

Long Trail NEWS



Quarterly of the Green Mountain Club

WINTER 2019



Search & Rescue | ED Summits Denali | On Patrol with Ranger Ray | Thru-Hiking the LT in Winter

Long Trail NEWS

The mission of the Green Mountain Club is to make the Vermont mountains play a larger part in the life of the people by protecting and maintaining the Long Trail System and fostering, through education, the stewardship of Vermont's hiking trails and mountains.

Quarterly of the Green Mountain Club

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The *Long Trail News* is published by The Green Mountain Club, Inc., a nonprofit organization founded in 1910. In a 1971 Joint Resolution, the Vermont Legislature designated the Green Mountain Club the "founder, sponsor, defender and protector of the Long Trail System..."

Contributions of manuscripts, photos, illustrations, and news are welcome from members and nonmembers.

The opinions expressed by *LTN* contributors and advertisers are not necessarily those of GMC. GMC reserves the right to refuse advertising that is not in keeping with the goals of the organization.

The *Long Trail News* (USPS 318-840) is published quarterly by The Green Mountain Club, Inc., 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677. Periodicals postage paid at Waterbury Center, VT, and additional offices. Subscription is a benefit for GMC members. Approximately \$5 of each member's dues is used to publish the *Long Trail News*.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Long Trail News*, 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677.

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Cover: Hikers fighting the wind on the summit of Camel's Hump. Photo by Earle Ray.



PHOTO BY CRYSTAL VALENTE

Winter Forest on Monroe Trail, Camel's Hump

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Winter 2019, Volume 79, No. 4

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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation: Filing date, September 19, 2018. *Long Trail News*. Publication No. 318-840, published four times per year. Office of publication, editorial and general business office located at 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, Vermont 05677. Editor: Jocelyn Hebert. Owner: The Green Mountain Club, Inc. Average number of copies each issue during preceding twelve months: Total number of copies printed, 7,000. Total paid distribution, 6,658. Total free distribution, 418. Total distribution, 7,076. Office use and otherwise not distributed, 0. Total, 7,076. Percent paid distribution, 94.10%. Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: Total number of copies printed, 6,700. Total paid distribution, 6,548. Total free distribution, 200. Total distribution, 6,748. Office use and otherwise not distributed, 0. Total, 6,748. Percent paid distribution, 97%. – *Jocelyn Hebert, Editor*



From the President

As winter approaches the Green Mountains, most of us rummage through our closets looking for our winter packs, hats, gloves, and cold weather layers. We trade our trail shoes for spikes, snowshoes, and skis as we get ready to head for the snow-covered hills. We are lucky we can step outside into a classic winter wonderland.

At club headquarters, our thoughts also turn toward our responsibilities as outdoor educators and trail maintainers and managers. Whether you are a seasoned winter hiker or new to winter travel, safety should be your first priority.

Neil Van Dyke, search and rescue coordinator for the Vermont Department of Public Safety (also known as the Vermont State Police), compiled an informative list of rescues on the Long Trail and Appalachian Trail this past season. (See pages 6-7.) It includes only a few winter rescues, and let's help him keep it that way! His safety tips apply year-round.

Last year there was a lively discussion on one of our social media platforms about maintaining and marking the Long Trail for winter use. One participant wrote: "Suggestion to GMC trail manager—Put a two-inch diameter international orange spot in the middle of the white blazes, then you will be able to see them in the winter. It works. I have blazed trails in Alaska this way!" A hiker in southern Vermont complained that he had been surprised to discover that shelters on the Long Trail were not designed for winter use.

We realize others might not know or understand GMC's position on winter maintenance, so we include here relevant highlights from our Long Trail System Management Plan:

SIGNS AND BLAZING

Background

Trail signs and blazes are necessary to provide hikers with a clear indication of the trail route and highlight trail junctions, overnight facilities, and points of interest. However, in keeping with the character of the Long Trail System, signs and blazes should convey the necessary information without being overly obtrusive.

Policy

Trail routes should be clearly defined so they can be easily followed by hikers in spring, summer, and fall. Trail blazing is an important part of this definition, but no substitute for proper trail clearing, which assures an easy route to follow. Over blazing mars the primitive character of the Long Trail System. It is important that the desire to reassure hikers they are on the trail be balanced by preserving the trail's character. Generally, no more than one blaze should be visible from any point on the trail.

WINTER USE

Background

Traditionally, the Long Trail has been maintained for use during the summer and fall. In recent years, the growing popularity of winter hiking and cross-country skiing has led to increasing use of the trail and trail facilities during the winter months.

Policy

In general, trails will not be maintained to a different standard in order to accommodate winter use. One exception is trails above treeline, where cairns may be used to mark the trail route. Other exceptions may be approved by the Trail Management Committee. Educational efforts will continue to inform hikers about safe and proper use of the trail system in winter.

In cases where excessive winter use is



Tom Candon

resulting in resource damage to overnight facilities and alpine areas, the Trail Management Committee will take action to prevent further degradation of the site, in cooperation with the appropriate management partners.

There are practical reasons for not maintaining the trail for winter use: the club doesn't have the staff or volunteer capacity to support the effort, and our backcountry waste management systems do not function in freezing conditions.

We hope it will be some consolation to those who wish for winterized shelters to know that GMC rents three cozy cabins with wood stoves, though not on the Long Trail. Bryant Camp and Bolton Lodge in Bolton Valley, and Hadsel-Mares Camp on Wheeler Pond in Barton, have all received rave reviews. See "Sections" on pages 24-25, and the "Journey's End" column on page 31, to see how friends have gathered at heated cabins in winter.

In this edition you will find two stories of cold weather adventures: Executive Director Mike DeBonis's account of his ascent of Denali (pages 8-11), and the tale of a thru-ski of the Long Trail in 1990 by two intrepid National Guardsmen (pages 16-18). I hope you find them interesting and inspiring.

Please step outdoors well prepared this winter, and come home safe and happy.

—TOM CANDON, PRESIDENT



Skiers on Mount Abe Summit



Editor's Note: Because we received so many comments this quarter, we doubled our space for letters. That wasn't enough, so we edited every letter for length. We hope your thoughts survived. Thank you for sending them.

Include Hiker Quotes in GMC Calendar

The first GMC calendar of 2018 won the lottery. You did absolutely everything right to share the spirit of the GMC and what we are all about: pictures of the trail, and quotes from hikers. A win-win combination for certain. So why did you change the format for 2019 and do away with the hiker quotes? Hopefully you realize that those quotes (along with the beautiful photos) made the calendar. Hope it's not too late for the 2020 calendar to find those hiker quotes that speak volumes ... Please do hiker quotes for all future calendars.

—TODD JENNER

Editor's Note: You will be happy to know that we reinstated hiker quotes in the 2020 Calendar!

Long Trail News is Informative, Enjoyable

I love how each issue of the *Long Trail News* has a theme. This one [Fall 2019] seems to be appreciating, protecting, and preserving the wild places we enjoy, presented through multiple perspectives ("The Mountains through a Different Cultural Lens: An Abenaki Perspective" and "Mountain Names: Remembering their Aboriginal Origins"). You found outstanding Native American writers who did much to calm the "us vs. them" tension common when presenting a "minority" viewpoint (though I suspect that among LTN readers these are not minority viewpoints!).

I also enjoyed that sometimes an article's perspective was somewhat slightly slanted from what I might have expected (e.g. "Problem Bears? Or Problem People?"). You also do not shy from harsh realities ("How a Fed Bear Became a Dead Bear"). This is important education, sensitively done so it does not sound like preaching and doesn't make me feel guilty about my own imperfect backcountry practices. Instead, I feel grateful to have such good teachers and a lot of food for thought.

The articles on staff members help me understand what goes on at the club, and provide a greater appreciation of members I don't know well. Those featuring trail construction and maintenance leave me amazed, even though I thought I already knew a lot about those topics.

I receive publications of the Sierra Club and The Nature Conservancy. I learn a lot from them, but I find the *Long Trail News* more enjoyable. Is it because the LTN deals with issues closer to home? Maybe. But really, I think that it is because the LTN ... makes us aware of the wider impact of the club's work and of the other topics covered, and helps us understand the roles we can play, on whatever level we choose. Not just donating money or time on trail or corridor work, ... but the roles we hikers can play during each of our forays outdoors.

—KATHY ASTRUCKAS, GMC UPPER VALLEY
OTTAUQUECHEE SECTION OUTINGS COORDINATOR

New Member Benefit: Caretaker Fee Waived

About a year ago ... I emailed you my thoughts about having to pay to stay at some shelters despite being a member. I debated whether to take the time to make contact, but I've always felt feedback from members helps strengthen an organization.

I was pleased to see a policy change allows members to now stay for free at shelters which previously required fees. Thank you. I'm fairly certain the change wasn't a result of my letter alone and others probably had a similar thought and also sent in their two cents.

—DAVE ROSATO

It's Not About Size or Strength

I appreciated Rosalie Sharp's article ["Leverage: It's Not About Size or Strength"] on using leverage to move large rocks. Many years ago, with a summer of professional trail crew and a master's degree in physics under my belt, I was astounded to watch then Field Supervisor Dave Hardy "surf" a step-stone into place.

Three of us had struggled for 20 minutes to move that heavy rock, working with all our strength. "Bites" were difficult to find. Dave in his gentle way gave us a lesson in working smarter, not harder. He stood on the rock, adding his 170 pounds, and commenced a series of quick and tiny little jabs and pries, each moving the rock a fraction of an inch, while showing no signs of breathlessness or exertion. Simultaneously he enlightened us on the finer points of leverage. Within five minutes he had the rock firmly seated, where I'm sure it remains to this day. It was absolute proof to me that strength is much less important than skill and strategy.

I would also add that a rock 80 feet up a gentle slope is drastically easier to move down to a job site than an identical rock 20 feet down the slope.

—DAVID IVERSON

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PHOTO BY CHRIS RICE

Jean and friends on the Nulhegan North Branch Trail.

We Lost a Friend and Leader

The Vermont hiking community lost one of the most inspirational leaders in GMC history on November 2 with the passing of **Jean Haigh**. We will have a tribute in the spring 2020 *Long Trail News* highlighting a life dedicated to supporting outdoor recreation and bringing people together, the way only Jean could. Venture into the mountains and forests this winter and—as Jean always did—bring a friend or two.

Inspired by “The Mountains Through a Different Cultural Lens”

Thank you so much for this article [“The Mountains Through a Different Cultural Lens: An Abenaki Perspective” written by Melody Walker]. I learned a lot from it, and it was beautifully written. I am glad the GMC is featuring the ideas of folks of color, and specifically indigenous people.

I am the program director at Farm & Wilderness, a Vermont Quaker foundation that runs overnight summer camps involved with the Green Mountains. We have been trying to teach our campers the history of the land we are on, as well as an appreciation of the relationship of indigenous people to the land, and we have developed partnerships with the Akwasasne Mohawk tribe and some Abenaki folks. I intend to circulate your article to our camp leaders for our continued education. Thanks!

