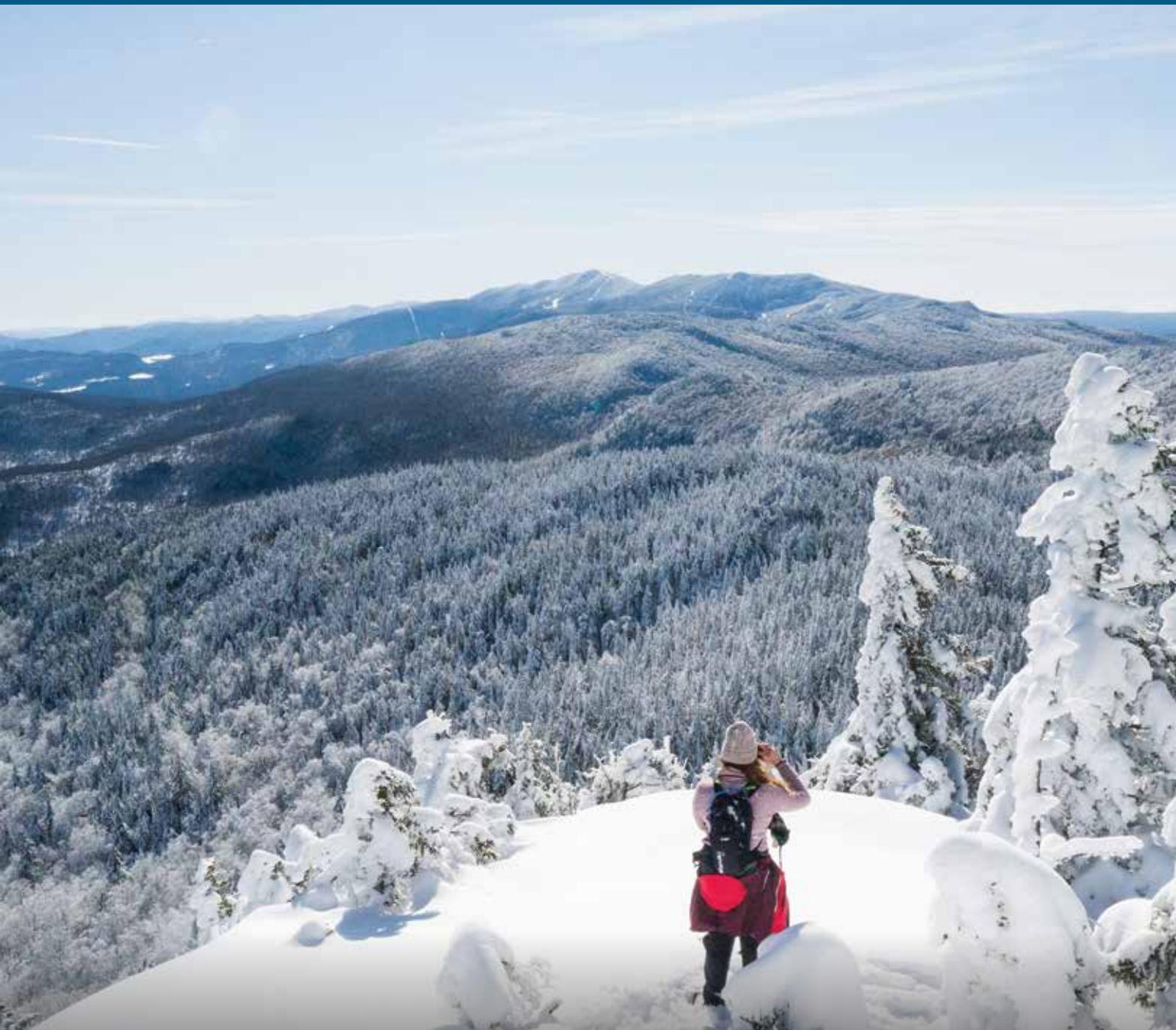


Long Trail NEWS



Quarterly of the Green Mountain Club

WINTER 2020



Coding Hollow Property Conserved | Managing Trails During a Global Pandemic | Winter Hiking Safety
Side-to-Side in Less Than a Week | Skiing Vermont's Highest Peaks

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

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FRONT COVER: Looking south to Mt. Ellen from Burnt Rock. Photo by Crystal Valente.

