Solar Projects Completed at Stearns Lodge
by Jamie Maddock

Summer is starting, the sun is shining, and as of mid-May we’re generating our own electricity at Stearns Lodge! It was only last fall that the RMC conceived its projects for investing in solar at Stearns and at Gray Knob, and the whole thing went so well and so quickly that all of the Stearns construction is now complete, with only the Gray Knob work remaining for the fall. Thank you to the members and others who contributed, many in memory of my good friend and RMC stalwart Mike Micucci, whose passing in October inspired us to undertake this effort in his memory. The four projects – new roof on Stearns, solar array on the new roof, electric heat pump for the caretaker’s quarters, and new panels at Gray Knob – cost nearly sixty thousand dollars, and our campaign for individual donations and foundation grants was completed by April, in time to hire contractors for the spring. I’ve written up some notes from the stages of the work at Stearns, to explain the pictures and provide some details for those technically inclined. It was a great environmental move for the club, we had a great time doing it, and Mike would have loved it from beginning to end.

First step, roof replacement. Our roofer Rob Judson said the old asphalt shingle roof was pretty beat and needed replacing. Fortunately it had not started leaking and the decking was in good shape. Thanks to Paul Cormier for help in selection of the metal roof system. It’s important to have a solid roof for the solar panels and

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Alone on Nowell Ridge
Winter caretaker Abigail Lown reflects on a solitary season on the mountain.

I lay snugly in my sleeping bag as forceful puffs of wind push the sides of the cabin back and forth with a force palpable from my cozy spot on the floor. I imagine I’m inside a ship that’s hit rough water. The structure creaks and moans as the winds shove Gray Knob this way and that. The last bricks in the fire smolder slowly as I drift to sleep, not a soul to tend to and no sounds except the wind against my cabin.

I wasn’t sure what to expect of this odd pandemic caretaking in Randolph, but told myself that whatever the circumstances, I would stick it out. Infrequent human sightings, breakfast, lunch and dinner wholly alone. My quiet winter had its lows and boring days, but the majority of the time I made the most of my life up on the ridge. Hours to fill stretching before me on snowy days, confined to my little abode in the clouds. Checking in on Crag Camp daily, rarely any change save for a dumping of snow or the passing through of a pine marten and a few snowshoe hares. I shoveled privy platforms and porches, knocked down my own meager outhouse cone, and hauled water for the use of just one. I developed a sustainable rhythm of daily life that became comforting, tranquil. I had no reason to rise early unless I was going for a hike, as my most time-sensitive matter was to take the bacon out of the cast iron pan when it was perfectly crisp.

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Greetings from the Mediterranean, where I’m laying over between flights. (If you don’t already know, I’m a commercial pilot in my day job.) This place is on the same latitude as Dallas, Texas, so the sun is pretty strong, especially now that we’re near the summer solstice. The bright sun makes me think of how much power the RMC must be generating, because in the first half of May we put a solar array on the roof of Stearns Lodge, and even on a sunny day in Randolph it’s a day where we’re making our own electricity and stepping away from fossil fuels. Go green RMC!

Going solar has been a great step forward for the club, and during the pandemic it’s also been good to have a special project to focus on, while we continued to adjust to the uncertain public health situation that remained mostly out of our control. Trends in New Hampshire and the northeast are improving, but the RMC will still not be completely back to normal this summer. As of early June, our camps, Gray Knob and Craig Camp remain closed to the public, and the other directors and I are considering state and local guidance in the coming weeks as we decide which events and gatherings we can safely sponsor in Randolph. But we are also rebounding with our outdoor activities and operations, especially on RMC trails, where we have hired a larger crew than in 2020. For members willing and able, there will also be volunteer work trips in July and August, with half-day outings to low-elevation trails, and longer trips to trails higher on the mountain. Whether for volunteer work, a family or group trip or for fine dining (the Gourmet Hike returns in 2021!), hiking is still a very safe outdoor activity and a great way to reconnect with your friends in Randolph. Volunteer work trips also help our budget, by qualifying us for matching grants and allowing our paid trail crew to concentrate on the heavy work.

This will be my last letter to you as President, after serving for six years, and it has been an honor to work with other members of the board, our many volunteers and our camp and trail employees. The past year has been a real challenge, but in fact all of the past six years have brought steady change in the club, as we’ve made improvements in our information systems, communications and social media, employment practices, partnerships with other regional organizations, and the legal and accounting services that support our work. I think the RMC’s ability to adapt and evolve has let us continue to succeed. After 111 years we still have the energetic culture of a community volunteer group, but in many respects we’re now a relatively mature non-profit organization. I think the RMC can and should be both of these things, and as I step down from the board I know I’ll find ways to help it continue. Hope you’ll find your own ways to do the same. Thanks as always for your support, and I’ll see you soon in Randolph.