—MICHELLE GOLDEN

UVM College Groups Courteous, Considerate, Schooled in LNT

I recently completed a thru-hike of the Long Trail on which I encountered seven or eight college orientation groups from the University of Vermont and two other colleges. I assume the GMC must have some relationship with these schools, given the number of trips they make on the Long Trail, and that they essentially appropriate the public space of the Long Trail for their private activities.

I’m writing to send a shout out to the groups from the University of Vermont, who were exceptionally courteous and considerate and schooled in Leave No Trace (LNT) principles—new students as well as older leaders. I ask that the GMC remind the program [administrators] at the other schools to review LNT principles, particularly on sharing space and being considerate of other hikers.

A twelve-person shelter should not be completely overtaken by a group of eight on a rainy day. And I mean overtaken—food, gear, wet clothing, sleeping stuff, backpacks, socks strewn on every surface and blocking the entire front porch area. My partner

and I had to literally clear a path before we could even step under the overhang.

Ear plugs and 30 yards of separation should be enough to sleep at 11:00 p.m. without being forced to follow conversations about freshman math courses shouted up the hill. The UVM groups showed it is possible to bring orientation groups to the woods in a way that is enjoyable, valuable, and harmonious for everyone. Please encourage the other colleges to sort their groups out for the sake of everyone on the trail.

Thanks for hearing my thoughts, and thank you for maintaining a beautiful trail!

—ZACHARY KENT

Editor’s Note: Organized groups planning to hike on the Long Trail System should visit the Group Hiking page on the GMC website for more information. Please use the online group calendar to sign up, greenmountainclub.org/groups/.

Questions, concerns, or need help? Contact our group outreach and field coordinator, John Plummer, at groups@greenmountainclub.org or (802) 241-8327.

Search & Rescue

ON THE LONG TRAIL AND APPALACHIAN TRAIL

BY NEIL VAN DYKE

While tens of thousands of people hike on Green Mountain Club trails every year without incident, occasionally things go wrong. Fortunately, Vermont has a dedicated and well-trained cadre of search and rescue people to help when things don't go as planned.

The Vermont State Police have jurisdiction and take the lead when people are 'missing or lost in the backcountry, remote areas, or waters of the State.' Help for hikers injured in known locations is typically delegated to local fire departments, emergency medical services, or search and rescue organizations.

I think it is of interest to review a fairly typical season of incidents on the Long Trail and Appalachian Trail in 2019. You may recognize some patterns.

Most injuries are caused by slips, trips, and falls. Wearing good footwear and not exceeding one's abilities can help avoid falls, but even experienced hikers can have an accident and need help!

Most, if not all, other calls for assistance could be avoided by following simple safety practices.

- Keep your group together.
- Be sure everybody in your party has a map, knows how to read it, and understands the planned route.
- Tell somebody reliable where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Take a headlamp or other dependable light source (not your phone) *even* if you are just going out for a short hike early in the day. Keep the light source in your daypack with a set of extra batteries or take two lights to avoid having to change small batteries in rain or cold.
- Be sure to dress in layers and pack extras including a rain shell. Vermont's weather can change quickly, especially at higher elevations.
- If you are on a long hike and intend to check in with family and friends, let them know there may be long periods with no contact because there is limited or no cell coverage in remote areas. Decide under what circumstances they should contact authorities. Search and rescue agencies will not usually search for hikers simply because friends or family "haven't heard" from them, unless there are other risk factors involved.
- If you do need help, call 911. Resist calling other people so your phone line is open to communicate with emergency responders, and to save battery life.

I wish you a happy and safe winter hiking season!

2019 Search and Rescue Incidents

2/17. Long Trail near Skyline Lodge. Hiker separated and lost trail. Located and assisted out by rescuers from local fire departments and Vermont State Police.

4/22. Battell Trail. Hiker separated and lost the trail. Followed drainage back to the road.

5/2. Long Trail near Belvidere Mountain summit. Hiker lost trail in snow. Talked back to Vermont Rte 118 by Vermont State Police and given a ride back to her car.

5/23. Long Trail on Camel's Hump. Hikers at Cowles Cove Shelter realized they had gone too far, having intended to descend the Forest City Trail while hiking on Camel's Hump. Directions were given by phone back to their car in Huntington.

5/27. Long Trail on Camel's Hump. Hiker called to report loss of the trail. Directions were given over the phone to get "unlost."

6/13. Long Trail north of Little Rock Pond. As it began to get dark, two teenagers requested assistance while trying to hike to Vermont Rte 140. Rescuers from local fire departments and Vermont State Police located and assisted them down the Homer Stone Trail.

6/20. Report from GMC of a call from a family member who had received a call from a hiker "in distress." Contact was made with the hiker a short time later, and it was determined there was not a problem.

6/28. Long Trail north of Kid Gore Shelter. Report of a hiker in distress. Located at Story Spring Shelter with a shoulder injury by search and rescue.

7/9. Long Trail at Governor Clement Shelter. Group had not returned to their summer camp when expected. Located at shelter by camp staff.

7/23. Near Cantilever Rock on Sunset Ridge Trail on Mount Mansfield. Injured hiker. Multiple search and rescue organizations responded and carried the subject on a litter out to Underhill State Park.

7/24. Long Trail. Hiker called from Corliss Camp to say they were confused on which way to go. Johnson Fire Department members hiked in to assist.

7/25. Long Trail. Fifteen-year-old on a summer camp overnight trip last seen near Cooper Lodge on Killington. Extensive search located teen in good condition 19 miles away at David Logan Shelter.

7/27. Long Trail. Injured hiker just north of Sterling Pond. Assisted off the trail by Stowe Mountain Rescue.

8/2. Appalachian Trail. Family member concerned that she had not heard from her mother hiking on the AT. Mother called and was okay.

8/7. Hellbrook Trail on Mount Mansfield. Injured hiker evacuated with assistance from multiple search and rescue groups.

8/10. Appalachian Trail. Family member concerned that she had not heard from her daughter hiking on the AT. Daughter called and was okay.

8/11. Camel's Hump. Separated group. One person came down in Huntington instead of Duxbury as planned. Hiker came out on her own as search and rescue was ramping up.

8/17. Long Trail. Medical event at Whiteface Shelter. Assisted off the trail by Stowe Mountain Rescue.

8/20. Camel's Hump. Camper with burns at Hump Brook Tenting Area. Evacuated by Waterbury Backcountry Rescue.

8/28. Long Trails. Injured hiker on Haystack Mountain in Lowell. Multiple fire departments and search and rescue groups assisted in carrying them off the trail.

9/4. Mount Mansfield. Report of a separated hiker during severe storm. Came out on their own.

9/4. Camel's Hump. Hiker with a leg injury near Wind Gap. Assisted off the trail by multiple search and rescue groups.

9/9. Long Trail. Hiker with knee injury just south of Camel's Hump summit. Carried off the mountain by multiple search and rescue groups.

9/12. Long Trail. Family member concerned she had not heard from her mother while she was hiking on the Long Trail. Mother called and was okay.

9/13. Mount Mansfield. Hiker stranded (unable to move up or down) with her dog on the Cliff Trail. Assisted by rescuers from Stowe Mountain Rescue.

9/18. Long Trail. Family member concerned that Long Trail thru-hiker had not checked in with their SPOT (satellite messenger) device. Hiker was okay.

9/19. Appalachian Trail. Hiker turned around on trail east of Killington. Able to find their way to a road and get a ride.

9/24. Long Trail. Hikers called to report they were lost near Little Rock Pond. Located and escorted out by Wallingford and Rutland Fire Departments.

10/15. Camel's Hump. Hiking party separated near the hut clearing on Camel's Hump. Started down Bamforth Ridge instead of Monroe Trail. Came out on own on Burrows Trail.

10/28. Long Trail just south of Smugglers' Notch. Report of a hiker who had fallen causing a significant laceration to their forearm. Stowe Mountain Rescue responded, administered first aid, and assisted hiker to the road.

11/13. Long Trail/Appalachian Trail. A man located about .5 mile from Goddard Shelter called 911 to report that he was too weak and exhausted to continue. Vermont State Police, SAR, and Fish & Wildlife wardens brought the subject out of the woods just after midnight.

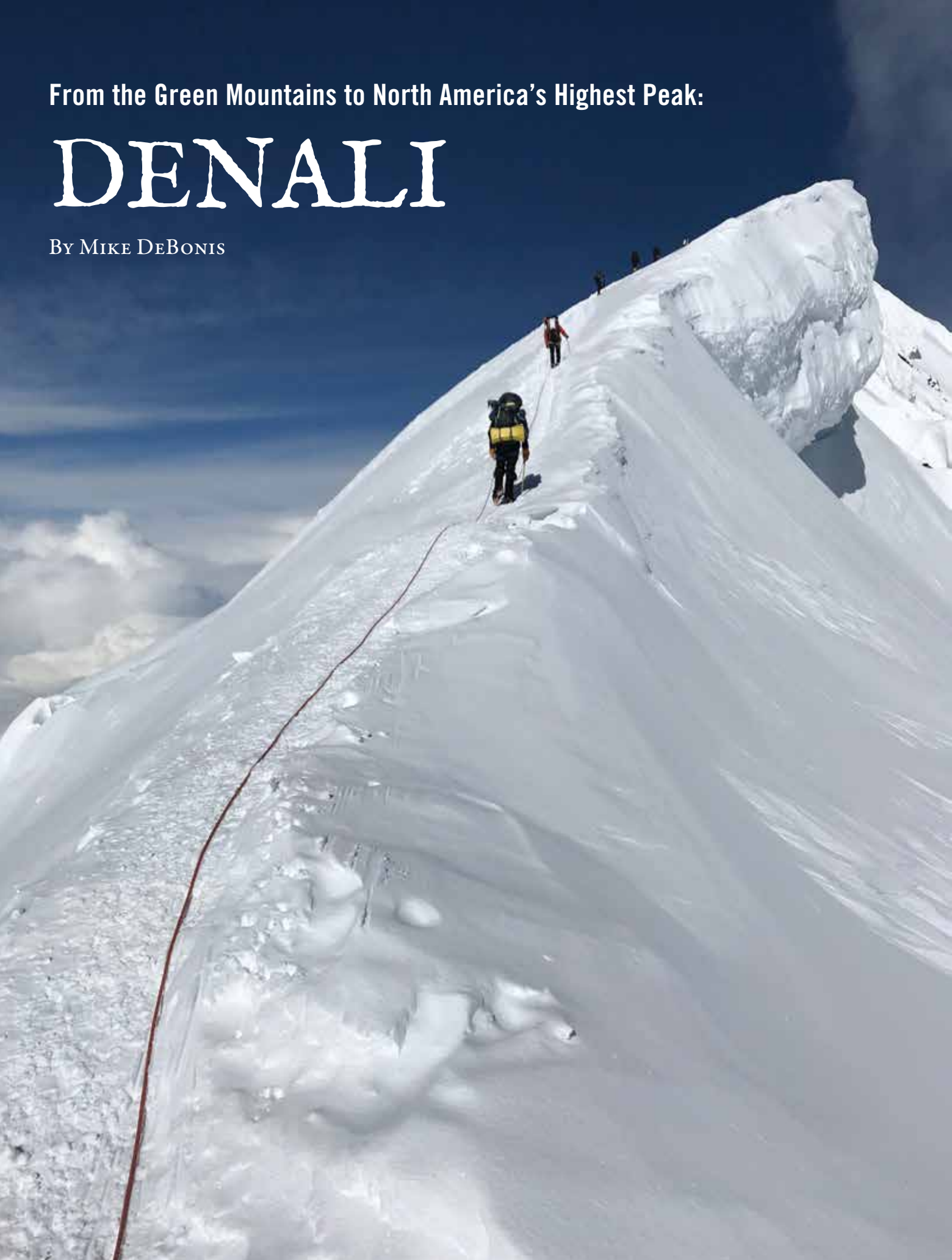


**Neil Van Dyke, Search and Rescue Coordinator,
Vermont Department of Public Safety**

From the Green Mountains to North America's Highest Peak:

DENALI

By MIKE DeBONis



Our guide said we needed three things to climb Denali: fitness, footwork, and mental fortitude. Oh, and being okay with cold and discomfort wouldn't hurt.

