

Maine Conservation Connection

Maine Conservation Corps



August 2010



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Summer Field Team Season Ends

The MCC's summer season wrapped up with the annual MCC Olympics on August 12th and Recognition Ceremony on August 13th, both at Lake George Regional Park in Skowhegan. The 2nd Annual MCC Olympics saw 9 crews battle it out in events like trail trivia, a skillet toss, a skipping race, and a pie eating contest. Two teams tied for first and participated in a tie-breaking crab walk race to determine the winning crew, which was led by Team Leader Aaron Mathias. Team Leader Krista Roger's crew came in a close second.

The MCC's Recognition Ceremony was a great success. MCC Director Linda Shapleigh introduced the MCC staff and guest speakers, including Department of Conservation Commissioner Eliza



The winning crew!

Townsend, John Graham – Deputy Chief of Staff for Representative Mike Michaud, Outdoor Recreation Supervisor Mick Rogers, Lester Kenway of the Maine Appalachian Trail Club, and Barbara Bentley of the Friends of Baxter State Park.

MCC Team Leaders each presented for a few minutes about their seasons and crews and then MCC staff talked about the season and provided the statistics for this summer's miles of trail built, volunteers, and much more. At the end of the ceremony, Field Team Coordinator Sara Knowles read excerpts about each Team Leader written by their crew members. Lunch (and cake) followed before the crews headed back to the office to clean trailers and tools and finish up paperwork.

Thanks to all of our members, partners and staff for a great summer season!



Team Leaders Wrap Up Summer Season

Andrea Bachynsky of Flemington, NJ is a 2009 graduate of the MCC's Trail Training Academy and led a crew on the Gulf Hagas Rim Trail and the White Brook Trail (both on the Appalachian Trail) this season. She previously served with the MCC as a Team Leader for the 2009 summer and fall seasons.

From Andrea:

“What amazed me most about my crew was their undying spirits. Even toward the end of a 9-day work session, when we would wake up to another rainy day, everyone still managed to laugh and have fun. We were able to be ourselves around each other and truly enjoyed one another's company.

Each person's progress, from beginning to end, was tremendous. The crew went from not knowing what the tools were called to being able to teach volunteers how to build good waterbars. I was impressed by the effort that went into each stone step, and I



think everyone's dedication was reflected in the quality of the finished product. Thank you for all your hard work and such a wonderful season!"

Bachynsky will continue to lead a crew for the MCC through the fall season.

David Bartoletti of Finleyville, PA is a 2010 graduate of the MCC's Trail Training Academy and led a crew in Vaughan Woods State Park & Ft. McClary, Freeport, and Bath this season. He also served with the MCC as a Team Member and Assistant Team Leader during the 2009 summer and fall seasons.

From David:

"As an all-star three-person team, Allegra, Heather, and I had a wonderful season. We were fortunate to have a very nice variety of projects, complimented by beautiful weather and amazing coastal scenery. We got to spend some great time in the Vaughan Woods of South Berwick, Ft. McClary in Kittery, and Quarry Woods in Freeport before moving on



to our most intensive project on the Whiskeag Trail in Bath. We became just about experts at bog-bridging, but were also able to dabble in trail layout and construction, stone steps, stump removal, high-lining stone down a mountain, and the construction of a retaining wall.

Among many highlights of our season, those that must be included are: using a canoe to bring in tools with lumber in tow, mountain biking on trails

which we had worked on, and getting to see some rare wildlife up close. We did a lot of smiling and had a lot of fun; I don't think any of us could have asked for a better summer!"

Now that his summer season is complete, Bartoletti plans on spending some quality time in the beautiful city of Portland, ME while nailing down plans for graduate school.

Charles (Chuck) Davis, IV of Bridgton, ME is a 2010 graduate of the MCC's Trail Training Academy and led a crew in Bradbury Mountain State Park and Portland this season. He also served with the MCC as an Assistant Team Leader during the 2008 summer season.

From Chuck:

“Our team name was ‘Chuck D and the Sweet Beans’ and our team song was ‘Rock you like a Hurricane’ by the Scorpions. This season we enjoyed building a brand new trail for Bradbury, working on Mackworth Island, and building the biggest bridge in MCC history: 168 feet long!

This summer has been one of the roughest summers of my life, but thanks to the MCC, it was also one of the best experiences of my life. I couldn't have asked for a better team. Each member brought something to the group that made us a great MCC trail crew. We laughed, worked hard, and gave plenty of high fives, but the number one thing we did was have fun. We brought dreams to reality working for the MCC and strived to conserve what was most important, the outdoors.