Jamie Maddock, President
Meet the Caretakers

Ava Jackson (above), Andi Smith (below R) and Myles Chouinard (below L). Courtesy photos.

Ava: You can usually find me working for my parents at Saal Pub & Libby’s Bistro in Gorham. When I’m not bartending, I enjoy mountain hiking and trail running. I graduated from Bowdoin College last year with a degree in anthropology and art. While caretaking I spent time skiing, hiking and gouching paint.

Myles: I grew up and lived most of my life in the Berlin-Gorham area. This year, I’m caretaking spring and summer. Being in the mountains, especially NH’s forests, has resonated tranquility and a sense of decompression. I’m grateful for the opportunity to live in a place with so much beauty and history in conservation. I’ve been a member of AVSAR since 2012 and excited to help people in the Northern Presidentialls more frequently. Some of my favorite things to learn about and participate in are: trail running, hiking/backpacking, weightlifting, foraging, fishing and hunting. I’m thrilled to be part of the RMC’s rich history and culture.

Andi: I just finished my second year at Emerson College, where I’m studying creative writing and history. This is my second year with the RMC and I’m looking forward to returning to the community this summer!
The RMC gratefully acknowledges grants received from the following organizations for its solar projects at Stearns Lodge and Gray Knob:

- The Randolph Foundation
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Tillotson Local Grants Program
- Thomas W. Haas Fund, a donor-advised fund of the NHCF
- The Randolph Foundation
- Stearns Lodge and Gray Knob:
  - organizations for its solar projects at

During the morning Mike’s father Joe Micucci and nephew Ari Jackson stopped by to watch and share stories. Mike F. then went down into the basement to start up the inverter, and Chris Hawkins and Sue Maddock fired up the grill for lunch. By the time you read this we should be hooked into the net with our 6.6 kilowatts of RMC power.

Ray Klinger of Alpine Heat Pumps was also there dropping off the equipment, which will go beside the caretaker’s quarters on a pedestal. It is very efficient, and will really cut down on our use of propane during the winter. For now we are leaving in the gas space heater as a backup, but do not anticipate using it.

Solar projects, continued from page 1

one that will not need replacing soon; it would be very expensive if we had to remove panels from an old roof, put on a new roof and then reinstall the panels.

The solar design featured 21 panels producing up to 7.14 kilowatts of electricity. This will take care of all of lodge’s power needs and also provide power for the heat pump. With net metering we are able to send excess power into the grid and then buy it back at night when we need it. Chris Hawkins played a key role here, lining up our contractor DTL Electric and taking care of all the paperwork required to connect with the grid. Chris Hawkins also made a Dunkin run to keep us going on sugar and caffeine.

The crew has nearly completed laying up the inverter, and Chris Hawkins and Sue Maddock took care of all of lodge’s power needs and also provided power for the heat pump.

DTL Electric and taking care of all the paperwork required to connect with the grid.

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Wayfinding: Maps of the White Mountains by Adam Apt

The long-anticipated exhibition “Wayfinding: Maps of the White Mountains” will be opening at the Museum of the White Mountains this June. The region has one of the richest cartographic histories of any mountainous area and in this regard is comparable to only the European Alps. The region’s mapmakers over the last two hundred years have been of all sorts, from local workmen to experts with national and world-ranging perspectives. Moreover, there is a tremendous variety of types of maps. Even visitors familiar with old White Mountain maps will find surprises in this exhibition, among them extremely rare published maps and unique unpublished manuscripts. The exhibition features maps from the far and recent past, as well as new cartographic aids for today’s hikers, tourists, scientists, weekend explorers, and enthusiasts. Broad historical themes are illustrated. First, we see the development of surveying and mapping technology from the 18th century to the present, as it has been applied to the White Mountains. Second, we see the changing purposes and uses of maps in this region, as the culture, politics, and the economy have changed over nearly four centuries. As the story of White Mountain maps progresses, we see the tremendous variety of maps, not just by type of map, but also by the range of aesthetic choices by the mapmakers, even for a given type of map, and even during relatively short periods of time. Each map describes specific places and routes, and also tells a story of the knowledge, curiosity, purposes, pleasures, and design ideas of its time.

In the exhibition, the maps are presented in either original or facsimile form, and include a number of “firsts”:

- The first map printed in British North America, which is also the first map to identify the White Mountains
- The earliest surviving sketch map of the White Mountains
- The first map to identify Mount Washington
- The first printed map of the White Mountains
- The first topographic map of the White Mountains
- The first contour map of the White Mountains
- The first hiking maps of the White Mountains

Contributor and RMC member Adam Apt, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, serves on the museum’s Advisory Council, and he has co-curated the Wayfinding exhibition with support from David Govatski. It will be on view from June 4 to September 17, 2021.

