



## CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

### Vice Chair's Views

Welcome to the Potomac Chapter's new newsletter! This is the first in what will be a quarterly newsletter. You'll find articles specific to our chapter, broader AMC articles, and articles from other Chapter publications. This particular issue is entirely developed by our Chapter!

We have had a very active year, with a big volunteer event in February and shutting down a few weeks later followed by a careful and deliberate reopening this summer. The Chapter is now running COVID conscious trips (socially distant, masks, limited participants, and taking other precautions), planning regular informal member meetings, training new leaders, and scheduling Zoom webinars. Our annual meeting will be in November, preliminary details are included in this newsletter. Stay tuned for more soon.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. Please feel free to reach out with comments or suggestions. We welcome contributions from AMC members. Contact me anytime at [vicechair@amcpotomac.org](mailto:vicechair@amcpotomac.org). I am happy to answer questions about the newsletter or general involvement with the Chapter.

~ Lisa Novins, Potomac Chapter Vice Chair



Photo: Watching the sunset at the Rohrbaugh Plains Trail overlook at the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area in WV's Monongahela National Forest. This was part of the novice backpacking workshop we ran for adults in August 2020. Credit: David Mong



Photo: Riverbend Park, VA. Credit: Lisa Novins



## Announcements

### Friday October 2, 2020 @ 7 pm: Conservation Conversation

Grab a beverage or a bite to eat and join us on Friday, October 2nd at 7 pm for our first of a series of monthly (approximately) Conservation Conversations. While COVID may be keeping us close to home, we can still get together to hear about what is going on in AMC and in the broader community to address the many conservation issues facing us today.

Our first speaker will be Peter Brandom who, after biking to work in Washington D.C. for many years, moved to Hillsboro, Oregon in 2008 to lead the development of Hillsboro's first comprehensive Environmental Sustainability Plan for city operations and the broader community. Since then, Hillsboro has reduced city facility energy consumption by 26%, reduced water consumption at city facilities by 16% and currently offsets 100% of city facility electricity with renewable power. The city has received multiple awards and became Bee City USA in 2019. Meanwhile, Peter got married, and became the proud father to his stepdaughter Elsie, six chickens, three cats, two dogs, and a lizard. Fortunately, Peter reports that, while the smoke is bad, Hillsboro is not yet threatened by the fires burning in Oregon.

Peter will share with us the lessons he has learned over the past twelve years and provide some tips on how you can promote conservation in your local community or your back yard. Help us get this series off to a great start by registering [HERE](#).

### Friday, October 23, 2020 @ 7pm: Conservation Conversation

For our second Conservation Conversation, join Steven Wallander, PhD for a virtual happy hour where he will give us an overview of how environmental economists evaluate conservation programs. No math required - just a willingness to broaden your perspective. Find more information and register [HERE](#).

### Sunday, November 15, 2020 @ 5pm: Annual Dinner

Please join us for a different kind of annual dinner. We'll be meeting on Zoom! The evening will include a local speaker, an AMC HQ update, a Chapter update, the executive committee vote, and some fun surprises. Watch your email, the [Activities database](#), and our [Facebook](#) page for more details and how to register.

### Ongoing Activities

Check out the AMC activities database to find activities happening, in person or online. You can search for regional activities (by chapter or state) or online (search BeOnline) [HERE](#).

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Elected Chapter Officers

#### Chapter Chair

Vacant

[chair@amcpotomac.org](mailto:chair@amcpotomac.org)

#### Chapter Vice Chair

Lisa Novins

[vicechair@amcpotomac.org](mailto:vicechair@amcpotomac.org)

#### Chapter Treasurer

Rich Batiuk

[treasurer@amcpotomac.org](mailto:treasurer@amcpotomac.org)

#### Chapter Secretary

Laura Falender

[secretary@amcpotomac.org](mailto:secretary@amcpotomac.org)

### Appointed Chapter Chairs

#### Conservation Chair

Peter Mason

[conservation@amcpotomac.org](mailto:conservation@amcpotomac.org)

#### Membership Chair

Peter Mason

[membership@amcpotomac.org](mailto:membership@amcpotomac.org)

#### Excursions Chair

Ken Shuck

[excursions@amcpotomac.org](mailto:excursions@amcpotomac.org)

#### Leadership Chair

Paul Rowe

[leadership@amcpotomac.org](mailto:leadership@amcpotomac.org)

