

Bay Circuit Trail

Season Report 2020



**BE
OUTDOORS**
APPALACHIAN MTN CLUB



Letter from the Programs Supervisor:

The 2020 Season on the Bay Circuit Trail was one to remember. We started the year planning as usual for our SuccessLink Paid Youth Crew, our overnight volunteer teen trail crew program that we run in collaboration with our colleagues from the Youth Opportunities Program at Harold Parker State Forest, Saturday Work Parties, and Custom Crews. Then COVID-19 hit. We continually reworked and revisited our programs to try and see what we could safely accomplish, given the guidance and policies AMC had put into place.

Though the decision was tough, we decided that we would cancel all of our teen trail programming on the BCT for the season. We could not see a way that we would be able to ensure social distancing with the crews, given that they need to take a van to work sites, share tools, and spend countless hours working close to one another. We prioritized safety and decided that the risk to the youth and staff was not worth it. Additionally, we had to cancel our spring work parties, and push our custom programming to later in the season. The bright light for all of this, was that we were still able to hire our seasonal Crew Leaders for the summer. Although the season was not what they anticipated, they were excited for the challenge of taking on a full season of trail work. With one returner, and one newcomer, our small-- but mighty-- crew completed all of the projects that the youth crews and volunteers were going to take on. It was a great opportunity for everyone to work together, get hands-on trail work experience, and spend an entire summer working outside.

As we headed towards the end of the summer, and things had begun to calm down, we were able to run a few Custom Crews, as well as one Saturday Work Party in the fall. The volunteers were outstanding to work with, and everyone was thankful that they were able to safely volunteer and be out on the trails again. If nothing else, COVID-19 has made the Bay Circuit Trail a very popular destination. With travel limitations in place, folks turned to close to home trails to get their outdoor recreation time. It was so wonderful to see so many hikers, bikers, and families out on the trail this season. This year emphasized the importance of local trails and highlighted what a wonderful resource the Bay Circuit Trail can be for the Greater Boston community. I look forward to the future, and hope that we are able to begin offering our traditional programming again in the coming years. This season proved that although a worldwide pandemic can be scary and unpredictable, the outdoors will continually be there, and I am grateful for the work we were able to accomplish this season.

Sincerely,



Christine Viola

Bay Circuit Trail Volunteer Programs Supervisor



Letter from the Projects Coordinator:

I want to start this season report with optimism and hope. The Bay Circuit Trail (BCT) staff had planned on a paid trail crew for teens from the City of Boston, but unfortunately, the program was canceled due to coronavirus related changes. We also had to cancel our week-long volunteer teen crew that we run in collaboration with the Youth Opportunities Program. Fortunately, Christine Viola, BCT Volunteer Programs Supervisor, and I were able to hire our two seasonal trail crew leaders and form a staff crew of four for the summer, thanks to our funders, who agreed to this change despite the disappointing news about the teen programs. Although our office was closed and logistics were difficult, we're thankful we had a crew and there was plenty of work to be done.

I want to thank the adult volunteers who joined us this summer, all of whom were willing and happy to work with the BCT staff and embrace the changes to our programs and protocols in order to keep people safe and healthy. The BCT staff members were surprised at how many organizations and volunteers were happy to come work for the Bay Circuit Trail this summer. Even without our teen volunteers, we still accomplished more than we had planned for. Due to COVID-19, AMC's trails department had few programs running this summer in comparison to the 30 or 40 the department usually offers. A "revised" BCT trails program ran this summer with great success, so hopefully it may serve as a model for future trails programs that AMC may run, whether or not coronavirus policies are still in effect.