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From the President

I was out on the trail often this summer as I continued my end-to-end hike from the Winooski River North. And I wasn't alone. There was a noticeable increase in the number of hikers on the Long Trail, its side trails, the Vermont Appalachian Trail, and the Northeast Kingdom trails. During a Zoom call with the presidents of GMC's 14 sections, the Manchester Section reported very full parking lots around Bromley Mountain, and the Northeast Kingdom Section reported high use on and around Wheeler Pond and Lake Willoughby.

This increased interest in hiking has resulted in more GMC members. So if this is your first edition of the *Long Trail News* as a member, welcome!

This year my appreciation of the work done by volunteers increased as they implemented COVID-19 safety rules while clearing trails and maintaining structures for crowds of enthusiastic hikers. Trail and shelter adopters made even more forays than usual taking care of their charges.

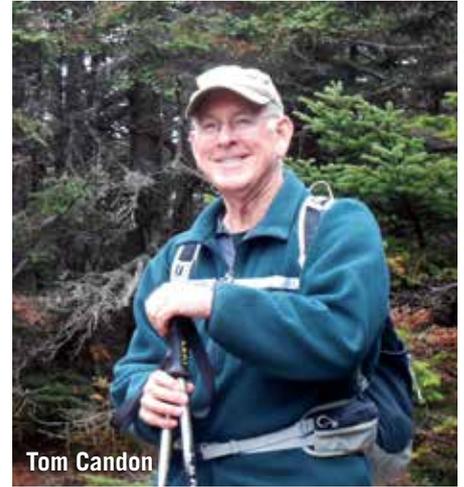
On my section hike, GMC field staff greeted me at Long Trail shelters and on our highest summits. They had a challenging year, with fewer of them than

usual managing the impacts of COVID-19 on every aspect of the field season. In addition to their usual jobs answering hiker questions and protecting popular sites, caretakers helped build privies, mark trail corridor boundaries, and conduct trail maintenance. We were lucky to have such a capable and dedicated staff.

I hiked through Coddington Hollow in Johnson on the one-third of a mile of Long Trail protected by a recent 160-acre land acquisition, which is now part of the Long Trail State Forest. The club worked 34 years to protect this portion of trail, demonstrating our commitment to securing the last miles of unprotected trail no matter how long it takes.

I am pleased to report that another small but strategic parcel is under contract, and we expect it will close by the end of the year. The GMC Land Conservation Committee and the club staff are working very hard to protect all the land that hosts the Long Trail.

In another important step, the GMC Board of Directors recently formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Working Group to advise the board and the staff as we address diversity, equity, and



Tom Candon

inclusion in the organization's operations, programs, and governance. We know our board members, staff, and volunteers still have work to do on this initiative, and must move it forward.

Enjoying the Long Trail, the incredible beauty of the Vermont mountains, and the great community of hikers that I met while finishing my End-to-End hike over the last two years confirmed for me the importance of GMC's work in the Green Mountains.

—TOM CANDON, PRESIDENT





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Follow Us:



Aiming for Inclusion, Not Tokenism

I'm sending this email because the summer quarterly this year included a picture of a Black person on the front cover, but all White people within the magazine. This is a good example of tokenism, which is when you try really hard to appear anti-racist by showcasing people of color, but it is a facade. Does that make sense? It is advertising inclusion, but is not particularly inclusive to have one Black person advertised on the front when the rest of the quarterly is nothing but White.

—EMMERSON "TORCH" ROBERTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you, Torch, for bringing this to our attention. We appreciate your pointing out that placing a person of color on the cover without additional supporting content in the magazine is a form of tokenism.