#### Young Members Chair

Vacant

[youngmembers@amcpotomac.org](mailto:youngmembers@amcpotomac.org)

#### Social Chair

Vacant

[social@amcpotomac.org](mailto:social@amcpotomac.org)

#### Communications Chair

Scott Kaiser

[communications@amcpotomac.org](mailto:communications@amcpotomac.org)



## AMC Potomac Chapter to Join the Capital Trails Coalition

The AMC Potomac Chapter has recently been invited to join the [Capital Trails Coalition](#) (CTC) as an Advisory Member. The Coalition consists of more than 60 nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies, including the D.C. and Virginia chapters of the Sierra Club, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, National Park Service, and multiple local biking clubs. Although the CTC does not itself build or maintain any trails, it provides a venue for their member non-profits, government organizations, and other stakeholders in the Metro Washington, DC area to come together to discuss incorporating their trails into an interconnected trail network, and share their expertise and experiences. The AMC in support of the Potomac Chapter will contribute the expert knowledge, expertise, and experience it has contributed to the development and maintenance of over 1800 miles of trails in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states.

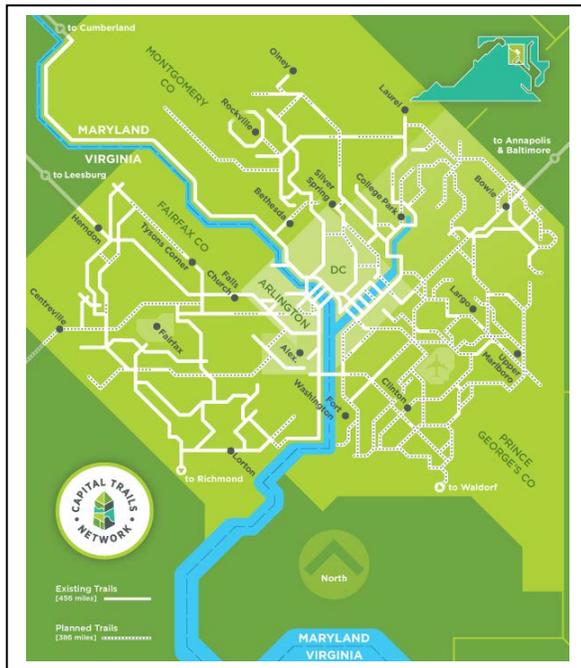


The CTC's goal is to develop a plan to expand and connect multiuse trails in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region (including Fairfax County, VA and adjacent Prince Georges and Montgomery, MD counties) into a network of 900 miles of interconnected trails. It seeks to create a world-class network of multi-use trails that are equitably distributed throughout the region. The regional trails network will transform public life by providing healthy, low-stress access to open space and reliable transportation for people of all ages and abilities.

As the AMC's Potomac Chapter explores the way forward to best support the Coalition and its partner organizations, we would like to hear from you if you have experience in trail development or maintenance (or not) and would be interested in participating in the support we provide.

For more information contact Ken Shuck at

[trails@amcpotomac.org](mailto:trails@amcpotomac.org), Potomac Chapter representative to the CTC.



### A Newbie's Take: AMC Leader Training

I am on the path to becoming an AMC trip leader. The process is well thought out, informative, and engaging—even given the challenging circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic. So far, I have taken wilderness first aid, participated in an online AMC canoe and kayak leadership course (thank you New York/New Jersey chapter!), taken AMC's online diversity course, and co-led my first socially distanced, bemasked hiking trip—actually, my first AMC outing ever. While I have yet to lead my own trip, but I very much look forward to putting my training to the test.

I don't expect to need my wilderness first aid on my first trip, but I will prepare as if I might. I have at least twice, unexpectedly, helped respond to backcountry emergencies, but I was not then a trained responder. I now see why wilderness first aid is so important; looking back I realize what I might have done better in a few incidents. And my first aid kit now is far better for it.

There are aspects of AMC trip leading that I had not expected, but nevertheless very much value. I had anticipated high quality and safety conscious outings. I had not thought about the extra efforts trip leaders can do to make sure people from varied backgrounds feel welcome. Bravo AMC. The more people there are who value the outdoors, the better able we all will be to protect and conserve those same outdoors places. I applaud AMC's conservation mission, and I will make sure to spread the word where I can.

