

Moosilauke Trail Remediation and Hiker/Student Education Program

Dartmouth Outing Club
Summer 2009
Application to the Waterman Fund

Organizational Overview

The Dartmouth Outing Club (DOC) was originally formed in 1909 to, “stimulate interest in out-of-door winter sports”, and quickly grew to encompass the College’s year-round out-of-doors outdoor education and recreation. The club has undergone constant evolution over the course of its 99-year history to meet the ever-changing needs of its members.

Today the club has over 1,500 student members (about a quarter of the College’s student population), and about as many non-student members, making it (to our knowledge) the largest collegiate outing club in the nation (as well as the first). The DOC organizes trips in the out-of-doors, provides outdoor leader and medical/safety education, maintains over seventy miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and is the first introduction to the College for most of the incoming students.

Due to its size, the Dartmouth Outing Club is organized as an umbrella organization for about a dozen member clubs, which each specialize in an aspect of outdoor recreation, including stewardship of a network of cabins, lodges, trails and wild areas. Membership in the DOC is open to all members of the Dartmouth community, and to others who share common interests.

The DOC has been responsible for the summit of Mt. Moosilauke (4802 ft) in Benton, NH since the donation of the summit tract by Pennington Haile, class of 1924. This included the maintenance and operation of the Tip Top House hotel and, since it burned down, the area now recognized as a fragile alpine zone.

For many reasons the trails on Mt. Moosilauke continue to become more popular each year:

- The trails are well-laid out and well-maintained, making for an easy hike to a nearly 5,000 foot summit with some of the best views in the Whites
- Trails from the Lodge are on land owned by Dartmouth and therefore not subject to the group regulations and parking fees that apply to the WMNF, which completely surrounds us.
- Moosilauke is one of the southernmost 4000-footers in the White Mountains and therefore an easier day trip for more people.

- For all of these reasons Moosilauke tends to attract large groups such as schools, camps and scouts. Ridgerunner reports indicate it is not unusual to see 200 people on the summit at once on summer and fall weekends.

It is generally recognized that the trails, and the fragile alpine zone in particular, suffer some damage each year from large numbers of users. For many years the Moosilauke Advisory Committee has mulled over the idea of group size limits, permits, and other regulatory devices, with many mixed feelings and much reluctance.

In light of this issue, DOC began an alpine steward program during the summer of 2003 with a generous grant from the Waterman fund. The program was funded this way until the summer of 2006. At this time, we received a gift from the family of David Heald, class of 1942 and were able to *permanently endow* the position of Moosilauke Alpine Steward.

This summer, recognizing the educational value of such work, we broadened the program to include all of the student staff working at the Moosilauke Ravine lodge. The students would rotate alpine stewardship duties on an ad hoc basis. This allowed a greater number of students to educate themselves about alpine stewardship, thereby increasing the impact of the program. The more students that become engaged in and educated about alpine stewardship, the more future advocates and stewards the mountains will have.

It is with this in mind that the DOC proposes this program. Increasing student involvement and engagement in alpine stewardship is generative and highly leveraged.

Project Description

This project is designed to address several needs: the most basic of which is much-needed treadway remediation. The trail in the alpine zone is badly degraded and seldom worked on by volunteer crews because of its remote location (hard to get any work done on a weekend with all the travel time). The DOC summer crew model has been gaining strength in recent years - students love to do this work, but simply don't have time while taking a full set of classes. Also, with a rotation through assigned jobs, the students learn a huge variety of skills and gain much greater experience.

The more important aspect of this program would be the educational aspect for those students. While the project calls for a full-time crew of 4 for 3 weeks, it is likely that depending on the size of summer crew, the experience would involve many more students. Furthermore, the crew will bring volunteer maintainers from the trailwork division of the Outing Club to train them on alpine trail building and maintenance. The DOC model of passing knowledge down will then leverage this learning for many years to come.

Furthermore, the students working at the Ravine Lodge, serving as alpine stewards will also gain from this project. Seeing first hand the work necessary to alleviate trail damage in alpine zones, the stewards will both be more able to adequately convey the importance of LNT practices to hikers, but will also have real, live examples to show passers-through. In this way, the program could potentially reach many more people than simply the students of the DOC.

- A. The project will take place on the upper reaches of the Beaver Brook trail, part of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. A letter of support from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy is attached. To access the trail, student workers will likely hike up from the Ravine Lodge where they will be based. The ravine lodge is on Ravine Rd. in Warren, NH. They might use the ridge trail or the gorge brook trail to access the summit and then travel down the beaver brook trail from there. A USGS map is attached.
- B. The treadway work is typical trail remediation: drainage, stepping stones, crib steps, etc. Materials will all be native to the alpine zone, stones from non-sensitive areas. Part of the educational aspect of the work will involve research into best practices for alpine remediation and teaching seminars provided by the Dartmouth Outdoor Programs Office and the ATC.
- C. The DOC has always been committed to stewardship and education; this program dovetails perfectly with those principles. As an AT maintainer club, the DOC prides itself on passing down knowledge about trail maintenance and environmental stewardship. The DOCs summer crew program provides an excellent opportunity for students to immerse themselves in these activities. Our system of site bosses and crew chiefs provides opportunity for more experienced students to pass on prior experience and knowledge in an unprecedented learning environment, more powerful than any professor or professional could provide.

- D. The match funds for this grant will come from the DOC and the Outdoor Programs office, the David Heald '42 Alpine Stewardship endowment, the J. Wilcox Brown Moosilauke Trails endowment and other endowments used to support the programs in the out of doors and specifically the Moosilauke property.
- E. This work will take place in late June and early July of 2009.

Reporting

Reporting will take place upon the conclusion of the summer crew season at the end of August. Typically these reports take a few weeks to generate, especially as students return to class, but are generally of very high quality. For an example, please see the Beaver Brook report from this past summer – this is an example of the type of crew/work we would plan to do for this project.

The report will include:

- Executive summary describing the DOC trail crew’s work, significant accomplishments and problems encountered.
- Total number of workers and work hours.
- Operational information (seasonal staff, transportation, work camp, etc.)
- Project summaries listing the quantities of completed work (feet of sidehill, number of rock steps, etc.), whether each individual project was completed or will be addressed in the future, and anticipated future work required.
- Photographs, creative art or writing by the crew leaders and volunteers, and other information.
- Educational aims accomplished, constructive synergy achieved with the Alpine Stewards.
- A copy of the Alpine Stewardship report.

Budget

	Current Rate	units/week	weeks	other	Grant costs	Match costs
Pay	\$7.25	40	3		\$870.00	
Fringe @ 9%					\$78.30	
Food	\$10.00	7	3		\$210.00	
Housing	\$44.00	1	3			\$132.00
mileage	\$0.50	200	3	\$0.25	\$300.00	
tools allowance	\$500.00			\$0.25		\$125.00
supervisory time	\$25.00	10	3	\$0.25		\$187.50
Other training	\$200.00			\$0.25		\$50.00
Per person					\$1,458.30	\$494.50
Extra for boss	\$1.00	40	3		\$120.00	
4 person crew total/3 weeks					\$5,953.20	\$1,978.00

We here at the DOC are very particular about the way we pay our students for projects like this. It is made clear that it is not as compensation for the work they’re doing. On the contrary, we consider them volunteers, but in order to meet the earnings expectations that the college puts on them for financial aid and to ensure that it is possible to do this job instead of going for a paid internship elsewhere.

