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Huts as Classrooms

*A memoir by two who inhabited the puckerbrush**

John B. Nutter and W. Kent Olson

In memory of Slim and Calista Harris, and Jim Hamilton



*Puckerbrush is an mountain slang word referring to the scrub bushes just below treeline in the mountains.

THE DEVELOPERS OF THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB HUTS did not expect to teach people about mountain safety and nature. They envisioned a chain of hostels. The developers built facilities that satisfied a purely recreational mission: providing warm shelter and, later, hearty meals for hikers. In time, caretakers were replaced by crews that offered hospitality, cooked, cleaned, and packed supplies.

Eventually, the workers' mission expanded. They became teachers, explaining to those guests about the beautiful, fragile environment of the mountains. We worked in the huts and for the AMC during those years of the expanding educational mission. This memoir traces the signs, subtle at first, of this expanding approach.

Joe Dodge, the first full-time huts manager (from 1928 through 1959), had pushed for the hut system. He wanted guests to enjoy "a healthful and inexpensive vacation on the ridges of New England." As White Mountain visitation increased, another objective evolved: teach users about the mountain environment so that they would know and be inspired to protect it. This purpose would join the AMC's central mission, first in the White Mountains, later throughout the Northeast.

We don't know exactly why hut crews¹ started educational programs for their guests, but they probably were a formal answer to questions. Early programs stressed mountain safety and the flowers of the Presidential Range's alpine zone.

Safety Above All

Dodge's successors, George Hamilton (1959–1966) and Bruce Sloat (1966–1970), promoted backcountry leadership and safety. In 1958, Pinkham Notch Camp (as it was called then) and the huts began hosting the AMC Mountain Leadership Workshop, a multiday learning trek taught largely by volunteers. Even AMC Executive Director Fran Belcher participated. Hamilton

¹ Crews in the huts have spelled their job title "cree" since that time. At first, the spelling was casual. Ken Olson printed "cree" on T-shirts and in memos, which could have enculturated the spelling.

At left, in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, Appalachian Mountain Club huts are also classrooms. Ryan McElroy, naturalist at Lakes of the Clouds, shows guests a globe as he describes plate tectonics, July 9, 2014. CHRISTINE WOODSIDE



Former AMC Executive Director Fran Belcher, shown on a hike during his tenure, attended the first AMC Mountain Leadership Workshop in 1958, where he and the others heard, “Democracy ends at the trailhead.” AMC LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

emphasized group safety, cheerily telling his charges, “Democracy ends at the trailhead.”

Although the huts, like Pinkham, were a staging area critical to workshop logistics, the croos did not write lessons. They provided bunks, plenty of hot food, and an equally welcome ingredient, “Mountain Hospitality for All,” the more-or-less official slogan of the huts.

Sloat had given lectures on weather at Lakes of the Clouds Hut when he worked summers at the Mount Washington Observatory on the

summit. Later, as huts manager, he showed a 16-millimeter black-and-white film about mountain safety, which some AMC members had shot using U.S. Forest Service equipment.

Beginning in the early 1970s, the Pinkham safety program advanced to color films that included *Hypothermia: Killer of the Unprepared*. In one scene, a man undressed a shivering young woman to warm her with his body heat. The film was not racy by today’s measure, but it was edgy for its era, especially when soggy undergarments came flying from the tent.²

The quaint movies were archetypes of early AMC education programs. The content and delivery of the educational message are more sophisticated today.

Mountain Flowers

Each June starting in the early 1960s, AMC sponsored its alpine flower tour, taking in Bigelow Lawn, Boott Spur, Alpine Garden, and sites around Lakes of the Clouds. The tundra plants included endemics, among them the dwarf mountain cinquefoil (*Potentilla robbinsiana*), which grows nowhere else in

² And when the newly hyperthermic woman told her savior, “Nothing wrong with your nerve.”