I hope that in years to come recreational users enjoy what we have done for the trails and that they respect the work we did. I hope that the MCC continues to make a difference in conserving our trail system and bring dreams to reality. I can't wait to come back 20 years down the road and see all of the work we did still making a difference in conservation. For my crew I hope that you continue working hard and stay positive because if you do there is nothing you can not do in life. Good luck to you Anna, Carl, Emmet, Mariel, and Seth.”



Davis will continue to lead a crew for the MCC through the fall season.

Michelle DiMeglio of Philadelphia, PA is a 2010 graduate of the MCC's Trail Training Academy and led a crew in Quoddy Head State Park and the Deboullie Public Land Unit this season.

From Michelle:

“The season went great. We all got along really well, spirits remained high all season (except for maybe one day of extremely cold wind and rain at Quoddy Head), and our crew accomplished some stellar work together.

We started off the season with lots of timber work at Quoddy Head, which meant hauling in some HEAVY lumber, including 13-foot logs, down winding, narrow trails. We all lamented the fact that the "jelly" was being crushed out of our spines, and on these days we dreamed about getting jelly donuts when we got into town at the end of the week (we still never have gotten those jelly donuts, for some reason). To make the lifting easier, we developed a "spiritual lifting" technique, in which we combined the energy into our collective hands before lifting. If that doesn't make any sense, well, I guess you just had to be there. We first used the technique to lift one of our crew members, Josh, and then decided that if it worked on him, it would probably work on the log, too. Happily, hauling those logs was not just unfortunate grunt work - I believe it made us stronger both physically and as a team.



Much of our work at Quoddy Head was to build several sections of bog bridging across extremely muddy areas. Other highlights included developing an innovative solution for a tricky mudslide area, which consisted of a set of stone stairs built directly on ledge - the only stone staircase at Quoddy Head State Park. ATL Andy McPherson took the lead on this project and did an excellent job. Also, just below this area, the crew built a set of "chicken steps" (an interesting trail structure which

I have only ever seen at Quoddy Head State Park), which was a quick and easy solution to help hikers safely up the slope. I think this project should have made Trailwork Magazine, if there is such a thing. Additionally, Corey and I teamed up to build the mind-boggling "staircase of illusion," a precisely crafted timber staircase spanning about 25 feet of steep slope. The hikers loved it, and also loved to remark about how they were 'the first ones to use it!' (despite the fact that other hikers had just come down the trail a half hour ahead of them).

The second half of the summer brought us to the far northern reaches of Maine to the Deboullie Land Unit. This is an awesome and remote place which requires an hour of driving on logging roads to access. It's amazing that in that remote place is a beautiful cabin with a propane-fueled kitchen, refrigerator, and running water from the lake. We enjoyed this very much as it allowed us to get creative with our cooking, and even bake birthday cakes for the summer birthdays. Each work day began with a motor-boat ride across the lake, then a steep 0.7 mile hike up the mountain. We finished up a beautiful stone staircase there that will help to stop the erosion from the hillside and create a safer route for hikers. The crew learned to set up a high-line and has been using the griphoist

system very effectively. We are also working on repairing some damaged waterbars along the trail.

The season seemed to go by so quickly, as summers on trail crew always do. As Taylor said, 'How can you explain to people what you did for the summer? You can describe to them what you did - lived together and worked together in the woods - but it is so much more than that.' It's a very good point. There is some sort of magic that happens out there beyond what anyone can see or understand from the outside. Sort of like the 'spiritual lifting technique'. You just had to be there. Each individual on the crew made the summer what it was, and I am so grateful to have spent time with each of them. Thanks crew! I love you guys and sure will miss you."

DiMeglio is headed to Idaho's Sawtooth Wilderness to do trail work for the month of September with an SCA Leader Crew. After that, she'll be backpacking throughout the western US for a month or two. She is not quite sure where she'll end up, but she's planning to visit Glacier National Park, then hopefully hiking in Utah, and likely visiting friends in Colorado.

Michael Ferry of South Bend, IN is a 2010 graduate of the MCC's Trail Training Academy and led a crew in the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge and on the north slope of White Cap (on the Appalachian Trail) this season. He also served as a Team Member during the 2009 summer and fall seasons.

From Michael:

"This crew has been remarkable and our time spent together was productive, informative, and an all-around feast of a time. We saw a great part of this state, from the salt



marshes of Kittery to the hundred mile wilderness of White Cap. I am grateful to my team and the MCC for these experiences."

This fall, Ferry will attend the SALT Institute of Documentary Studies in Portland, ME to study in their photography program.

Aaron Mathias of New Riegel, OH led a crew on West Baldpate and Hay Mountain (both on the Appalachian Trail) this season. He previously served as a Team Member during the 2009 summer and fall seasons.

From Aaron:

“This summer season went very well. The crew and I had an awesome time! I had a great group of guys: Peter, Chad, Albert, Charlie, and Hansy. We all got along great, just laughing and having fun while getting our work done as well. It’s hard to believe that we are all from different places and backgrounds, but it seems like we have known each other for years!