This has been my fifth year working for the AMC's summer season, and each year has been drastically different. In 2016, I was part of the first crew of hired seasonal employees for the BCT, we had 4 week-long teen volunteer overnight crews and a few custom crews throughout the summer. During my second year, the BCT had 5 week-long teen volunteer crews and more custom crews. For my third summer with the AMC, I worked in the White Mountains because of staff changes for the BCT, but even still, I was able to work for a week on the BCT, and in total, 3 weeks of teen crews were run and many custom crews. Last year, we had 7 weeks of teen crews and a bunch of custom crews working on the BCT! And in 2020, we had plans for 7 weeks of teen crews, but instead had 8 weeks of a staff-led crew. Every year comes with new challenges and AMC's trails department has proven its flexibility and adaptability. All of our programs have great impact on how participants view the outdoors. It took me a while to understand why digging up the earth and making trails is good for the environment. The programs the trails department run make people more conscious of how easy it is to impact our lands, and they are more likely to follow trails and practice better outdoor ethics. I look forward to the unknown challenges and changes for the trails department, but the BCT trails program will continue to do its best to get people involved and outdoors building and maintaining trails!



Masuzyo Mhango

Bay Circuit Trail Project Coordinator



2020 Bay Circuit Trail Staff



Christine Viola
Bay Circuit Trail
Volunteer Programs Supervisor



Masuzyo Mhango
Bay Circuit Trail
Projects Coordinator



Jane Maloney
Bay Circuit Trail
Crew Leader



Shane Berry
Bay Circuit Trail
Crew Leader



Jane, Christine, Shane, Masuzyo

Bay Circuit Trail 2020 by the numbers

Work Completed in 2020	
Type of Work	Quantity/Length
New Trail	2600 feet
Marking and Blazing	21 miles
Bog Bridges (Dimensional Stringers)	206 feet
Puncheon Boardwalks	175 feet
Blowdowns removed	7 blowdowns
Total Rocks Set	65 rocks
Stepping Stones	8
Rock Water Bar	3
Rock Staircase	1- 4 steps
Rock Check Steps	12 steps

Volunteer Programs	Date	# Vols	#Vols Hrs Total
Athletic Brewing Company Custom Crew	8/10/20	9	44
Institution for Savings Custom Crew	8/24/20	8	48
October Work Party	10/10/20	5	30
Other Volunteers	Various	9	76
	TOTALS	31	198

Staff Crew Major Projects	Date	# of Staff on site	# of Staff Hours
Ashland Boardwalk Construction	6/18/20-6/24/20	4	64
Weston Bog Bridging	6/30/20-7/7/20	4	56
Concord Bog Bridging Project	7/8/20	4	50
Billerica Rock Project	7/13/20-7/23/20	4	190
Southborough Trails New Trail Construction	7/30/20-8/6/20	5	140
Various Other Trail Marking and Basic Maintenance	June-August		114
		TOTAL HOURS	614



Bay Circuit Trail 2020 Project Summaries

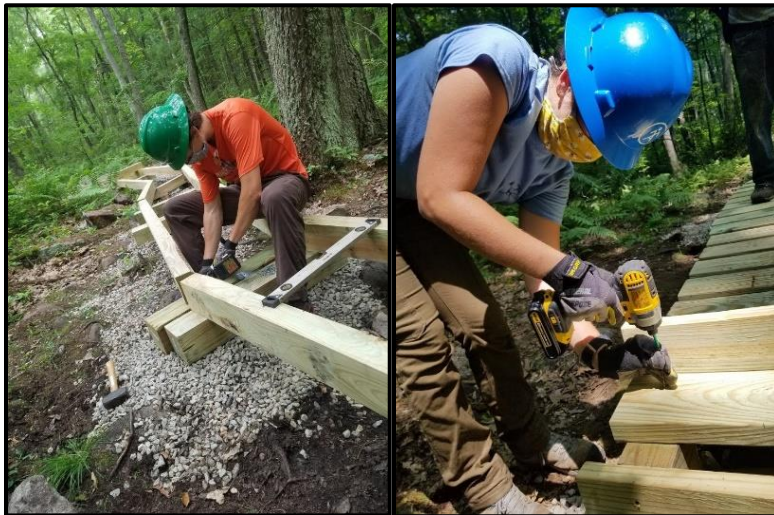
BOARDWALK CONSTRUCTION IN ASHLAND TOWN FOREST

Our first project for 2020 was working in Ashland Town Forest, where we installed 130 feet of new boardwalk through a muddy section of the BCT. As you travel over the new boardwalk, you'll see another boardwalk ahead with a similar style that was installed. That boardwalk was constructed by a local Boy Scout troop. In order to be consistent throughout the forest, the new boardwalk was modeled after that one, following the same design. This was a great project to work on to begin the season, and we are thankful to REI New England for their support and assistance in purchasing materials for this project.