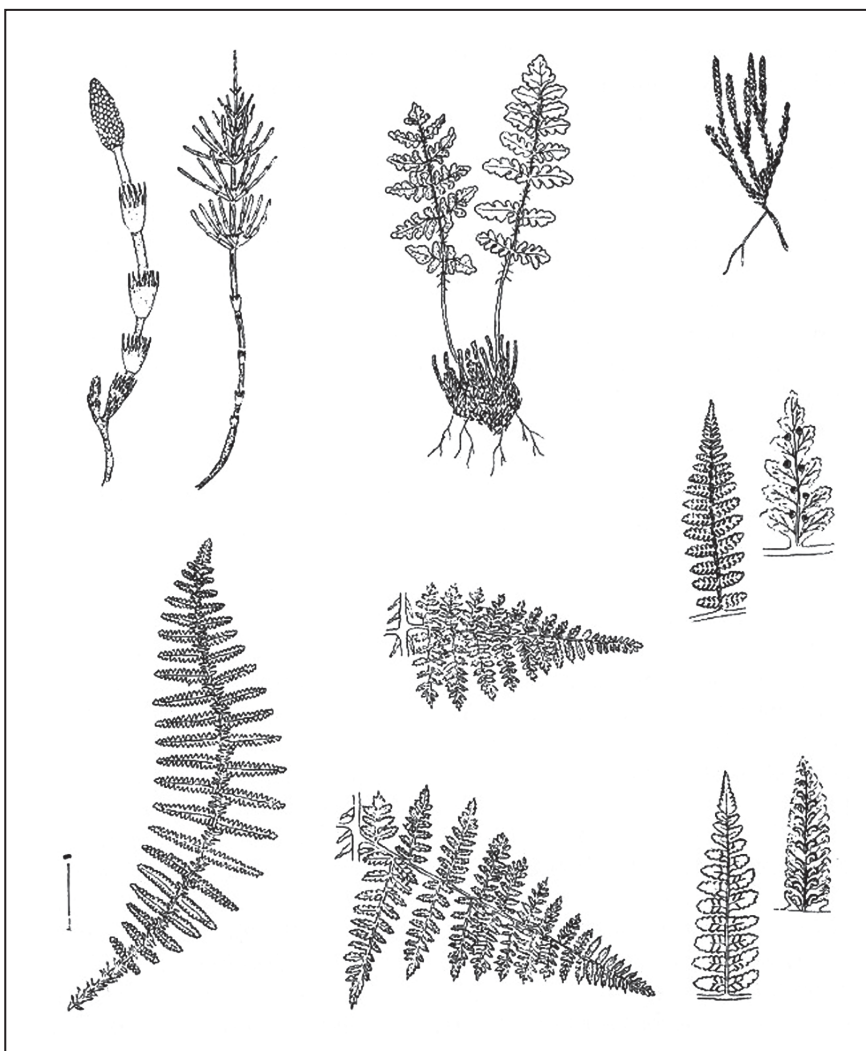


Stuart "Slim" Harris and Calista "Cal" Harris with their children, Sally and Kim, at Zealand in the summer of 1945, when the family crewed the hut. AMC LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

the world. This wondrous garden of miniatures lies in a fragile zone. Tour leaders promoted a tread-lightly approach to the alpine ecosystem.

Stuart "Slim" Harris, a 1927 hutman at Lakes of the Clouds, was a professor of botany at Boston University and contributed mountain flora articles to *Appalachia*. He and his wife, Calista, ran Zealand Falls Hut in 1945. In the 1960s, they became part-time teachers-in-residence at Lakes, conducting walks for guests during the vibrant June bloom and exposing many hutmen to tundra botany for the first time. Inspired by the Harrises, the Wes Tiffney family—four Ph.D. botanists—also served as volunteer naturalists.

The AMC published *Mountain Flowers of New England* in 1964. Slim Harris wrote the text and did the drawings, using his *Appalachia* articles as a foundation. Miriam Underhill (a climber who worked on and edited the



Slim Harri's illustrations from AMC Field Guide to Mountain Flowers of New England, the 1977 edition. AMC LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

journal for several years), supplied the color plates. Botanist Jean Langenheim and science teacher Fred Steele contributed. The guide contained a dichotomous key to summer flora. A key to fall plants by Christine Johnson was added in the 1977 edition. Walter Graff, then the Pinkham programs director, assisted. The book was a landmark in club history, opening the world of alpine flowers to thousands of knowledge seekers.