We should have included content and imagery in the summer issue that better represented Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). For this, we apologize. We will work to better represent them in the future, and we hope members of our community will continue to comment on the club's communications and our work on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, especially when identifying errors or areas for improvement.

HikeVT for the Whole Family

(In response to the HikeVT hike recommendations): This is a wonderful series. So helpful for planning hikes with different members of my family having different abilities. Thank you, GMC!

—RACHEL NORTON

Mt. Ellen Staff/Volunteer Workday

Looking at all the hard work the club does, you make me proud to be a member. I'll be on the AT/LT tomorrow!

—JEFF STONE

Hiking as a Family Tradition

We have vacationed at the Trapp Family Lodge for more than 35 years, and always hike the Green Mountains while visiting. The GMC is the best source of information we have found for the Green Mountains. When we had our children, the GMC gave us great ideas for age appropriate hikes. As they grew up and were capable of more challenging adventures, the GMC was there to help. We are now in our upper 60s, and the GMC continues to be helpful with ideas for hikes, most recently in the Northeast Kingdom.

—STAN AND CARYL JOHNSON

A Family Volunteer Day on the Long Trail

My wife and our two teenagers just did a day of volunteer trail work with Volunteer & Education Coordinator Lorne Currier last week. He was an informative, professional and enthusiastic leader. He made it enjoyable while letting us do some productive work to improve drainage on the Long Trail just north of Taft Lodge on the trail toward the Barnes Visitors Center.

Afterward we were sore, but that passes quickly, and the fond memories of working hard together to make something better in this world will last a lifetime. We just joined as a family, encouraged by our experience, and we will always remember our time on the trail.

There is nothing like working hard to improve a trail to give one great appreciation for the trails others have made ahead of us and to respect the natural world that the trail goes through. Thanks to Lorne and everyone at the GMC for the hard work. Keep it up!

—THOMAS GEIGER



View from Camel's Hump

PHOTO BY CHRISTIE SILKOTCH

New Member Reflections

I am embarrassed to admit I haven't been a member before, since I have worked in the outdoor industry, love your trails, and couldn't live without the work you do. I often thought of joining while on a hike, and forgot about it later on.

Starting in July, my friend and I set a goal to hike Camel's Hump together once a month for a year. We thought it would be fun. Now it has become clear we aren't going to stop after our 12th month in June. I've attached a pretty magical photo from our last hike before the pandemic ramped up.

This is surely more than you were looking for, but I really wanted to say thanks.

—CHRISTIE SILKOTCH

Long Trail News welcomes your comments.

Letters received may be edited for length and clarity. GMC reserves the right to decline to publish those considered inappropriate. Letters may not be published.

Send to: gmc@greenmountainclub.org or
Letters to the Editor, GMC, 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road,
Waterbury Center, VT 05677



THANK YOU GMC Members!

Like many organizations, the Green Mountain Club was forced to absorb financial loss, postpone important goals, and rethink our way forward this year. Through it all, what stands out most to me is the overwhelming support we received from members and donors like you. At a time of uncertainty, you were there for us, for the trail and for the hikers who were able to use the trail to support their mental and physical health during a very difficult year.

