Meet Your Executive Committee: Rich

By the time I was in Junior High School, I had already experienced much of the United States having been born outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, then moving to Woodstock, New York followed by Arvada, Colorado and then down to Huntsville, Alabama and finally in Westboro, Massachusetts. Given this all occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, there was a lot of major events shaping our communities and country during this time.

And yes, the Woodstock Music Festival was held while I was living there, with the actual concerts taking place miles away on a farm and not downtown in then our very much hippie town. Too young to have that experience, I spent many days exploring the woods and making forts with friends. Then our move to Colorado put our family in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains just outside of Denver. Already living a mile high in elevation, we spent a lot of time about 10,000 feet hiking and camping in the mountains in the spring, summer and fall and skiing during the winters. So our next move to Alabama was a bit of a shock where we were introduced to hot and humid summers and ‘mountains’ which have been foothills previously. From there we headed up to Massachusetts where I would spend my Junior High School and Senior High School years and have my initial exposure to the AMC.

Being a hiking and camping family we quickly discovered everything the White Mountains had to offer and soon thereafter, what the AMC had to offer. I can still remember my first overnight stay at the Lake of the Clouds hut in the mid-1970s and the hut croo singing to wake us up for breakfast. Two and a half decades later, my dad and I would spend a week hiking the Presidential Range, staying in the AMC huts along the trail, one of our last annual backpacking trips together prior to his passing.

I am an avid fly fisher, kayaker, canoeist, hiker, backpacker, and camper, basically any excuse or reason to get outside, often on the less travel paths and enjoy everything the outdoors has to offer along with others who are doing the same. And prior to retirement, I was the Associate Director for Science, Analysis, and Implementation at the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s Chesapeake Bay Program Office located in Annapolis, Maryland. Working with academic, agency, advocacy, policy and business experts, I was responsible for providing federal, state, regional and local partners and stakeholders with innovative technical and programmatic solutions to complex policy issues facing restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and the surrounding 41 million acre watershed. Over my career, I had the opportunity to work directly with literally thousands of local, regional, state and federal agency staff and managers, scientists, local and state elected officials, members of Congress, Congressional staff, farmers, home builders, municipal authority managers, and members of advocacy organizations, all while traveling extensively across the country and around the world.

So the combination of my passion for getting outdoors along with working with a multitude of partners and stakeholders towards common goals, becoming active with the AMC was a perfect match for me. An AMC member for many years, I re-engaged with the Potomac Chapter as I approached retirement knowing I would finally have the time to become a more active in the operations of the Chapter. I have since become the Chapter Treasurer, a member of the Executive Committee, the Paddling Committee chair, an AMC certified paddling and hiking leader (and one final co-lead away from becoming a backpacking leader), and the Potomac Chapter’s representative on the Inter-chapter Paddlers Committee.

See you on the trail!

Rich Batiuk, Treasurer
treasurer@amcpotomac.org
Activities

Friday August 12 - Sunday August 14. Dolly Sods Wilderness Blueberry Backpack. Leader’s annual backpacking trip at peak blueberry season! A total of 11 miles spread over three days (Dolly Sods, WV) Register

Saturday August 13 - Sunday August 14. 20s and 30s Gifford Pinchot State Park Camping Weekend. Join your fellow 20s and 30s members on a social media break, enjoying Saturday dinner, S’mores, Sunday breakfast & lunch (Southeastern Pennsylvania) Register

Friday August 19 - Monday August 22. Dolly Sods Wilderness 3-Night 15 Mile Backpack. Point-to-point overnight, with camping at both major overlook campsites (Dolly Sods, WV). Register

Thursday September 8 - Sunday September 11. Moose River Plains Bicycling/Hiking/Camping in the Adirondacks. Three night bike-packing trip with day hiking, to visit some of the remote ponds of the Moose River Plains (Wakely Dam, Indian Lake, NY) Register