Before:



After:



BOG BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION IN WESTON, MA

In Weston, our crew installed 96 feet of bog bridging in two different locations along the Bay Circuit Trail. Additionally, we removed one blow down, and set 5 rocks before the bridging as a part of tread improvement. We also had the help of local volunteers from Weston Forest and Trails who assisted us on the first day. These bog bridges will help keep hikers on the trail, out of the mud, and help them avoid the sensitive wetlands that surround the trail.

Before:

After:



ROCK WORK EROSION CONTROL IN FOX HILL CONSERVATION LAND, BILLERICA MA

A few years back, we construction a new trail in Billerica that is a part of our future plans for the BCT. We returned to the site this year to construct check steps and water bars using rock found on site. We needed to repair eroded sections located just a bit above the newly constructed trail. Rock was an easy choice for this project, based on its longevity and availability. We used a grip hoist to move larger rocks and rock bars to move the smaller rocks and set the rocks in place with small rock crush. These structures are not expected to need any maintenance for a long time. They are designed to slow the water and catch sediment, thus filling in over time and getting buried. A few years back this trail was rerouted because of poor erosion control, which is holding up well. We aimed to install each rock no more than 6 inches above the grade to allow for bikers to be able to ride over.

Project Site #1

Before:



After:



Project Site #2

Before:



After:



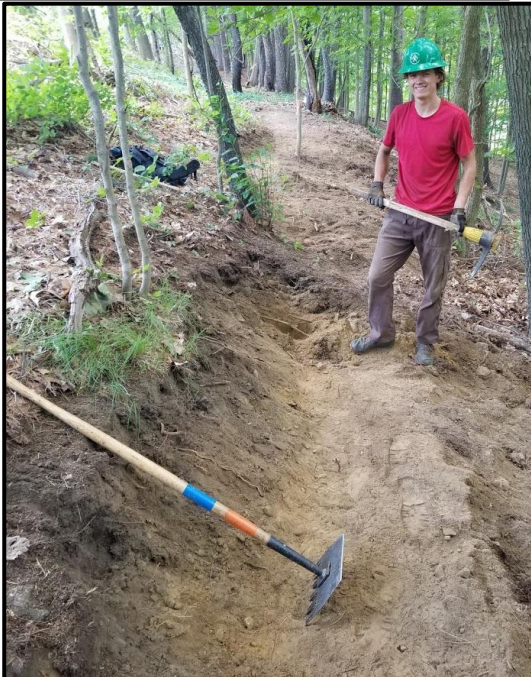
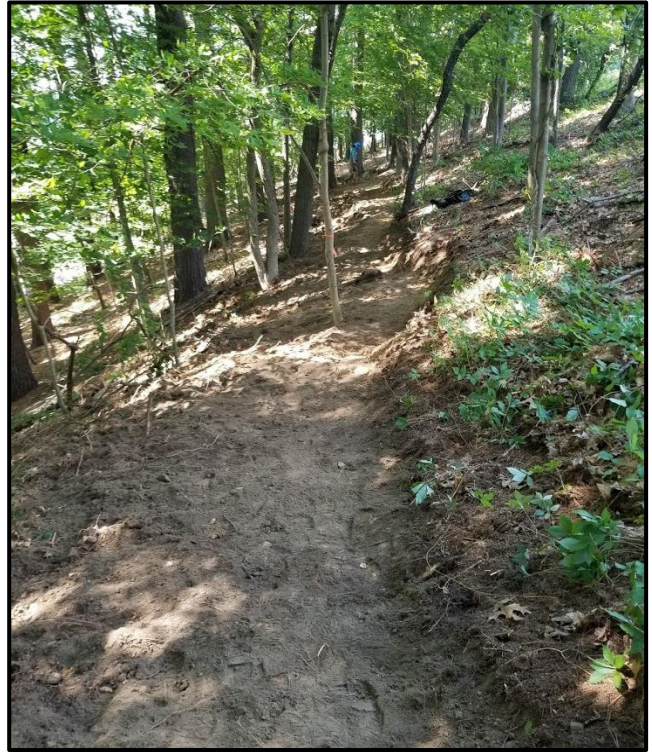
SIDEHILLING TRAIL REROUTE IN SOUTHBOUROUGH MA