We started out at our first project at West Baldpate. None of us will forget the first couple of hikes up to the lean-to, lots of weight on our backs and a lot of sweating and heavy breathing. I remember Chad saying afterwards that he didn't think he was ever going to make it, but we all did, we are like a group of pack mules! We will also not forget the hike up, up, and up to the worksite either. By the last few days we were all hoping the hike would get easier, but it never did! Lester told me that hike was labeled by a crew in the past as ‘the steepest hike to nowhere!’ and I think there is some truth to that statement. Peter and I won't forget trying to set up the bear line; it only took us about 3 hours one evening after work! But the saving grace of that evening was that Chad, Charlie, and Albert were at the lean-to stoking a fire and cooking everyone campfire pizza pies—one of our team's favorite meals. The project site was a bit intimidating at first and few of us truly believed we could reach the goal of 50 stairs that Lester set for



us. But, once we got moving on the project things were smooth sailing or smooth gravy as Charlie would say, and we reached our goal and then some.

The success at Baldpate was a big boost for our team and it showed the guys what we were

capable of doing when we all worked together. I won't forget the last day on Baldpate and the look on Chad's face said it all. It was a cloudy, rainy day, which was not unusual for Baldpate. At lunch time I looked over at Chad and saw a very unhappy face, so I asked him with some concern, ‘Is everything okay Chad?’ he replied, ‘Yeah I'm fine.’ I knew right away that Chad was not fine, but we were leaving Baldpate that day for good, so I reminded him of that hoping that would help. We survived Baldpate's wrath of mist and clouds and came away with a lot of good times and great memories!

different part of the state for an eight day hitch on the Wright Trail, where we built step stones through knee-deep mud. Our return to Baxter began with the 3.3 mile hike up to Chimney pond crew camp, where we hiked up to the tablelands of Maine's tallest mountain to work on alpine trail reconstruction each day. We had help in the form of volunteers from the Deboullie crew when we built water bars on the Abol trail the following week. After the Abol trail, we hopped back up to Chimney pond to build a staircase and water bar on the Saddle trail. Our last few days were back on the Abol trail building more water diversion structures.

Throughout the season, we determined that the scientific forest part of Baxter State Park is actually used for black fly breeding, and that beaver dams often don't hold the weight of a person, a saw, and their gear. Hiking 4,000+ feet of mountain in a day is daunting even without having to lug a saw up a rock face. Mice are not shy, chipmunks are fast. Moose meat blood is probably not a good thing to have leak all over your bedroll. Birthday cake is pretty difficult to make on a propane stove in the backcountry, and usually ends up being scrambled goo. Moose and bears are abundant, music is always good, yodeling is a great way to wake up, and laughter can be the best medicine."

Rogers will continue to lead a crew for the MCC through the fall season.

Chelsea Simon of Scottsdale, AZ is a 2010 graduate of the MCC's Trail Training Academy and led a crew in Portland, York, Grand Lake Stream, and on the Wright Trail this season.

From Chelsea:



"As the season draws to an end, it is clear that our team, which was once a group of strangers, is now a group of friends closer than ever. We began our journey as a team with the Fore River Sanctuary project in Portland where we battled roots and mud to complete a 40 ft. section of boardwalk and 100 ft. of ditch and drain with rip rap. As the work became more intense, our bond as a team grew stronger and it was clear that this was going to be a great season. Perhaps I'm biased, but the hard work and dedication seems unparalleled. No matter the task, I could count on my team to get it done efficiently and most definitely with a lot of laughs.

As the locations of our projects became

more rugged, our spirits remained high. I was pleasantly surprised when my team accepted the new backcountry setting as we moved to the Wright Trail in Bethel, ME. Though the hiking was tough on all of us, we pushed ourselves and became even more cohesive as a team. Now that the season is ending, I can reflect, and say with confidence that this was truly one of my favorite summers. Thanks everyone for a great season!”

Simon will continue to lead a crew for the MCC through the fall season.

Matthew Spinner of Waterville, ME led a crew in Waterville, Blue Hill, and Hallowell this season. He previously served as an Assistant Team Leader during the 2010 summer season and a Team Member during the 2006-2009 summer seasons.

From Matt:

“I felt this summer season went very well, though it was a bit of a roller coaster getting the opportunity to transition from being an Assistant Team Leader to a Team Leader mid-season. The change of weather from the past two summers was a welcome relief, to be sure! I was glad to not have to name my boots after major bodies of water after every day of work! Working with Dustin and Henderson also provided no shortage of good times and laughs; I always found myself in good spirits when working in their company.

