

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Representatives Learn About AMC's New Hampshire Programs

Piscataquis County officials, educators, and businesspeople learned about the programs and destinations managed by the Appalachian Mountain Club in northern New Hampshire and its work with local communities during an orientation tour of the club's visitor center in Pinkham Notch and its new lodge and learning center, the Highland Center at Crawford Notch, March 3-4. AMC has been working with community leaders in the county on planning for AMC's Maine Woods Initiative.

The AMC launched the Initiative in December as a strategy for land conservation that integrates habitat protection, recreation, education, and sustainable forestry in Maine's 100-Mile Wilderness region.

As an initial phase of the initiative, the AMC purchased a 37,000-acre parcel, known as the Katahdin Iron Works tract, from International Paper. Also in 2003, the club purchased Little Lyford Pond Camps near Greenville, and is continuing to manage the property as a traditional sporting camp, which offers such activities as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, paddling, and fly-fishing.

"Through our work at Little Lyford Pond Camps and on the KI property, I've had a chance to meet many folks from throughout the county who have expressed an interest in AMC's work in Maine," said AMC Project Manager Gerry Whiting. "We thought it would be a good idea to give them a first-hand look at AMC's programs and facilities in New Hampshire, where the club has been active for more than 125 years," he said.

The group visited the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center and Joe Dodge Lodge in Pinkham Notch, where the AMC established a camp in 1925. The visitor center is the busiest in the White Mountain National Forest, and AMC provides hiking information, trip-planning assistance, educational programs, and meals and lodging in this location.

The group also visited the Highland Center at Crawford Notch. Opened last fall, it is the AMC's newest destination for adventure, learning, and lodging in the White Mountains.

During the visit, county representatives learned about AMC's work in a number of areas, including educational programming, trail maintenance, scientific research, outdoor safety, and conservation-and-recreation-based economic development. A 1995 economic study

showed that visitors to AMC's overnight and day destinations in New Hampshire's White Mountains provided a positive direct and indirect statewide economic impact of approximately \$62.8 million. The study also found that more than 900 jobs in the White Mountains were directly or indirectly supported by AMC visitors. More recently, AMC worked closely with New Hampshire- and New England-based contractors, vendors and suppliers in the creation of the Highland Center.

"This was a great opportunity to get to know many of our new neighbors in Piscataquis County," said AMC Deputy Director Walter Graff. "I think it helped people gain a more comprehensive understanding of the AMC, and it helped us gain a better sense of how AMC can be a supportive and active member of the Piscataquis County community," Graff said.

Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club is the oldest conservation and recreation organization in the United States. With more than 91,000 members in the Northeast and beyond, including 3300 members in Maine, the nonprofit AMC promotes the protection, enjoyment, and wise use of the mountains, rivers and trails of the Appalachian region.

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