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## Michael McCarthy: Nature, joy, and becoming fully human

"We might have left the natural world, most of us, but the natural world has not left us," says Michael McCarthy, a British naturalist and writer. "The natural world is a part of us, and if we lose it, we cannot be fully who we are. And if we were to realize that, which is hard, and if we were to realize it on a large scale, which is even harder, that might offer a defense of nature."

McCarthy, the longtime environment editor of the British newspaper *The Independent*, and environment correspondent of *The Times* (of London) offers the world a galvanizing call by suggesting that a more effective way of helping people connect with nature - and take up the cause of protecting it—is by focusing on our joy in nature as our reason for defending it. McCarthy contends this is a more persuasive approach than relying on the language of statistics, which can at times overwhelm or distract us from nature itself's call to action. Tapping into our bond with the natural world, as we ourselves were once part of that wildlife, can connect us to a deep legacy of inherited feelings and instinct which lie deep within us, underneath all the familiar parts of civilization. "The sudden passionate happiness which the natural world can occasionally trigger in us may well be the most serious business of all.... We are all capable of loving nature, because in us, at the very deepest level, in the bottom of our psyches, we have a link to the natural world, which really goes to the essence of who we are."

An interview with McCarthy, was recently rebroadcast on NPR program *On Being* with Krista Tippett. The full interview episode can be found here: <https://onbeing.org/programs/michael-mccarthy-nature-joy-and-human-becoming/>. McCarthy is the recipient of the RSPB Medal from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Silver Medal from the Zoological Society of London. His books include *The Moth Snowstorm: Nature and Joy* and *The Consolation of Nature: Spring in the Time of Coronavirus*, coming in October 2020.



Photo: "To be fully human is to recognize that the natural world is where we came from, and it remains part of us. And without it, being fully human is something we cannot do."  
Michael McCarthy.  
Credit: Lisa Novins

### Newbie's Take... (continued from previous page)

Additionally, I am impressed with AMC's response to the pandemic. It is not easy to do anything social today, but AMC's clear expectations for social distancing, mask-wearing, and other limitations put me more at ease as a future trip leader.

As I plan to lead my first trip, I will draw from lessons already learned in my first co-lead experience. Trip leader Dave Mong was masterful at clearly communicating to the public what was to be expected on this trip, a pleasant afternoon out-and-back on the Appalachian Trail in Maryland. This was a daytime hike, so while we started mid-afternoon, we needed to return before dusk, and clearly setting a turnaround time and sticking to it was key to everyone's enjoyment. I am comfortable hiking at night, but this was not a night hike. And it didn't become one. We were back at the trailhead, saying goodbye to our newfound friends, masks and all, as the sun began to set.

I am excited to co-lead again with Dave Mong as trip leader on a family-friendly bikepacking trip October 16-18. I'm very interested to learn how to lead on overnights too.

Check out the [Activities database](#) for upcoming Chapter activities.

See you on the trail.

~ Will Schaefer, Potomac Chapter, Leader-in-Training



## Places to Paddle

Here in the mid-Atlantic region, we are blessed with a wide diversity of places we can paddle, from whitewater rivers which will challenge experts to seemingly endless tidal creeks snaking around saltwater marshes and everything in-between. In addition, we are fortunate to have a growing number of water trails being established and mapped, again across free flowing creeks and rivers to tidal rivers and embayments, with a number of these well-connected with the rich history of our region.

In this and future columns, I plan to share both my and other fellow Potomac Chapter members' favorite places to paddle. Be you a seasoned paddler or someone recently interested in getting out on the water, we will share places of interest to a wide array of members. We will also share where you can turn to for more information about these and other places to paddle.

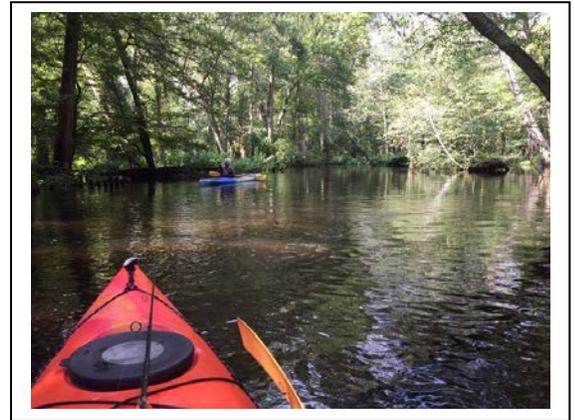
And these days when we mention paddlers, we are referring to those plying the waters via canoes, kayaks and paddle boards. The good news for the increasing population of paddlers is the growing number of 'soft launches' located in places and along waterways where you just can't maneuver a boat on a trailer. The next time you are searching Google Maps for access to water, look for the term 'soft launch' or 'canoe/kayak' launch as you zoom in or a 'soft launch' symbol on maps of specific parks and natural recreation and wildlife management areas. When you look closely, you will be amazed how many you will find compared to just 5 years ago.