I can't recall exactly when I began to think of climbing Denali, North America's highest peak at 20,310 feet, but the idea really took hold a few years ago. I was approaching 50, and figured if I was going to do it, I'd better get serious.

To decide whether I really wanted to do an expedition climb, I signed up for an eight-day Denali winter prep course on Mount Rainier in the Washington Cascades in 2017. It provided an overview of the skills and equipment needed for traveling and camping in snow and cold. The experience reignited my fondness for winter camping in New England.

But before attempting Denali, I needed more experience on glaciated mountains, so I joined a trip to Mount Baker in northern Washington. Even in June this 10,781-foot peak has storms and deep snow. Our group spent two days in tents waiting for the weather to clear for a summit attempt. It didn't happen, and we hiked out without success. Our guides tried to make us feel better by saying that waiting out storms in a tent is a very important mountaineering skill.

Crevasse on Denali are notoriously huge, and falling into one, especially in the summer as the ice melts, is a serious concern. So team members needed to know how to use rigging systems with mechanical advantage for pulling out teammates. The climber in the crevasse, if able, uses ascending devices such as prusik (friction) knots or mechanical cams to climb out. I went to the White Mountains of New Hampshire and took a two-day course with professional guides that covered the basics.

The ascent up the West Buttress of Denali is the most common route. It follows the Kahiltna glacier for 15 miles from 7,500 feet to the 20,310-foot summit. For about the first ten days, each climber on our team had to pull a sled with personal and group gear, along with an expedition pack, totaling about 100 pounds. At 14,000 feet, when the glacier is left behind and the terrain becomes more technical, snowshoes and sleds are cached, and climbers switch to crampons



Mike on summit holding GMC bandana

and an ice axe and begin carrying all gear in packs.

Training Back Home

In my research on preparing and training for Denali I learned there is no one right way. Some on my team hired personal trainers, while others climbed high-

“...at some point your body or mind will tell you “no,” and you must override the desire to quit and push on.”

elevation glaciated peaks. A guy from Houston pulled a cart loaded with cement blocks along city streets, much to the bemusement of his neighbors.

For me, the Long Trail System in the winter of 2018-2019 proved the perfect training ground. I was one of the only people on the team fortunate enough to have convenient and unlimited access to steep, snow-covered mountains.

I followed a six-month training program suggested by the guide service, designed to build strength and endurance. Its key element was the “McKinley edge:” the principle that at

some point your body or mind will tell you “no,” and you must override the desire to quit and push on. An extra lap or hill climb is built in at the end of each workout in the program to accustom you to going just a bit further or pushing a little bit harder.

It was important to start my regime slowly. To prepare for carrying a 65-pound pack uphill for eight hours a day, day after day, I spent six months gradually increasing the duration and intensity of my workouts.

My work hours as GMC's executive director made it tough to fit training into a typical day. I did many hours of trail running by headlamp after work or in early mornings. When the snow got too deep for running, I walked and ran on a treadmill at home. I didn't join a gym, but I installed a pull-up bar and hung a climbing rope over a beam in my barn (think of the climbing rope in your elementary school gym). I used another climbing rope to practice crevasse self-rescue techniques, using prusik slings to pull myself up while wearing my full pack and gear.

If you're not a climber, you might wonder what a prusik sling is. It's a loop of comparatively thin rope tied in a friction knot (the prusik knot) that grips the thicker climbing rope when the loop is weighted. With the loop unweighted, a climber can slide the knot up the



Camp 2, climbers ascending “Motorcycle Hill”

climbing rope.

Using two alternating slings supporting their feet and a third sling clipped to the upper portion of their climbing harness, climbers can ascend the climbing rope—slowly and laboriously. Getting over the top edge of a crevasse is often the most difficult part, especially if the rope has cut into the edge. That’s when help from above is most useful.

A month before my trip I was training six days a week with at least two days of heavy pack training. I loaded 25 to 30 pounds of gear and five one-gallon jugs of water—weighing an additional 42 pounds—into my 105-liter pack. When I reached a summit, I emptied the jugs to ease the descent a bit. The nice part about training like this was that I never had to worry about running out of water. And dumping gallons of it onto the ground was a good conversation starter with fellow hikers. Eventually, loading and carrying the heavy pack became second nature.

Favorite Training Places

Early morning skinning up Bolton Valley was a favorite training technique—and really the best time to go, when the snow was firm and the woods were quiet and dark. I wore a headlamp to start, but often turned it off at dawn.

Ski trails are great training for glacier travel. They flow linearly through mountains like glaciers, and at night or early in the morning they can be hard and icy. Black diamond trails are good practice for wearing crampons and using an ice axe on steep slopes.

My favorite local mountain and trail for hiking and training was the Monroe Trail on the Duxbury side of Camel’s Hump. I wore snowshoes lower down, even if the trail was packed, and switched to crampons on the steep upper sections. When wind was ferocious on the summit I hunkered down in my cold weather gear and drank hot cocoa. This was a good way to test gear and clothing, especially for occasions of forced immobility in severe weather.

On one winter trip up Mount Washington, when winds exceeded 30 miles an hour and the temperature was well below zero, I got a good look at potential conditions on Denali. Above Lion’s Head the wind really hit me. I was sweating from the climb, and needed to add layers and cover exposed skin quickly. I cursed myself as I fumbled for gloves and my fingers chilled. My bag was poorly organized, and I wasn’t ready for the sudden change in weather. That hike was humbling, and I realized I needed to improve my skills, because I couldn’t afford to make mistakes like that on Denali.

Fortunately, I grew stronger and more proficient as my training progressed. After a winter on snowshoes and crampons, my stride and foot placement became more comfortable and efficient. I learned to organize my pack better, and no longer had to dig to the bottom for critical gear. As the last mountain snows melted in late May, I put away my gallon water jugs, and was finally ready.

The Climb

The critical limiting factor on Denali, other than weather, is altitude. My team spent almost two weeks progressing slowly from base camp up the mountain. After each move to a new camp, we rested a day or two. To eliminate the need to carry the full weight of our gear the entire distance, team members ferried loads up the mountain beyond each camp, and then returned to sleep at camp with empty packs. This also accelerated acclimatization to altitude, by providing exercise high up, followed by rest and sleep lower down.

On some days we did nothing physical—literally nothing. I read book after book on an e-reader. The summer sun doesn't really set in the Alaskan interior, so sleeping was difficult, especially on days with no physical exertion. Our job on those down days was to eat, rest, and acclimate. In short, climbing Denali came with long stretches of extreme boredom, punctuated by brief moments of exhilaration and risk.

Once at high camp—17,000 feet—everything changed. No more rest days. After two weeks putting ourselves in position for the summit, the day arrived. A good weather window had the guides telling us we were going for it. Weather changes quickly on the mountain, so when you get a good summit day, you always go for it. You never know if you will get another chance. This was the third attempt for one teammate, the second for two others. All three had been stuck in their tents at 14,000 feet for five days on previous climbs with no weather window for a summit attempt.

On the morning of June 22 our team got up, ate breakfast, and began the steep climb to Denali Pass. We summited at midday under clear, calm skies. To say we were lucky is an understatement. The view from the top was spectacular and sharing that special moment on the highest point in North America with my teammates was exhilarating.

Climbers say a piece of you stays on the mountain. You dedicate so much time and energy to preparing and climbing that when the experience is over, there is a void in your life. I like to think that whatever piece of you is left out there is replaced by something that is a better, purer expression of yourself. 🏔️



Graphic showing approximate camp locations

MOUNTAIN STATS

Denali: 20,301 feet

Base camp: 7,500 feet

Camps (6): Base; Camp 1; Camp 2; 11,000 Camp (3); 14,000 Camp (4); 17,000 Camp (5)

Team: 9 clients; 3 guides

Team success: 77%

Average trip duration: 17 days (National Park Service data)

2019 registered climbers: 1,230

Average overall summit rate: 65%

Percentage of U.S. climbers: 63%

Percentage of women: 12%

MIKE'S STATS

Days: 16

Rest Days: 6

Distance traveled: 15 miles

Average pack weight: 120 pounds (including sled)

Temperature swing: -20F to 90F (in sun)

Highest altitude: 20,301 feet

Calories per day: 6,000-8,000

Favorite Food: Bag of bacon

Food storage: Cache dug in the snow

Human waste: #1 in designated communal holes. #2 in "clean cans." Yup, everyone on the team defecates in a can. All solid waste is carried out of the park.

Trail pests: Crows that tried to get into our food cache and my clean cans!

Worst ailment: Sunburned tongue—yes, really

Fondest memory: The views

A full-page photograph of Earle 'Ranger Ray' Ray standing in a snowy forest. He is wearing a black beanie, glasses, a black jacket with a grey harness, blue gloves, and red gaiters over black pants. He is holding two trekking poles and wearing snow boots. The background shows snow-covered trees and a path.

On Patrol *with* **RANGER RAY**

BY LINCOLN FRASCA

For Earle “Ranger Ray” Ray (a.k.a. R.R.) the Long Trail is much more than a footpath in the wilderness. It’s 272 miles of community, photography, story, and a common thread shared among day hikers, thru-hikers, and section hikers alike.

This fall I was the Battell Shelter caretaker, and I often saw R.R. hiking “on patrol.” At 63, in gym shorts, running shoes, and a light pack, he had a spring in his step typical of hikers half his age. Our first encounter was when I met him on the trail between Lincoln Gap and Mount Abraham. We had an enthusiastic conversation and it was obvious how much he cares for the trail and appreciates the work of the GMC.

I crossed paths with him several more times in the next few months. One misty September morning at Theron Dean Shelter I chatted with him *off* patrol, and he gave me his signature 👍 to share his story here.

R.R. lives in Monkton, 30 minutes from the trailheads of Mount Abe and Camel’s Hump—his unofficial patrol area. On any given day you may find him in the alpine zone, swapping stories, helping hikers identify peaks, taking landscape photos, and the occasional selfie.

