

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Locals, Visitors Help AMC Celebrate Highland Center Grand Opening**

BRETTON WOODS, N.H. – Hundreds of mountain lovers of all types helped the Appalachian Mountain Club celebrate the grand opening of the new Highland Center at Crawford Notch on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 10 and 11.

Nestled in the heart of the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the Highland Center is an environmental education center and lodge that offers world-class views, all-inclusive outdoor adventures for families and individuals, meeting space and lodging for groups, and educational opportunities for children and adults alike.

The Highland Center is designed to provide opportunities for people to connect with the outdoors in meaningful ways, so they can explore, enjoy, learn about, and care for the outdoors, AMC representatives said. The Highland Center is open to all, AMC members and nonmembers alike.

The weekend's activities included a grand opening ceremony with comments by elected officials, a local school teacher, AMC representatives, and world-renowned mountain explorers, Brad and Barbara Washburn.

The grand opening served as an official unveiling of the new exhibit of Brad Washburn's breathtaking mountain photographs on display in Thayer Hall at the Highland Center. The exhibition was organized by Tony Deceanas of Panopticon Gallery, and includes recordings of the Washburns reflecting on the photos in the exhibit.

### **Sen. Gregg receives AMC Conservation Champion Award**

As part of the celebration, the AMC presented U.S. Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH) with its first-ever Conservation Champion Award, in recognition of his long-term leadership in the conservation of significant lands, rivers, and natural resources in New Hampshire and the region.

AMC Executive Director Andrew J. Falender thanked Sen. Gregg for his "untiring efforts as a true steward of this country's special outdoor places."

Citing Gregg's leadership on such conservation initiatives as Forest Legacy, the Trailhead Protection Program, the Rivers Management Protection Program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund, among others, AMC Deputy Director Walter Graff said Gregg has played a critical role in conservation throughout his career, as an executive councilor, a U.S. congressman, New Hampshire's governor, and now, as New Hampshire's senior U.S. senator.

“From Great Bay to the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters, from Kimball Pond to the Pond of Safety, Senator Gregg has been there when the important natural resources of New Hampshire and the Northern Forest needed a champion,” said Graff.

Sen. Gregg told the assembled crowd he was honored to receive the award, and he congratulated the AMC on the opening of the Highland Center. “The new Highland Center is an absolutely tremendous facility and will provide an enormous benefit to people visiting Crawford Notch and the White Mountain National Forest,” Gregg said in a statement. “I have been fortunate to work closely with the AMC for years because we share an understanding of the importance of conservation and environmental education. AMC has a proven record of striving to inform and educate people throughout the region on the importance of conservation, science, research and outdoors information, and this center signals the beginning of a new phase of educational opportunities being provided by AMC.”

### **Panel Discussion, Open House Featured**

Grand opening events included a panel discussion on the creation and mission of the Highland Center by panelists Peter Dunnigan of MacMillin Company of Keene, N.H., the construction management firm for the project; AMC Outdoor Program Centers Director Paul Cunha, who directed the project for AMC; Craig Halvorson of Halvorson Design Group, the project’s landscape design firm; Dennis Carlone of Carlone Dick LaFleche, the project’s architects; and AMC Education Director Pam Hess.

U.S. Congressman Jeb Bradley (R-NH) also joined the celebration on Friday, fresh from a hike up a nearby 4,000-foot peak, his 46<sup>th</sup> 4,000-footer. Rep. Bradley is working toward completion of the AMC’s White Mountain Four-Thousand Footer Club list, and has only two more climbs to go to have attained the summits of all 48 mountains on the list. Citing AMC’s long history of public service in New Hampshire, Congressman Bradley congratulated the organization on the opening of the Highland Center.

Saturday, Oct. 11, featured a Highland Center Open House, including guided tours of the center and its environmentally sensitive design features; a demonstration of trail maintenance techniques; information and displays on AMC’s various educational programs, which include A Mountain Classroom, the Adventure and Discovery Series, and Teen Wilderness Adventures; the opportunity to talk with AMC volunteers and staff and learn about AMC’s mapping program; the Conservation Action Network at [www.outdoors.org](http://www.outdoors.org); Businesses for the Northern Forest; AMC’s scientific research on air quality and forest ecology; trail programs; volunteer opportunities; AMC books; AMC huts; search and rescue; and AMC’s new Leadership Training Institute.

Sponsors of the Highland Center Grand Opening included: L.L. Bean, Dasani, Citizens Bank, Backbone Media L.L.C., Backpacker's Pantry, Clif Bar, Halvorson Design Company, NorthCenter Food Service, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Schwartz Communications, Shaklee, and radio station 93.5 FM WMWV of Conway.

For more information about the Highland Center, visit [www.outdoors.org/highland](http://www.outdoors.org/highland). For reservations, call (603) 466-2727.

Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club is the oldest conservation and recreation organization in the United States. With more than 90,000 members in the Northeast and beyond, the nonprofit AMC promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers and trails of the Appalachian region.

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