For this place to paddle, we are heading over to the Eastern Shore to the blackwaters of the Pocomoke River. Here you can directly and fully experience a cypress forest up close and personal and discover that trees have knees too! This paddle starts with Pocomoke Canoe Company in Snow Hill, Maryland. For a small fee they will portage you and your canoe/kayak up-river to Porters Crossing, enabling you to float and paddle down river for about 5.5 miles, pulling out right in Snow Hill where you left your car or truck hours ago. You can rent canoes or kayaks for this trip or others on the river.

For the first 1.5-2 miles, you will be literally surrounded by ancient cypress trees... to the point you will swear you saw a dinosaur passing by through adjacent the swamp. The current in this upper reach helps you with the paddling, providing more opportunities to enjoy the colorful and plentiful dragon flies and damsel flies using your watercraft as a downstream ferryboat.

As you proceed downstream, the river channel slowly but surely widens, with water lilies and other emergent aquatic plants filling in the shallow areas. No worries as the river has deep main channel during its entire length. And as the canopy overhead opens up, so does the possibility for sighting bald eagles (and their nests), ospreys, herons and a variety of ducks including wood ducks.

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### Sources of Information and Livery Service

Pocomoke River Canoe Company 2 River St, Snow Hill, MD 21863 (410) 632-3971  
<http://pocomokeriverpaddle.com/>

Sea Kayaking Maryland's Chesapeake Bay: Day Trips on the Tidal Tributaries and Coastlines of the Western and Eastern Shore by Michael Savario and Andrea Nolan



## Places to Paddle (continued from previous page)

Spring and summer bring an assortment of wildflowers which find interesting places to bloom in this water rich environment and dramatic colors in the fall. If you enjoy fishing, the upper Pocomoke hosts an array of species, including largemouth bass, pickerel, yellow perch, white perch, bluegill and other sunfish as well as gar and snakeheads. Fishing can be a challenge mainly due to the huge amount of structure throughout the river and along the shorelines as well as the dark nature of the water due to natural tannins from the extensive surrounding wetlands. At the same time, fish here can grow BIG given plentiful sources of food. Hold on tight once you hook into one as regardless of their size, they are going to head for the nearest cypress tree knee, underwater root, or lily pads to wrap you line around.

Bring a lunch, cameras, fishing tackle and even a good book to read during lunch tied up a willing tree and plan to spend the morning and a good part of the afternoon just losing yourself in everything this primitive river has to offer. And when you see Snow Hill's water tower just over the tree line, you know you are close to your take out location and already planning for your next trip through the cypress forest by water. This is a great paddle for both beginners as well as kids—the water is flat, there is lots to look at and you can make the entire trip in 2.5-3 hours of steady paddling if desired. But you will find that time goes by real quickly if you and your fellow paddlers take your time and enjoy your surroundings.

~ Rich Batiuk, Potomac Chapter Treasurer, avid kayaker and fly fisherman always looking for somewhere else new to paddle



Photo: Getting ready to start our backpack at the Dolly Sods Wilderness Area in WV's Monongahela National Forest. Those in the photo were part of the novice backpacking workshop we ran in August 2020. Credit: David Mong

## 2021 Executive Committee Nominations

At this year's Zoom annual meeting, being held on November 15, 2020 @ 5pm, we will elect our Executive Committee Officers for 2021. The four executive committee officers are Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The officer nominations are:

**Chair:** Lisa Novins

**Vice Chair:** Peter Mason

**Secretary:** Laura Falender

**Treasurer:** Richard Batiuk

In addition to the officers, the executive committee is comprised of chapter committee chairs. Those committees are currently: Communications, Excursions, Leadership, Family Outings, Conservation, Membership, Young Members, and Social. The Chapter anticipates openings in the following committees in 2021: Membership, Young Members, and Social. If you're interested in taking up any of those positions, getting involved in any Chapter activities, committees, writing for this newsletter, or Chapter leader training, please contact current Vice Chair, Lisa Novins at [vicechair@amcpotomac.org](mailto:vicechair@amcpotomac.org).