

The Ponky Reporter



Letter from the Chair

Hello Ponkapoagers!

It's been quite a ride working our way through the ups and downs of life during the pandemic and the constant need to update the way Ponkapoag operates. Covid forced a shortened summer season last year and we remained open through the fall and winter. We could not have done it without the many volunteers that make Ponkapoag possible. As you all know, Ponkapoag is a volunteer based camp all the way from the chair to the committee to the community of people that contribute their time to making the camp a rustic refuge. We are launching this newsletter to help connect the Ponkapoag community.

After being closed and unable to have volunteer work parties for the first year of the pandemic, we got work parties started again last year. The camp needed extra TLC after being closed and the volunteers came through, I want to thank you. Some of you may have seen the recent WBZ "It Happens Here" story about Randolph and focused on Ponkapoag. I was proud to show the reporter around camp, and it is the volunteers who help maintain the camp through it's now 100 year history.



Scan the QR code or click the hyperlink to watch the WBZ video: [It Happens Here: AMC Ponkapoag Camp 'A Little Bit Of Heaven' In – CBS Boston](#)

We are focusing on volunteer engagement and connecting to the region's diverse population. Historically, volunteer opportunities at Ponkapoag were mostly hands-on like raking leaves, painting cabins or light carpentry repairs. Volunteering meant either coming to work parties or for the ambitious volunteers seeking out individual projects. To enable more people to

contribute to camp, Ponkapoag is launching a new opportunity for volunteer work that can be done at a computer or pen and paper. We've set up what we call "sub-committees" that are focused on a specific need of the camp. These subcommittees work autonomously and need diverse talents including creative skills and hands-on skills to be successful.

Sub-committee opportunities include:

- The Ponkapoag Digital Newsletter: Put together a regular electronic newsletter to be emailed and posted on our website to expand our reach and increase volunteer engagement.
- Environmental Education: Create opportunities for a diverse local population to access direct, affordable, personal experiences with nature.
- Ponkapoag Centennial Celebration: Plan and implement a celebration and commemoration of Ponkapoag's first 100 years.
- Cabin Experience: Keep cabins updated, while maintaining their rustic and close-to-nature character by monitoring and maintaining the furniture, fixtures, and equipment.
- Outhouse: Researching ways to improve and or update bathroom facilities while maintaining camp's rustic charm.
- Grounds: Preserve the natural habitat of camp to strike a balance between environmental protection and camp safety while enhancing camp life.

*If you would like more information or to volunteer contact us at
ponkapoagcamp@outdoors.org.*

I hope you have had a chance to visit camp and get your version of "Ponk Magic" in the past year by staying in a cabin, coming for the day, or hiking through. It really is a wonderful refuge so close to Metro Boston. Be sure to check Ponkapoag's website for the latest information on camp.

In closing Ponkapoag is planning a full summer season this year so don't forget to send in your summer reservations, starting in April for the Cabin Lottery held in early May.

Here is a link to the [Ponkapoag Website](#).

Happy Ponking,

Dennis Maher

AMC Ponkapoag Volunteer Camp Chair



Help Wanted

Summer Manager

Ponkapoag is looking for a *summer manager* this season. If you are interested or know someone who is, please email ponkapoagcamp@outdoors.org for more information.

Paid Skilled Carpenter/ Handypeople Needed

There are several skilled carpenter jobs we have been unable to do with volunteers. These jobs include things like making repairs to window sills, repairing or building new stairs and railings, as well as other interior and exterior maintenance.

Ponkapoag is looking to hire carpenters or handyfolks for these small jobs, usually half to a full day of work. Ponkapoag is developing a list of people for future jobs that cannot wait for a work party.

If you know carpenters or handypeople who work in the Randolph/ Canton area, please contact us: ponkapoagcamp@outdoors.org.

Paid Contractor Needed

As some of you may know, Ponkapoag has tried to renovate one of the nineteen cabins each year, unfortunately due to the Pandemic we were not able to renovate a cabin the past two years. Planning is underway to renovate a cabin this spring, and another in the fall. Cabin renovation includes everything from footing repairs, new windows, sprucing up interiors and roofing.