The Humbling Buttercup

Mountain Flowers came in handy for Warren Brodhead, a USFS range patrolman. At Madison Spring Hut, he talked with a man who had observed the pretty yellow flowers outside, at 4,800 feet.

“Are they buttercups?” the man said. Brodhead looked authoritative in his uniform.

“Why, no,” Brodhead said, “they’re mountain avens, a special White Mountain alpine species.”

An older man in blue bib overalls was listening. He had gray-white hair, wore steel rimmed glasses, and held a pipe in his fist.

“Nope,” he interjected softly, “those are buttercups.” He drew on the pipe.

Brodhead wanted to handle this politely. “Actually, sir, they’re mountain avens, *Geum peckii*,” he said, trying to be deferential. He held up the hut copy of *Mountain Flowers*, pointing at it. “It says so right here in this book.”

Another draw on the pipe. The man exhaled a fragrant cloud and smiled. “Well,” he said, “I wrote the book.”

That’s how Warren Brodhead met Slim Harris. And that was how Brodhead learned that AMC pack burrows—the “donks”—ate buttercups in the valley and eliminated them at Madison. There they happily grew.

The Learning Curve

We tell the buttercup story with humility because in our day Lakes hutmen exhibited deplorable ignorance about the mountain environment. Out of respect for the Harrises, we had some appreciation for the alpine plants and a parochial interest in preserving the rare cinquefoil. But we had little concern for other aspects of the alpine ecosystem.

Following hut system protocol, we washed garbage cans in the Ammonoosuc River where it flowed from the lakes, and we tossed cans and glass into gaboons (as dump pits of that era were called) on the Ammonoosuc Ravine headwall. Occasionally we roughhoused atop the breakable frost terraces of Monroe Flats. Decades later the USFS and AMC rock-walled Monroe col’s most sensitive alpine habitats and placed warning signs to keep callow people like us from temptation. Today’s hut croos, fortunately, are enlightened guardians of the tundra ecosystem, especially the local flora.

That we two ended up as official nonprofit protectors of mountain environments was ironic. But, chastened, we had reformed. It might seem unusual to compare the 1964 publication of *Mountain Flowers* with the

1962 publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (Houghton Mifflin). We argue that both books, published early in a turbulent decade, significantly altered the ways in which AMC members and other readers thought about environmental issues.

Naturalizing the Huts

Sloat hired Brian Fowler in 1967 to add geology to the alpine flower tours. Sloat introduced the program at other huts the next summer, renaming it naturalist-in-residence. Assisted by his wife, Betsy, Fowler organized a faculty that included Lakes flower walk leaders.

Sloat believed the system must practice its education ideals. Huts as physical entities should honor the natural systems on which they depended. He brought facilities to higher ecological standards, improving water systems, developing sounder waste removal, setting up cyclical maintenance, and



The authors John Nutter, standing at right, and Ken Olson, to the left of Nutter, did not envision teaching about the fragile mountains when they first served on the Lakes of the Clouds Hut crew in 1964 with (seated, left to right) Rocky Morrill, Stan Cutter, Dal Brodhead, and (standing, from left) David Lewis and Jed Davis. COURTESY OF

JOHN NUTTER

building or renovating huts in ways sensitive to mountain soils, plants, and streams.

Increasingly, AMC was living what it taught. Goodbye, gaboons!

Teaching on the Ridges and in the Huts

Traditionally perceived as a hiking club and operator of huts, trails, and shelters, the AMC shifted emphasis in the 1970s. No leader in club history worked harder to move it toward public service through education than did Tom Deans, a former Greenleaf hutmaster who succeeded Belcher as AMC executive director.

White Mountain visitation was reported to have increased dramatically following Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas's 1961 *National Geographic* article, "The Friendly Huts of the White Mountains." The system's education expansion of a decade later happened as outdoor interest exploded nationwide. To address the 1970s influx, the USFS and AMC managed visitation more intensively. For example, we experimented by putting a roving hutman in the mountains for a summer.

