

Maine Conservation Connection

Maine Conservation Corps



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MCC is Getting Back to its Roots for Anniversary



CCC Members in Acton, Maine

The Civilian Conservation Corps was a Depression-era work-relief program instituted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It sent unemployed young men to various camps throughout the country to perform conservation work such as trail and road building, forest fire protection, and invasive species control. Conservation Corps all over the country are the descendants of this pioneering program. This year marks the Civilian Conservation Corps' 80th Anniversary.

It's also the MCC's 30th anniversary, and the 20th anniversary of the AmeriCorps National Service Program. It's quite a trifecta, and we are planning lots of great events this season to celebrate, among them an afternoon of storytelling and sharing with some of the men who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps, all those years ago. We are VERY excited about hearing from some of the men who were there!

There were more than 25 CCC camps located throughout the state of Maine. We anticipate MCC field teams to be serving in many of those same locations over the course of the summer. Stay tuned for more details about special events and unique educational and volunteer opportunities!

MCC Welcomes 2013 Senior Team Leaders

The MCC recently welcomed **Elise Giasson, Michelle DiMeglio, and Lindsey May** as Senior Team Leaders for the 2013 season. They bring a combined 10 years of experience with the MCC to their new positions.

Giasson, a native of Auburn, Maine, first began her journey with the Maine Conservation Corps in 2009, after realizing the



Elise Giasson, Michelle DiMeglio, and Lindsey May

immense joy she got from physical labor and life in the outdoors. She served two terms as a Team Member, moving up to an Assistant Team Leader in the fall of 2010. In 2011 Elise attended MCC's Trail Training Academy and served as a Team Leader for both seasons; working in such beautiful locations as Grafton Notch State Park, Androscoggin Riverlands, and Tunk Mountain, to name a few. Last year Elise had her first experience as a Senior Team Leader, a position which she quickly grew to love because of the strong focus on team dynamics and all the opportunities for teaching new members. She is very excited to be back for another term, and can't wait to kick off the summer season!

May, a Wisconsin native, spent her first summer in Maine as a Field Team Member with MCC in 2006. After three months of building stone steps on the Appalachian Trail, she had no other choice but to hike the whole thing. After thousands of miles on the AT and PCT, Lindsey returned to Maine for many more seasons of trail work with the MCC. Her love of trail work continues to grow, and she is looking forward to another great season with the Maine Conservation Corps. She is a graduate of the MCC's 2011 Trail Training Academy, and served as a Team Leader in 2011 and 2012.

DiMeglio, a native of the Philadelphia area, is thrilled to be returning for her third year with MCC. She first came to Maine in 2010 for the Trail Training Program, and returned in 2011 as a Team Leader and Senior Team Leader. She has also worked for the Student Conservation Association and the Southwest Conservation Corps on trails throughout the country, including the Pacific Crest Trail in California, the Sawtooth Mountains in Idaho, and locations throughout Arizona and New Mexico. Previously an environmental engineer living the cubicle life, she is happy to be able to play in the dirt for a living as a trailworker in the beautiful Maine woods.

MCC Staff Spotlight: Brenda Webber



Hi I'm Brenda Webber and I have been the administrative recruitment associate with MCC since July of 2001!

I live with three cats that are very entertaining; have two great daughters that I am very proud of, a son-in-law that is the best and seven grandkids that are fantastic and keep me on my toes!

I love what I do at MCC and it sure does keep me busy. One of the best

parts of my job is how great it is receiving an applicant's application and the process of getting it to the review, interview and offer stage and then they walk through the MCC doors on that first day. It's great seeing the difference in all the MCC members from their first day, not knowing what to expect and unsure of themselves, seeing their new found confidence in a job well done; and all the new members that are complete strangers to each other, seeing the friendships forming right away, and then their last day with MCC - their tears on saying goodbye to all their new forever friends that served and lived with them through thick and thin. It's great knowing I had a hand in making all this happen and how this terrific program benefited so much from the members, the partners, the MCC, and the State of Maine.

