoku*, move us to take time to quietly enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds us. Wherever we are. I know I can always find my forest, wherever I am.

Since we are all taking care of ourselves and each other by foregoing our group hikes, here are a few suggestions for immersing yourself in nature at home. You can spend 5 minutes or an hour sitting or silently observing what's happening around you in the natural world. The amount of time does not matter. Give yourself the gift of tuning into your senses.

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View from the Chair: What's new in SEM?

We are two months into the cancelation of all AMC activities due to COVID-19, so what could be new? A lot, actually. Let me introduce you to changes at your Executive Board level.

Diane Simms, formerly Communications Committee Chair, has stepped up to be Chapter Vice Chair, and she will become Chapter Chair when my term ends in November. With Diane's position change, **Nichole Nelson** has moved from Vice Chair to Chair of the Communications Committee. Both Diane and Nichole bring excellent backgrounds to their new positions and have already made an impact in their short time on the Board. But that's not all. **Joe Keogh**, our venerable longtime RLBH leader, has taken on a new role—Paddling Vice Chair—with a focus on paddling trips north of the Cape Cod Canal. Once the activity shutdown relents, expect to see new paddling opportunities in our off-Cape region. The Skiing Committee has news, too. **Dia Prantis**, prominent XC skiing trip co-leader for several winter weekends, has volunteered to be Vice Chair of the Skiing Committee. My thanks to each of you for recognizing and accepting the opportunity to contribute to the chapter.

But there are also new vacancies coming up as current terms come to an end. Chapter Secretary, Membership Chair, and Trails Vice Chair will become vacant in November. In addition, the Hiking Committee Vice Chair has recently become vacant. Two of the positions, **Chapter Secretary** and **Membership Chair**, are good options for someone with a desire to contribute. No trip leadership skills are required. The **Trails Committee** blazes poorly marked trails, performs regular maintenance on hiking trails, and recently has been called upon to help repair or build trail bridges; the **Vice Chair** position is a good fit for anyone who likes to both hike on trails and swing a rake or dig with a shovel. Active hikers—preferably trip leaders or those working to be a trip leader—are a great fit for the **Hiking Committee Vice Chair**. Further details on the responsibilities of these positions can be found on the Activities Database under Volunteer Opportunities. Here's the link: <https://activities.outdoors.org/search/index.cfm?type=3&grp=10&ext=1>.

Give some thought to joining the Executive Board. Be part of a fine bunch of volunteers who together work toward offering great experiences for our Southeastern Massachusetts community to enjoy and to conserve the outdoors. To further explore these openings, contact our Nominating Committee Chair, Alan Greenstein (alan.b.greenstein@gmail.com); me, lenu44@gmail.com; or the respective committee chairs (listed below and under "Officers" on our [website](#) homepage).



Len Ulbricht, AMC-SEM Chapter Chair

2020 Executive Board

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Webmistress..... Cheryl Lathrop	Blast Editor..... Marie Hopkins
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Contact chair@amcsem.org if you are interested in any OPEN position



Mindfulness *Continued from page 1*

Start by finding a comfortable place to sit. Decide how much time you would like to spend in this spot. Think about an intention you might want to bring into your quiet time. Wake up your senses and pay attention to what you see, hear, touch, smell, or taste. The most powerful sentence from M. Amos Clifford that I repeat in my mind while I'm sitting quietly is, "Notice what you are noticing."

Notice first your breathing as you settle into your space. As you become aware of slowing down your breath, start to look around and "notice what you are noticing." What do you see? Is it sunny or raining? What do the raindrops look like when they hit the ground? If your thoughts stray from your surroundings you can gently re-focus on what you're looking at. "Notice what you are noticing."

Pay attention to what you hear. Are the birds singing? Is the wind quiet? Can you hear the trees? If you're sitting on the ground is there anything you can safely touch? What does that blade of grass actually feel like? Do you smell anything? I live a few miles away from the ocean and some mornings I can actually "taste" the salt air when I'm enjoying a sunrise from my front steps. "Notice what you are noticing."



Notice the beauty of the natural world around you, like these baby Eastern oak pine cones.

**Photo by
Pam Johnson**

Spring is such a glorious time of awakening. The buds on the trees are changing every day. Baby pine cones are growing. On sunny days the birds are joyfully singing in the morning chorus. Plants are pushing up through the ground. The sun rises earlier each day. There is so much life just bursting out and when we sit quietly, we are mindful of the power and beauty of Nature. I always feel much more peaceful and relaxed when I take time to be mindful and present, even if I just focus for ten minutes. The benefits are real and Nature is a powerful healer.

