



Trail Skills College

September 19-21, 2025
Noble View Outdoor Center
Russell, MA

Join the trails community for three days of learning, sharing, and connecting in Western Massachusetts!



Workshops led by experts on a variety of topics

Camping available on-site

This event is for the entire trails community – volunteer and professional trail stewards with all levels of experience.

Whether you are just starting out and looking for ways to get involved, or a professional looking to further your skills and build your network, this event offers opportunities for everyone and **all are welcome!**



The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) is the host of this event.



Additional thanks to the greater trails community for supporting training programs at Noble View.

Program Schedule

Friday, September 19

Sign In 7:30am-8:45am

Event Kickoff at 9:00am

Rigging for Trailwork (Day 1 of 2)

Instructor:

Recon Trail Designs
Matt Coughlan

9 AM – 4:30 PM Cost: \$265

The Rigging for Trail Work Workshop is for anyone interested in the use of Griphoists and rigging systems for trail work, regardless of prior experience. Over the course of three days, this workshop will cover rigging fundamentals, safe setup and operation of Griphoist ground and high line systems for situations involving pulling, lowering, lifting and moving heavy loads on and off the ground. Rigging in trail work entails using hoists, wire ropes, and mechanical advantage systems for moving heavy loads. High line operations utilize hoists, wire ropes, elevated spar locations, belays, hauling and mechanical advantage systems with a variety of slings, blocks, shackles, belay and anchoring equipment. Participants in this workshop will learn how to safely design, setup and operate ground and aerial rigging systems, and will get hands-on experience. This will include learning about the different pieces of equipment, their working load limits (WLL), tree climbing and anchor building, how to identify and quantify forces, and safe operational practices.

Axe Workshop

Instructors:

AMC
Alex DeLucia
Liesl Magnus

9 AM – 3:30 PM Cost: \$50

This one-day workshop is designed for individuals who use axes in the maintenance of recreational hiking trails. Over the course of a very full day, we will cover the history of the axe, reviving an old axe, rehanging axes, sharpening, safety, and axe use techniques (bucking and limbing). There is a classroom portion in the morning followed by some time in the tool shed, and we will wrap up the day with chopping in the woods. This full day axe workshop can fulfill the axe training requirement for axe use on National Forest. Participants are encouraged to bring their own axe that is already hung on a handle so they have something to practice sharpening and to use for the chopping portion of the day. Participants may also bring an old un-hung axe head to start the process of bringing it back to life. There will be other axe heads and hung axes for use in the workshop as well.



Friday, September 19 (continued)

**Critical Trail Maintenance
(Level 1 Maintenance)
Training 1**

Instructors:
AMC
Craig Heinselman

9 AM – 3 PM

Cost: \$25

This workshop covers the critical trail maintenance (also called level 1 maintenance) responsibilities of trail adopters, maintainers, and others. Participants will be provided with a training video to watch ahead of time, so this training will focus on field instruction, tool use, safety, techniques and best practices for drainage structure maintenance, corridor clearing, and trail marking. This training will meet the basic training requirements for AMC trail adopters.

**Trail Analysis and Design
(Day 1 of 2)**

Instructor:
AMC
Jon Szalewicz

9 AM – 4 PM

Cost: \$100

This will be a hands-on analysis and design workshop for trail workers. It is geared towards Northeastern Hiking trails but not exclusive. Multi-use, XC ski, and bike trails all may apply. The audience for this workshop is for professional field staff. Entry level workers and volunteer maintainers are welcomed as well but Critical Trail Maintenance or equivalent is a prerequisite. The goal is to encourage folks to develop a trail eye and empower them to make real time decisions to prioritize trail issues in the field. This is not a Critical Maintenance course, though much of the conversation will talk about the impacts of trail maintenance. We will then design a section of trail and go over the scouting, layout, grades/slopes and the steps of constructing a trail from scratch.

Day one of the Workshop will consist of walking and discussing what we find on the trail. Observations, interpretation, and discussion will be the bulk of the time. An initial meet and greet will include a ½ hr. to line out some of the core fundamentals of trail design.

- Identifying fall line vs sidehill trails
- Fundamental features of both
- Common issues of different styles of trails
- How trails evolve over time

- A Brief History of Northeastern Trails
- Hiker psychology

Day two will focus on scouting, trail layout using principles of sustainable trail design, and the process of beginning to construct a new trail. This will be entirely in the field after a quick morning circle up.