We are a terrific program and I look forward to many more years of doing my part in making this program a success!

Environmental Educator Program Coordinator Attends Conference in D.C.

Bryan Kalleberg, the MCC's Environmental Educator/Environmental Steward/Veteran Community Leader Program Coordinator, recently attended a national Corps Network conference in Washington, D.C. The Corps Network is the voice of the nation's 158 Service & Conservation Corps.

The theme of the 2012 National Conference was "*C3: Corps, Community, Change*" and it was a timely reminder of how our AmeriCorps Program strengthens communities, restores the environment, and transforms lives.

While at the conference, Kalleberg attended several workshops, including “Veterans: Continuing to Serve on the Home front,” and “How to Get Your Corps Involved in Disaster Relief,” Kalleberg also took advantage of networking opportunities.

The take away message – it’s all about developing relationships.

National Service Day at the Capitol

The MCC joined fellow Maine AmeriCorps programs and the Maine Commission for Community Service for a day of legislative outreach in the Hall of Flags on March 6. The reaction from the legislators was positive and supportive, and most of them already had some familiarity with the MCC. Many of the legislators talked of their own love of the outdoors and expressed appreciation for the work we do. One was even a past corps member who served in a youth corps with the Maine Forest Service.



MCC Trail Trainer Savannah Steele speaks to a legislator

The Events of the 2013 Boston Marathon as Experienced by an MCC Alumnus

**By Steve Niles, AmeriCorps Programs Manager
Goodwill Industries of Northern New England**

After running the race with my friend Steve Whalen from Mt. Desert Island, we crossed the finish line around 1:40pm. It had been a beautiful day traipsing through Eastern Massachusetts on our way to downtown Boston. We were continually cheered on by thousands of families who lined the race route from Hopkinton to the finish line in Boston. Once past the finish line it took us quite a while to walk through the food, drink, medal and foil blanket gauntlet. Hundreds of volunteers were amassed to provide us these essential items as we were all stretched thin by the effort to run 26 miles (the medals of course were a frivolity!). We then got our gear bags from the buses that had been at the starting line and got our spare clothes on. Then we headed over to the family meeting area to find our families near the corner of Clarendon St. and St. James St. We got to the family meeting area at 2:10pm and didn’t see them. We waited for a good while and then once they all arrived we visited for ten minutes or so and waited for my father and his partner to arrive. Since it was friends and family of both Steve and myself we had 12 or 13 folks in the group now. It must have been about 2:45 when we started off toward our friends place in Cambridge where we were staying.

We were around 2 blocks away from the bomb site when the explosions happened. If you know Boston- we were in the intersection at the corner of Clarendon and St. James. One block over and one block down from the first explosion. That one was very loud. Stopped everyone in their tracks where we were. We had a good size clot of our friends and family around and kind of lost some of them in the panic/franticness that ensued. We couldn't tell what made the deafening boom- but all the adults were on high alert/danger mode. My wife Holly and I quickly looked for our kids and realized we did not know where our youngest son Daniel (8) was. We found him with our 13 year old son, Caleb and our friend, Michael- but that made us lose the back of our group. We quickly called or texted them and confirmed that we would all be fine going our separate ways. We were with our friend Michael who is from Boston and he lead us on a route away from the marathon scene – trying to get to the T (subway) to get back to his place in Cambridge. But the T was shut down already. Big metal grates across the entrance. And Michael was starting to get texts and calls from friends who knew he was going to be at the Marathon with us. We still did not know what was going on- but sirens were everywhere and Michael had heard that there was an explosion by the finish line and a bunch of people were hurt. Michael took us through a series of buildings and indoor malls to get from the Back Bay Station/Copley Plaza area to the other side of the Convention Center near the corner of Mass Ave and Boylston St.