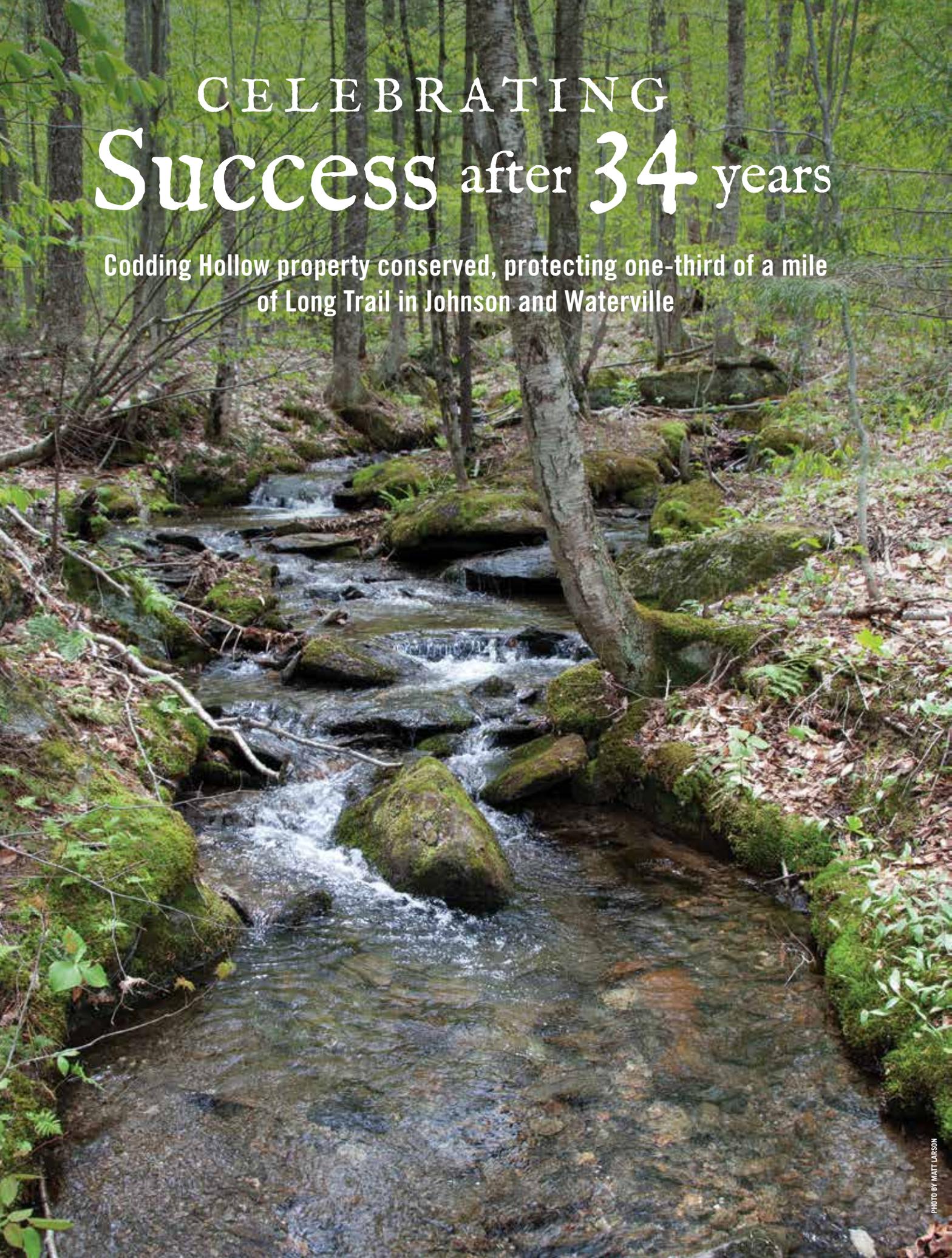
So, thank you. Because of you, the Green Mountain Club was able to endure financial loss related to COVID-19 and adapt to the changing budgetary pressures. As a staff, we were encouraged and overjoyed to learn about what the Long Trail means to you, especially during difficult times.

While we may not know what next year will bring in the world of social distancing, we do know that with a 30% increase in use on the trail and a year's worth of delayed projects due to COVID-19, we have work to do. If you are able, please consider using the enclosed envelope or our website (greenmountainclub.org/donate) to make a year-end donation.

—ALICIA DiCocco
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

Special 2020 Tax Considerations for Donors

- If you do not itemize deductions, you can deduct up to \$300 in charitable contributions. Thus you can claim up to that amount without going through the process of itemizing when you file your 2020 tax return.
- If you do itemize deductions, the cap on deductible annual contributions has been raised from 60 percent of your adjusted gross income to 100 percent.
- The required minimum distribution for retirement accounts has been eliminated for 2020, but the tax advantage of donating directly from your retirement account remains.