Earlier in the spring, a local volunteer from Southborough requested some help constructing a new section of trail that would get the BCT off of a busy road and into a beautifully wooded area. Town members had been planning this reroute for nearly five years, and it was finally ready to be constructed. Southborough Trails requested our assistance with some of the more technical aspects of this reroute, including “side-hilling” along a steep slope, where we cut into the hill and created a smooth walking surface. Additionally, we added a few rock steps to help make one of the turns more gradual and to prevent erosion. The new trail is beautiful and as of September, it had been completed and marked.

Before:



After:



ATHLETIC BREWING CUSTOM CREW IN BORDERLAND STATE PARK

We were excited to get to work with our first Custom Crew in August, Athletic Brewing Company. Athletic Brewing makes non-alcoholic craft beer, low in calories and full of flavor. For this project, we chose a location in Borderland State Park, where the BCT follows the Rockland Street Trail. Over the past few years, we have been slowly extending existing boardwalks through a wet, muddy section of trail. This project was planned for the early part of the season, but had to be postponed until it AMC had additional safety protocols in place due to the global pandemic. We were so thankful for the help of the Athletic Brewing volunteers, as they had no problem carrying heavy lumber on hot day. They were eager and helpful and happy to work with BCT staff. As the first volunteer crew of the season, this was very successful. The BCT is thankful to Athletic Brewing for all of their help and support!

Before:



After:



CUSTOM CREW EROSION CONTROL ROCK WORK IN ROWLEY MA

In 2019, our youth crew spent several weeks constructing a new trail to reroute an existing unsustainable trail on the BCT in Rowley. After a year, the trail was in good shape, apart from a couple of wet sections, so when the Institution for Savings Bank approached us asking to do a volunteer work day on the BCT, we had them come to Prospect Hill to help fix the muddy section of trail by installing three stepping stones and a rock water bar. We also dug out drainage dips and replaced loose soil with small rocks and gravel. 2020 marked the second year the Institution for Savings employees did a Custom Crew with AMC, and we are always excited for this day, as they are an enthusiastic group to work with. Additionally, IFS donated two bags of work gloves to the BCT program, which we are so thankful for!

Before:



After:



FINAL THOUGHTS:

Throughout the season, the BCT Staff Crew also worked on various other projects including trail marking, clearing blowdowns, monitoring trail, basic maintenance, axe training, and other duties as needed. We also had a day of Leave No Trace, plenty of days of tool maintenance, and even took some time at the end of the season to spruce up our tool trailer by painting the BCT and AMC logos on it. Although this season was different than what we had expected, the staff crew was able to get so much accomplished, while also staying safe throughout the season.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our amazing project partners:



AMC's BCT Volunteer Program would like to thank the following funders for supporting us in 2020:

REI New England for supporting the Ashland Boardwalk project, youth crew and other program needs.

Arcadia Charitable Trust for its 3-year challenge grant (2019-2021) to expand preservation and stewardship efforts on the BCT and for enabling us to hire the two summer trail crew leaders to help our staff, despite the paid youth crew program being canceled. This approved change to our 2020 program made a world of difference in terms of the amount of work and types of projects we were able to complete along the trail, despite the challenges presented by COVID-19.

The Manton Foundation for its 3-year grant to match to the Arcadia Charitable Trust's challenge grant and for enabling us to hire the two summer trail crew leaders to help our staff, despite the paid youth crew program being canceled.

We would also like to thank the **JMR Barker Foundation** for its \$300,000 challenge grant, awarded to AMC in 2013-2014, for use over multiple years for Bay Circuit Trail operating and programs support.

We are also grateful for the contributions we received from individual donors for the Bay Circuit Trail in 2020.

Thank you to all those who support and participate in AMC's volunteer programs and help make the Bay Circuit Trail an outstanding resource for outdoor engagement!