The AMC hired us both—Nutter as education director, Olson as AMC hut system manager—on January 1, 1971. Olson hired Garth Quillia as the AMC's first ridge-runner in 1972. The club patterned the job on USFS range patrolmen including Bob McIntosh, Casey Hodgdon, and Warren Brodhead. Quillia traveled the trails, mostly in the Presidential Range, as an informal mountain safety officer and AMC ambassador. He gave hikers advice by day and helped hut croos by night.

The physical huts became especially important in the diffusion of knowledge via visitor contact. The number of facilities, their locations along the Appalachian Trail, and their patronage—which Sloat estimated in the 1960s at 200,000 day visits and 40,000 overnights annually—made the huts and Pinkham the logical places for AMC's growing educational programming, especially for its messages about the backcountry.

Deans reorganized the classic Pinkham setup. Volunteers Tim Saunders, Bill King, Nelson Gifford, Sandy Saunders, and others guided his structuring of the new North Country System.³ Deans transformed a simple lodging complex and huts business headquarters into AMC's formal center of public service—comprising programs in huts, trails, shelters, Saco River

³ As it was informally known. Official name: Northern New England Regional Office, a.k.a. NNERO. Critics said NNERO fizzled.

campgrounds, education, research, planning, conservation policy, and USFS relations. The initial plan, later dropped, called for Pinkham to oversee even some AMC camps, such as Echo Lake and Three Mile Island.

All of us made a willing, collegial team under Deans's leadership. We senior staff were in our mid-20s and inexperienced as managers. Deans entrusted us with a span of AMC authorities and responsibilities never before consolidated at Pinkham. We tried to earn the implied honor he had bestowed. Our jobs were to inform and expand on his vision, which was to use creatively AMC's strategically situated assets and reach beyond them to benefit the mountains and improve the experiences of hundreds of thousands who love the wilds. Said differently, our responsibility was to develop programs that redefined AMC as an even more powerful civic institution.

Science to the Front

Major new directions of the AMC began at Pinkham, where the educational staffers became known as the "Ed Squad." John Nutter began organizing new educational offerings in the Whites. Among our mandates was a charge to develop programs using the huts and Pinkham during off-peak periods. One approach was to invite high school science programs to base a component of their curricula on White Mountain ecology, using the huts and a two- to three-day field experience as draws.

The second was to sponsor theme weekends at Pinkham, especially in the fall between the closing of the huts and the ski season. Ken Olson was tasked with adding basic interpretive functions to job descriptions of hut crews and Pinkham staff. We worked with each other, weaving education into the hut system operations.

The hut talks about ecology were inspired by the highly regarded Newton, Massachusetts, public schools. All of Newton's ninth-graders hiked in the Presidentials and stayed in the huts in September.

Dr. Bob Kilburn, Newton's science curriculum director, and Mike and Saundy Cohen, two dedicated teachers, approached the Pinkham leadership team about spreading the programs to other schools. They collaborated on a curriculum with Carol Bershad of the Newton district, who was later named Massachusetts Biology Teacher of the Year.

As the Hut Committee reviewed the school curriculum idea, committee member Pete Richardson, admissions director at the Massachusetts Institute

of Technology, provided a mailing list of New England high school science teachers.

Newton schools helped Nutter develop a weekend Mountain Leadership Workshop course for them. Invitations went to the thousands of teachers on Richardson's list. Dozens of teachers signed up, eager to capitalize on the new interest in ecology. A number brought students through the huts, which helped AMC use the facilities during off-peak times.

The Pinkham team produced programs in mycology, orienteering, public policy, and nature and the arts. Participants also cleared cross-country ski trails around Jackson with Wildcat Inn owner Brad Boynton. The fall workshop deserves credit for helping advance the Jackson area as a ski touring center.

Encouraged by the weekend workshops' success, the Ed Squad designed a month-long teacher clinic for summer 1973. Saundy Cohen named it "A Mountain Classroom." The Ed Squad produced a teacher handbook of the same name. Workshop participants helped run the course. Many teachers modified the AMC curriculum for use in their schools. The AMC hut system was exporting knowledge.