Once back out on the street we would occasionally see some people in shock or crying- but it was still pretty hazy on how bad the situation was. Then as we walked down Mass Ave we crossed over the green space at the corner of Comm Ave and Mass Ave and noticed that the police had blocked off the marathon course and thousands of runners were backed up behind the police line trying to figure out what to do. Probably starting to get cold- because even though it was a decent day out (50's and windy) those people were spent and had barely any clothes on. When I had gotten done with my run, I got cold right away and even after I put many layers back on it took me a while to get warm again.

Since the T was shut down it was a two and a half mile slog back to Michaels place in Cambridge. As we were walking Holly was getting texts and calls from friends and family who knew we were there and had heard about the madness. We got more tidbits of info from them and found out that lots of people were hurt and folks had died. The kids were asking questions occasionally and were clearly concerned, but we really did not have many good answers. We told them what we knew. Once we got back to Cambridge we let Daniel (age 8) watch a video in the other room and the rest of us got numb watching the TV coverage.

Quite a surreal experience. Scariest of all is that all our friends and family (party of ~12) were watching the race only a block from where the 2nd bomb went off. After they were done watching the race they walked within a few feet of where the second bomb eventually detonated on their way to find Steve and me after the race. It was only timing that prevented them from being obliterated. I hope they catch the fiends who turned such an awesomely powerful community event into a fearful frenzy for thousands.

AmeriCorps Week

In celebration of National AmeriCorps Week, the MCC Trail Trainers and Veteran Community Leaders participated in a service project at Crescent Beach State Park, where they helped the park staff with storm debris clean-up and recovery. Also, MCC members and staff traveled to Portland to participate in a recognition event put on by the REAL School. Several other AmeriCorps programs participated but the MCC made a big splash with over a dozen members in attendance. It was a great opportunity to learn about other AmeriCorps programs in Maine and meet service-oriented people.

Maine AmeriCorps Member Conference

MCC Trail Trainers, Veteran Community Leaders, and staff members attended the Maine AmeriCorps Member Conference at Thomas College in Waterville, ME on March 27th. The keynote speaker was Bill Basl, Director of AmeriCorps. In addition, there were fifteen workshops that members could choose from, as well as networking opportunities at lunchtime and prior to the conference's start.

After the conference, Bill Basl met with Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Division of Parks and Public Lands Director Will Harris and Planning Chief Katherine Eickenberg, Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation Mick Rogers, and MCC Director Jo Orlando. They were joined by Maryalice Crofton, Executive Director of the Maine Commission for Community Service.

MCC Alumni Spotlight

Ruth Ann Keister

For the last two summers I have worked at Blueberry Cove Camp, sister camp to Tanglewood Camp in Lincolnville, both non-profit camps. I am currently at the Good Tern Co-op, a non-profit organization in Rockland, ME.

I am also working on starting my own non-profit organization called. Freeing Maine's Future! The focus of the organization is helping free students in collage debt who are living and working in the mid-coast area in Maine. It's a slow start getting board members, so far there are only two of us so it's going slower than I'd like it to.

What initially drew you to the MCC? Deferring my college loans while doing something for the better good was one thing that attracted me to the MCC. Honestly though, this was a job that would help me become a well-rounded person, propel me towards the top of job applicant lists and help me realize that I could do more for people.

What was your favorite part about serving with the MCC? I liked working amongst the mountains, lakes and streams, but most of all I like working with volunteers. The most memorable group of volunteers I worked with was group of teenage girls from Canada. They worked their butts off to make an amazing camp site for the AT along Flagstaff Lake. They finished the site and were able to be the first ones to camp at the campsite they had built with their own hands. I never saw such a bunch of exhausted, but happy teens.

How did your time with the MCC affect your career/life path? What advice do you have for current/future MCC members? I wish I had known about MCC and/or Americorps before I went to college. I might not be in so much debt. I would encourage any student to go into the MCC or other Conservation Corps. The student will most likely receive a more fulfilling life experience then they will at college. Furthermore they won't put themselves in debt joining a CC, it's not as long as a commitment as college, students receive cash credit towards college if they desire and it makes them a more marketable person in the job field.

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