Friday September 16 - Sunday September 18. Fallfest Hiking/Camping Weekend at Elizabeth Furnace National Recreation Area. Two-night camping trip with day hiking, and an opportunity to practice and get help (Laneville, WV) Register

Friday September 16 - Sunday September 18. Fallfest/All Day Views: Women’s Affinity Group Camping and Hiking Cole Mountain and Mount Pleasant. Day hiking to 360-degree views on Cole Mountain. Two independent 6-mile hikes, one in the morning, and the other in the afternoon (Alto, VA) Register

Thursday October 6 - Sunday October 9. Bike-Packing in the Moose River Plans of the Adirondacks. Three night trip to beautiful, remote ponds and lakes of the Moose River Plains (Moose River Plains, NY) Register

Thursday October 13 - Sunday October 26. Second Annual Potomac Chapter Weekend Gathering @ Rocky Gap State Park. A weekend full of camping, hiking, biking, paddling, and more! (Rocky Gap State Park, MD) Register

For more information on Rocky Gap State Park, click here.

BREAKING NEWS: LeeAnn Hart joins AMC Potomac as Membership Chair. Welcome LeeAnn!

Executive Committee

Officers
Chapter Chair: Lisa Novins, chair@amcpotomac.org
Chapter Vice Chair: Peter Mason, vicechair@amcpotomac.org
Chapter Treasurer: Rich Batiuk, treasurer@amcpotomac.org
Chapter Secretary: Deborah Ward, secretary@amcpotomac.org

Committee Chairs
Conservation: Kathy Campbell, conservation@amcpotomac.org
Membership: LeeAnn Hart, membership@amcpotomac.org
Excursions: David Mong, excursions@amcpotomac.org
Leadership: Bryna Selig, leadership@amcpotomac.org
Young Members: Dushyant Chaudhari, youngmembers@amcpotomac.org
Communications: John Pacovich communications@amcpotomac.org

At-Large Members
Jill Watkins: atlargemember1@amcpotomac.org
Kate Lawrence: atlargemember2@amcpotomac.org
Laura Falender: atlargemember3@amcpotomac.org

Editors
Deborah Ward

Looking for More Activities?

Didn’t find anything here that piques your interest? Stay up-to-date with our latest chapter offerings as well as those of the greater Appalachian Mountain Club by visiting the online Activities Database here.

Visit us online at www.amcpotomac.org

amcpotomac.org
Call for Volunteers: Your Chapter Needs You! Your skills, expertise, and willingness to volunteer can help the chapter keep growing.

The Potomac Chapter is always seeking volunteer activity leaders and volunteers who are interested in becoming involved with chapter management. There are both virtual and in-person opportunities. Current openings include:

- **Trip Leaders:** Love introducing people to the outdoors? Become a trip leader! Enjoy day hiking, camping, backpacking, bicycling, paddling (and others) as much as we do? Help us get people enjoying the outdoors - we need you! Contact Bryna Selig (leadership@amcpotomac.org) to get enrolled in free leadership training and learn of upcoming opportunities.

- **Virtual Programs:** Enjoy learning about new topics and bringing people together? The Chapter is looking for a coordinator for our new monthly virtual programs. Contact chair@amcpotomac.org

- **Are you a storyteller or photographer or both?** We need a few more speakers/presenters for our upcoming virtual programs. Have you had an outdoor or conservation adventure you enjoy sharing? We’d love to hear about it! Contact chair@amcpotomac.org

- **Communications Committee:** Our communications committee is hard at work on our website, newsletter, social media, Meetup, and all regular member and public facing communications. If you would like more information about helping out, please contact John Pacovich at communications@amcpotomac.org

- **Young Members Committee:** Are you an AMC member in your 20s or 30s. Our Young Members Committee is looking for volunteers to train as leaders and to help organize events. For more information contact leadership@amcpotomac.org or YoungMembers@amcpotomac.org.