"You carry a forest inside you." A little mindfulness will bring you to your forest every day.

'Where are we going?'

By Bob Vogel, Hike Leader

The Hiking Trip Prognosticator knows, and now you can too!

1. Choose a number, between 1 and 9.
2. Multiply by 3.
3. Add 3.
4. Multiply by 3 again.
5. Add the two digits of your answer together.
6. The destination list shows where you are going!

Destination list:

1. The Blue Hills
2. M. Kilimanjaro
3. Hike the AT
4. Mt. Washington
5. Borderland State Park
6. A Hut to Hut adventure in NH
7. Welch & Dickey
8. Mt. Isolation
9. Nowhere
10. Mt. Everest
11. The Maine Woods
12. Wampatuck State Park
13. Mt. Lafayette
14. Mt. Fuji
15. Mt Moosilauke
16. Mt. Monadnock
17. PCT - Pacific Crest Trail
18. Mt. Chocorua

Modeled after something seen from SkyScanner.



Get to know the threatened species of the Blue Hills

By Joanne Newton, Conservation Chair

As a continuation of the article in last month's Breeze on Endangered Species in the Blue Hills, this month I will share some information on the "Threatened Species" there. A Threatened Species is one which is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

There are six such species in the Blue Hills. I have gathered the information below from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife website.

Attenuated Bluet:

"The Attenuated Bluet is a small, semi-aquatic insect of the order of damselflies. Like most damselflies, they have large eyes on the sides of their heads, short antennae, and four heavily veined wings that are folded together over their backs. They have exceptionally long, slender abdomens, and they are the largest damselflies in the United States.



"The male is mostly pale blue with thin black stripes on the 'shoulders' and top and the abdomen is mostly dark brown or black with some blue on the sides. Females have thicker abdomens than males and are usually brown where the males are blue. Attenuated Bluets range from 1.5 to 1.8 inches in length.

"There are approximately twenty species of damselflies in Massachusetts so it is difficult to identify the Attenuated Bluet without direct comparison to other species.

"They inhabit a variety of wetlands, including swamps, shady ponds, vegetated stream backwater but mostly prefer highly vegetated ponds and lakes."

Some of you may remember one magical evening at dusk when we were red-lining. I don't remember which hill we were atop, but there were hundreds, if not thousands, of damselflies flying all around. I'm quite sure they weren't Attenuated Bluets but it was a remarkable, breathtaking sight that evening.

Scarlet Bluet:

"This Bluet is in the same family as the Attenuated Bluet. It has red eyes with a small red spot behind each eye on the back of its head, which is black. The abdominal

segments are orange below and black above. They are approximately 1 inch long.



"Scarlet Bluets are found in acidic, sandy ponds with floating vegetation, often with lily pads. (I've seen lily pads on Ponkapoag Pond just beyond marker 5175. May be a good place to look for these Scarlet Bluets.) Adults spend much of their time flying over the water, landing on lily pads.

"The adults are active from late June through August. They have a 1 year cycle with eggs laid in early summer and which probably hatch in fall. The nymphs develop over winter and spring, undergoing several molts. In early to mid-spring, the nymphs crawl up onto emerging vegetation and begin their transformation to adulthood."

Blanding's Turtle:

"The Blanding's Turtle is a mid-sized turtle ranging between 6 to 9 inches in shell length. It has a high-domed top shell (carapace) which is dark and covered with pale yellow flecking. The lower shell (plastron) is yellow with large black blotches on the outer posterior corner of each scale (scute). The most distinguishing feature is its long yellow throat and chin, which makes it recognizable at a distance.

"The Blanding's Turtle may be confused with the Eastern Box Turtle. The Eastern Box Turtle is only 4 to 7 inches in shell length. The Spotted Turtle is also similar to the Blanding's Turtle but is smaller yet at 3.5 to 4.5 inches in shell length.



"Blanding's Turtles use a variety of wetlands and drier land habitats. They can be found in seasonal pools, marshes, scrub wetlands and open uplands. They overwinter in wetlands during their

inactive season, which is November through March. After emerging from overwintering, they leave the permanent wetlands and move overland to vernal pools and scrub swamps, where they feed and mate. They are omnivores, eating both plants and animals and they eat while on land and in the water.

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Threatened species *Continued from page 4*

“Females nest mostly in June in open areas with well-drained loamy or sandy soil, such as dirt roads, powerline right-of-ways, residential lawns and gravel pits. They reproduce at 14 to 20 years of age and lay between 10 and 12 eggs which hatch between late August and September.

