



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2015

Contact: Bruce Lyndes
News Services Mgr.
(603) 535-2775

**New Exhibit at PSU's Museum of the White Mountains
Features Hiking Trail Clubs**

Plymouth, N.H. – In the early 1900s, Americans were discovering the beauty and grandeur of New Hampshire's White Mountains, and hiking the scenic ridges became increasingly popular. Trail clubs began forming, with members creating hiking trails and overnight camping structures, beginning a proud legacy of enjoying and protecting New Hampshire's most precious natural resource.

The renowned hiking trails of New Hampshire's White Mountains and the trail clubs that created and maintain them are featured in the newest exhibit beginning March 31 at [Plymouth State University's Museum of the White Mountains](#). *Trail Clubs: Connecting People with the Mountains*, highlights the history and important role trail clubs have played in the White Mountains region. MWM founding director Catherine Amidon said the exhibit enhances visitors' knowledge and appreciation of trail clubs and the members who comprise them.

"Look at your White Mountain National Forest map and you'll find a seamless trail system," said Amidon. "Those trails were cut and are now maintained by groups like the Appalachian Mountain Club, Cohos Trail Association, Dartmouth Outing Club, Squam Lakes Association, and more. This exhibition brings together those clubs and groups that enjoy and help to maintain the White Mountain National Forest."

The exhibit includes a full-scale, handcrafted log shelter erected in exhibit space for visitors to view. Following the exhibition, the shelter will be dismantled, transported, and rebuilt by the Cohos Trail Association in northern New Hampshire. Other unique images and artifacts of trail clubs and trail making are also on display. The exhibit is curated by Steve Smith, author and hiking enthusiast, Mike Dickerman, author and book publisher and Ben Amsden, Director of the PSU's Center for Rural Partnerships. Dickerman and Smith co-produced the authoritative reference book, *White Mountain Guide: AMC's Comprehensive Guide to Hiking Trails in the White Mountain National Forest*.

According to Chris Thayer, the AMC's director of North Country programs and outreach, the White Mountains trail systems are revered by hikers worldwide.

"New Hampshire has long been a top destination for outstanding outdoor experiences. Our rich hiking history, extensive trail networks, and iconic mountains all contribute to that well-deserved reputation," Thayer said. "Since the 19th century, trail clubs have been instrumental in creating the footpaths we all enjoy today and, as shown in the museum's new exhibit, they remain partners in the ongoing stewardship of these public assets for the benefit of future generations."

The trail clubs are also credited with helping create national awareness about the importance of preserving public lands. For decades, timber barons had callously clear-cut thousands of acres of trees, creating environmental disasters like floods and forest fires. The trail clubs appealed to political leaders, claiming forest protection was critical at the national level; soon after, the White Mountain National Forest was created.

"The exhibit is a great opportunity to see and appreciate the many ways in which trail clubs have contributed to the stewardship of the White Mountains," said Smith.

To expand the exhibit's reach, the MWM has made additional online materials available, including a catalogue, videos and standards-based educational material developed by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

The exhibition was made possible by the generosity of these donors: 2014-15 Museum of the White Mountains members; John Nininger and the Wooden House Co., Ltd, Newbury, VT; Ed Rolfe, Wilderness Map Company, Littleton, NH; and Michael Mooney.

Trail Clubs: Connecting People with the Mountains, is on exhibit through March 6, 2016.

#30#

For more information about this release, contact Bruce Lyndes, PSU News Services Mgr., (603) 535-2775 or blyndes@plymouth.edu.