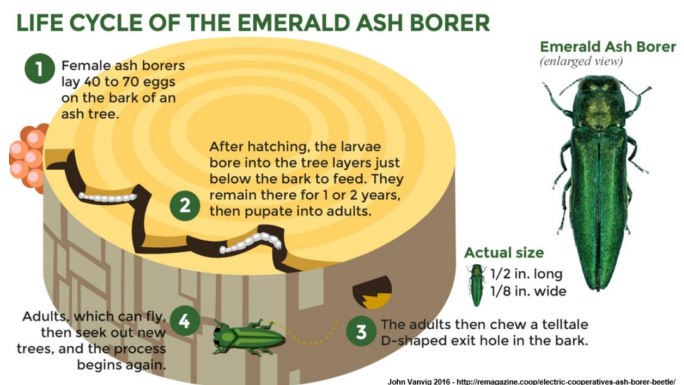
Ponkapoag is looking to hire contractors for Cabin Renovation involving multiple days of work. Please contact us if you know renovation Contractors who work in the Randolph/ Canton area: ponkapoagcamp@outdoors.org.

Nature of the Blue Hills: The Emerald Ash Borer

by Libby Arsenault

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), also referred to as the Asian Longhorned Beetle, is an invasive insect fatal to all six species of ash trees in the United States and Canada. It is thought to have entered the US in 2002 through shipping containers constructed from ash wood. The EAB was first detected in Michigan in 2012 and has since spread to at least 35 other states, including Massachusetts.

The adult EAB lays its eggs in the bark of ash trees. After hatching, the larvae burrow into the wood then enter into their pupal stage. After pupating, the EABs bore their way back out of the wood in serpentine patterns by feeding on tissues that transport water and sugar (see illustration) thereby cutting off vital nutrients to the tree. In the past 20 years, millions of ash trees in the US have succumbed to the EAB.



According to forest ecologist Isabelle Aubin of Natural Resources Canada, "Losing key species like ash is weakening forest ecosystems."¹ Scientists are working on conservation strategies and mitigating the impact that dead ash trees are having on forest ecosystems. For more information on the Long-term Impacts and Management of Emerald Ash Borer click on this webinar link <https://youtu.be/yVnumpAavnE>.

How can you help?

As individual campers, there are actions we can take to help protect Ponkapoag and other forest ecosystems from further damage due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

1. Do not bring untreated firewood into camp!
2. Watch for and preserve lingering ash trees.
3. Seed collection. Click here for information: https://www.fs.usda.gov/nsl/gtr_nrs55_AshSeedCollection.pdf
4. Contact your Massachusetts state legislators; ask them to support the invasive species bill (H.999 sponsored by Representative Rogers, S.563 sponsored by Senator Jehlen).

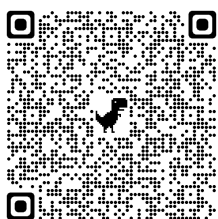
¹ Pennisi, E. (2020, September 23). *A sparkling beetle could spell doom for North America's ash trees*. <https://www.science.org/content/article/sparkling-beetle-could-spell-doom-north-america-s-ash-trees>

Friends of the Blue Hills

is a non-profit organization “devoted to preserving and protecting the Blue Hills Reservation’s natural beauty, diverse natural habitats and many recreational opportunities.” The organization provides events, activities and educational workshops that are free to the public.

On Sunday, May 1, you are invited to volunteer at **Green Up the Blue Hills**, an event geared towards removing garlic mustard plants from areas around Ponkapoag’s cabins. The event announcement explains: “This plant is easy to pull out... but very damaging to other plants in the forest. It releases a poison in the soil so native plants do not survive. By removing garlic mustard, volunteers will help keep the forest healthy for the endangered species that live at Ponkapoag Pond — and all plant and wildlife.”

Participation in this event can be counted towards your volunteer hours for camp!



For further information and to register, scan QR code or click on link <https://friendsofthebluehills.org/news-events/calendar/>

Green Up the Blue Hills
May 1, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Meet: Temple Beth David of the South Shore
1060 Randolph Street, Canton, MA

Other upcoming Friends of the Blue Hills events:

Saturday, March 26 @ 11:00am - 1:00pm Beginner Hike

Saturday, May 28 @ 1pm - 3pm: DCR Southeastern Adult Walking Club

Social Connections

Introducing one of Ponkapoag’s newest and youngest members, Josiah Furth, who was born on October 7, 2021 to parents Barnabas and Hope Furth! Josiah is a very smiley and happy boy, and he loved his first visit to camp!