Tea Time at Wellesley

Educational activities led to our meeting not only science teachers but also other interested naturalists. In 1972, we put out a call for qualified volunteers willing to spend a week in the huts teaching natural history. One of them, Jorie Hunken, worked for the New England Wildflower Society. She had extensive knowledge of flora and was an accomplished pen-and-ink artist. Hunken produced beautifully illustrated ecology brochures specific to each hut's environs.

Nutter also recruited at Wellesley College. Many years later, in 2013, Sally Surgenor recalled one of his visits, when he met her classmate Adele Joyes:

We both lived in Pomeroy Hall, a wonderful towered dorm in the Quad. Our Head of House, Mrs. Ellinwood, served tea and cookies each Wednesday in the large dorm dining room, using silver tea service, and a giant urn of strong tea. We Wellesley girls would flock back from our afternoon science lab or the art studio to wait in line while she served tea to each of us in turn. We'd grab a handful of homemade cookies and then flop on the couches or start a card game. We'd talk.

That afternoon, in walked John Nutter and he was forced to rise to the

extraordinary social occasion by making small talk in line, then balancing tea cup and saucer, and cookies, then walking across the large living room under the watchful eye of every girl in the room. He interviewed Adele in the round “tower” corner nook, while we all eyed them surreptitiously.

Nutter hired Joyes that day as a hut naturalist. Surgenor later joined the first research crew and eventually became AMC’s first conservation director. Vicki Van Steenberg, another naturalist, was also a Wellesley alumna. The college was an outstanding resource for AMC program development.

Bonsai!

In 2013, Hunken summarized her 1970s AMC experience:

When I started, people were still hiking with not just old gear but old ideas about wilderness as a place where they could walk, camp, disrupt as they pleased. Fir branches were cut for beds, campsites left longtime imprints, and mess was left or buried. People hiked hard to experience that freedom and it was hard to undo that entitlement.

We lived by the principles of stewardship and the disciplines of giving up self ease for the sake of future folk. Nutter comes to mind—tromping through the mud in the middle of the path rather than damage the vegetation on the drier sidelines.

And what followed [were] the huge efforts of the trail crews in making safe walkways that were teaching tools in themselves as the vegetation grew back to the edges of the boardwalks and steps. It felt, at the time, that every workshop, every teacher-training hike to the high huts, was going to help make the change we believed in.

A young man came walking out of Tuckerman with a beautiful krummholz specimen in his hand. “Look at this!” he said. “Bonsai trees for the taking!” The hut guy not only eloquently explained why he should respect and leave such beauty in its place, but (somewhat more forcefully) escorted the guy back to the tree’s original site and helped him replant it.”

Chris “Hawkeye” Hawkins, of the 1971 Lakes of the Clouds Hut crew, remembered, “Nutter sent up blank posters, colored paper, and markers and asked us to use the materials to explain ecological themes relevant to the hut. It was low-level stuff, but it was a beginning.”

City Kids Go to the Mountains

Inspired by AMC member and S.S. Pierce⁴ Vice President Eliot Hubbard, Deans started the Youth Opportunities Program at the AMC's Joy Street headquarters in 1968.

Youth Opportunities introduced Boston inner-city youngsters to the White Mountains. Hut visits were an integral part. Sloat jokingly nicknamed the program "Hoods to the Woods," which staff and participants instantly commandeered for use on T-shirts.

Anna B. Stearns donated the \$10,000 start-up funds. Club leaders Fran Belcher, Luther Child, John Perry, Gerry Fosbroke, and Ray Lavender garnered AMC support and nurtured the program.

Deans hired Olson to run it in summer 1969, its first full operating season. Dick Zeiss, Randy Coston, and Charlie Ruvin took over in the 1970s.

By the time Olson became Youth Opportunities director, he had spent five summers as a hutman and knew the system would be important to the program. He described one adventure:

I led a black youth group to Galehead from Zealand via the Twinway. Most were teens, but the youngest, Marvin, was 8 and slight. I worried about his stamina as the group ascended Zeacliff. On a clear day it affords a classic White Mountain panorama, the Pemi sprawling below, the mass of Carrigain busting into the sky. But we broke onto the cliff enveloped in dripping, stagnant fog. I felt awful for these kids and was about to say something.