“Blanding’s Turtles are vulnerable because they travel long distances in their active season. They reproduce late in life at between 14 to 20 years of age, and they have low nest and young survival rates. There are few known nesting sites in Massachusetts. Land development and roads have created additional hazards for these turtles. They are mostly found around the Great Lakes Region but there are much smaller populations in eastern Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire, southern Maine, and Nova Scotia. They are on the Endangered Species or Threatened Species lists in all areas except for New Hampshire.”

Eastern Red Bellied (Hentz’s) Tiger Beetle:

“Tiger Beetles are so named because of their “tiger-like” behavior of chasing down and capturing prey.” (I would never have thought to compare a beetle to a tiger even if I saw this beetle chasing down



prey!) “They are about a ½ inch long and are dark brown in color with a copper sheen, particularly on the head and thorax. Their abdomen is bright orange and is only visible in flight. They inhabit sparsely-vegetated bedrock outcrops, often of granite.

“They are a summer species with a life cycle of 1 year. Adult beetles are active in July and August. It is thought that the larvae burrow in soil, moss, and lichens in cracks in the bedrock. The larvae overwinter and complete their development in spring and early summer.

“Their only range is restricted to bedrock outcrops in the hills around Boston extending along the north shore to Gloucester. They are susceptible to aerial spraying and are threatened by habitat loss.”

Marbled Salamander:

“The Marbled Salamander is a stout, medium-sized salamander with a stocky body, short limbs, and a broad,

rounded snout. The body is dark gray to black with large, variably-shaped grayish to whitish cross-bands that create a ‘marbled’ pattern along the entire body. They are between 3 to 5 inches in length.

“Breeding and larvae habitat is variable, but mostly consist of vernal pools, woodland ponds, shrub swamps and forested swamps. The consistent characteristics of these habitats, though,



are waters that are fishless (smart salamanders!), occur within or are adjacent to forests, and hold water continuously from about January through May. Adults live in terrestrial environments where they prefer well-developed leaf litter, much woody debris, loose soil, and abundant rodent tunnels, but they do live within several hundred feet of their breeding wetlands.

“Most Marbled Salamanders spend the majority of their time underground or hidden beneath rocks, logs, leaf litter or other debris. Winters are spent below frost line in rodent tunnels or root channels.”

Pitcher Plant Borer:

“The Pitcher Plant Borer is a moth with a wingspan of approximately 1.1 to 1.6 inches. The lower wings and body are pale yellow in color with the head and thorax predominantly maroon with some yellow and red designs across this area.

“They live in acidic Sphagnum bogs where pitcher plants grow.”

Aside: A perfect location to look for them is in along the Boardwalk, where we have seen pitcher plants growing. It was off season for these moths, but I can’t resist telling you about the “Frozen Feet Club”—nine determined hikers who walked on the Boardwalk in March when the boards were sunken under several inches of ice and very cold water! Why did we do this? So we could take credit for White Lining the Boardwalk. We hobbled down and back with extreme frozen feet pain, but enjoyed every minute for the stories we can now tell of survival in the Blue Hills!



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“The Frozen Feet Club,” left, explored the Boardwalk, right, in March while White Lining the Blue Hills. Warmer weather will bring pitcher plants—and borers—here soon.
Photos by Karen Foley

Blue Hills species *Continued from page 5*

Back to moths:

“The adult Pitcher Plant Borer Moths fly in late August and September. The eggs overwinter, hatching in spring. The larvae bore into and feed internally on the roots of the pitcher plants also consuming leaves.

“These moths are threatened by habitat loss, water disruption during natural seasonal flooding of their habitat, invasion of non-native plants, water pollution and aerial insecticides.



“It is interesting to note that pitcher plants are carnivorous and have a deep cavity filled with digestive fluid. They have modified leaves known as ‘pitfall traps’. The plants attract and drown prey with nectar.”

Just goes to show you that all species have predators – the Pitcher Plant Borer larvae feed on the carnivorous pitcher plant.

Hopefully, we can all be hiking in groups again in the near future so we can look for these species together. Remember to use iNaturalist to identify species and mark their locations. It would be so exciting to find some of these Endangered and Threatened Species so we know they are still alive in the Blue Hills. It will be equally as exciting to see all of you there as well!

Stay well and hike when you can. Hope to see many of you on the trails soon.



Volunteer of the Month: Maureen “Mo” Walsh

By Len Ulbricht, Chapter Chair

Each month SEM recognizes one of our amazing volunteers. We are so fortunate to have people give their time, energy and expertise to make our chapter one of the best! This month the chapter chair has the opportunity to recognize the Volunteer of the Month for May, editor of the *Breeze*, **Maureen Walsh**.