Although the work proved tough, I believe one of my best sites this year was definitely Blue Hill, which provided some gorgeous views (especially at lunchtime!). Being able to hike the trail for recreation only a week after working there helped me appreciate the beauty of the area. I definitely recommend stopping by Blue Hill if you're on the way to Acadia. It's a nice, quick hike!”

This fall, as per the “Matt Spinner Four-and-a-Half-Year” plan, Spinner will be heading back to Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to finish off his Bachelor's in History. As for plans after that, he says “I



may rejoin the MCC for a full season (summer & fall) next year, and try to join trail training and get the “full experience”. Ultimately, I'd love to gain employment in the National Park Service and work at one of their many National Historic Sites. This would allow me a job where I can mix my love of history with my love of the outdoors, the latter of which I gained through service here in the Corps.”

Summer Field Team Stats

As proof of how busy our Field Teams were this summer, here's just a taste of what they accomplished:

4.81 miles of new trail
325 edge stones
279 rock stairs
161 stepping stones
77 water bars
230 ft of ditch & drain
685 ft of bog bridging
37 timber steps
521 ft of side hill
250 ft of rip rap

The crews also built many bridges, bunny habitat, rock walls, removed a ridiculous number of blow downs, and much, much more...there's just too much to list!

MCC Welcomes New AmeriCorps Members

Earlier this summer, the MCC welcomed Stewart DesMeules & David Cherry.

Stewart DesMeules of Newcastle, ME is serving 900 hours as an Environmental Educator with the Medomak Valley Land Trust (MVLТ) in Waldoboro. DesMeules is a 2010 graduate of Wheaton College in Massachusetts where he studied Biology and Environmental Studies.



At the MVLТ, DesMeules will be writing Land Management Plans for at least two pieces of land owned by the land trust. The Land Management Plans will establish a biological inventory of the properties, as well as provide information that can be used to make good decisions about how the land is managed. In addition to this, DesMeules will be coordinating volunteers for events held by the land trust, coordinating trail maintenance, and wrapping up an alewife

counting program. To learn more about what the MVLT does, please visit <http://www.midcoast.com/~mvlr/>.

David Cherry of Kennebunk, ME is serving 900 hours as the Community Recreation Assistant based out of the MCC's Hallowell office. Cherry is a 2010 graduate of the University of Maine at Orono where he studied Parks, Recreation & Tourism.



At the MCC, Cherry will be working on the Bureau of Parks & Lands' (BPL) Community Recreation & Grants program doing Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) site visits, as well as site visits and trail assessments for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). LWCF site visits include locating appropriate signage and ensuring the area is being used for recreational purposes. RTP site visits include walking designated trails and outlining any possible issues for managers. Completing both of these projects will help the BPL have a better idea of the amount of resources needed

to continue to keep these projects open for public use and also enable the BPL to provide the public with a comprehensive list of recreational opportunities. To learn more about the Community Recreation & Grants program, LWCF, and RTP please visit <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/programs/community/index.html>.

Environmental Educator Celebration of Service

Every year the MCC Environmental Educator program engages its members in a volunteer project in "Celebration of Service". In late June, 20 Environmental Educators and EE Program Coordinator Jo Hersom hiked into the Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps (KLWC) in Baxter State Park to complete a service project and spend some time in the park.

The initial plan for the service project was to help paint cabins, but the weather didn't quite cooperate. The group worked on two other projects instead: splitting and stacking 11 cords of

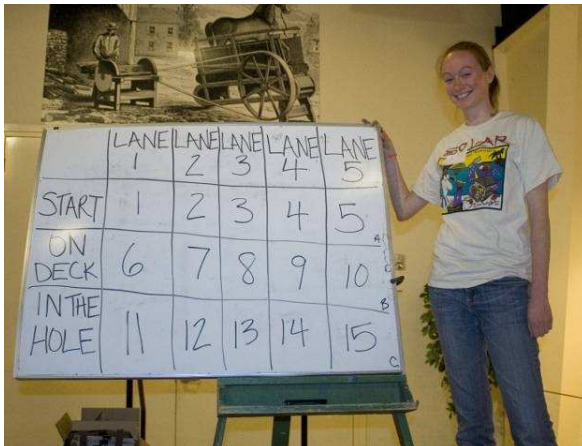


firewood and doing corridor work on a mile and a half of previously closed trail near the Camps. Two EE's, Edward Hanlon & Tony Sutton, also helped pack out gear along the hiking trail for some folks whose plane couldn't land due to the inclement weather.

Environmental Educators Complete Service

Six Environmental Educators across the state are finishing up their terms of service in August and September.

Katharine (KD) Roux of Wells, ME served 1700 hours with the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Air Bureau – Emissions in Augusta. She previously served 1700 hours with Efficiency Maine in Augusta in 2008-09.