- **Executive Committee: Family Outings Committee Chair** - The Family Outings Committee organizes events for families with children that are designed to introduce parents and children to the outdoors and facilitate their getting involved in outdoor activities and conservation. You must be a member of AMC and over the age of 18 to serve as a committee chair. If you would like more information, please email the PC Chair at chair@amcpotomac.org

- **Executive Committee: Treasurer.** Role opening in early 2023 as Rich Batiuk transitions to an exciting, new role in to further help the AMC. Interested in helping the chapter manage its budget and finances? Contact chair@amcpotomac.org to learn more.

Would you like additional information about any of these areas? Please contact Lisa Novins at chair@amcpotomac.org or Peter Mason at vicechair@amcpotomac.org

**Trip Report: Round Hill Appalachian Trail Festival in Round Hill, Virginia, on June 11, 2022.**

On Saturday June 11, the Potomac Chapter joined other hiking and trail conservancy clubs at the annual *Round Hill AT Festival* in Virginia, where we gathered to celebrate the natural beauty of the Appalachian Trail and ways to protect it. The Chapter sponsored a table to promote hiking and trail conservancy, as well as membership within the Appalachian Mountain Club. There was a fantastic turnout at the event and we were able to introduce the organization to many who have never heard of the club, and also to connect with current and past members alike. A big shout out to Jill Watkins for representing the club by leading a morning hike up to Raven Rocks - what a way to represent!

![Our Conversation Chair and Vice Chair greeting people over the course of the day](image1.jpg)

![View from the summit of Raven Rocks](image2.jpg)
Tracking Flowers and Fauna Along the Appalachian Trail through Community-Science with iNaturalist

By Danielle Guttman, AMC’s Mid-Atlantic Conservation Outreach Manager

The Appalachian Mountain Club has launched a community-science project, Flowers and Fauna Along the Appalachian Trail Corridor, through a free app called iNaturalist. This project is a smartphone-oriented extension of AMC’s long-term monitoring program, Mountain Watch, which has been tracking how plants are responding to climate change since 2004.

Our project, Flowers and Fauna along the Appalachian Trail Corridor, is a great tool for allowing community members to contribute to real scientific research. As of July 8th, 2022, our project has had 19,102 observations made of 1,749 different species along the corridor. We rely on the help of hikers, dog-walkers, backpackers, and other outdoor enthusiasts to tell us what they’ve seen along the trail corridor by taking photos of buds, flowers, and fruits and uploading them to iNaturalist.

AMC’s scientists will then use the photos that you upload, confirm the identity of key plants, and code their flowering and fruiting status. The more photos that are posted, the better we will be able to understand the large variability that is inherent in mountain environments. This will help to determine whether the AT corridor is a climate refugia - that is, if it’s more resilient to climate change than other landscapes. The landscape of the Appalachian Trail is especially important for understanding how plant phenology - the timing of plant life-cycle events such as flowering and fruiting - is related to climate and how changes across the Appalachian Trail’s climate gradients could impact ecosystem resilience and biodiversity.

The iNaturalist app can be found in the Apple App Store for iPhones, or in the Google Store for Android devices. Using the app, you can identify almost any living animal or plant. Your mobile device will also automatically geotag the image, assigning its location, and if you’re not sure of the name of the species of plant you have observed, the community on iNaturalist, including AMC’s own scientists, will help confirm or identify the plant. You don’t need to be an expert to identify key species and contribute to this project.

You can become a Citizen Scientist and support AMC’s research by downloading iNaturalist on your smart phone and joining our Flowers and Fauna of the Appalachian Trail project. Come contribute important data while you explore the outdoors!

If you’d like more information on how to get involved or have questions about the project, you can contact AMC’s Mid-Atlantic Conservation Outreach Manager, Danielle Guttman, at dguttman@outdoors.org.

Living in the Wild

By Peter Mason, Vice Chair, AMC Potomac

I grew up in Connecticut and was fortunate to live for much of that time in an old colonial house that sat on half an acre of land but backed up onto many acres of woods and fields, as well as a lake that served as a reservoir for the town. The fields were full of butterflies and bees and I often saw deer, foxes and groundhogs when I went exploring with my dog Sara or delivered newspapers on my bike in the early morning.