Just then Marvin cried out, "This is beautiful!" It astonished me that this little guy instantly got the feel of the place in zero visibility. Everyone did well crossing to Galehead in the depressing viewless weather. We didn't know we embodied Thoreau's feelings expressed in a lecture in 1851, "My spirits infallibly rise in proportion to the outward dreariness."

One hundred and eighty kids took part in the program that summer, up from 63 in 1968. That was a humble start, consistent with our slim resources. By 2012, thanks to AMC's expanding investments and to successive program leaders, Youth Opportunities had served 153,198 boys and girls since inception. Operating across four seasons, with eight staff and a \$700,000 budget, YOP

⁴ For many years, the fabled S.S. Pierce Company supplied most of the hut system's canned foods, bottled goods, and culinary sundries.

now annually introduces 24,000 people to the outdoors. And the program has trained 5,000 individuals for mountain leadership responsibilities.

Lessons From Abuse

Tuckerman Ravine, an easy hike from Pinkham with an outstanding view of Mount Washington's steep terrain, was an early victim of heavy use. The USFS and the huts mounted an initiative called "Respect the Ravine"—an AMC coinage—to deepen public appreciation of the big cirque. The area surrounding Tuck shelters had been hacked for firewood. Tenters compacted the soils to tarmac consistency. The efforts to minimize human impacts allowed recovery to begin.

Another USFS-AMC innovation, the Restricted Use Area program, prohibited camping and fires in alpine zones and near huts, and capped overnight stays at many shelters. This required an education component. AMC beefed up its "Carry In-Carry Out" program, with Fran Conkey's timeless logo on posters printed by Ray Lavender's company, adding brochures on preparing enjoyable nonintrusive trips to the White Mountains.

"The big change I noticed—the shift away from campfires to cook stoves," wrote former Lakes of the Clouds Hutmaster Tom Johnson in 2013. "It was hard for many people to give up the romance of the former."

Robert Proudman, a former AMC trails supervisor, recalled that the Carry In-Carry Out program was born in 1970, with the help of caretaker Steve Page, when crews removed the much-abused Liberty Spring Shelter and installed the campsite nearby. "I remember Lavender's signs popping up everywhere," Proudman said in 2013. "I think Tommy [Deans] might have thought up Carry In-Carry Out, or had the political savvy to see its significance when it was first suggested, and insisted on club- and forest-wide application. It was soon nationwide, and I think AMC should justly claim its provenance."

Developing Research Capability

Until the 1970s, the USFS and universities conducted most research that occurred in the Whites. In 1972, Joel White invited USFS scientist Dr. Raymond E. Leonard on a hike to the former shelter area at Garfield Pond to view the AMC's new campsite, which Proudman and his trail crews had constructed. Leonard espoused scientific approaches to limiting user damage in the mountains.

White and Leonard took Pete Richardson on a Mahoosuc hike, to interest him in promoting an AMC backcountry research program. Richardson embraced the idea. Associate Executive Director Steve Maddock, PhD, a former professor, threw his credentials behind it. The AMC's council approved it.

The AMC's first director of research, Ed Spencer, established the department in offices in Pinkham Notch. One objective was to disseminate knowledge from original research in the Whites. Staff focused on scientific inquiry into environmental issues. The information gained was designed to help managers cope with escalating wild lands use.

The next director was Dijit Taylor, who was succeeded by Ken Kimball, the current director.

Interpreting the Mountains

Olson remembers that a large-format photographer named George DeWolfe stopped by Pinkham Notch Visitor Center in 1971. He was completing his master's thesis, a black-and-white portfolio of the Whites. Would AMC trade room and board the next summer for an exhibition-grade set of the photos? His samples were exquisite, so Olson said yes.