Roux volunteering at the Maine Energy Education Program's Jr. Solar Sprint

Roux spent much of her time in the lab analyzing air samples using X-Ray Fluorescence instrumentation to identify toxic air pollutants from wood smoke. When she wasn't in the lab she assisted with the development of educational and outreach materials, including a web page and informational card, about the environmental and health impacts of improperly burning wood.

“This term I enjoyed how much this position made me use my brain. Using an instrument in a way that basically no one else in the world is was a challenge.

I experienced a few major obstacles and my confidence grew each time I figured out what went wrong and how to fix it. Science is so great!” said Roux.

“Overall, being a part of the Maine Conservation Corps for the past couple of years has given me so many opportunities I wouldn't have seen otherwise. There was professional development, hours for hiking mountains, moving logs, and planting shrubs, meeting other really rad MCC members, traveling around the state talking to people, playing with mercury, playing with x-rays, and playing games with kids. Seriously, greatest choice I've made,” she added.

As of right now, Roux's post-service plans are to “run away and join the circus.”

Tony Sutton of McMinnville, OR served 1700 hours with the Maine DEP's Air Bureau in Augusta. He also served 1700 hours with the DEP's Air Bureau in 2008-09 in the same position.

During his term of service, Sutton examined wind data from the DEP's weather station and developed wind assessment curriculum. He also worked with the DEP's Green School's program, which extends beyond the standard energy curriculum and enables students to use tools to understand energy use in their schools.

"I started my second term of service in the fall of 2009 and returned to my original host site because I loved the work, the people, and the opportunities for professional development. Despite returning to the same site, my second term differed greatly from the first," said Sutton.

"My supervisors gave me greater responsibility to schedule my own time, classroom visits, and develop projects of my interest. As a result, I spent a majority of the year developing classroom curriculum for a weather station. Through this project, I taught myself skills in managing large data sets, creating graphs that analyze wind information, and discerning how to present that information from young audiences to adults."



Sutton came to Maine to pursue graduate school, and as he completes his second term of service, he takes one step closer to that goal. This summer he is moving north to Orono to start an Environmental Communications Masters program this fall at the University of Maine.

Edward Hanlon of Jackson, MS served 1700 hours with the DEP's Lakes & Watershed program in Augusta.

Hanlon's position was focused on education and outreach, and he spent time visiting classrooms and teaching students about pollution and what they can do to protect bodies of water. He also administered the Watershed Protection Grant Program, which is a service-learning program implemented throughout the state.

"When I first arrived at the DEP in Augusta, it was immediately a thrilling experience. From day one you can begin to grasp the wealth of knowledge available, concerning such a diverse array of topics that it overwhelms you. It is only months later that you realize how much more information is actually available to you through the experienced and dedicated DEP staff. It always amazed me how willing every employee was to explain any detailed aspect of their work, no matter how many hundreds of times they had done so for supervisors or colleagues in the weeks before. Everyone truly cares about what

they do here, and the enthusiasm is more than infectious. It results in a work environment full of laughter, dedication, and compassion, the extent of which should be experienced by everyone at some point in their life,” Hanlon said.

“My specific appointment as an Environmental Educator existed within the realm of freshwater ecology. Obviously, this topic includes copious amounts of information.



Hanlon helping out at the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed spring camp

Although you could never be expected to cover even a fraction of its scope during only 11 months, my work at the DEP introduced me to many different subjects within this widely encompassing field of study. Water quality was the main focus of my educational efforts, but this included lessons on the water quality of watersheds, lakes, rivers, and streams. When discussing the water quality of these in classrooms throughout central Maine, I

was able to talk about how they related to water consumption, aquatic food webs, macro invertebrates, invasive aquatic plants, non-point source pollution, erosion, vegetative buffers, the water cycle, and ground water. During visits to these schools, I was encouraged to bring my own experiences and approach into my lessons rather than teaching from rigid templates. This, in part, helped me stay excited and enthusiastic about my visits to classrooms throughout the entire school year.”

Now that his term of service has come to an end, Hanlon is heading back to Mississippi to start a graduate program in Biology at the University of Mississippi.

Mary Jewett of Bridgton, ME served 1700 hours at the Lakes Environmental Association in Bridgton.

During her term of service, Jewett primarily spent her time in classrooms teaching local kids about water and why it is important. She also spent time focusing on corrective environmental actions in the region.

“I served at the Lakes Environmental Association in my hometown, Bridgton. During the school year I taught at 5 different schools in my area educating fifth and sixth graders about the importance of water in our world. My favorite part of teaching in the schools was at times convincing the kids that the information I was giving them was important to them. So many kids don’t think that the ‘real world’ includes them, but I tried to show

them how they could make a difference. Everyone affects the environment just by living.”