- Slopes and Grades
- ½ Rule
- Sustainable Design
- Soil and hydrology considerations
- Scouting with a Clinometer
- Layout
- Corridor Clearing
- Tread Construction
- Use of organics in Trail building?
- Efficient approaches to construction to save time and money
- Ongoing maintenance considerations

Friday, September 19 (continued)

**Rock Work Progression (Day1):
Intro to Rock Work**

Instructor(s):

AMC
Connor Piechota
Nora Sackett
Erik Samia
Patricia McGuire

9 AM – 4:30 PM

Cost: \$75

Ever hike a trail and find yourself amazed by the rock structures you, see? If so, then this is the workshop for you! This is day one of a four-day rock work progression training, this introductory class focusing on the fundamentals of rock work. Learn about body mechanics, how to safely quarry and move rocks to build trail structures.



Friday, September 19 (continued)

All Person's Trail: Walk and Talk

Instructor(s):
AMC- Caitlin McCarthy
DCR- Ale Echanti

Time:
9 AM-11:30AM

Cost: Free

Join AMC and Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for a walk through of Noble View's All Person's Trail. This couple hour session will highlight the planning, specifications, construction, and partnership it took to build this amazing trail.

Saturday, September 20

Rigging for Trailwork (Day 2 of 2)

Instructor:
Recon Trail Designs
Matt Coughlan

**9 AM – 4:30
PM**

**Trail Analysis and Design
(Day 2 of 2)**

Instructor:
AMC
Jon Szalewicz

9 AM – 4 PM

**Critical Trail Maintenance (Level 1
Maintenance)
Training 2**

Instructors:
AMC
Craig Heinselman

9 AM – 3 PM

Cost: \$25

This workshop covers the critical trail maintenance (also called level 1 maintenance) responsibilities of trail adopters, maintainers, and others. Participants will be provided with a training video to watch ahead of time, so this training will focus on field instruction, tool use, safety, techniques and best practices for drainage structure maintenance, corridor clearing, and trail marking. This training will meet the basic training requirements for AMC trail adopters.

**Chainsaw A-Sawyer: Bucking and Limbing
(Day 1 of 2)**

Instructors:
AMC
Matt Moore
Liesl Magnus
Connor Piechota

9 AM – 5:30 PM

Cost:
\$275

Participants will learn the basics of using a chainsaw safely, following AMC's Chainsaw curriculum, consistent with the current federal Developing Thinking Sawyers curriculum.

The first day will focus on sawyer safety, components of a chainsaw, personal protective equipment (PPE), proper handling of a chainsaw, and basic cutting skills. On day two, participants will be in the field learning cutting techniques for dealing with cutting blowdowns on trails. Objectives, hazards, log analysis, escape, and cutting plans will be the primary focus.

Sawyers can attain an A-level federal bucking and limbing evaluation, making them eligible for

certification by a sponsoring federal agency. Anyone interested in this certification should contact Erik Samia at esamia@outdoors.org for details.

Upon demonstration of safe chainsaw operation, all participants will receive a certificate of completion and authorization to operate a chainsaw to their level of training on AMC lands and properties and some partner agency and organization lands.

***A prerequisite for this course is a current First Aid and CPR certification.



Saturday, September 20 (continued)

**Rock Work Progression (Day 2):
Moving Rocks on the Ground**

Instructors:

AMC

Nora Sackett

Erik Samia

Patricia McGuire

9 AM – 4:30 PM **Cost: \$75**

This second day rock work program focuses on how to safely and effectively move rocks to work with. Participants will learn terms and techniques such as the flip, pick and pry, wrap, drag, waddle, and row in order to get rock onto the trail and staged to build with. This is a must for anyone trying to build their skill set and want to learn how much goes into rock work.

Privy Building (Day 1 of 2):

Instructors:

AMC

Emily Wight

Cooper Smith

9 AM – 5 PM **Cost: \$100**

Have you ever been curious about backcountry waste management? Are you also interested in expanding your carpentry skills? Then this 2-day workshop is for you! Join AMC Trails and Campsite staff to build a new ADA compliant privy at Noble View.