DeWolfe was the huts' first official artist-in-residence. The program led to a photo workshop series and to residencies for practitioners in other media. His work resides in permanent collections at Pinkham and Joy Street. No one since Guy Shorey, who established a White Mountain canon in the early 1900s, has so well portrayed our great range in black and white.

Peppy and Crusty

In 1971, the writer Edward Hoagland interviewed us for a Time-Life book about the mountains. Believing it would escalate use of the crowded backcountry, we tried to dampen his enthusiasm for this picture-dominated volume. Whether or not we influenced him, that book did not go forward. But in 1973, Hoagland's book of essays, *Walking the Dead Diamond River*, with no illustrations, was published by Random House. His depiction of AMC members is classic for its understanding of some members' fustiness:

At breakfast at the Pinkham Notch lodge you see that the Appalachian Mountain Club members are a breed of queer ducks too—peppy skinny

fellows with curious genteel accents and middle-level jobs, and some crusty nanny-like ladies. . . . I was touched by how Olson and Nutter managed to invest all this—including the Appies, as the kids call them, sitting at long boarding-school tables thumbing guidebooks—with the air of a commune. The paradox is, says Nutter, that in order to save any sampling of wilderness you must bring great numbers of people in, organize a Four Thousand Footer Club with forty-six⁵ peaks to be climbed, and all the rest of it, so that each voter can see the landscape for himself.

Education—this is the note sounded everywhere in a losing battle. Since tourism is so destructive to wild land, Nutter and the others who minister to it from the side of the angels do so with misgivings.

Time-Life did publish an illustrated wilderness book, *New England Wilds* (1974), with the text not by Hoagland, but by Ogden Tanner. A section was devoted to the Whites, the huts, and the need for education.⁶

A Wider View

Over time, we realized that forces greater than books or magazines were driving increased use, mainly the growing societal demand for outdoor recreation. On balance, it was a good thing the stewardship message should spread via the written word.

Books have always played a large role in education about our native range. In his *Bibliography of the White Mountains* (AMC, 1911), Allen H. Bent wrote that the Whites “have had more written about them, probably, than any other mountains, the Alps alone excepted.”

⁵ At the time, 46 peaks were on the list. Later, the required number rose to 48.

⁶ Severest tragedy marked the project. A Time-Life photographer, Dean Brown, who was a Pinkham guest, died when he fell from Table Mountain, north of the Moat Range, getting a shot from the steep face. The USFS told Tanner the Appalachian Trail might become the “Appalachian Trench.” “That night,” Tanner wrote, “I tried to grapple with the growing management problems of wilderness, and lost.”

Enter the Archdruid

In 1978, Kent Olson and former New York Times Book Review editor Brooks Atkinson co-authored *New England's White Mountains: At Home in the Wild* (AMC Books and Friends of the Earth).⁷

The series editor was David Brower, former executive director of the Sierra Club. The book followed the design of Eliot Porter's *In Wildness is the Preservation of the World* (Sierra Club, 1962), for which Brower had won the Carey-Thomas Award for creative publishing. We hoped the exhibition plates and the essays in *At Home in the Wild* would harness beauty in service to conservation, inform people's love of the Whites, and tell the huts story in a collection-worthy volume. But Brower, an AMC honorary member and a two-time Nobel Prize nominee, was a controversial figure, known for his obdurate environmentalism, resolute personality, and documented disregard for nonprofit board authority.⁸

Wherever Brower went, he stirred feelings. In a go- or no-go AMC Council meeting about our book, an AMC officer who worried Brower was overstating potential sales called him an "importuning salesman." But the book sold quickly. Brower had safely led AMC in a successful venture, although he personally lost \$25,000 on it. Early on, he told Olson that "publishing a book is like giving birth—there's blood on the floor afterward." We believe that the important thing is that AMC took a big educational risk beyond guidebooks and maps—and prospered.

The Enduring Whites

The early twentieth-century huts differed from the system we entered in 1964. Likewise, ours differed from today's. Visitor numbers, mountain

⁷ Photographs were by Phillip Evans, Amory Lovins (a MacArthur Fellow and author of *Soft Energy Paths* [Friends of the Earth, 1977]), and George DeWolfe, text by Brooks Atkinson (first editor of the New York Times Book Review) and Ken Olson. Stephen Lyons was project editor. Ansel Adams's publisher, the New York Graphic Society, was the commercial backer.