A photograph of a small stream flowing through a forest. The water is clear and flows over mossy rocks, creating small cascades. The surrounding forest is lush with green foliage and trees. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

CELEBRATING Success after 34 years

Codding Hollow property conserved, protecting one-third of a mile
of Long Trail in Johnson and Waterville

In September the Green Mountain Club (GMC) joined its partners, The Trust for Public Land and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, in celebrating the conservation of the Codding Hollow property in Waterville and Johnson. The acquisition protects 160.7 acres of forested landscape and one-third of a mile of the Long Trail, a critical stretch for the long-distance hiking trail where any gap could sever its continuity.

Thirty-four years in the making, the accomplishment depended on the efforts of countless individuals and organizations who maintained relationships with the landowners, brainstormed creative trail protection scenarios, raised funds to support three decades of GMC's land protection program, and finally signed the deeds.

Why did it take so long to protect this modest but crucial parcel in northern Vermont? GMC's three-inch thick land protection file for the property tells the complex story of Vermont land use philosophies, trail management priorities, public relations, tax law, and real estate deals that made Codding Hollow a thirty-four-year project.

The Path to Conservation for the Codding Hollow Property

1986 > GMC launches the Long Trail Protection Campaign. GMC has never mounted a capital campaign before. More than 60 miles of Long Trail in northern Vermont are located on private properties, protected only by the generosity of landowners and handshake agreements. Large tracts of timberland in northern Vermont are on the market, and GMC estimates that more than 30 miles of trail could be affected by their sale.

1990 > GMC establishes a relationship with the Codding Hollow property owner, a Vermont-based timber company with multiple landholdings. The landowner is willing to discuss options for permanently protecting the Long Trail route but is not interested in anything that would prohibit timber harvesting along the trail or restrict sale of the land later. GMC and the

landowner consider a possible land sale or donation, conservation easement, or trail right-of-way.

1991 > GMC and the landowner continue to discuss trail protection options and example trail rights-of-way are shared and discussed.



PHOTO BY MATT LARSON

1992 > The Green Mountain Club Board considers National Scenic Trail (NST) designation for the Long Trail, primarily motivated by the time and money it could take for the GMC to protect the Long Trail without federal support. GMC had considered NST designation in 1975, 1986, and 1990, but had rejected the idea for fear that national designation would increase use of the already stressed trail system. GMC hoped that its land protection effort could succeed without federal involvement. GMC's Land Protection Committee estimates that under the current protection program, it would take more than \$5 million and at least eight more years to protect the entire Long Trail.

The Codding Hollow landowner lets GMC know that he's "very gunshy of having to deal with the federal government." He is interested in working with GMC on an easement under development but fears the federal government would disregard the terms of

an easement and restrict his property rights if the trail received NST designation.

1993 > Governor Howard Dean asks GMC to pursue National Scenic Trail (NST) designation. A motion passes at GMC's Annual Meeting "*that in cooperation with appropriate interested parties, the GMC proceed to draft federal legislation for federal protection for the Long Trail subject to later Board approval of wording before introduction in Congress.*"

The Codding Hollow landowner learns of the vote, again expresses his concerns with federal involvement, and says that if GMC proceeds with legislation, he would want the trail routed away from his property. GMC tries to reassure him that if NST designation were granted, an easement would be grandfathered and recognized as trail protection, and the property would not be subject to eminent domain. The landowner's concerns are not assuaged, and he expresses concerns about pursuing an easement with GMC.

1994 > GMC's Land Protection Committee has been working since the summer of 1993 to draft NST legislation. Public meetings held around the state gather opinion from the public, GMC members and landowners in an attempt to build support for the controversial designation. The primary question is how eminent domain authority would be handled by the legislation and how that could affect landowners along the Long Trail.