Sunday, September 21

Critical Trail Maintenance (Level 1 Maintenance) Training 3

Instructors:

AMC
Craig Heinselman

9 AM – 3 PM

Cost: \$25

This workshop covers the critical trail maintenance (also called level 1 maintenance) responsibilities of trail adopters, maintainers, and others. Participants will be provided with a training video to watch ahead of time, so this training will focus on field instruction, tool use, safety, techniques and best practices for drainage structure maintenance, corridor clearing, and trail marking. This training will meet the basic training requirements for AMC trail adopters.

Privy Building (Day 2 of 2):

Instructors:

AMC
Emily Wight
Cooper Smith

9 AM – 5 PM

Chainsaw A-Sawyer: Bucking and Limbing (Day 2 of 2)

Instructors:

AMC
Matt Moore
Liesl Magnus
Connor Piechota

9 AM – 5:30 PM

Rock Work Progression (Day 3): Setting and Building

Instructors:

AMC
Nora Sackett
Erik Samia
Jon Szalewicz

9 AM – 4:30 PM Cost: \$75

This third day of rock work focuses on the best techniques and standards for how to set rocks in order to build various trail structures. Learn about how to best dig a hole for your rocks, crush setting, and the reason why we build the way we do. Learn from some of the region's best stone workers in this in-depth hands-on course that rocks!

**Thank you to all our partners
for supporting and helping instruct at
Noble View's first Trail Skills College!**



About Noble View Outdoor Center



There's a reason they call it "Noble View." Elevated around 1,100 feet above the Connecticut Valley, the Noble View Outdoor Center provides spectacular views of towns, countryside and the cities of Westfield and Springfield. After enjoying the view, explore 360 acres of woodlands, trails, and abandoned farm fields. Hike in the summer or break out of your winter routine with cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

December through March, overnight guests stay in fully updated cottages with electricity and lighting. The cottages share a central campfire ring and firewood is included! Central parking is a short walk from the cottages, and campsites are accessible by gravel paths.

April through November, Noble View's cottages are used by the AMC trails department for trainings and trail maintenance and unavailable to the public. The campground and bathhouse remain open year-round, and the kitchen and communal space in North Cottage are available for day-use rentals throughout the year.

Location

Noble View is located at [635 South Quarter Road, Russell, MA 01071](#)— just northwest of the town of Westfield, and about 40 minutes northwest of the city of Springfield, MA. Overlooking the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts. Noble View is home to over 358 acres of woodlands, 12 miles of trails, and abandoned farm fields to explore. Trails are excellent for easy to moderate 3-season hiking and snowshoeing and nordic skiing during the winter.



Camping

Noble View has great camping options available. There are five wooded sites: Each with 10x12' platform and a campfire ring with pot grate, five sites along edge of field: 3 with 12x16' platform, and 2 with 10x12' platform. Each has a campfire ring with pot grate. There is one large bear box, so please store your food in your vehicle if you can or bring a bear canister.

For this event there are more camping areas that AMC staff can help direct you to upon your arrival. One shared bear box. Sites are walk-in and have access to the bathhouse. Bring your own containers to transport water. Campfire wood is free and located in the camp area wood box with additional wood in the woodsheds by the cabins.



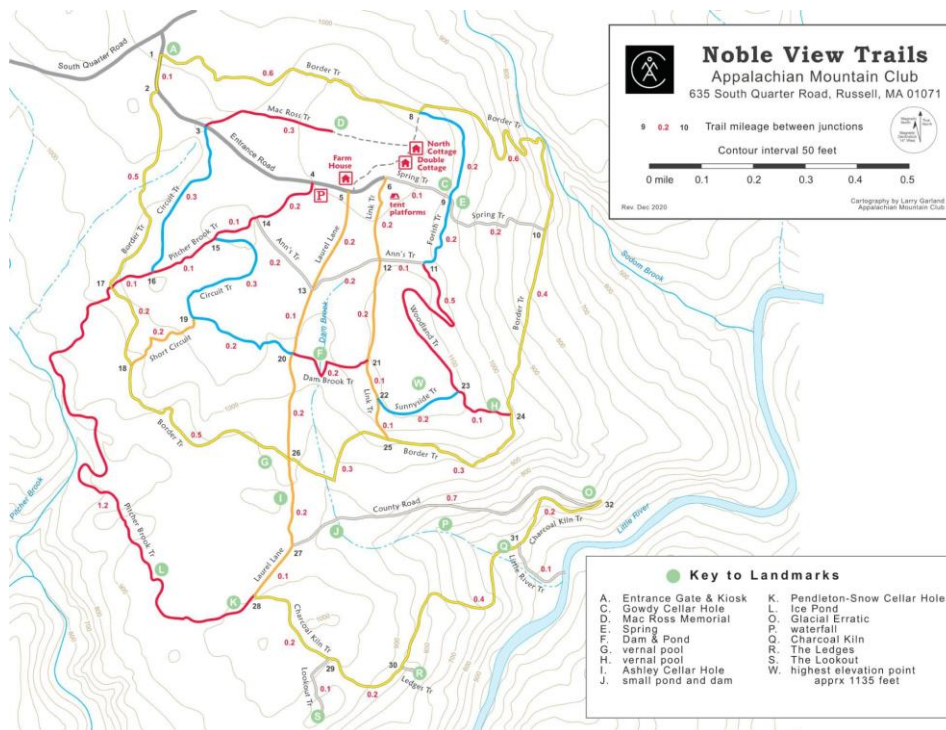
AMC has a long-standing commitment to using its huts, lodges, and sporting camps as models for sustainable operations and environmental stewardship. At the Noble View Outdoor Center, we have a modern bathhouse with a number of sustainable features including solar panels, Clivus toilets, and energy efficient plumbing and electrical features.