Ponkapoag Work Party Dates

With spring just around the corner, it'll soon be time to roll up our sleeves! The next work party is scheduled for Sunday, April 10th. Work parties usually go from 10 am to 4 pm. Make sure to save these work party dates on your calendar!

Sunday, April 10

Saturday, April 30

Sunday, May 22

Sunday, June 12

Saturday, June 25

Opening on June 26



Ponk History Lesson

by Finbarr Arsenault

Ponkapoag Pond has been a relaxing getaway, a home to a family-friendly campground, and pleasant hiking route for nearly one-hundred years. Despite the AMC establishing its campground in the early 1920s, the site was frequented as a getaway for another hundred years prior.

The early history of Ponkapoag Pond as a popular vacation spot arguably starts with the establishment of the Ponkapoag Hotel in 1823 by Captain William Tucker, who purchased the land from his father. On the land, he constructed a hotel and subsequent tavern, to accommodate which, Cpt. Tucker carved out a path to the pond for a beachside shack. Here, he would hold shoreside parties for his patrons. A diverse collection of people turned up at the tavern, from a circus in 1825 to an entire company of The Crane's Guard Militia. The hotel even featured a bowling alley!² When Cpt. Tucker passed away in 1869, the popularity, and thus accessibility also crawled to a halt. His property was sold off, and the following owners neglected to maintain the hotel.

In the years surrounding the turn of the century, the relatively-untouched Ponkapoag Pond and Blue Hills would find themselves victim once again to increased popularity. In the final decade of the 19th century, the Kanton Kamera Klub*³, along with naturalists, hikers, and many others

² Huntoon, Daniel T. V. *History of the Town of Canton, Massachusetts*. 1893. *Stoughton History*, <https://stoughtonhistory.com/12huntoon.htm>. Accessed 7 Mar. 2022.

³ Erickson, Beth, and Jay Turner. "Editorial: History Column Solely Lacking in Context." Editorial: History Column Solely Lacking in Context | Canton Citizen, 25 Sept. 2014, <https://www.thecantoncitizen.com/2014/09/25/editorial-images-on-glass/>.

found themselves attracted to Ponkapoag Pond's shores. Photos from 1893-1913 reflect its general popularity during the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. Just as today, family and friends would use the pond's waters as a chance to relax, canoe, fish, and eventually, camp.

The advent of railway travel made it possible for city-goers to venture far from the bustle of Boston. With the popularization of streetcars and trolleys in the early 20th century, once-secluded vacation spots throughout New England became increasingly popular.⁴ The popularity was so exponential that Ponkapoag Pond attracted the attention of The Appalachian Mountain Club when looking for new potential candidates for Boston-area campgrounds. In 1921, the AMC campground was established. Initially consisting of tents and a singular building, it would grow through the 20th century to be the cabin-campground we know today.⁵



Post scriptum: This article was a very, very, short history of Ponkapoag Pond. Below are some links that provide greater insight to a more thorough history. I look forward to writing more about the pond in the future. Any feedback or corrections on historical facts would be greatly appreciated.

*This is the actual name of the club. There was already a local club who used the initials "CCC," so the club opted for a more unfortunate name. Extensive research has been done, but nothing has ever connected this photography club with the hate group that shares the same initials.

⁴ Comeau, George T. *Canton*. Arcadia Pub., 2009.

⁵ Whitley, Howard S. "History of the Camp." *AMC Ponkapoag Camp*, Appalachian Mountain Club, 23 Jan. 2020, <https://ponkapoagcamp.org/history/>.

Letter from the Editors

Dear Campers,

Do you have any news, photos, announcements, or other relevant material you want to share? Do you have any topics that you would like us to explore? New ideas for camp - like how to mouse-proof a cabin? We want to hear from you! Send us an email!

Contributions to the newsletter can count as volunteer hours!

Thank you!

The Editors

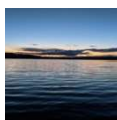
Send us your submissions for the Spring Edition of the Ponky Reporter by Sunday, APRIL 1, 2022!

Articles
News
Ideas
Photos
Questions



Email the editors at:
PonkapoagNewsletter@gmail.com

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