

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2003

CONTACT: Rob Burbank, Public Affairs Director
Appalachian Mountain Club
Phone: (603) 466-2721, ext. 195
rburbank@amcinfo.org

AMC Supports Efforts to Reduce Air Pollution as Member of Carbon Coalition

CONCORD, N.H. – On April 21, the Appalachian Mountain Club lent its strong support to a new campaign to reduce air pollution as a member of the Carbon Coalition, a citizen-based effort to combat global warming.

Since the mid-1980s, the AMC has conducted a wide range of scientific research on regional air quality. Efforts have included monitoring of acid precipitation, ozone smog, haze, and soot in various locations throughout the Northeast. The AMC monitors air quality and cloud water acidity on Mt. Washington, among other efforts.

The AMC joined other members of the Carbon Coalition April 21 to launch a new, grassroots effort to fight global warming.

"We recognize the environmental threats posed by carbon dioxide pollution, one of the byproducts caused by the burning of fossil fuels, and we have joined with other members of the Carbon Coalition to urge policy-makers to commit to bringing about real reductions in carbon dioxide emissions," said AMC Deputy Director Walter Graff.

The AMC will work to address carbon dioxide pollution through its research, education and conservation efforts, Graff said.

AMC staff scientists are monitoring the mountain environment in an effort to detect ecological changes that may be attributable to climate change. In addition, the organization is slated to launch a new program called Mountain Watch, a citizen-based environmental monitoring program that focuses on recording the impacts of air pollution on -- and climate change within -- mountain ecosystems.

"AMC's Mountain Watch program engages people directly in the issues of climate change on a personal level by involving them in actual monitoring activities, such as tracking the dates when certain alpine flowers bloom from year to year, or monitoring ground-level ozone concentrations," Graff said.

The AMC's research in the White Mountains has documented degraded air quality for many years. Chemical analyses of rain and cloud water on Mt. Washington have detected elevated levels of sulfur compounds, primarily attributed to regional, industrial sources of fossil-fuel combustion, as well as elevated levels of nitric acids, primarily attributed to regional automobile emissions.

The AMC has also conducted scientific research on the effects of air pollution on hiker health and the loss of scenic views to haze.

More information on the AMC's air-quality research is available on the Web at <http://www.outdoors.org/research/airwater/>.

Founded in 1876, the non-profit Appalachian Mountain Club is the oldest conservation and recreation organization in the United States. Its 90,000 members promote the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers and trails of the Appalachian region.

###