Meals are not offered at Noble View. But cooking on camp stoves and the grills at the tent sites are welcomed!

2025 Rates:

Camping per night: \$27 (AMC Member)

Camping per night: \$33 (Non Member)



Instructor Information

Alexander DeLucia- AMC Director of Trails - Alex has worked with AMC's Trails Department since 2001 supporting all aspects of the department's operations over the years. Beginning with a degree from Unity College in Adventure Education and Outdoor Program Administration, to working in a number of outdoor leadership roles and conservation stewardship roles, Alex found a love for trail work in the White Mountains of NH with the Appalachian Mountain Club. That passion for resource protection and recreation management has led to the continued engagement with AMC's efforts to protect and maintain trails from D.C to northern Maine. Among the many tools a trail worker can utilize none quite compare to the versatility, aesthetics, and personal connection of the axe. Alex looks forward to sharing his knowledge and passion for this timeless and essential tool, the axe.

Alexandra (Ale) Echandi- Trail Planner at DCR- Ale launched her career in 2008 as a Natural Resources Manager and Trail Planner at the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), specializing in urban parks before her role expanded to encompass statewide initiatives. Seeking to broaden her experience in wetland delineations, permitting, and stakeholder engagement, she joined BSC Group in 2014. As an ecologist, project manager, and outreach coordinator there, Ale primarily focused on right-of-way projects while also contributing to municipal and non-profit planning efforts in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Her commitment to public service led her back to DCR as the Inland Ecologist for eastern Massachusetts, a position she held briefly before joining the regulatory review team with the Commonwealth's Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program. In 2024, Ale rejoined DCR for a third time, returning to her roots as a trail planner on the Trails and Greenways team.

Caitlin McCarthy- Caitlin is Appalachian Mountain Club's Southern New England Trail Programs Manager. She manages our professional trail crews, our long-distance trail coordinators on the New England Trail and Bay Circuit Trail, and our facility coordinator at AMC's Noble View Outdoor Center. These days Caitlin's work with AMC involves establishing and nurturing partner relations, trail planning and design, team management, budgeting, and much more

Connor Piechota- Connor is the Southern New England Trails Volunteer Programs Supervisor with the Appalachian Mountain Club. His trails career began in New Hampshire with the Squam Lakes Association, and has since worked with the USFS in New Hampshire, the Red Rocks of Sedona, Arizona, and the Cascades in Oregon. He's now happy to be back in New England to continue his journey! He is an experienced B sawyer (chainsaw and crosscut) and is passionate about keeping trails sustainable and enjoyable. Connor has extensive experience in rock work with multiple professional seasons of using dry stone masonry skills and teaching volunteers and beginners how to build 'bomber' structures.

Cooper Smith- Cooper is the Field Supervisor for AMC's Backcountry Campsite Program. He started his AMC journey as the caretaker at the Imp shelter on the beautiful Carter-Morriah ridge. Cooper then joined the Leadership Team and has been helping others take care ever since. In the campsites, our privies are a tremendous source of pride. Every year we facilitate the composting of 3,000 gallons of human waste! In his role at the AMC, Cooper have been a part of many privy upgrades, retrofits, and full rebuilds. The most recent being an ADA compliant privy on the All Persons Trail on Mt Cardigan. "It has been a true joy to work hard at the problem of responsible human waste management in the backcountry, and I look forward to continuing the work!"