Born in Exeter, N.H., his family moved when he was about ten to an old farmhouse near Pawtuckaway State Park in Deerfield, N.H. Here he explored the woods and honed his outdoor skills. He loves to share stories about his youth: “I remember the days when my dad would throw the canoe and our fishing rods in the station wagon, and just go. My dad was an avid outdoorsman and would take our entire family on yearly camping trips to the White Mountains and Baxter State Park.”

R.R. credits his own love of the mountains to his father’s adventurous spirit.

Last Father's Day he posted his recollection of one of his dad's stories about climbing Mount Katahdin on Facebook: "His team of climbers was the first to reach the peak that year. I can hear his proud voice, telling me all about how he and his small group of friends at Exeter High School had bested a team of climbers from Phillips Exeter Academy, a prestigious private school."

Like many of us mountain creatures, as he likes to call fellow hikers, young R.R. dreamed of living in a cabin and becoming a park ranger or game warden. Later his dreams were realized. After service in the Navy, he attended college on the GI Bill and worked summers as a ranger at Bear Brook State Park in New Hampshire. He also worked as a police officer in Deerfield, with parts of Bear Brook and Pawtuckaway State Park in his jurisdiction.

After college he looked for U.S. Forest Service ranger jobs but found them few and far between. Instead, his experience as a Navy air traffic controller led him to become an air traffic controller with the Federal Aviation Administration.

That job landed him in Vermont, and *here* is where "Ranger Ray" was born. While section hiking the Long Trail, R.R. often wore green pants and a matching cap. Spotting his distinctive garb and sensing his military bearing, hikers often asked, "Are you the ranger?" One hiker learned his last name, and the rest is history.

R.R. has used the trail for guidance, and sometimes to cope with grief, throughout his life. After retirement, he found himself at a loss for what to do next, so he began hiking Mount Abe...a lot. "Could have been every day," he said. He finds comfort in the meditative rhythm of hiking and feels connected to the "mountain brothers and sisters" he meets on the trail, including many veterans. "For some vets, or anyone in

transition, the trail can be the perfect place to sort things out," he said.

It's hard for him to choose his favorite trail encounter, but one does stand out. Once he picked up two hitchhiking northbound thru-hikers, and they sighted a bear (a first for all of them in Vermont) just below Appalachian Gap. The next day R.R. hiked up Camel's Hump to meet them and snapped a thumbs-up group selfie of them with the GMC caretaker. Days later they sent him a photo of their big smiles at the Canadian border. It's these small and ordinary human connections that energize and motivate him.

R.R. often writes short stories about interesting hikers, accompanied by thumbs-up selfies, and posts them on his Facebook page. These, along with his scenic trail and landscape photos, keep his Facebook viewership in the thousands.

**"It's these small and
ordinary human
connections that energize
and motivate him."**

He considers social media and the increased use of technology on the trail a double-edged sword. "As much as I enjoy sharing highlights from the trail, I'm wary of the impact that social media has on popularizing certain areas like Mount Abe," he said. He feels the use of technology in natural areas can devalue the wilderness experience, and he longs for "the good ol' days when, with compass and map in hand, hikers ventured across these mountains." However, he's quick to acknowledge the advantages of technology, and he supports the slogan "hike your own hike."

R.R. has been hiking in Vermont for more than 30 years. His partner (trail name "Treats") keeps him fueled with homemade baked goods and desserts (testimonial!). After a long caretaker shift, R.R. and Treats invited my partner and me for a dinner featuring fine cheeses, baked chicken, potatoes, Waldorf salad, AND chocolate gingerbread! I think all caretakers would agree there's no better way to get on our good side than to share fresh and hot home-cooked food.

In 2015, R.R. finished the Long Trail. He recently completed the Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine sections of the Appalachian Trail, and is no stranger to the White Mountains, where he has hiked many of its high peaks. He doesn't consider these hikes conquests, and tries "not to get too wrapped up in a check-the-box mentality." Rather, he sees them as tiny puzzle pieces. Perhaps one day he will assemble a few more Appalachian Trail puzzle pieces, or spend time compiling his hiking stories and photos for a book. For now, he is content hiking in the Green Mountains he calls home.

Wherever his next steps lead him, the GMC will be patiently waiting for his caretaker application. In the meantime, he shares this advice for hikers: "Put one foot in front of the other, and most definitely hike your own hike! R.R., out!" 🥾

Lincoln Frasca grew up in the Catskills area of New York. He graduated from UVM in 2015 with a B.S. in Environmental Studies. Since graduation he has pursued a career in outdoor education leading trips for Outward Bound California and coaching ski teams in Lake Tahoe. This past year he returned to Vermont and resides in the Mad River Valley.

See photography by Earle "Ranger Ray" Ray on following pages.



Ranger Ray with mountain friends and GMC caretakers. Lincoln Frasca with Ranger Ray on far right.

The Mountains We Call Home

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EARLE RAY

*Snow was falling,
so much like stars
filling the dark trees
that one could easily imagine
its reason for being was nothing more
than prettiness.*

—Mary Oliver



South side of Camel's Hump



Hut clearing, Camel's Hump



Camel's Hump summit



Forest near Battell Shelter



Battell privy, Mount Abe



Birch forest



Lone hiker approaching Camel's Hump summit



Happy hiker on Mansfield



Mount Mansfield ridge



Thru-Hiking the Long Trail in Winter

How Two Men Did It

BY KRISTIN MCLANE

We GMC staff members have heard mention of winter end-to-end Long Trail attempts for years. We thought there had to have been at least a couple of winter thru-hikers, but no one could name one. A *Long Trail News* archives search turned up former 1970s GMC President George Pearlstein, who has been called the first winter end-to-ender many times. However, further research revealed he did his hike in sections, not continuously. Other names also turned out to be section hikers; didn't finish their winter trips; or didn't hike on the Long Trail in winter at all. No dates of registered end-to-end hikes indicated winter thru-hikes of the Long Trail, either.

We asked *Long Trail News* readers to contact us if they knew of anyone who had thru-hiked the trail in winter and received two new names that did check out. We'd finally confirmed a successful winter Long Trail thru-hike—or more accurately, thru-ski.

What did it take? Apparently military mountaineer training and expert ski skills. Also, helicopter support.

In January of 1990, Sergeant First Class Pat Moriarty and Sergeant First Class Tom “Stony” Stone were “old men” in the Vermont National Guard at around age 40. Yet they were chosen for a recruiting mission on the Long Trail that winter.

Pat and Stony, senior instructors at the Army Mountain Warfare School in Jericho, routinely spent at least a week each month outside. Among other winter training, they had also gone through three weeks of mountaineering on Maine's Mount Katahdin in winter with the entire cadre

“The bottom line is,
when you're doing
something like this, you
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if they say they're on
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it—they're on belay.”

several years earlier. A Baxter State Park permit had required resumes and medivac capability. Climbs there depended on trust and guts. If your rope partner slipped off one side of the narrow and precipitous Knife Edge, your job was to jump off the other side to arrest the fall. Clearly, Pat and Stony had what it took for the Long Trail in winter.

Recruitment along the Long Trail made sense because the trail passed through many ski areas where accomplished athletes—seen as potential recruits—could be found. The Guard arranged for Pat and Stony to ski down each mountain in the morning, get a few runs in, set up a table at the base lodge to meet people and hand out the recruiter's cards, then take a lift back up to the trail. Good work if you can get it. Such a trip seems unimaginable these days.

Trust and Compatibility

Pat and Stony were already good friends, which would come in handy on an expedition of more than two months. “We called each other a lot of names, but it was all laughing and throwing snow and stuff at each other,” Pat said. “The bottom line is, when you're doing something like this, you travel with somebody that if they say they're on belay, you can forget about it—they're on belay. And if they say they're going to do something, they're going to do it. Plus, skillset-wise we were fairly evenly matched.”

Pat insists no particular days were better or worse than others, and he tends to downplay any trouble at all. “Every day, sometimes every hour, every minute, there was a challenge of some sort or another.” They'd figure it out and continue on, no big deal.

A Supported Expedition

A winter thru-hike of the Long Trail is no mere hike, but an expedition. Once a week, a Huey helicopter found the adventurers and supplied food, fuel, radio batteries and climbing skins, and removed trash, empty fuel canisters, and dead batteries. The Guard kept in touch with FM radios that worked via line of sight, with help from repeaters on Mansfield and Killington.

In especially cold weather, a windchill of -35 degrees F. or colder, a helicopter was sent to check on them every other day. With no planned meeting points, the pilot flew until their direction-finding radios' signals intersected. A "jungle penetrator," a heavy steel device pointed to pass through foliage without snagging and extract downed pilots in forested areas, lowered and lifted supplies and trash. Supplies descended in doubled duffle bags; trash rose the same way.

Special Gear

Pat and Stony spent most of their time on soft and wide 180 cm. Dynastar Yeti touring skis, and didn't even take snowshoes ("We hated them!"). With Silvretta 401 bindings, Asolo winter mountaineering boots, and Leki adjustable ski poles, their setup worked well, except for their self-adhesive Silvretta mohair climbing skins, which repeatedly snapped under the strain. Pat and Stony went through around 150 pairs. It got so bad they sometimes had to improvise climbers with six meters of cordage tied in knots along the bottom of each ski.

Snowpack varied from boot top to knee depth on eighty percent of the trail. "If you're used to mindlessly slogging along, it's okay. If you are a true Nordic skier, you'd probably hate it. Probably one of the key things was we weren't carrying that much weight on our backs. We would have had a hard time slogging through had we been carrying packs, but since we were dragging sleds, we had weight distribution which was better than a normal long-distance hiker might have."

They pulled gear and supplies on Mountainsmith Armadillos, short hard-bottomed sleds with covers and long handles. For steep terrain they could fold the handles, converting the sleds to unwieldy backpacks. With a weekly load of fifty-five pounds, neither was eager to do that, though adjustments could balance weight over their

hips. Instead, they used climbing ropes to surmount ledges or icy spots, then hauled the sleds up on ropes with z-pulleys anchored by trees. They resorted to that only about a dozen times, and only for short distances. They carried crampons and ice tools but used them only half a dozen times. "We tried to avoid the ice simply because of the factor of it's tough on equipment and easy to get hurt on," Pat recalled.

Staying on the Trail

As any winter LT hiker might wonder, how did they follow the trail? White blazes often disappear on snow-plastered trees, but Pat says there was still a "pretty discernible path even with snow on the ground," although they did have trouble in the high-elevation spruce-fir zone. They used trail maps, National Geodetic Survey maps, Silva Ranger compasses, and Thommen altimeter-barometers so "not only could you take a shot at a hilltop" and triangulate, "you could also check with your altimeter-barometer and put you on the right contour line. ... We never took a wrong turn. Massachusetts to Canada, we never, never got disoriented. Once again, we taught it for a living. I would have been more surprised had we been lost. Nobody in the military is ever lost; they are temporarily geographically embarrassed, but never lost."

Warmth, Fuel, Hydration

They carried two North Face VE 25 tents, one a spare they never even unpacked. Said their boss at the time, "If you plan for emergencies, you'll never have one."