In September GMC's board votes by a large majority to seek legislation to add the Long Trail System to the National Scenic Trail System. Proposed legislation stipulates that "eminent domain authority will be limited to the main route of the Long Trail and will not apply to side trails. Landowners who have agreed to protect the Trail corridor, both prior to and following the passage of legislation, will not be subject to eminent domain. Eminent domain can be used only as a last resort when no other means will protect the Trail and is limited to a maximum corridor of 1000 feet." – *GMC Long Trail News, Winter 1994*

In November the owner of the Codding Hollow property writes GMC a strongly

worded letter stating that NST designation is “incompatible with the goals” of the timber company and that “it is particularly disturbing to us that our fifty years of good-will and volunteer trail protection will now be ‘rewarded’ with a taking.” The letter demands that “upon receipt of this letter you should actively proceed with relocating the trail off of the property.”

GMC responds, asking the landowner to reconsider the relocation demand until they have reviewed the legislation wording, and the landowner agrees to suspend the relocation demand.

1995 › Conversations with the landowner continue, discussing purchasing all or part of the property. The landowner is inclined to wait to see how GMC moves forward with NST designation before committing to any action. The Nature Conservancy discusses possibly helping to facilitate a land swap to conserve the Coddling Hollow property with some recently donated land to the Conservancy. As a result of the 1994

mid-term election and continued public feedback, GMC decides to not pursue legislation designating the Long Trail as a National Scenic Trail.

1996 › The land swap with The Nature Conservancy doesn’t work out, but GMC offers to look for land to exchange for the Coddling Hollow property. The landowner is open to the offer.

1997 › A land exchange is still being discussed, but a suitable property has not been identified.

A neighboring property is opened for logging, and the Coddling Hollow landowner is interested in conducting the harvest. Access to the neighboring land is through a GMC conservation easement. GMC tries to leverage the required permission to get protection for the trail on the Coddling Hollow property, but the landowner is not interested.

1998 › GMC purchases a neighboring property and offers to allow the Coddling

Hollow landowner to harvest the timber in exchange for Long Trail protection. The two parties discuss a long-term management agreement in exchange for a 25-acre protection zone for the Long Trail on the Coddling Hollow property, but problems with the terms of the agreement emerge.

2002 › GMC learns that the landowner is interested in selling their timber lands in Vermont, including the Coddling Hollow property. GMC asks to buy the property or secure a trail right-of-way before the sale. An appraisal is conducted but the landowner asks for a purchase price that is deemed “outrageous” by GMC and GMC decides a purchase isn’t worth pursuing with the current owners.

The landowner works with LandVest, a New England timberland management and real estate firm, to bundle their Vermont holdings—a total of 7,000 acres in 15 parcels—and offer them for sale for \$6.5 million.

GMC talks with The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Land Trust

“When I first contacted all the Long Trail landowners in 1990, only one landowner was interested in selling,” recalls Susan Shea, GMC’s former long time Director of Conservation. “However, through regular contact and friendly cultivation over the next two plus decades, most landowners came around and we were able to complete over 80 land conservation projects and protect most of the Long Trail System. The Coddling Hollow parcel was one of the last remaining projects to be completed.”