Craig Heinselmann- Craig is AMC's Adopt-A-Trail Coordinator. In this function he works with over 160 trail adopters on critical and alpine maintenance on 440 miles of trails in New England. In addition, Craig coordinates the sign monitoring program. He is a long-time volunteer in the White Mountains in various capacities and brings an engineering background to his role at AMC.

Emily Wight -(They/Them) Emily is the AMC Maine Woods Trails Manager. They grew up building mountain bike trails at Pine Hill Park in Rutland Vermont. Emily started seasonally with the AMC in 2021 and has worked all across New England including on the Old Bridle Path, several locations along the Appalachian Trail, and currently in the AMC 100-mile Wilderness.

Erik Samia – Erik is the Trails Training Programs Supervisor for the Appalachian Mountain Club. For the past 13 years, Erik has been dedicated to trails and overall stewardship of all public lands. From leading volunteer and professional trail crews from New Hampshire to Alaska and a few other places in between, Erik has found his sense of place in the

mountains, forests, and waterways that we all love. Born and raised here in the White Mountains, Erik is excited to host this fourth annual trail community event.

Jon Szalewicz- Jon has a problem with mountains! His first memory is as a 2-year-old with a bowl cut taking the Cog Railway up Mount Washington. Jon grew up playing in the woods of Taconic Mts and moved to NH for high school and college. After hiking the Long Trail in 2000, Jon realized that he could actually get paid to work on trails. He started his career in trails as a Volunteer Crew Leader for AMC in 2002. Over the years Jon has worked across the US from Haleakala National park on Maui to House Island in Maine. Since 02' Jon has taken jobs trail building, caretaking, and wilderness ranger-ing for the AMC, RMC, GMC, NPS, USFS, Washington Trails Association, Pacific Crest Trails Association, etc. For the past 15 plus years in the off season, Jon built and groomed XC ski trails at his home in Craftsbury VT. In 2023 Jon was recruited to turn full circle and rejoin the AMC. Jon is excited to be back and inspired to see the growth and potential in the AMC trails program.

Liesl Magnus- Growing up in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire, Liesl spent many years hiking, camping, and exploring the White Mountains. After going to college in the Adirondacks, they headed out to Montana where they discovered a love of trail work, traditional tools, and teaching others. In Montana, they spent seasons with the Selway Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation, the Montana Conservation Corps, and the USFS. Now in their second year as the Professional Trail Crew Manager, they have continued to hone their skills as a field instructor and are excited to be a part of Trails Skills College in 2025!

Matt Coughlan- Matt Coughlan is the owner of Recon Trail Design, LLC, offering recreational trail planning, design, construction, and education based in Western Maine & Mount Washington Valley. He got started in trailwork as an AmeriCorps intern at Kingdom Trails in Vermont in 2005 and learned rigging for trailwork while working for the Maine Appalachian Trail Club.

Matt Moore- Matt Moore is AMC's Senior Trails Operations Manager. Matt first started working on trails for AMC in 2004, as an Appalachian Trail Ridgerunner in CT and MA. Since, he has worked in and on trails all over the United States, including many seasons as a Trail Crew member and leader in the National Parks, and more than 10 years with AMC's trails department. Matt has specialized in chainsaw work throughout his career and currently is a federally recognized chainsaw instructor offering trainings in bucking and felling several times per year.

Nora Sackett- Nora is the Volunteer Trails Programs Manager for the Appalachian Mountain Club. Nora has been working on trails for 8 years in different capacities and has worked seasonally with the AMC in the past, as well as other organizations in both the east and west, and is especially passionate about rockwork.

Patricia McGuire- Patricia joined AMC as the Mid-Atlantic Trail Program Manager in 2025 with five years of experience in natural surface trail building and maintenance, including time working on a trail crew, performing roving trail maintenance, planning and coordinating projects for trail crews, training and leading volunteers in trail work, and conducting trail assessments. Patricia has worked on trails in a variety of settings, from the backcountry of Arizona, New Mexico, and Wyoming, to state parks and forests in Vermont, to urban parks in the city of Philadelphia.