Avoiding shelters, Pat and Stony set up their tent each night on any sunny flat spot, ideally with a natural windbreak. They packed down snow, set the tent, then dug a hole a foot and a half deep in the snow by the door. This let them sit comfortably to remove boots when entering, but more importantly, they could then crack the zipper along the floor so cold air would sink to the lower vestibule floor.

A space blanket hung on one side of the tent, and a lit candle lantern could raise the inside temperature from -10 degrees F. to 45 degrees F. in no time. "Many nights we'd sit for a couple hours and shoot the breeze in our underwear sitting on top of the sleeping bags." Their -40 degree F. Wiggy's sleeping bags had fast-drying and highly compressible Lamelite synthetic insulation, which had been tested for military use. Two sleeping pads, an Ensolite foam pad, and a self-inflating Therm-a-Rest rounded out their sleep systems.

They cooked supper daily on an MSR XGK multi-fuel stove with white gas, made more efficient by putting small square foil-covered foam pads under the stove and the fuel can, so they'd have something warm in their stomachs at bedtime. Supper was usually the military cold weather oatmeal ration.

Dehydrated rations take a lot of water, but they were usually able to dig for water in brooks, and filtered it through Katadyn pumps for drinking. They seldom melted snow, which is time- and fuel-intensive and "lousy tasting." The military had calculated that winter duty required 3,500 to 4,500



Preparing to lower a "jungle penetrator," a mechanical system used to resupply Pat and Stony.

calories per day. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks were cold “pocket food” – nuts, trail mix, chocolate (“you never have too much chocolate”), small amounts of granola. They drank dried apple cider to avoid the diuretic effect of coffee. If the weather was really bad and they wanted a warm meal early, they stopped and made camp, cooking outdoors to reduce moisture in the tent. They found their food sufficient—neither man lost or gained weight, but it was redistributed, mostly into their leg muscles.

Safety Measures

Because Stony was a Special Forces Medic and Pat a registered EMT, they had “the emergency first aid kid from hell.” Fortunately, they didn’t need it much. They had no illnesses, and only minor injuries—rope burns, scratched faces from tree limbs, and the like. Pat rolled down some stone steps close to Mad River and banged up the back of his head. Stony twisted his knee at one point, but they “taped it all up, and he walked on like it never happened.”

“The military experience was probably good for us prior to going, because you’re used to working when you’re hurt, with sprains and strains, and tired,” Pat said. “Ranger school, you’re lucky if you got four hours of sleep a day for 68 days. You’re used to working when you’re nearly exhausted, and that helped on the Long Trail. And also recognizing some of the symptoms—when you start taking unnecessary risks or doing dumb stuff and not thinking through right, it’s time to pitch the tent. You need to get some sleep, get some food, and get your head screwed on straight so you don’t end up hurting yourself.”

Clothing and Hygiene

Both men had two sets of uniforms made of fast-drying ripstop nylon. Each had a very bulky Austrian Army issue wool sweater with a high collar—“We could stand outside at 50 below” in these. They wore fleece caps and gloves and mittens with detachable fleece inserts and carried both lightweight and expedition weight long underwear.

They applied extra dry antiperspirant to their feet beneath light polypropylene sock liners and extreme cold weather wool socks. “We could have two or three pairs of socks drying out inside our Gore-Tex while we were moving” using their pantyhose drying system. They put damp socks in the legs and feet of a

pair of pantyhose and hung it around their necks under outer layers to dry by body heat, a trick learned from keeping IV bags warm.

Finally, each had a fleece pile “bear suit” that could really keep them warm—so much so, they almost never wore it. “The key, particularly in the wintertime, is not to overheat, so slow and steady with the minimal amount of clothing on for whatever the weather conditions are.”

Miscellaneous gear included candle lanterns (“We used the insert that burns fuel oil instead of candles—a much cleaner, smarter way to go and plus, you could go all night on one filling of fuel”), plastic sandwich bags (for cold feet, put a partial sandwich bag on your foot under your sock, just over your toes—this keeps in the heat while letting out perspiration), down-filled camp booties and a pair of Tingley rubber slip-ons for traction, and baby wipes—two per day.

They tried solar showers every few days for the first week or two, then said “the hell with it.” Still, the worst part of the trip for Pat was not being able to get clean. They always accepted happily when people they encountered invited them home to learn more about their trip. First they offered hot drinks, then hot showers. “People seem to be very gracious when you’re doing something

nonintrusive, obviously putting some effort into it.” They never went to town but did stay in kind strangers’ homes about ten times. They met only a couple of dozen hikers away from ski areas.

“Planning ahead is key,” Pat said. “Once you’ve done all your planning, then go to somebody who hasn’t been in on any of the planning and ask them to shoot holes in it. The ‘what if’ person. The other thing is: come to grips with some givens. You’re going to be tired, you’re going to get sick of walking, you’re going to get sick of setting up the tent, you’re going to have equipment failures, you’re going to have stuff to do, emergency repairs, you’re going to end up with minor injuries, you may or may not get sick while you’re on the trail.”

Pat’s and Stony’s matter-of-fact approach to a major adventure showed they were right for the mission. While especially noteworthy for the Green Mountain Club, for them their winter thru-hike of the Long Trail was just one of many adventures, solo and together. 🐾

Many thanks to GMC member Tom Aldrich, who informed us of this amazing journey and put us in touch with Pat.



Army Sergeant First Class Tom Stone was killed in Afghanistan in 2006 at age 52 in Operation Enduring Freedom, his third tour of duty in Afghanistan with the Vermont National Guard. He had previously set up small medical clinics for Afghan civilians that served thousands. While still based in the Upper Valley, where he grew up, Stony also spent 1992 through 2000 walking around the world—22,000 miles through 29 countries.



Master Sergeant Pat Moriarty retired in 2000, and still lives in the Mad River Valley where he grew up. He started teaching skiing at Sugarbush before retiring and continues to this day. He’s never done the whole Long Trail in the summer, but he might try it next year, now that he has a new right ankle.



Snow laden forest on the Long Trail



Planning the Year Ahead

Our Work Begins with You

The Green Mountain Club has big plans for 2020.

We want the youngest members of our community on trails exploring and engaging their minds and getting their boots muddy. Some have limited or no opportunities for hiking, so we are committed to finding ways to help them enjoy time on our trails.

We begin hiring backcountry caretakers and trail crew members in January and are developing a more comprehensive training program for them that includes a curriculum on

diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We are continuing conversations with landowners and trail management partners to buy land to permanently protect more of the Long Trail.

We are planning weeks of field season work, which requires getting permits, visiting work sites, and collaborating with partners across the state.

And, we continue to answer questions from hikers who stop by the visitor center year-round and help plan their trips.

This is a lot to accomplish, and it all depends on you.

With your support, we can create experiences for youth on trails.

With your support, we can hire field staff to care for our mountains, trails, and overnight sites.

With your support, we can conserve more land and protect more trails.

With your support, we can help hikers have positive, memorable experiences.

—ALICIA DiCocco

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

greenmountainclub.org/donate



GMC toddler hike



Sterling College students hauling trash



Middlebury College service trip



Tufts University service trip



Exploring the forest



Keeping the Long Trail System in good condition requires a staggering amount of work. Routine annual maintenance alone takes a small village of people. Planning, obtaining permits, reconstruction, relocations, coordinating partnerships, and site management add further time and complexity.

Major work last summer on the Long Trail in the Breadloaf Wilderness demonstrated that perfectly. In October, 2017, a windstorm felled hundreds of trees, obstructing and sometimes obliterating the trail. In 2018 most blowdowns were cleared, but normal annual maintenance had to be deferred. Early in 2019 we started receiving reports that the Long Trail in that area felt like a carwash in wet weather, and debris filled waterbars and other drainage structures. In federally designated Wilderness areas the footpath is maintained to a lower standard, but the trail fell far short of even that standard. And many areas continued to lose trees because so many were no longer protected from wind by standing neighbors.

A full range of trail supporters tackled the work of reopening the Long Trail in the Breadloaf Wilderness. Led by Bread Loaf Section Trails Chair David Morrissey, the section made many work trips to clear drains, clip encroaching vegetation, and clear blowdowns. Ken Norden and Seth Coffey of the U.S. Forest Service led other Forest Service employees who made crosscut saws sing. GMC caretakers left normal responsibilities to help. Other GMC lead field staffers responded with long workdays to pitch in themselves and coordinate the work of others. Finally, many individual trail and shelter adopters picked up tools to assist. Everyone pulled together, and the trail through this area is much improved.

Students on college service trips also do trail work each year. Green Mountain Club staff members led 16 volunteer service projects, providing 150 participants from nine outdoor orientation programs the opportunity to learn and contribute to trails by working on the Long Trail System.

- **Yale University** students installed puncheon on the Long Trail in Lye Brook Wilderness.



Sterling College students carrying roofing material for Corliss Camp.

- **Tufts University** students constructed scree walls and installed string treadway marking on Sunset Ridge Trail on Mount Mansfield. On the Long Trail, other students brushed back overgrown sections and cleared drainage structures between Boyce Shelter and Little Hans Peak in the Breadloaf Wilderness.
- **Harvard University** students spent two days assisting with the Long Trail relocation project at Stratton Pond.
- **Williams College** students also worked for two days on the Long Trail relocation project at Stratton Pond.
- **Sterling College** students worked on the Long Trail north of Vermont Route 15; cleaned drainage structures, used a crosscut saw to remove blowdowns, and clipped brush on the Forrester's Trail; carried lumber and supplies to Journey's End Shelter in preparation for converting the pit privy to a moldering privy; carried in 12-foot panels of metal roofing for Corliss Camp, and carried out old asphalt shingles; and clipped overgrown vegetation and cleared drainages on the Long Trail from Hazen's Notch south to Haystack Mountain.
- **Middlebury College** students trimmed overgrown vegetation between Mount Grant and Cooley Glen Shelter on the Long Trail and cleaned drainage structures on Clark Brook Trail.
- A new accessible, moldering privy was constructed at Governor Clement Shelter with funding support from the ATC Grants to Clubs Program.
- Field staff members carried in and installed bear boxes at Griffith Lake Tenting Area, Peru Peak Shelter, Stratton Pond Shelter, and Tucker Johnson Shelter thanks to funding from the US Forest Service and the National Park Service.
- The Long Trail Patrol installed a 21-step stone staircase on the Sterling Pond Trail over two weeks.
- New tent platforms were constructed at Bamforth Ridge Shelter on Camel's Hump with help from the Vermont Air National Guard and the GMC's Montpelier Section.
- The lower most bridge on the Forest City Trail on Camel's Hump was closed for safety. Options for replacement are being explored.
- Once again, members of our field staff, led by Field Supervisor Ilana Copel, attended the Vermont Works for Women "Women Can Do" Conference, where they shared expertise on trail work and tools of the trade.

Other trail projects, improvements, and notes of interest from the fall season are:

This winter we will catch up on paperwork and planning and fundraising for next season's projects. As we do, we hope you get outside to enjoy the snow-capped peaks in whatever way is most enjoyable for you.