The Museum is located in Plymouth NH, on the campus of Plymouth State University, about sixty miles south of Randolph. Information at plymouth.edu/mwm.
Nowell Ridge, continued from page 1

I slept in, and usually rose to a chilly room and either brilliant bright sunshine or soft gray skies coming through the windows. I ooh-ed and ahh-ed over many a multi-colored Quay sunset and hot pink morning skies to the east as I collected my weather data.

On my last full day as a caretaker, I walked to the summit of the Rockpile herself. Washington. I delighted in the melting ice and snow, cruised through Sphinx Col and over Mt. Clay. I held my gratitude for the winter as well spent, not for its concrete productivity, rather, for the opportunity to experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience the value of being alone with my own thoughts. My own soul. The experience. I imagined what it would feel like to welcome guests every weekend. The guests I did meet throughout this special season. I think back on my time at Gray Knob and the chance to read as a youngster. I read new books about anti-racism theory. I read comedy that had me belly laughing alone up on the mountain.

The winter allowed me the pleasure of reading nineteen books. The gift of reading for fun was the most soul-satisfying part of the season. I dug into classics I hadn’t had time to read before, straddling the woodstove, trying to stay warm while keeping my bio-brick burning to a minimum. The winter allowed me the pleasure of reading nineteen books. The gift of reading for fun was the most soul-satisfying part of the season. I dug into classics I hadn’t had time to read before, straddling the woodstove, trying to stay warm while keeping my bio-brick burning to a minimum. The winter allowed me the pleasure of reading nineteen books. The gift of reading for fun was the most soul-satisfying part of the season. I dug into classics I hadn’t had time to read before, straddling the woodstove, trying to stay warm while keeping my bio-brick burning to a minimum. The winter allowed me the pleasure of reading nineteen books. The gift of reading for fun was the most soul-satisfying part of the season. I dug into classics I hadn’t had time to read before, straddling the woodstove, trying to stay warm while keeping my bio-brick burning to a minimum.

Within this framework, the year-to-date expenses and revenues are all coming in as expected and line with the budget approved by the board in January. Outside the operating budget we have also planned the solar electricity projects at Stearns Lodge and Gray Knob. The response to our fundraising appeal was so strong, from both individuals and grantmaking foundations, that we are able to fund the projects with new special-project donations received in 2020 and 2021, and without drawing on the RMC’s reserve funds. Look for a full report on these special projects and the rest of 2021 in reports at the Annual Meeting and end of year.

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Welcome new RMC members!

Sarah Alexander, Shoreview MN
Will Arling, Windham NH
David Berliner, Somerville MA
Jared Bierbaum, Bloomington IL
Karen Bradley, Randolph NH
Anne Wenk and Jack Cushion, Brooklyn NY
Eric Cos, Centreville VA
Liz Crutcher, Marlborough CT
Josh Davis, Kittery ME
Hannah DeMarco, N. Attleboro MA
Tristan Donovan, Dover NH
Suzanne Eusden, Whitter AK
Carol Felice, Madison NH

RMC 100 Finisher

Chris Cameron of Hudson, New Hampshire completed the RMC 100 on April 29, 2021. He started in 2015, and he’s seen above on the Castle Trail in August 2017. Courtesy photo.

RMC Merchandise

Head to the RMC website year-round for merchandise, paying membership dues, making a donation, or setting up an automatic payment plan for dues or donations.

www.randolphmountainclub.org

Featured on this page: Our zip fleece vest, with the RMC logo patch (available on the website) and the 2020 Directory. The directory is available in print only, to members only and not via the website. To purchase, contact Michele Cormier directly at (603) 466-5841 or pcormier@ine.tr.com.
New RMC Alumni Association

by Tad Pfeffer

It should be obvious, after only a moment’s thought, that a great many people have passed through the RMC’s Camp Caretakers and Trail Crews over the one hundred eleven years since the Club’s founding. It was not until the RMC’s Centennial in 2010, however, that we started to appreciate not only how many of us there have been, but also how many have vanished – some to posterity, but others simply to a new and unknown address.

After the Centennial event, a small group of RMC people started gathering updated bios and contact information on alumni employees, to share this information on the RMC website (see link at end of this article). We were struck by the variety of experience and expertise of those individuals we have been able to trace. A combination of fascination with the historical depth of the Club, regard for its history, and awareness of the challenges of the changing mountain world the Club inhabits has motivated us now to formally establish an RMC Alumni Association.

Alumni association leaders, from left: Jenny Baxter, Doug Mayer, Sarah Allen, Tad Pfeffer, and Deva Steketee.

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