⁸ John McPhee's book *Encounters with the Archdruid* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971) vividly tells Brower's life story, including the saga of his defeating the proposed Marble Canyon Dam in the Grand Canyon, a world-class environmental victory. The reward? His directors sacked him for having cost Sierra its tax-exempt status in the dam fight. It was the most famous firing in conservation history. Brower was to the Sierra Club board what General Douglas MacArthur was to U.S. President Harry Truman. Brower founded Friends of the Earth, but was eventually fired from that organization, too.

communications technology, complex National Forest protocols, liability strictures on packing, heavy reliance on helicopters, labor and health regulations, hut wages, rotting structures, stewardship requirements, maturing conservation ethics, deeper appreciation of biotic diversity, and public appetite for ecological knowledge—all these demanded AMC's adaptation.

Yet in essential ways, the huts are changeless, faithful to Joe Dodge's ideal of healthful mountain recreation. Yes, crews now educate hikers in the beauties, frailties, dangers, and ecological functions of the mountain environment, but that responsibility has enlarged, not supplanted, traditional roles.

The old jobs—we think the best summer jobs in America—still rely on enthusiastic people seeking high places and strenuous labor. Hutmen and hutwomen still cook, clean, pack, and host, rescue hikers, carry out raids⁹, add jargon to the huts lexicon, and tramp the hills on days off.

Development has filled White Mountain valleys and is creeping upslope. Traffic has burdened roadways. Formerly tranquil villages now jangle the senses. Multitudes crowd some trails. But thanks in substantial measure to the AMC's dedication—and that of the USFS—to conserving the backcountry and educating visitors, the high mountains seem eternally the same.

Fortunately for all. And if, as young men and women, you and your good friends were lucky enough to cohabit the puckerbrush in the alpine zone of a massive range—a geology and an ecology that subsume a human figure—life's unanticipated dimensions, large and small, became clearer.

Fortunately for us.

JOHN NUTTER of Arlington, Virginia, worked at Lakes of the Clouds Hut from 1964-1966. He was AMC's first director of education. Before his retirement, he worked for The Nature Conservancy and Potomac Electric Power Company.

W. KENT OLSON of Bass Harbor, Maine, worked at five huts in the 1960s and became AMC's hut system manager in 1970. He later was director of AMC publications and editor of *Appalachia*. He is retired from a conservation career, most recently as president of Friends of Acadia.

Slim and Calista Harris, among those to whom the story is dedicated, worked with their children at Zealand Falls Hut in 1945. Jim Hamilton worked at Zealand Falls Hut in 1963 and later was a dedicated development officer for AMC.

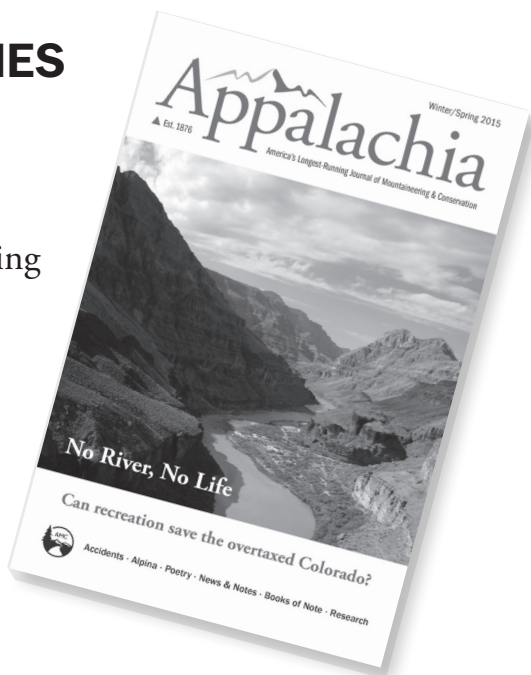
⁹ The tradition of stealing nonessential objects from each other's huts in the middle of the night.

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