—KEEGAN TIERNEY
DIRECTOR OF FIELD PROGRAMS



AT Open Areas Initiative

Partnership Management in Action

Hike along the Appalachian Trail (AT) in the Upper Connecticut River Valley of Vermont and you are bound to find a hilltop meadow from which to survey the surrounding landscape and appreciate the rolling topography of the region. That meadow is a historical remnant of the rich agricultural history of the area and the result of the “partnership management model” in action.

The Appalachian Trail Open Areas Initiative is a partnership of the Green Mountain Club, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy,

and the U.S. Forest Service that manages and maintains historic agricultural fields and viewsheds in the AT corridor of Vermont. Launched in 2013, the initiative demonstrates the potential of partnerships. In the last six years each partner has provided funding, labor, equipment, and expertise to establish a dynamic and nimble operation.

The initiative has reclaimed nine meadows, referred to as “open areas,” preventing them from reverting to forest interior and providing both early successional habitat for wildlife and sweeping views for hikers. The partnership now regularly maintains twelve open areas and works with local volunteers and farmers to keep an additional eight areas open.

Nonnative invasive species control is becoming an increasing focus of the initiative because many unwelcome species thrive in disturbed habitats such as these old agricultural fields. The partners use scientific information and careful planning to decide which species to address and the best tools to use, such as mechanical removal, herbicide treatment or prescribed fire.

In the past, agriculture kept these fields open. Today the initiative works with as many farmers as possible to hay or pasture fields, but some are too remote or rocky to be worth working. Contracting with herders is another agricultural option for field and invasive species management, and it has been very successful in other parts of the country.

In 2018, Mary Beth Herbert, inspired by her earlier work mowing and reclaiming Appalachian Trail open areas while on GMC’s Long Trail Patrol, acquired three goats (named Ruth, Bader, and Ginsburg) and offered her time and animals to test grazing on the AT in Vermont. In each of the last two summers, she camped out with her goats for four days and experimented with systems needed to conduct contract grazing within the AT corridor.

Her field tests show goats happily eat vegetation in open areas and that most hikers respond to them with delight and curiosity, but also that many goats would be needed to have much effect. Thanks to Mary Beth’s generous time, effort, and dedication, the initiative plans to continue experimenting with contract grazing, and hopes to contract with a herd to graze an entire open area someday.

Managing open areas will continue to be a challenge. Funding for the program is uncertain, replacing farmers who stop haying and grazing is difficult, and invasive species continue to expand. However, the initiative has come a long way in six years and with the continued attention and commitment of managers it is sure to make more progress in the next six years.

—MOLLIE FLANIGAN
CONSERVATION MANAGER

If you are interested in participating in this effort, please contact Mollie at mflanigan@greenmountainclub.org or 241-8217.





He's Back!

Lorne Currier left GMC in 2018 after a successful term of service as the VHCBC AmeriCorps Group Outreach Coordinator. In the summer of 2019, Lorne worked as a GMC field assistant and this fall joined the permanent staff as GMC's Volunteer and Education Coordinator. In his new position, Lorne will be responsible for coordinating the club's trail-based volunteer activities and education programming. Welcome back, Lorne!

First Day Hikes

Fresh air is an ideal chaser for New Year's Eve festivities, so the Green Mountain Club is pleased to join Vermont State Parks again to offer guided hikes on New Year's Day. Part of a national program with state parks from all 50 states, First Day Hikes will be a free, family-friendly day, coordinated locally by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

Hikes will take place on state park and forest lands throughout Vermont, led by professional guides, outdoor educators, and experienced volunteers. They vary from full-day mountain climbs to walks through

level and frozen winter wetlands, providing choices for people of all ages, experience levels, and physical abilities.

The program makes it easy for Vermonters to start the new year with a healthy social outdoor activity. Invite visiting family members or friends to join you! Leashed, well-behaved dogs are also welcome. If conditions require snowshoes or spikes, guides will have extras to lend.

GMC and the Long Trail System are vital to hiking opportunities in Vermont, so it's only natural that Vermont State Parks has invited us to lead hikes. In past years GMC staff members led hikes to the summit of Mount Hunger, and co-led a hike with the Little River State Park manager through the park, despite a high temperature of -3 degrees F.

The full list of 2020 First Day Hikes is posted on the Vermont State Parks website. At least one or two hikes will take you out on the Long Trail System. Whether you're a new winter hiker or an experienced mountaineer, joining a First Day hike is a great way to start the New Year on the right foot.

Save the Date for Winter Trails Day

**Green Mountain Club Visitor Center
Saturday, March 7, 8:30 am-4:00 pm**

Try out winter hiking with experienced GMC leaders and join our great community for a fun-filled day at GMC. There will be guided group hikes around the Green Mountains, winter skills workshops, snowshoe demos, kids' activities, and a campfire with s'mores all day. Stick around for the après party and raffle!

GMC, BBCO, and REI Partnership

The first Vermont REI Co-Op store opened in Williston in mid-November. As part of REI's local community outreach, GMC was selected as the non-profit beneficiary for all the grand opening celebration events. REI collaborated with GMC and Burlington Beer Company on a limited release New England IPA named Gazing Over Green. The beer is a tribute to the generations of Green Mountain Club trail builders and maintainers who have cared for the 272-mile footpath in the wilderness for nearly 110 years. GMC will receive 10% of all sales.



Member Only Merchandise

Show your support of the Green Mountain Club with these member-exclusive Hike VT Love GMC shirts and trucker hats. There's a map of Vermont on the back of the shirt showing the Long Trail, Appalachian Trail, and Northeast Kingdom. Shirts come in leaf green and heather sunset in both men's and women's sizes. Hats are adjustable and have topographic lines on the brim. Choose from a yellow front with a green brim, or seafoam front with a yellow brim.

Available in both the visitor center in Waterbury Center and online at store.greenmountainclub.org. Don't forget to use your *member20* code for 20 percent off.





Sections

ILLUSTRATION BY ED EPSTEIN



What better way to get outside in winter than base camping in a cozy cabin with a wood stove? GMC sections have long held outings at such camps. Let's explore some recent and coming winter cabin retreats.

Burlington Section: TED ALBERS

January will bring another attempt by the Burlington Section to host a revival of its 1950s and 1960s tradition of New Year's Eve at **Bolton Lodge**. But this year we will host the gathering on January 26. Why? For two years now, subzero temperatures and full-on winter gales have thwarted our plans. We did have partial success in mid-January, 2018, when Vice President Nancy McClellan took oyster stew to a hastily arranged Bolton Lodge potluck. We had plenty of food, but with so little notice, few to eat it.

Now it's time to try again. We cannot be defeated repeatedly by mere weather! All are invited to meet at Bolton Lodge at noon on Sunday, January 26. Bring a dish or snacks, your skis or snowshoes, and spend the afternoon on the Nordic and backcountry ski trails managed by Bolton Resort, or relax by the stove.

No need to RSVP. All GMC

members and friends are welcome. For additional information and directions, including on tickets at the Bolton Backcountry and Nordic Center (for those who want to do some backcountry skiing), please email the Burlington Section at info@gmcburlington.com.

Brattleboro Section: JOE COOK

In 1984 we received permission from

the U.S. Forest Service to install a wood stove in **Spruce Peak Shelter**, now the only enclosed shelter on the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail with a wood stove. However, the shelter is drafty, so those planning to spend a winter night should bring warm sleeping bags. And although there is firewood reasonably close to the shelter, they will also want to bring a saw to cut downed trees, arrive with sufficient daylight to gather wood, and leave some

wood for the next hikers.

For as long as I can remember I have spent New Year's Eve at Spruce Peak Shelter. The outing is on our section's schedule so some years I have been alone, and others as many as 20 have joined me. Part of the fun is not knowing how many and who will be there.

On one memorable New Year's Eve a few years ago, section members Deb Luskin and Tim Shaffer and I agreed they would cook dinner, and I would prepare breakfast. Deb prepared an amazing shrimp scampi. It was so good that I asked for the recipe. For breakfast I cooked bacon and eggs on the wood stove. Its heat was also perfect for my coffee percolator.

Please let me know if you would like to join me this New Year's Eve. If you have questions call me at (802) 257-0609, or email jfcook3@gmail.com.

Connecticut Section: JIM ROBERTSON

Join the Connecticut Section for a winter weekend at **Bolton Lodge**, a closed shelter with a wood stove, February 7 through 9. There is a hike or snowshoe of about 0.7 mile from the parking area to the lodge. The cost will be \$77 per night,



Burlington Section: Gathering inside Bolton Lodge

split equally among participants. For more information or to register, contact Jim Robertson: jrobert685@aol.com; 860-519-8310 cell; 860-633-7279 home.

Manchester Section: MARGE FISH

The Manchester Section has organized winter campouts for many years, first at Wheeler Pond Camps and now at **Bryant Camp**. The dates for our third year at Bryant are Wednesday, March 11, through Friday, March 13. Backcountry skiers and snowshoers generally begin and end the day together but engage in their own activities during the middle of the day. We are now fully booked, but we keep a waiting list because there are often cancellations. If interested, contact Marge Fish at marge.fish@gmail.com.

Northeast Kingdom Section: CATHI BROOKS

Wheeler Pond Camps, a place of beauty, serenity and joy for many in the NEK Section, lies in remote forest next to Willoughby State Forest. The camps are surrounded by mountains, trails and a lovely pond, and have been the center of many of our activities. We picnic, hike,

and often hold NEK Section meetings there. Our annual fall wood stacking party is a highlight for our section. See Journey's End (page 31) for one NEK member's memories of winter nights at **Hadsel-Mares Camp**. We look forward to the replacement of Beaver Dam Camp, which became structurally unsound and was demolished.

Worcester Section: RAM MOENNSAD

Situated on the shore of Cedar Meadow Pond in Leicester, Mass., the Worcester Section's camp is open year-round to the public in daylight. Facilities include **Whitman Lodge**, a changing-room house, a picnic area, and a porta-potty. The lodge and bath house are open only during events sponsored by the Worcester Section.

Join the Worcester Section at noon at the camp on January 1 for the president's open house, and enjoy a potluck lunch by the wood stove. Bring your favorite dish to share. Coffee, cider, and dessert will be provided. Call Ram at 508-210-6965 or Margos at 508-799-0842 for more information or to register. A short hike will follow lunch.