“I also led walks in Pondicherry Park, which is a set of trails in the middle of my town, and helped at Place Camp, which is a day camp for young kids between the ages of 6 and 11. The camp took place at Holt Pond which is a preserve owned by LEA. It was challenging being with the kids for a week, but rewarding too. Unlike in the schools, all the activities at Place Camp are outside. This helps the kids stay calmed down. Last but not least, I also helped with the milfoil prevention and eradication efforts that LEA does. We discovered a huge infestation of Variable Leaf Milfoil in one of our rivers and have been working hard to do something about it. I also did some boat inspections and helped with other infested lakes like Lake Arrowhead.”



Jewett during one of her afterschool programs

Jewett is happy to announce that once her term of service ends, LEA is hiring her on full-time. She’ll be doing a lot of the same work that she did during her term of service, plus a few extras. As she put it, “This is where I’m supposed to be, so it worked out beautifully!”

Patrick Marass of Springvale, ME served 1700 hours at the DEP’s Watershed program in Portland. He previously served 300 hours in the same position in 2009.

Marass’ position focused on helping to gather data on stream and lake watersheds, including the Long Creek and Capisic Brook stream watersheds around Portland and the Mousam Lake and Great East Lake watersheds in York County.

“I really learned a lot about myself over this last year. The best lesson I learned while in the MCC is that you should always try and find a job doing what inspires you and not a job just to pay the bills. If you can be an AmeriCorps volunteer and still pay the bills, you can do anything and pay the bills! Being able to enjoy my job and help preserve the natural resources of Maine has been a great experience. I was able to see most of the state through my work with the DEP and the MCC. I am very grateful for that. I worked a lot this past year on 319 (non-point source pollution) mitigation grants given out to non profit groups for the implementation of erosion control around lakes and ponds. I spent

many weekends this spring and summer volunteering and providing technical assistance to groups performing Watershed Surveys.”

“Traveling up into the Rangeley Lakes region as well as in the Western Mountains were some of my favorite work related trips, while the Kathadin Lake Wilderness Camps trip (for the MCC’s Celebration of Service) was my absolute favorite. I also did a lot of work with urban impaired streams in the greater Portland Area, specifically Red Brook in Scarborough / South Portland, Long Creek in South Portland, and Capisic Brook in Portland. Being a part of the greater MCC community has also been a wonderful experience I would recommend becoming an MCC member to anyone.”



Marass doing a stream corridor survey around Red Brook in Scarborough

Marass plans on working in the greater Portland Area in Water Resource Protection. He has applied to several jobs and is waiting to hear back. “If nothing pans out around here,” he said, “I am packing my bags, grabbing my sweetheart, and heading west (to hopefully work)!”

Rebecca Martin of Lyman, ME served 1700 hours at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland. She previously served 1700 hours with the DEP’s Lakes & Watershed program in Augusta in 2008-09.

During her term of service, Martin was part of the Vital Signs team. Vital Signs is a program designed to teach middle school students about science through practice, where the students are actually “doing” science and not just learning about it.

“I am inspired by GMRI’s mission and location—who doesn’t love an ocean view? The two projects that have absorbed the majority of my term of service have been the Vital Signs Afterschool Program at Mahoney Middle School and developing species identification resources to be used by middle school students and citizen scientists in the Vital Signs program.”



Martin (on R) with students & volunteers inspired to clean up Mill Creek Park!

“One highlight of my term of service was participating in a student inspired, driven, and coordinated stream cleanup in Mill Creek Park. After months of stepping around garbage in Mill Creek while investigating for crayfish, mayfly nymphs, sticklebacks, and more –the students were inspired to ‘do something!’ about the trash. They decided to host a stream cleanup and invited other students, siblings, Maine Conservation Corps members, and citizens to

participate. They cleared bags of glass, shopping carts, a bike, and clothing from the stream. It was awesome to witness young people who were confronted with a problem discover and successfully carry out a solution. During the cleanup, the students educated the participants about their work in the stream and the animals they had found and learned about with Vital Signs.”

Next up for Martin: some camping, traveling to visit friends, and job searching!

Environmental Educator Recruitment

The MCC Environmental Educator program is currently recruiting for 1700 hour AmeriCorps positions that will start January 3, 2011. Host sites include the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Marine Resources, the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Merryspring Nature Center, among others. The application deadline is September 7, 2010. FAQ’s, application materials, benefits, and position descriptions can be found on our website: <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/mcc/smeevl.html>.