Despite being surrounded by nature, my family considered the wild to be someplace else where we went to visit. In the summertime we would venture up into the White Mountains of New Hampshire to camp and hike. As my brother and I grew older, we expanded our range to include The Adirondacks in New York, the Green Mountains in Vermont, and Maine. We hiked, backpacked, paddled, camped and enjoyed these places, then returned home to fight pitched battles with the groundhogs as they tried to poach from our garden.

Since leaving Connecticut, I have lived in or near cities: Chicago, Cleveland, and for the past twenty-eight years, Washington D.C. Living in urban environments has only reinforced the division in my mind between home and the wild - until recently.

Last August, my wife and I attended a dinner party in North Arlington, near Chain Bridge. As we walked down the sidewalk, heading to our car at about 10 pm, I felt a sharp pain in my left ankle. When I looked down, I was shocked to see something slither away. “I think I just got bitten by a snake!” I told friends, who confirmed by sight and then photograph that I had been bitten by a copperhead snake.

Two nights in the hospital and four doses of anti-venom later, I emerged from the hospital with no permanent damage to my leg and a much greater appreciation for pain medications. I also had a greater appreciation for how the boundaries between home and the wild are breaking down as more and more open
space is being developed. Over the years, I had noticed that I was seeing lots more rabbits and foxes in my neighborhood, and more deer when I bike on the W&OD trail to work. But my snake bite really brought it home for me and made me realize that - with less and less wild available to them - the wildlife is moving in.

Which makes me wonder whether we need to start living at home like we live in the wild. After the snake bite, several people asked me if we had killed the snake. In addition to being a great way for one of my companions to also get bitten, this would have only added tragedy to an already unfortunate situation. The snake was not out hunting humans - it only bit me because I stepped on or near it when I wasn’t watching where I was going in the dark.

We do need to minimize risk, but at home we tend to do this by trying to control the environment around us rather than living with it. Companies tell us to spray for mosquitos so that “outside is fun again,” but this comes at a cost. Despite planting milkweed, Joe Pye weed, and other native plants in my garden, I have not seen a single butterfly in my yard this year.

If you think about it, there are lots of things we do when we are in the wild that would make a difference when we are at home. Walk more, use less, manage your waste, leave no trace. As for the foxes, keep your distance (sometimes they have rabies) and don’t tempt them by leaving your cat out at night. Most of all, get outdoors and enjoy nature, even if you live in an apartment downtown. Just watch where you step.

Places to Paddle: Just Follow the Water Trail!

By Rich Batiuk, Treasurer & Paddling Leader

In the mid-Atlantic region, we are blessed with lots of places to paddle—thousands of miles of streams and rivers, many ponds, lakes and reservoirs, and over 10,000 miles of tidal Chesapeake Bay shoreline, not to mention all the coastal bays and the Atlantic Ocean. To help us navigate all these waters, we also have a growing number of water trails.

So, what is a water trail? According to Wikipedia, “water trails (also known as blueways) are marked routes on navigable waterway such as rivers, lakes, canals, and coastlines for recreational use. They allow access to waterways for non-motorized boats and sometimes motorized vessels, inner tubes, and other craft. Water trails not only require suitable access points and take-outs for exit but also provide places ashore to camp and picnic or other facilities for boaters.”