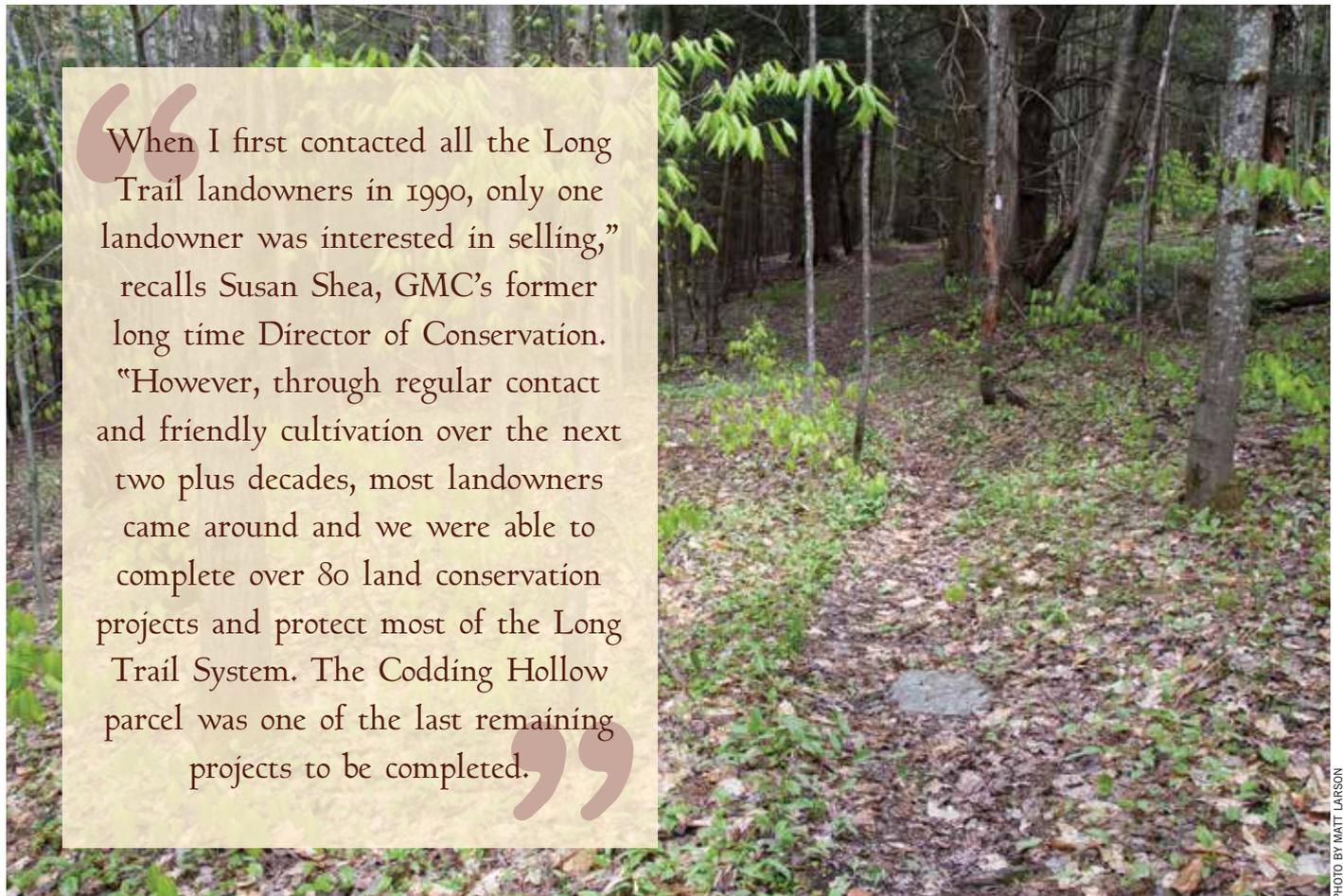


PHOTO BY MATT LARSON

to see if a collaboration to purchase the bundle is possible.

2003 › The 7,000 acres are sold to an investment firm, and LandVest continues to manage the properties. GMC establishes a relationship with the new landowner.

2004 › GMC discusses its interest in the Coddington Hollow property with the new landowner, and the owner expresses a willingness to do a land exchange, proposing a 3:1 acreage ratio because they want to increase their holdings. Both parties look into potential properties for a land exchange.

2007 › The landowner tells GMC they are interested in selling a bundle of their Vermont holdings called the Green Mountain Portfolio. GMC makes an offer to buy just the Coddington Hollow property. The landowner considers the offer, but decides to sell the bundle of properties together instead.

2008 › The Green Mountain Portfolio is on the market. GMC continues to express an interest in purchasing the Coddington Hollow property. GMC discusses the Green Mountain Portfolio with The Trust for Public Land to see whether the bundle could be purchased and protected as a larger conservation project.