MCC Alumni

Rebekah Robinson

Rebekah Robinson was born and raised in first Lincoln, NE, then San Francisco and Baltimore. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting from the University of Maryland Baltimore County and is currently finishing up a Master of Jewish Studies

program at Gratz College in Philadelphia, where she now resides. Robinson joined the MCC during the summer of 2004 as a Team Member and then became a Team Leader for the 2005 season and led a mini team on 12 different projects across Maine. After her time with the MCC, Robinson participated in the Adamah Fellowship at the Isabella Freedman Jewish retreat in Connecticut, where she utilized her recently acquired chainsaw skills, and learned organic farming, animal husbandry, and sustainability in the context of Jewish tradition and values. This fall she is starting a year-long Chaplaincy Residency at the Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia. Robinson is also trained in liturgical/musical leadership in Jewish worship, tutors Bar and Bat Mitzvah students, and teaches Hebrew to adults.

What initially drew you to the MCC?

I became disillusioned after college, and my mother was serving a year as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America—an AmeriCorps program that tackles poverty in the United States) so I became interested in AmeriCorps. I knew I wanted to be outdoors, active, and working with my hands.

What was your favorite part about serving with the MCC?

All of the Oreo cookies! Quarrying rocks was a lot of fun, as was working with a chainsaw and working with volunteers.

What was your favorite project/place you served?

Grafton Notch: it was my first project, and it's such a beautiful area. We had a great team, had a lot of fun, and went swimming every day after work!



Robinson near the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia

How did your time with the MCC affect your career/life path?

I've always been spiritual, but while working in the woods I really felt a spiritual connection, and I felt that those feelings were really magnified during that time. During my time with the MCC, I also learned that I am a vocational learner—that I learn best by doing. Discovering this about myself and being exposed to the different ways that people learn was very valuable and really informed a lot of aspects of my life like teaching kids and leading services.

If you could give any advice to current or future MCC members, what would it be?

Become aware of where you are in your skills, accept that, and build from there.

Jake Aman

Jake Aman is originally from Brooklin, ME and he holds a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in Environmental Protection and Human Ecology. He now lives in Wells, ME and works as a research associate at the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, which is also where he served as an MCC Environmental Educator for two terms of service from January 2008 through November 2009. Aman’s work includes water quality and environmental monitoring, as well as volunteer coordination for the Southern Maine Beach Profile Monitoring Program, a Maine Sea Grant program. He is also involved with supporting community efforts to restore sea run fish to the rivers of York County. For more information, please visit www.wellsreserve.org.

What initially drew you to the MCC?

I was looking for jobs and internships and I kept finding a number of interesting opportunities that all led back to the MCC. I applied for a couple positions and when the Wells Reserve got their funding that year, the timing worked out perfectly.

What was your favorite part about serving with the MCC?

Finally being involved in real environmental work—work that is meaningful and connected to conservation decision making. Being involved with that on a daily basis was great, as was the networking.

What was your favorite project/place you served?

I was (and still am) most excited about all of the monitoring we do. We monitor water quality, weather, and fish, to name a few. I liked doing field work and working with wildlife, and I really enjoyed getting to know southern Maine. It’s an area with a rich history, interesting geography, and it is the front line for conservation in Maine, experiencing the fastest rate of development in the state.



Aman on the Mousam River in Kennebunk

How did your time with the MCC affect your career/life path?

It led directly to a job! I also developed a strong appreciation for volunteering and community and national service.

If you could give any advice to current or future MCC members, what would it be?

Don't take your opportunity for granted, and stay open to whatever opportunities come along and they will lead you where you need to be.

Volunteers of the Month

June

Gary Goss of York, ME was nominated by Team Leader Chelsea Simon and her crew for his help on their Highland Farm project in York. The crew really enjoyed having Gary around and they appreciated all of his hard work, including the 45 hours he volunteered over the course of their 9-day session!

Bob Miller of Kittery, ME was nominated by Team Leader Michael Ferry and his crew for his help on their project at the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge. The crew was super impressed with all of his work helping to build stone walls and bunny habitat on what felt like the hottest day of the summer!

Fred Frodyma of Alfred, ME was nominated by MCC EE Ashley Pinkham who is serving at the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve in Wells. Pinkham nominated him for all the hard work he does as a dedicated member of the Mousam Kennebec Rivers Alliance and as part of the Volunteer River Monitoring Program.

July

Devin Littlefield of Strong, ME was nominated by MCC EE Ben Godsoe who is serving with the Sandy River Land Trust. Littlefield spent the month of July volunteering with the SRLT and spent 72 hours helping with the planning for the new Fly Rod Crosby Trail and other trails projects.

Samantha Squires of Ferrisburg, VT was nominated by Team Leader Aaron Mathias and his crew for all of her help with their project on Hay Mountain on the Appalachian Trail. The crew really appreciated all of her hard work (24 hours worth!) as well as her friendliness, positive attitude and enthusiasm to get work done.