Worcester Section: Whitman Lodge

Section Directory

Bennington

Maintenance: Harmon Hill to Glastenbury Mountain
President: Lorna Cheriton, (802) 447-1383
E-mail: chertop1@comcast.net
Website: meetup.com/gmcbennington

Brattleboro

Maintenance: Winhall River to Vt. 11 and 30
President: Bonnie Haug-Cramp, (802) 380-5165
E-mail: onacloud@myfairpoint.net
Website: brattleborogmc.com

Bread Loaf

Location: Middlebury area
Maintenance: Sucker Brook Shelter to Emily Proctor Shelter
President: Ruth Penfield, (802) 388-5407
E-mail: ruthpenfield@gmail.com
Website: gmcbreadloaf.org

Burlington

Maintenance: Winooski River Footbridge to Smugglers' Notch
President: Ted Albers, (802) 557-7009
E-mail: ted@ted-albers.net
Website: gmc Burlington.org

Connecticut

Location: Hartford, Connecticut
Maintenance: Glastenbury Mountain to Stratton-Arlington Road
President: Jim Robertson, (860) 633-7279
E-mail: jrobert685@aol.com
Website: conngmc.com

Killington

Location: Rutland area
Maintenance: Vt. 140 to Maine Junction
President: Herb Ogden, (802) 293-2510
E-mail: hogden@vermontel.net
Website: gmckillington.org

Laraway

Location: St. Albans area
Maintenance: Lamoille River to Vt. 118
President: Bruce Bushey, (802) 893-2146
E-mail: brbshy@comcast.net
Website: gmclaraway.org

Manchester

Maintenance: Vt. 11 and 30 to Mad Tom Notch
President: Marge Fish, (802) 824-3662
E-mail: marge.fish@gmail.com
Website: gmc-manchester.org

Montpelier

Maintenance: Camel's Hump to Winooski River Footbridge and Smugglers' Notch to Chilcoat Pass
President: Steve Bailey, (609) 424-9238
E-mail: stevecbailey@gmail.com
Website: gmcmontpelier.org

Northeast Kingdom

Maintenance: Willoughby and Darling State Forests and the Kingdom Heritage Lands
President: Cathi Brooks, (802) 626-8742
E-mail: cathibrooks@aol.com
Website: neckgmc.org

Northern Frontier

Location: Montgomery
Maintenance: Hazen's Notch to Canada
President: Ken Whitehead, (802) 933-5352
E-mail: mrsswhitehead@gmail.com
Website: gmcnorthernfrontier.org

Upper Valley-Ottawaquechee

Location: Upper Connecticut River Valley, and New Hampshire
Maintenance: Appalachian Trail: Maine Jct. to NH border
President: Dick Andrews, (802) 885-3201
E-mail: techcomm@vermontel.net
Website: gmc-o-section.org

Sterling

Location: Morrisville/Stowe/Johnson
Maintenance: Chilcoat Pass to Lamoille River
President: Kevin Hudnell, (802) 851-7019
E-mail: khudnell@gmail.com
Website: gmcsterling.org

Worcester

Location: Worcester, Massachusetts
Maintenance: Stratton-Arlington Road to Winhall River
President: Ram Moennsad, (508) 210-6965
E-mail: shivratri@gmail.com
Website: www.gmcwoo.org

28th Annual James P. Taylor Outdoor Adventure Series

The James P. Taylor Outdoor Adventure Series, named after the man who first envisioned the Long Trail, brings outdoor adventures and educational lectures to you through stories, photographs, and videos. Join us for inspiring presentations as we celebrate 28 years of the Taylor Series.

Members: \$5; nonmembers: \$8; kids under 12: free. Tickets available at the door only. Proceeds support local sections and the GMC Education Program.

Check the GMC website, greenmountainclub.org, for the full calendar, updates, and changes. **All shows held at the GMC Visitor Center in Waterbury Center unless otherwise noted.**



Rugged Happiness

Rugged Happiness: Setting the Unsupported Female Record on the Long Trail

Nika Meyers

(Trail name: Early Bird)

Friday, December 20, 7 p.m.

Former GMC staffer Nika “Early Bird” Meyers returned to thru-hike the Long Trail for her second time in October. This time, however, she finished the trail in only six days, 11 hours, and 40 minutes, setting an unsupported female record. Early Bird will share moments of unexpected fear, sleep-deprived silliness, severe discomfort, overwhelming happiness, and digging deep within to find strength. Her love for long distance hiking began on the Long Trail, and she is pleased to share her story with the community that helped give her the confidence to dream big!

Moving Earth: Cotton Brook and Other Landslides in Vermont

Marjorie Gale

Thursday, January 9, 7 p.m.

More than 217,000 cubic yards of material slid from 12 acres of a hillside on Cotton Brook in Waterbury last May, destroying recreational trails, creating a small pond by damming a brook, and transporting thousands of cubic yards of sand, silt, and debris downstream. State Geologist Marjorie Gale will discuss landslides in Vermont and how this catastrophic event affected the nearby landscape, habitat, and water resources.

From Peak Bagger to Thru-Hiker: Hiking the John Muir Trail

Steven Hurd

Thursday, January 23, 7 p.m.

GMC Northeast Kingdom Section member, Steve Hurd, read the following exhortation in *Backpacker Magazine*: “Hike

the John Muir Trail. Get this on your life list: It’s the #1 trail our readers think every hiker should do.” Inspired, Steve set out to hike the 211-mile trail from Yosemite National Park to the summit of 14,505-foot Mount Whitney in California. Learn what it took for him, a day hiker and peak bagger (he’s climbed all 67 of New England’s 4,000-footers) to become a thru-hiker.

A Long Trail Hiker’s Ascent of Denali

Michael DeBonis

Thursday, January 30, 7 p.m.

GMC Executive Director Mike DeBonis fulfilled a personal dream and stood on top of Denali, North America’s highest peak, last June 22 after a winter of training on the Long Trail System. Hear Mike compare his experiences of climbing “the Great One” and thru-hiking the Long Trail. (See pages 8-11 for a preview.)

The Spirit in the Mountains

Melody Walker

Saturday, February 8, 7 p.m.

Join us for an interactive lecture on the Abenaki view of power, place, and spirit in all things. Melody Walker, an educator, activist, artist, and citizen of the Elnu Abnaki Band of Ndakinna, will discuss concepts in the Abenaki worldview and

the meaning of homeland for indigenous people.

Backcountry Skiing Vermont’s 110 Peaks Above 3,000 Feet

Spencer Crispe

Thursday, February 13, 7 p.m.

Over several winters, Spencer Crispe became the first person known to climb and ski every mountain above 3,000 feet in Vermont. Unsure whether that was possible, Spencer pored over maps, planned routes, and determined the gear he needed before he ventured out to bushwhack through dense forests and deep snow to the 110 summits. If you’re a backcountry skier, or just curious about what it takes to complete a challenge like this, come listen to Spencer’s account of his unique and unforgettable adventure in the winter woods of Vermont.

The Natural (and Unnatural) History of the Common Loon

Eric Hanson

Thursday, February 20, 7:00 p.m.

Craftsbury Outdoor Center, Craftsbury

Hosted by the Northeast Kingdom Section

Eric Hanson has been conducting research on the common loon since 1992 and today is the Vermont Loon Conservation project coordinator and a biologist for the Vermont Center for Ecotudies. Eric will discuss the amazing recovery of loons in Vermont over the past 30 years, the threats they face, and the conservation methods that have brought about their recovery, including stories of capture and rescue. He will also cover their fascinating behaviors and natural history, including new research



John Muir Trail

Speaker Series Calendar



Common Loon

on how loons find territories, what is conveyed in the yodel call, and recent discoveries on their migration pathways.

Searching for White Blazes; Hiking the Long Trail in Winter

Mary Lou Recor

Thursday, February 20, 7 p.m.

Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society, Middlebury

Hosted by the Bread Loaf Section

The *Long Trail Guide* aptly notes that the Long Trail is “not designed for winter use” with its snow-covered and inconspicuous

white blazes, dense woods, deep snow causing low-hanging branches, remoteness, and short days. Mary Lou Recor will recount her trail-breaking, route-losing adventures through 14 years of winter day hikes to cover 270-plus miles.

Day Hiking and Other Adventures in Newfoundland

Rich and Sheri Larsen

Thursday, February 27, 7 p.m.

Newfoundland has a lot to offer: great hiking, beautiful scenery, unusual geology, interesting history, good birding, and more. Rich

and Sheri Larsen traveled to Newfoundland last summer and spent two and a half weeks day hiking and exploring the island. Join them to learn more about visiting Newfoundland and see photos from their trip.

Cycling along the Great Divide

Ferdinand Lauffer

Saturday, February 29, 7 p.m.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Enosburg Fall

Hosted by the Northern Frontier Section

Ferdinand Lauffer shares his pictures and stories from his summer bike ride along the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route for 2,850 km from Banff, Alberta to Frisco, Colorado. As a bonus, he will tell the highlights of last year's 1,500 km Cross Germany ride from Germany's border with Switzerland and France to the Polish city of Świnoujście at the shores of the Baltic Sea.



Adventures in Newfoundland



Rugged Happiness: Setting the Unsupported Female Record on the Long Trail

Nika Meyers (Trail name: Early Bird)
Friday, December 20, 7 p.m.

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Hiking Abroad

Elisabeth Fenn and Kevin Hudnell
Thursday, March 5, 6 p.m.

Creating a Four-Season Hut Network in the Green Mountains

RJ Thompson
Friday, March 6, 7 p.m.

Walking the GR5: From the Cold North Sea to the Warm Mediterranean

Kathy and Jim Elkind
Thursday, March 12, 7 p.m.

Storytelling Night

Storytellers
Thursday, March 19, 7:30 p.m.

50 Years of Caretaking on Stratton Mountain

Hugh and Jeanne Joudry
Saturday, March 21, 7 p.m.

28th Annual James P. Taylor Outdoor Adventure Series cont.



Hiking Abroad

Hiking Abroad

Elisabeth Fenn and Kevin Hudnell

Thursday, March 5, 6 p.m.

Rock Art Brewery,
Morrisville

Hosted by the Sterling Section

Thinking about hiking a long-distance trail in another country? Elisabeth Fenn and Kevin Hudnell, former GMC field staff members and current GMC section leaders, will share their sometimes hard-earned knowledge from hiking in Europe and the Middle East on a budget. Take advantage of their experiences to avoid some of the pitfalls of hiking abroad and make the most of enjoying your trip.



Hut Network

Creating a Four-Season Hut Network in the Green Mountains

R.J. Thompson

Friday, March 6, 7 p.m.

Richmond Free Library,
Richmond

Hosted by the Burlington Section

The Vermont Huts Association in Stowe is working to create a

statewide hut network. Many private camps and cabins exist, but few are connected to an established trail network, and even fewer are open to the public. Join Vermont Huts co-founder and Executive Director R.J. Thompson as he discusses the organization's plans for a backcountry hut network open to the public all year. Representatives from the GMC will discuss the club's involvement in the exciting effort.

Walking the GR5: From the Cold North Sea to the Warm Mediterranean

Kathy and Jim Elkind

Thursday, March 12, 7 p.m.

The Grand Randonnee 5 (GR5) is a 1,400-mile walking route that traverses four countries, three mountain ranges, and innumerable historic and cultural landmarks. Nightly indoor accommodations distinguish this route from most long North American

hiking journeys. The GR5 starts at the North Sea in The Netherlands and travels through Belgium, Luxembourg, and the length of France to Nice on the Mediterranean. Kathy and Jim Elkind spent over 3 months walking the changing landscape from the flat Delta region, through Ardennes, Moselle and Lorraine valleys, then Vosges, Jura, and the Alps. They will share slides of the magnificent landscape and humorous stories of their trials and tribulations of walking together as a couple for 98 days.

Outdoor Adventure Storytelling Night

You!