Since October 2016, Maureen, or “Mo” as she is affectionately called, has assembled and edited your assorted contributions into an attractive and highly readable chapter newsletter. (That’s 37 issues—38, including this one.) *The Breeze* has become a “let’s read about what’s going on in the chapter” moment that many of us look forward to each month—be it a quick scan or a deep read. Lots of editing goes into formatting those wonderful stand-alone contributions from many of you into a publishable, cohesive, and well-presented document.

There’s deciding on the order of articles, which supporting photos to use or not use, where to place them and which to give prominence; there’s deciding what to do with extra space here or too much wordiness there; and there’s chasing down omitted credits or captions or names in the photos, plus other assorted chores. And when it seems to be ready to go to final proof read, here comes a last-minute contribution that needs to go in this issue, not next month’s. Yet Mo goes through all the back and forth with undisturbed aplomb and the most pleasant manner.

Thank you, Mo, for all you have done and continue to do for the chapter.

Maureen will receive a Volunteer of the Month certificate and a \$50 gift card.



A butterfly bush brings life to your garden, and tending to yardwork helps you stay fit. *Photo by Jeannine Audet*

Stay-at-home fitness ideas

By Jeannine Audet, Ski Chair

Spring—finally! The time of the year has arrived that many of us have been waiting for, through what seemed a long, cold, dreary winter. The time when those who are not aficionados of outdoor winter activities can resume participation in group hiking, biking, and paddling activities.

But wait! Due to the arrival of the coronavirus, we need to maintain social distancing to slow the spread of the disease and help one another to stay as healthy as possible. Not only are our outdoor group activities on hold, but indoor gyms, yoga studios, spin classes, dance classes, etc., are also suspended. What can we do to keep active, stay in shape, and maintain some social connection?

Here are some ideas! (ALWAYS be sure that you are respecting your body and attentive to any medical or orthopedic issues you may have!)

Many indoor fitness establishments are giving online classes to their members and in many cases are making them available to non-members also. Check out what is available on forums such as Zoom, YouTube, and Darebee.com. They are easy to access, even for those of us who lack in tech. skills. Also, some of these businesses are offering reduced rates on classes and gift certificates, so you can sign up at a discount, and maybe start a new activity soon!

There is no more accessible activity than walking. Walk in your neighborhood or down your street, maintaining a six-foot berth, of course. Some hiking trails are still open; try

out a new local spot! Bring your kids and your dog. Do a scavenger hunt, notice things around you. We don't always attend to the beauty that is in our own backyards! PSA: Please pick up after your dog!

Dust off your bike or take it off the indoor trainer and go for a ride. Explore some of those trails, if you have a hybrid or mountain bike. Maybe try some rollerblading. Don't forget your helmet and padding!

This is the perfect time to do some yard work. Yards need TLC after the winter, to clear fallen branches and leaves and to prepare gardens. Build birdhouses, a new garden, or a fire pit; these additions can lead to new activities and interests for the coming months. Start slowly to avoid injuries, as outdoor work can involve use of different muscles. Raking is great cardio, and planting can exercise your balance and work your core muscles.



A perfect workout: An overgrown spring trail. *Photo by Jeannine Audet*

Play in the yard with your kids and dog. Throw a ball or Frisbee, shoot some hoops, jump rope, or draw a hopscotch or "ladder" in sidewalk chalk for agility training.

On rainy days, which we surely have this time of year, there are indoor projects which can involve lifting and moving things. Rearrange your furniture for a fresh look. There are the old standbys, too--maybe not as much fun, but effective: Go up and down the stairs several times. Carrying manageable objects can add a challenge. Toss a medicine ball with your spouse/partner or teen, or use a stability ball or resistance bands.

Hoping these ideas can help everyone to stay active, fit, and engaged. Hope to see you on the trails soon!





Silver Linings

Compiled by Diane Simms, AMC-SEM Vice Chair

We asked you to share uplifting thoughts, positive stories, personal breakthroughs, or accomplishments you have experienced since the onset of the pandemic. Here are your stories. E-mail your Silver Linings for the June Breeze to CommunicationsChair@amcsem.org.

My silver lining is the realization that in the past my calendar was filled with to-dos that now seem trivial and unimportant, since all of them could be and have been canceled. In the future, I will give more thought as to what is truly important in my day and will prioritize time with family and friends first. ~Joanne N.



I committed to getting into biking condition this spring so as to be in shape for long rides this summer. Major worry was road traffic, which I thought would limit me to only early morning weekend rides. Since the stay-at-home order, I can now ride any day of the week I choose, AM or PM, and no more traffic worries. ~Len U.



