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5 COLLEGE OUTDOOR FESTIVAL CELEBRATES NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

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Appalachian Mountain Club organizes annual event for college outing clubs in Pioneer Valley

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMHERST, Massachusetts – The annual 5 College Outdoor Festival returns to Hampshire College on April 16, bringing together local students from the Five College area to enjoy and gain a deeper appreciation for stewardship of the Pioneer Valley’s outdoor recreational resources, especially the New England National Scenic Trail (NET). As the long-running festival’s new organizer, the [Appalachian Mountain Club](#) (AMC) is coordinating closely with the Hampshire College Outdoor Programs, Recreation, and Athletics Department, which will continue to host the event on the college’s campus.

The free, full-day 5 College Outdoor Festival is open to all Pioneer Valley area college students and kicks off with an orienteering race at Hampshire College, followed by hiking and rock climbing trips on the NET in the afternoon. For information and to register, visit newenglandtrail.org/5collegefest.

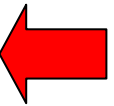
This year’s festival will celebrate the NET along a stretch of the trail that passes through J.A. Skinner State Park and Mt. Tom State Reservation. Outing clubs from Smith College, Mt. Holyoke College, Amherst College, and UMass Amherst will lead several hiking trips on the NET that include well known local peaks such as Mt. Holyoke, Bare Mountain, and Goat’s Peak. Greenfield Community College will separately lead a technical rock climbing skills review at a climbing area along the NET.



The festival will conclude with featured evening speaker Heather “Anish” Anderson, who set the unsupported speed records for the Appalachian and Pacific Crest National Scenic Trails. This portion of the festival is open to the general public and free to attend. Anderson will speak at Hampshire College in Franklin Patterson Hall at 7pm.

As trail steward of the NET in Massachusetts, AMC has been working to engage young people and colleges on the trail and in the outdoors through the NET College Network, with support and funding from the National Park Service. This event is just one of many to increase volunteerism, recreation, and stewardship on the NET with people of all ages in surrounding communities.

To commemorate the 2016 National Park Service Centennial, this year nationally recognized artist Xiomáro is creating a photographic series of the NET as one of the country’s 11 National Scenic Trails.



About the New England Trail

Designated in 2009, the New England National Scenic Trail (NET) is a 215-mile trail route that travels through 41 communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The NET is comprised primarily of the historic Mattabesett, Metacomet, and Monadnock (M-M-M) Trails. The principal trail stewards are the Berkshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) in Massachusetts and the Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA) in Connecticut. Nearly 2 million people live within 10 miles of the New England Trail, which travels through a classic New England landscape with stunning scenery and rich natural resources. For additional information about NET, visit newenglandtrail.org or the NET Facebook page at facebook.com/NewEnglandNationalScenicTrailNet.

About the Appalachian Mountain Club

Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) promotes the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters, and trails of America’s Northeast. AMC helps people of all ages and abilities to explore and develop a deep appreciation of the natural world. With chapters from Maine to Washington, D.C., guidebooks and maps, and unique lodges and huts, AMC helps people get outdoors on their own, with family and friends, and through activities close to home and beyond. AMC invites the public to support its conservation advocacy and research, youth programming, and care of 1,800 miles of trails. More information is available at outdoors.org.