Thursday, March 19, 7:30 p.m.

Outdoor Gear Exchange,
Burlington

Participate in this year's Taylor Series by telling your OWN stories! Throw your name in the hat for a chance to tell your five- to six-minute adventure

story at a Moth-like storytelling night. Each story should be a true, first-person account with a good story arc, including a beginning, a middle, and an end. Contact us (gmc@greenmountainclub.org) for more storytelling tips!



50 Years of Caretaking

50 Years of Caretaking on Stratton Mountain

Hugh and Jeanne Joudry

Saturday, March 21, 7 p.m.

Manchester Community Library,
Manchester Center

Hosted by the Manchester Section

Ever wonder what it would be like to live in a small cabin on top of a mountain for a summer? How about 50 summers?? Sit back, relax, and enjoy a presentation from GMC caretakers Hugh and Jean Joudry on their half century of mountaintop fire watching, caretaking, and interacting with thousands of hikers on Stratton Mountain.



Walking the GR5



GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB 2019 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR **JONATHAN BIGELOW**

Jonathan Bigelow is an educator at the Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester and an avid outdoorsman. He often leads trips for young hikers and the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.

Inspired by Marge Fish, a fellow Manchester Section member, and her long history of volunteerism for GMC and the Long Trail, Jonathan volunteered to lead the rebuilding of Tucker Johnson Shelter in Marge's honor.

When Tucker Johnson Shelter burned years ago, it left a major gap in the chain of Long Trail shelters near heavily hiked Sherburne Pass. Jonathan worked with GMC staff members to design a shelter

based on plans developed by former GMC President George Pearlstein. He obtained the wood, materials, and supplies for the project, and pre-cut most of the lumber at his house. In one weekend in October, 2018, Jonathan and a group of Manchester and Killington Section members joined local community members to build the new shelter.

Jonathan's good humor, can-do attitude, and leadership made the project run smoothly, and everyone had a lot of fun. Thanks to Jonathan, Tucker Johnson Shelter is poised to host backpackers for many years to come.



Board Report

President Tom Candon called the September 21, 2019 board meeting to order, thanked all volunteers and staff members for their work, and described ways for board members to keep up with club news between board meetings. He also recounted highlights of his personal project to section hike the Long Trail.

Executive Director Mike DeBonis congratulated Lorne Currier on his selection as the new GMC Volunteer and Education Coordinator. Mike also reported on implementation of the club's strategic plan, concluding that after two years the club is making good progress toward its goals.

Treasurer Steve Klein reported that the club has completed the first four months of our fiscal year. He said this is a challenging time of year, with costs associated with the strategic plan, the Hike VT marketing campaign, and the active field season. Year-end fundraising will be important for balancing the budget.

Auditor Brent Hodgdon, CPA, presented

the result of the 2019 audit. The club received a clean audit and is in strong financial shape.

The board voted to approve the following items: the 2019 audit; the GMC Perpetual Fund (a portion of the endowment managed to preserve the purchasing power of donations indefinitely); a short-term investment policy for earning a safe return on cash; and the president's appointments to committees for the next year.

Staff members presented a review of the 2019 field season, with highlights from the land conservation program and from the work of the club's trail crews and summit caretakers.

Finally, the nominating committee reported that it has begun to identify candidates for the election of general board members (those not representing particular sections of the club) in June.

Tom called the meeting to a close, and invited the directors to join other volunteers for the annual volunteer appreciation picnic after the board meeting.

—ED O'LEARY, SECRETARY

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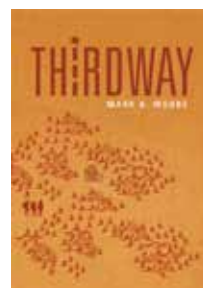
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Toasting the New Year with a bit of bubbly is a tradition that takes place in Times Square and at parties in millions of homes around the world. In the last few years, my family and friends have raised our glasses of champagne while winter hut camping at Hadsel-Mares Camp at GMC's Wheeler Pond Cabins.

Our days of winter tent camping are long behind us, but we are certainly not ready to hibernate! In the company of our two well-behaved dogs, winter camping at Hadsel-Mares has been spectacular. And, the bubbly stays nicely chilled nested in snow outside.

Wheeler Pond is incredibly peaceful in winter, offering a view from the cabin of a wide expanse of snow beneath the cliffs of Wheeler and Moose mountains. We have been treated some years by snow falling softly as the New Year's moon rose over the cabin.

Temperatures have ranged from minus 28 degrees Fahrenheit to plus 25. On subzero nights as we trudge up the hill to the privy, guided by our headlamps, the chilly air rejuvenates us. And the privy is a special experience, especially if you visit in the daytime to take in the view of the pond through the window. Just remember to wipe the frost off the toilet seat.

During the day, we bundle up, put our snowshoes on, put booties and coats on the dogs, and set out to explore the scenic winter trails right from the front door on our own traditional First Day Hike. We particularly enjoy the Moose Mountain Trail with its short but interesting rocky sections and the panoramic overlook above Wheeler Pond.

Snowshoeing around Wheeler Pond is fun and less hilly than other area trails like Wheeler Mountain Trail where the snow is often deep and untracked. Yes, there's a lot of snow in this beautiful section of the Northeast Kingdom, and we always get a good workout.

The rustic charm of Hadsel-Mares adds a special atmosphere. We are always glad to arrive at the parking area after negotiating the winding and occasionally thrilling Wheeler Mountain Road. Sometimes we must shovel a spot for the car, but the small lot is usually cleared. We load our gear on pulks, and spike or snowshoe the short distance to the cabin.

Plenty of firewood is provided, stacked through the efforts of Sterling College students and the Northeast Kingdom Section of the GMC (sometimes with our help). The cabin's wood stove really warms it up, and the somewhat Spartan bunks serve us well with our thick sleeping pads.

Each year we try to outdo ourselves with our menu. We have enjoyed surf and turf (steaks grilled outside over a fire), crepes, and fondue. This year we are planning seafood Newburg! A celebratory dinner at the Ritz could never be as much fun as our gatherings at cozy Hadsel-Mares.

We are ever thankful to the Green Mountain Club for preserving this unique opportunity for year-round outdoor adventure. We look forward to the day when Beaver Dam Cabin, also at Wheeler Pond Camps, is rebuilt and again on our list of winter lodging options.

Be adventurous, embrace winter, and check out the Hadsel-Mares cabin at Wheeler Pond Camps any time of year!

—SHEILA GOSS

New Year's Eve at HADSEL-MARES CAMP

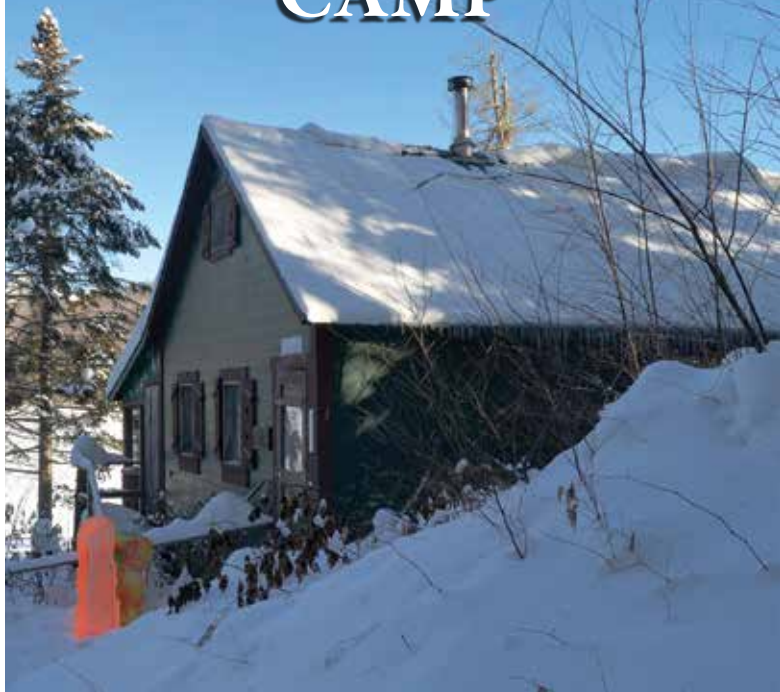


PHOTO BY SHEILA GOSS

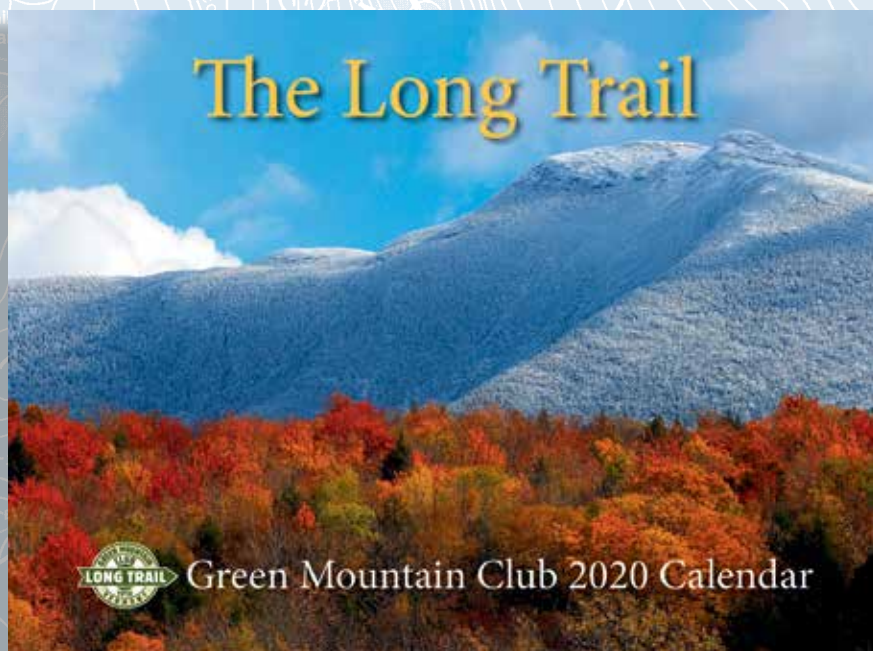


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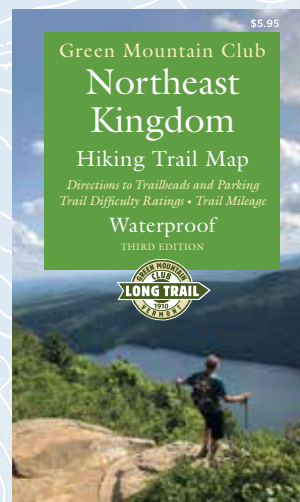
New Northeast Kingdom Map

The updated third edition of the Green Mountain Club's Northeast Kingdom Hiking Trail Map is now available, both in waterproof paper form and digitally. Updated to include the new Kingdom Heritage Trail on Middle Mountain and Bluff Ridge and trail relocation on Wheeler Mountain.

The digital map is available through the free Avenza Maps app in the App Store and Google Play. After installing the Avenza Maps app on your mobile device, visit greenmountainclub.org/digitalmaps to purchase your map today.

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