Great progress made on a large garden, fruit trees, chickens, and beekeeping. Canning at harvest time (?)—that is the remaining question! ~David Y.



I am finally taking advantage of Zoom and FaceTime to see loved ones. I canceled a trip in March to visit family in Oregon. Warmed my heart to see my sister and niece. I've also enjoyed happy hours full of laughter with friends. Because I can't be with them in person, I cherish other ways to connect. ~Diane S.

Vacuuming at home has always been one of my least desirable chores. Thanks in part to my stimulus check, I now have an always willing, sometimes able, vacuuming assistant. My iRobot Roomba just arrived, was recently activated, and has already bounced through a couple of rooms. When registering my Roomba on the iRobot website, it asked for a name for the device. "Vic"-the-vac just keeps on going! ~Ken C.



In a book that I am reading, *Walking: One Step At a Time*, author Erling Kagge quotes Henriette Lund (1847): "Above all, do not lose your desire to walk; every day I walk myself into a state of well-being and walk away from every illness." ~Maria S.



My seven-year-old grandson's comments to his mother: "Mom, I know why the virus is spreading in spring. Do you want to know?"

"Sure, tell me."

"Well, the earth needs to have time to clean itself. With no one driving, we are saving the earth, and it has time to heal, cause there's no pollution. Also, there are less people out, so they aren't throwing trash in the ocean or in the woods. Plus, have you seen people planting outside? That makes oxygen. You know Earth Day is in April, after all. I bet come May everything will get better and the world will be even more beautiful with more nature. So it's God's way of helping us, if you think about it." ~Walt G.



I could not let the 50th anniversary of Earth Day be forgotten during this COVID-19 period. While working in my garden, I had a brainstorm! I gathered some boxes, newspaper, garden tools and got to work. Wearing mask and gloves, I dug up five boxes of plants, and placed them, along with my Earth Day recognition signs, alongside the road. Success! My neighbors are getting fresh air, exercise, and enjoyment in their gardens. I'm still getting requests for plants! ~Cathy Giordano





How to make all-natural insect repellent with essential oils

By Bill Cannon, Conservation Co-Chair

I have been hiking with the AMC for about seven years now. I have enjoyed every minute. About four years ago I volunteered to be the Conservation Chair for the Southeastern Chapter. This sparked a lot of interest in all-natural products, biodegradable products, and things that go hand-in-hand with Nature.

With my Conservation hat on at all the Redline and Full Moon hikes, I became concerned with how we get along with the Insects we encounter on the trail—mainly ticks and mosquitoes.

The insect repellents that are readily available contain the effective but controversial ingredient DEET (a brand name for diethyltoluamide). Other repellents like “Skin So Soft” seem less effective and more like a marketing ploy. And who wants to smell like that in the woods anyway? Even less effective and also goofy-looking is wearing dryer sheets under your hat.

For a while I chose not to wear any bug repellent. I really didn't have to. Everyone around me had it on.

Well, I couldn't let it go. I had to find a better repellent, and this is when I ran into an all-natural repellent made with essential oils. I picked up a bottle that was made here in Massachusetts. I researched the ingredients and found they were effective in repelling many different Insects, mainly mosquitoes and ticks. Some even repel biting flies.

A short time later, my wife and I went to a class on essential oils, concentrated plant extracts that retain the natural smell and flavor, or “essence,” of their source. We found they are useful for a lot of things, such as body aches, sleeplessness, cleaning, mood enhancement, and repelling insects and rodents. (When I put my car away for the winter, I put an open jar of cotton balls, witch hazel, and drops of peppermint oil under the seat.)

I did some more research on other oils and found that a lot of them were effective in combating insects.

So, below is my formula for Insect repellent. You can adjust it any way you want. You do not need all the ingredients listed below. Adjust it to your preference in smell or get a feel for the effectiveness. You can start with the first three oils and add to them later.



Combine essential oils, left, with witch hazel in a roller bottle, right, or spray bottle for hours of insect protection.

I like to use a roller bottle, but you can use a spray bottle. Keep in mind that some oils break down some plastics over a period of time, so use glass containers.

Essential oils need to be reapplied several times during a hike to stay effective.

Looking forward to everyone in the woods smelling like geraniums.

Ingredients:

- 5 drops of Geranium oil, effective against mosquitoes
- 5 drops of Lavender oil
- 5 drops of Lemon Grass oil
- 5 drops of Citronella oil, repels biting flies and mosquitoes
- 5 drops of Tea Tree oil, repels ticks
- 5 drops of Orange oil (optional)
- 5 drops of Rosemary oil (optional)
- 5 drops of Cedarwood oil
- 5 drops of Eucalyptus oil
- Witch-hazel oil, used as a carrier for the essential oils

Directions:

Add all the drops to the roller bottle. Fill to the top with witch hazel. Push in roller ball top and shake.