Sharon Hicks of Old Town, ME was nominated by Team Leader Andrea Bachynsky and her crew for all of Hicks' help on their White Brook Trail project on the Appalachian

Trail. Hicks also volunteered 24 hours, and the crew was really impressed by her hard work, patience, positive attitude, and enthusiasm towards the work. We even hear she might be thinking about becoming an MCC member in the future!

Michael Ferry, Sr. of South Bend, IN was nominated by Team Leader Michael Ferry and his crew for all of his help on their White Cap Mountain project on the Appalachian Trail. Not only did Ferry volunteer 40 hard hours with the crew, he also told great stories, lent a water purifier, and provided some excellent wasabi soybeans.

Thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers this summer!

Fall Field Team Volunteer Opportunities

Some of our upcoming projects during the Fall Field Team season:

Lake St. George State Park, Liberty, ME

Volunteer Dates: August 25-26, August 31-September 2, September 8-9

Project Details: Removal of blowdowns and clearing trail corridor

Wonderbrook Preserve, Kennebunk, ME

Volunteer Dates: August 24-26

Project Details: Construction of 20' bridge, clearing new trail

Baxter State Park (1)

Volunteer Dates: August 31-September 2, September 8-9

Project Details: continued work on the Hunt Trail, quarrying and setting stone

Baxter State Park (2)

Volunteer Dates: August 31-September 3, September 8-10, September 14-17, September 21-22

Project Details: Bog bridging, water bars, stone steps, bridge construction

Wolfe's Neck Woods State Park, Freeport, ME

Volunteer Dates: August 25-27, August 31-September 3, September 8-10, September 14-17, September 21-23

Project Details: Stone work, resurfacing trail, bridge construction/railing installation

Deboullie Public Land Unit, Fort Kent, ME

Volunteer Dates: August 25-31, September 8-14, September 21-22

Project Details: Water bar and stone step construction

If interested in volunteering, please contact Sarah Gaffney at sarah.gaffney@maine.gov or 207-624-6092. Please see our volunteer calendar for a full list of fall volunteer opportunities: <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/mcc/volunteer.html>.

In Memoriam: Jon Underwood

On July 22nd, Jonathan Underwood passed away. Underwood was a former MCC staff member and a strong supporter of AmeriCorps and national service, and his warmth and generosity is remembered by many in the MCC community.

In his younger years, Underwood was an English teacher in New York. Actor Denzel Washington was one of Underwood's many students, and in his book, "A Hand to Guide Me", Washington recognized Underwood for instilling in him a passion for reading. In 2006, mentor and student were reunited on the Oprah Winfrey Show when Underwood was invited as a surprise guest.



Jon with one his beloved dogs, Taffy

Underwood moved to Maryland in the 1970's, and after leaving teaching he was instrumental in the national service movement. In 1984 he founded the Maryland Conservation Corps. Ten years down the road he joined the staff of the AmeriCorps*NCCC, serving as Project Director and then as Campus Director when the facility moved to Perry Point, MD. In 1997, Underwood headed north and joined the staff of the Maine Conservation Corps for several years. He also later served as the Program Director of Maine Independence Corps before moving back to Maryland in 2007.

Here is a remembrance of Jon shared by MCC alum Shelby Rousseau, who is the Stewardship Director for Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust in Oquossoc, ME.

“There is a curious fact about friends that people share but rarely acknowledge. By understanding the lives of those that touch our path, we come closer to understanding ourselves. What we look for in people, are the very same qualities we are proud of, or wish were more evident within ourselves. So, in some way, people tell us a lot about who we are, and who we aren't.

Jon was an important person in my life. He embraced my direction through his guidance, contributing to who I am today. It's been 10+ years since I served two terms with MCC, yet every year Jon and I touched based. He loved coming to Rangeley, sticking his toes in the lake, throwing sticks to his dog and embracing his MCC 'children'. The last time I spoke to him was following a voice mail he left sharing that he was going to be on the Oprah Winfrey Show. He didn't identify himself on the message, but I knew it was him.

I cried when I saw him on TV because it was ‘his turn’ and he was absolutely deserving of it.

My career has been seamlessly clutched by the arms of Jon and driven by the education and experience that Jon afforded me. I’m lucky to have known him and have called him a friend. I could search the whole world looking a mentor and friend like Jon, but all I would get is a worn out pair of boots.”

Jon will be greatly missed by the MCC and national service community.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, September 11 at Christ Episcopal Church, West River.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Lab Rescue of the LRCP, Inc., P.O. Box 1814, Annandale, VA 22003 or a donation of your time to a service organization of your choice.

Senegal Loves MCC!

Earlier this summer, we received this photo from MCC alum Evan Spark-DePass with the caption “Senegal Loves MCC!”. Spark-DePass is currently serving with the Peace Corps in Senegal.