In Maryland, through partnerships with local governments, citizen associations, and nonprofit organizations, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is working to build a statewide network of water trails. To date, Maryland has over 750 miles of designated water trails and other projects are in development across the state. You can access an interactive map to view existing designated trails:

[amcpotomac.org](http://amcpotomac.org)

or see go to Maryland Public Water Access web app at:

[Maryland Public Water Access](http://www.maryland.gov/marinewateraccess)

Currently, some the available water trails include: the Potomac, Monocacy and Youghiogheny in western Maryland; Point Lookout State Park Water Trails in St. Mary’s County; and the Patuxent and Anacostia rivers in central Maryland; and on Maryland’s Eastern Shore there are Chester River Water Trails, Choptank and Tuckahoe Water Trails, Kent Island Water Trails, Tilghman Island and Bay Hundred Water Trails, Corsica River Water Trails, Marshyhope Creek Water Trail, Eastern Neck Island Water Trail, Smith Island Water Trails, Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center Water Trails and Sassafras River Water Trail. In addition, there are county-based maps of water trails in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s counties. With the exception of the Youghiogheny River, all these water trails have hard copy maps you can order on-line or downloadable electronic versions. And please note that the Potomac River trail covers not only Maryland, but also Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

[Within Delaware, there is the Delaware Nanticoke Water Trail. Eagles, osprey, marshes and cypress swamps. The Nanticoke offers all that and more along more than 60 miles from its headwaters in Delaware south to Tangier Sound in Dorchester County, Maryland. Much of the land along the river corridor is undeveloped and privately owned, but portions of private land are protected by non-profit organizations and state and local parks. As such, the river corridor is ideal for wildlife including migratory birds. Bass fishing, boating, kayaking, and canoeing are also popular.](http://www.delaware.gov/initiated/1128405)
For information on the water trail in Delaware, including a list of public access points visit this site You can also visit PaddleTheNanticoke.com for helpful hints and ideas on trip planning on and near the river.

The District of Columbia shares a water trail with Prince George’s County, Maryland along the Anacostia River. Discover the natural abundance of the Anacostia River as it threads through the heart of Washington, DC. Watch birds on Kingman Island or dock at the National Arboretum and roam the forest. Paddle to Diamond Teague Park and catch a ball game or tie-up at Yards Park and explore new restaurants. The Anacostia River corridor has lots of options for outdoor fun and the Anacostia Water Trail can help you find them. The trail covers a nine-mile stretch of the Anacostia River, running from Bladensburg, Maryland, through Washington, DC, to its juncture with the Potomac River about two miles south of Capitol Hill. Along this trail, the character of the river varies remarkably. Upstream you’ll find forests, wetlands, and wildlife that seem amazingly removed from the city. Downstream are hubs of riverfront recreation, with community parks, restaurants, and sporting events. The Anacostia Water Trail offers a way to explore the river and its resources. Its public access sites, programming, and orientation information is helping both residents and visitors find new adventures on the Anacostia and discover other treasures that have been there all along.

Over in Virginia, there are water trails on the Rappahannock, Mattaponi, Pamunkey, and James rivers. The Chesapeake Conservancy, working with the National Park Service, is also actively developing and promoting water trails in Virginia and the other Bay watershed states. For example, the Upper James River Water Trail meanders through beautiful Botetourt County located just northeast of Roanoke, Virginia. The trail is organized into five segments, each offering a unique experience. Along the 45 miles of the Upper James River in Botetourt County, you can get up close and personal with the Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountains. You’ll experience the unspoiled beauty of the river as you paddle through scenic valleys and past rolling farmland while keeping a watchful eye out for native wildlife. Some Class I & Class II rapids along your journey will make it a fun day for all members of the family by canoe, kayak or tube. And Virginia is part of the ultimate water trail—the John Smith Trail, parts of the Bay and tidal river waters in Virginia as well as Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia.
Up in Pennsylvania, water trails are described as "boat routes suitable for canoes, kayaks and small motorized watercraft. Like conventional trails, water trails are recreational corridors between specific locations. Water trails are comprised of access points, boat launches, day use sites, and -- in some cases -- overnight camping areas. Each water trail is unique, a reflection of Pennsylvania's diverse geology, ecology and communities.” Pennsylvania Water Trails embrace the “Leave No Trace” code of outdoor ethics that promotes the responsible use & enjoyment of the outdoors. Pennsylvania offers water trail guides which show “trail heads” (boat launch and take-out points) and provide background about the scenic, historic and geologic points of interest along the way. Throw in a little fishing, wildlife watching, and camping and you can see how water works wonders in Pennsylvania. For more information on Pennsylvania’s water trails go to:

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

for on-line access to 25 water trails across the state.