I like the roller because you don't overspray on anyone, it is easy to apply solution to your face, and it is easy to carry in your pocket for reapplication while you are hiking.

I purchase my oils at Young Living, www.youngliving.com. Witch hazel can be purchased at Amazon or Whole Foods stores. Roller bottles can be purchased on Amazon.



Catching up with Cathy Giordano, our retiring Cape Hikes Vice Chair

By Barbara Gaughan

Cathy Giordano has been the SEM Cape Hikes Vice Chair since November 2016. She is “retiring” from her role this November. I had a chance to catch up with her via E-mail and phone.

Barbara: How long have you been involved in AMC?

Cathy: I have been an active member in AMC since 1997. I had previously been a member while training for a hike to Mount Katahdin and let my membership lapse briefly while caring for my mother.

Barbara: Tell us about the role of Cape Hikes Vice Chair.

Cathy: Initially, I attended monthly Board Meetings and hike planning meetings. As Jane’s (Jane Harding, Cape Hikes Chair) responsibilities increased, my responsibilities increased. Jane and I worked as a team to make Cape Hikes a viable part of AMC. It became our joint mission. We sought new hike leaders and lent support by scouting

and planning hikes with them. Teamwork was key for such events as AMC-SEM’s Open House at Myles Standish State Forest in Carver in 2017 and 2018, as well as the 2019 AMC Fall Gathering on Cape Cod.

Barbara: Do you use any hiking apps?

Cathy: “All Trails.”

Barbara: Favorite SEM hike?

Cathy: I love hiking in the Blue Hills! Red Line, White Line, and Conditioning hikes are some of my favorites.

Barbara: Favorite trail snack?

Cathy: Other hikers will tell you it’s PB&J.

Barbara: Favorite thing about getting outdoors/being outdoors with AMC?

Cathy: I enjoy being outdoors in nature and meeting new people.

Barbara: What have you learned about yourself in your role as a volunteer hike leader? As a committee vice chair?

Cathy: I have to say, I have grown as a person. As I became more comfortable in my roles, I became more involved, even trying my hand at organizing trail work groups on the Falmouth Moraine. I met so many interesting people, made many new friends, and became part of endeavors that I had never dreamed of.

Barbara: How are you adapting to being outdoors in the time of Covid-19?

Cathy: I try to get outdoors each day to work on yard and house projects. Best of all, I hike with a friend locally, early in the day, wearing a mask and hoping to see no other people on the trails.

Barbara: Give us your pitch to encourage a volunteer to step into the role of Cape Hikes Vice Chair,

Cathy: Initially, I felt very unsure about stepping into the role myself. So don’t let that stop you. Jane Harding, as Cape Hikes Chair, is hard-working. She gives her all. It has been a great pleasure to work with her. The secret to our success has been working as a team. It has also been a great experience to connect with the AMC Board members. They are all so positive and genuinely helpful.

Barbara: Thank you, Cathy. See you on the trails!



Nike Anti-Ballistic Missile in transit.³

Nike Site B-55 in the Blue Hills

By Bob Vogel, Hike Leader

Those who Red Line are familiar with “the Nike site,” as we hike through part of it in the Ponkapoag East (Lantana) section. Here’s a bit more of the story with excerpts from the sources in footnotes. (I couldn’t find many pictures of the Randolph facility, so some are of the Burlington facility or stock photos.)

For those that weren’t around, or at least weren’t old enough to worry about world wars in the 1950s, this was the Cold War era. The U.S. and Russia had teamed up to beat Germany—but then things got tense. It was a time when school kids were taught to get under their desks in case of a nuclear attack. (Good thing one never came: I don’t think those desks would have helped!) People built bomb shelters in their back yards. (Another idea that wouldn’t have solved the problem.) Would the Russians attack us? Who knew? All that was known was that World War II anti-aircraft guns couldn’t shoot down jets, because the jets were too fast. Something new was needed.

Project Nike was a U.S. Army project, proposed in May 1945 by Bell Laboratories, to develop a line-of-sight anti-aircraft missile system. In 1953, the project delivered the United States’ first operational anti-aircraft missile system, the Nike Ajax. Nike was named after the goddess of victory from Greek mythology.¹

The first lines of defense were Distant Early Warning (DEW) lines that stretched across the Arctic and Canada. They functioned as tripwires. If a Soviet jet crossed the Arctic and penetrated a DEW line, the Nike missile bases would have to swing into action.²

Each launch site had three parts separated by at least 1,000 yards.

