

Community News

From: The Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Management Committee

Cosmo A. Catalano
Chairman

Steven H. Smith
Corridor Coordinator
4 Douglas Rd.
Westford, MA 01886

413-822-0094

978-821-2916

cosmo.a.catalano@williams.edu

stevenhsmith@verizon.net

[To News Staff: Question and answer sessions can be arranged upon your request.]

Pittsfield, Massachusetts, October 6, 2006

**MOTORIZED USERS HAVE RESPONDED TO APPALACHIAN TRAIL
VOLUNTEERS**

Motorized use of AT buffer lands on North Mountain and in Chalet Wildlife Management Area by ATV's and motorcycles has gone down in 2006. Early in 2006, the volunteers of the Massachusetts Appalachian Trail Management Committee launched a public information campaign to inform motorized users and the general public of the prohibition against motorized vehicle use in this area. The ridge of high country between Cheshire and Dalton, known as North Mountain, including the Gore Pond area, is the target of the 2006 program because it has been the site of extensive illegal motorized activity. This year, extensive signing and public notices plus enforcement activities are underway to eliminate the prohibited use of this wilderness area.

Many motorized riders have responded and motorized use has been reduced. The Trail Volunteers wish to thank those who have helped in this reduction and ask the remaining users to also respect the rules regarding motorized travel in this region.

Enforcement activities by state, federal, and AMC personnel will continue throughout the autumn and winter. Snowmobiles are included in the prohibition except by special permit by Mass. Fish and Wildlife.

The Appalachian Trail and its corridor lands are designated by the National Park Service for foot travel only to preserve the Appalachian Trail as a "footpath in the wilderness". Foot travel by hikers, both long distance hikers and day users, is the only use permitted on the AT and its federally designated lands. Providing the hiking public with the experience of wildness, quiet, and natural surroundings is the goal of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

In the North Mountain area, this prohibition against motorized travel also applies to the Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife lands that comprise the Chalet Wildlife Management Area bordering the east and west sides of the National Park Service trail corridor along the ridge top.

This public information campaign is being supported by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Signs prohibiting motorized travel have been installed on all routes and boundaries of the Fish and Wildlife Chalet WMA lands as well as the National Park Service corridor.

Appalachian Trail Ridgerunners of the AMC and the Department of Conservation and Recreation, along with Massachusetts Environmental Police and National Park Service Rangers are available along the trail and on the lands in question to inform users and enforce the prohibition against motorized vehicles throughout the year. Motorized users are also being informed through their clubs, as well as through posted signs and news media.

Motorized travel has been illegal in this area since trail lands were purchased from Cowee Lumber in the early 1980's. For a short time after that purchase, rights of way existed across the trail corridor. Since the acquisition of the adjacent land by Mass. Fish and Wildlife, those routes have been closed to motorized travel, except by Special Use Permit. The volunteers for the Appalachian Trail urge the motorized travelers to respect the restrictions on this land, and ride only where it is permitted.

Members of the public who wish to report occurrences of illegal use of the lands in question may contact the Appalachian Trail Conservancy New England Regional Office, P.O. Box 312, Lyme, NH 03768. Tel. 603-795-4935.

About the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy is a volunteer-based nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of the 2,175 mile Appalachian National Scenic Trail, a 250,000-acre greenway extending from Maine to Georgia. Our mission is to ensure that future generations will enjoy the clean air and water, scenic vistas, wildlife and opportunities for recreation and renewal along the entire Trail corridor.

www.appalachiantrail.org

About the Appalachian Mountain Club

Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club is the oldest conservation and recreation organization in the United States. With 90,000 members, in the Northeast and beyond, the nonprofit AMC promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers, and trails of the Appalachian region.

www.outdoors.org