Out in West Virginia, there are a growing number of water trails to take advantage of. For example, the Cacapon River Water Trail offers 65 miles of wildlife and breathtaking vistas. From novice paddlers to experienced ones, there is a section of this river for everyone. Although, there is no public camping along the river, there are numerous public and private campgrounds located throughout the area. On the other side of the state, the Coal River Water Trail has 20 access points in 100 miles. There is a kiosk at each one that provides information about the river and the distance to the other kiosks. Go to:

West Virginia Tourism - Featured Flatwater Destinations

for more information on where to paddle in West Virginia.

Off the Beaten Path

By Brendon Leon, AMC Member

Open roads will carry you, zoom-zoom. Summer and Fall make some of the best times to venture into the great country side, especially the Appalachian Mountains. On the way, rolling along the highway and scenic byways- powered by diesel, ultra fuel or coasting on clean sun power, a euphoria overcomes one seeing the sunlit valleys and winding trails from distance. These destinations are places of natural splendor. Therefore, it is understandable that the road is overlooked as a part of the Appalachian Mountaineering experience. The destination may be ultimate in importance, but they are connected by the straight-ways and carvings paths of Appalachian roads and highways. They cross dense corridors of often terraced homes and storefronts on and around the glorious Appalachian Trail. These roadways connect people and nature.

Leg 1

Make the most of the trip. Leaving Washington D.C. for the mid-western portion of Appalachia, the thrill seeker, mild mannered hiker and one seeking quiet wilderness will find what some have described as Alpine-like landscapes and quiet inhabitants including frogs and other small reptiles. The destination often visited is an old estate returned to nature in the form of trails and wilderness now called Dolly Sods. Of this place, there are ghost story whispered from wars past. Trail seekers come close to the fauna and climb a moderate way to a plateau initially surrounded by forest As the trekker goes deeper, the forest gives way to fields of fruit and remnants of an ancient industry before reaching the mountains edges. If a hiker or runner dislikes steep inclines and declines, many trails in the region offer higher entrances that allow vehicles into the trail start.

Vroom, vroom! Cars pass and the first stop out of the capitol toward the destination is an expansive farm on route XX in Loudoun County that cultivates crops of grape and vine, offering wines described by connoisseurs as similar to those in France’s Bordeaux Region complimenting steaks of red meat in several cuts including the flank. Corn stalks front the place in quiet. Continuing upon the journey but still only several miles from the farms, the nearest taverns combine the style of classic pubs with the style of old country stores offering its patrons select teas, tequila, coffee and even cannabis There is a hint of native American wood carvings that are soothing to the senses. These taverns are mostly restrained, quiet business; calm and quiet on a Saturday morning with a
father and daughter occupying a place near the counter; the girl sits squat on his shoulders, both looking at a menu on the wall. Booths mean patrons can dine-in. This is only a small part of un-busy Loudoun County- a stop on the way to a trail off the Potomac.

Continuing the journey from D.C., the road foreshadows the smokey mountains soon to rise by the gently sloping terrain, zoom-zoom! The vehicle rises with the roll of tilled and manicured lands. Moving toward Shepherdstown, many estates and farms are old and give a strong sense of history in the low altitude fields of wild forests and tracts of sun-tinged, green farmland in this part of West Virginia closest to the capitol. Arriving in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, the topography becomes highly varied with deep gullies and some constrained meadows. The village pops up from the earth; it was an excursion but anchored by a university, Shepherdstown was a good place to regroup and review the itinerary.

Leg 2

Opening parcels, making phone calls and verifying group participants were in route, we sit in a Shepherdstown cafe. It is an opportunity to process refined foods before hitting the trail where we switched to high energy, simple carbs like granola and dried fruit.