One part, of about six acres, contained the IFC (Integrated Fire Control) radar systems to detect incoming targets (acquisition and target tracking) and direct the missiles (missile tracking), along with the computer systems to plot and direct the intercept.

The second part, around forty acres, held three underground missile magazines, each serving a group of four launch assemblies, and included a safety zone. The site had a crew of 109 officers and men who ran the site continuously. One launcher would be on 15-minute alert, two on 30-minute alert and one on two-hour alert.

The third part, the administrative area, usually co-located with the IFC, containing the battery headquarters, barracks, mess, recreation hall, and motor pool.

The Blue Hills Nike site was active under control of the Army from October 1955 to October 1963. The housing area located on Army Street in Randolph was supposedly used by the government up until about 1991.

This area is located off High Street in Randolph, directly across from Central Rock Gym. If you haven’t hiked in there, it’s an interesting place to see. There isn’t a lot left, but the launch pads are still there, and you can see where the (underground) missile silos were. There isn’t much interesting left of the rest of the site.



¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Nike

² <https://burlingtonretro.com/2017/09/21/straight-shooting-about-nike-missiles/>

³ http://coldwar-ma.com/Nike_Missile_Bases.html

⁴ <https://www.flickr.com/photos/alohadave/2740159484/in/photostream>

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Nike Site *Continued from page 11*

The IFC (Integrated Fire Control) radar systems

These were located off Chickatawbut Road, on the right, just before the overlook as you ascend from Rt. 28. The radar units are gone, of course. However, the buildings remain and the area is now used as an education center and isn't normally open to the public. As you hike the Skyline Trail in the area, you will hike along the chain link fence that encloses the area. As you continue east on the Skyline Trail, you may notice pieces of the supports from more chain link fence that was installed in the Nahanton Hill area. (Don't trip over them; they stick up a couple of inches!)



Target-tracking radar. This would lock in on enemy aircraft. (Burlington installation)²



Acquisition radar. This would bounce electronic signals off airplanes to determine "friend or foe." Friendly aircraft would respond with a specific signal that functioned as a secret handshake. (Burlington installation)²



The Control Room, manned all day, every day, coordinated the signals from the varied equipment and also had the "fire" buttons. (Burlington installation)²

Decommissioning:

Soviet development of ICBMs (InterContinental Ballistic Missiles) decreased the value of the Nike (aircraft) air defense system. Beginning around 1965, the number of Nike batteries was reduced.

Nike Hercules was included in SALT I discussions as an ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile). Following the treaty signed in 1972, and further budget reductions, almost all Nike sites in the continental United States were deactivated by April 1974.

So, as you hike through the Blue Hills you can think back to the cold war, and the part the Blue Hills played in trying to keep Boston safe. There were many other Nike Sites around Boston:

When I was a teenager living in Burlington, about 1966, they converted the Nike IFC site there into a youth center. The Missile Launch Area? That became the Burlington campus of Northeastern University, which I attended my freshman year, 1966-1967. We used to park our cars next to the missile silos, which are still there.



Blue Hills missile launch area in Randolph⁴

Activities

For the most current information, [search activities online](#)

Hiking Key:

C4D

Indicates distance in miles

AA 13+

A 9-13

B 5-8

C less than 5

Indicates pace

1very fast

2fast

3moderate

4leisurely

Indicates terrain

Avery strenuous

Bstrenuous

Caverage

Deasy

Found in the description

LActivity leader

CLActivity co-leader

FTFirst Time

NM ...New Members

ANAdvance Notice

C Conservation

HIKING

Get your 100-mile patch! Contact hikingchair@amcsem.org.

Always looking for additional hike leaders! Contact hikingchair@amcsem

(FT) (NM) Thu. June 4, 11, 18, 25. Red Line the Blue Hills - Hiking, Blue Hills Reservation, Milton, MA. Join us to hike all the trails in the Blue Hills or just enjoy a walk in the woods. Location, terrain and elevation will vary each week. Time is approximately 6-8 pm Thursday night. Register once then show-n-go when you can make it. Once you register, an E-mail will be sent to you every week telling you where to meet. This is a great way to end your day, get outside, strengthen your hiking legs and socialize with a nice group of people. This is the 15th year of the Red Line series! L Joe Keogh (jpkeo24@gmail.com) L Michael Swartz (617-840-4199, swartz@brandeis.edu), R Sue Svelnis (781-849-9299 before 9 pm, suesvelnis@gmail.com)

Sat., Jun. 13. Mt. Monadnock Without the Crowds, Jaffrey, NH. This is the second in a new series of "Gentle Adventure" hikes designed for reasonably fit hikers in search of real challenges in the hills and mountains, but at a gentler pace. From Monadnock State Park's main parking area, we'll gradually loop our way around to Monte Rosa (one of the three main summits) via the uncrowded Parker, Lost, Farm, Cliff Walk, Thoreau, and Monte Rosa Trails. From Monte Rosa, we'll drop down and then back up on the Smith Summit Trail and to make our way up to the decidedly not-uncrowded summit of Grand Monadnock. After enjoying our lunch and (weather permitting) the expansive views on the summit, we'll work our way back down to the trailhead via the gentle Pumpelly Trail and more-challenging Red Spot Trail. While relatively long (app. 8 miles) and with several steep and rugged sections, when tackled at a moderate pace, this is nevertheless a very enjoyable hike for those with the right mindset and appropriate fitness. L Paul Miller (paulallenmiller@verizon.net, Paul is an experience SEM chapter four-season hike leader.) L Emilie Bent

(FT) (NM) Thu., Jul. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Red Line the Blue Hills, Blue Hills Reservation, Milton, MA. See listing for Thur., June 4.

Sat., Jul. 11-12. Overnight Trip to Mt. Eisenhower, Mt. Pierce, and Mizpah Spring, Southern Presidentials, NH. This is the third in a new series of "Gentle Adventure" hikes designed for reasonably fit hikers in search of real challenges in the hills and mountains, but at a gentler pace. During these two days, we'll plan on hiking app. 8.5-miles and summiting two 4,000 footers. On Saturday morning, we'll meet in Crawford Notch, NH, to spot a few cars and then drive around to the nearby Edmands Trail trailhead on the Mt. Clinton Rd. We'll hike 3.3 miles (2,750 ft. elevation gain) up to treeline on the beautiful Edmands Path to the bald summit of Mt. Eisenhower for lunch and (weather permitting) to enjoy the expansive views. From "Ike," we'll follow this exposed, above-treeline section of the historic Crawford Path for a little under two miles to the Summit of Mt. Pierce. Then, we'll drop down app. 0.8-mile to the AMC Mizpah Springs Hut, where we'll enjoy our happy hour, followed by a hearty a croo-served dinner and then spend the night at the hut. Following breakfast at the hut on Sunday morning, we'll take the Mizpah Cutoff back around to the Crawford Path and then make our way back down to the cars we spotted in Crawford Notch (a little over two miles from the hut to the parking area). Trip is limited to ten participants. Participants should note that weather conditions could alter this itinerary. L Paul Miller (paulallenmiller@verizon.net, Paul is an experienced four-season SEM hike leader.)

(FT) (NM) Thu., Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27. Red Line the Blue Hills, Blue Hills Reservation, Milton, MA. See listing for Thur., June 4.



Activities

For the most current information, [search activities online](#)

HIKING

Fri., Aug. 7-9. Weekend trip to Pinkham Notch, Imp Face, and Tuckerman Ravine, Pinkham Notch, NH. This is the fourth in a new series of "Gentle Adventures" hikes designed for reasonably fit hikers in search of real challenges in the hills and mountains, but a gentler pace. On Friday, we'll meet up at the AMC's Joe Dodge Lodge in Pinkham Notch, NH where we'll spend the next two nights. We'll plan on hiking up to nearby Square Ledge on Friday afternoon before our happy hour, followed by dinner in the dining hall. After breakfast on Saturday, we'll drive up Rte. 16 just a bit to the Imp Trail trailhead and hike up to the Imp Face on the northern leg of the Imp Trail to eat our trail lunches and (weather permitting) enjoy the expansive views of Mt. Washington, the ravines, and other Presidential peaks. After lunch, we'll continue around and follow the southern leg of the Imp Trail loop back down to Route 16 for a short jaunt up the road back to our cars and then drive back down to JDL, where we'll enjoy another dinner and spend the night. This loop is app. 6.6-mi. long with app. 2,100-ft. elevation gain and loss). Following breakfast on Sunday morning, if the group is willing, we can hike app. 2.2-mi. up the Tuckerman Ravine trail to "HoJos" (the ranger station at the base of Tuckerman Ravine) and then back down again before driving back home. Single-night options available for those who prefer. Participants should note that weather conditions could alter this itinerary. Trip is limited to ten participants. L Paul Miller (paulallenmiller@verizon.net, Paul is and experiences four-season SEM chapter hiking leader.) L Eva Das (borsody@gmail.com)

(FT) (NM) Thu., Sep. 3, 10, 17. Red Line the Blue Hills, Blue Hills Reservation, Milton, MA. See listing for Thur., June 4.