2009 › A timber harvest is conducted on the Coddington Hollow property. The forester gives GMC reassurance of a light-cut buffer along the Long Trail and promises to “make an effort to keep skid trail crossings to a minimum, ideally just one crossing, and will post signs on the trail warning of logging activity.”

2011 › The timber harvest on the Coddington Hollow property wraps up. GMC gets the property appraised and makes an offer to the landowner, but the offer is rejected as too low. The landowner moves forward with selling the Green Mountain Portfolio.

2013 › The Green Mountain Portfolio properties are purchased by a privately held limited liability corporation. LandVest continues to manage the Coddington Hollow property.



PHOTO BY MATT LARSON

GMC and The Trust for Public Land launch the Partnership for the Green Mountains, a collaboration to strategically conserve priority lands surrounding the Long Trail.

2015 › LandVest lets GMC know that the landowner understands GMC’s interest in the Coddington Hollow property and is willing to sell GMC the tract. The sale can happen once the landowner finds a comparable property to buy so as to not decrease the acreage of his holdings. GMC works with The Trust for Public Land to monitor the land deal, since GMC’s internal land protection capacity has decreased in recent years.

2019 › LandVest tells The Trust for Public Land that the landowner has found a comparable property and is ready to sell the Coddington Hollow tract. The Trust for Public Land gets the property under contract, and the State of Vermont invests \$130,000 in the project through a legislative appropriation so the land can become part of the Long Trail State Forest. The towns of Johnson and Waterville support adding the land to the state forest system. The Trust for Public Land, GMC, and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation work to conserve the property.

2020 › The Coddington Hollow property is purchased by the State of Vermont and incorporated in the Long Trail State Forest. GMC purchases a conservation easement for the Long Trail on the property.

When immersed in the continuing work of managing and stewarding a 110-year old resource like the Long Trail, it is easy to forget the hard work, generous

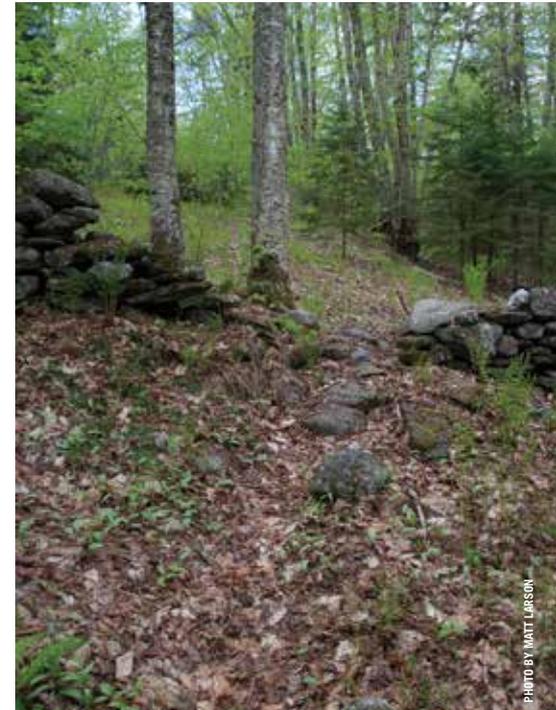


PHOTO BY MATT LARSON

support and bold vision that has gone into making the resource a reality. The conservation of Coddington Hollow is a chance to celebrate the vision, vigilance and effort that it takes to steward the Long Trail. Its conservation is a critical addition to the quilt of conserved lands the Long Trail traverses. It fits perfectly into the design composed of more than a hundred other trail protection projects that GMC has worked on, and it joins the countless other conserved lands in Vermont open for public recreation today.

Thank you and congratulations to all the members, donors, supporters, landowners and partners who have brought the Coddington Hollow project to fruition!

—MOLLIE FLANIGAN
CONSERVATION MANAGER



Managing Trails

DURING A Global Pandemic

Field staff reflections of the 2020 season

As it did so many things, COVID-19 complicated the GMC Field Program. Our trail crews – both professional and volunteer – were canceled. Backcountry caretakers started late, got shuffled all around the state, and were asked to fill unexpected roles (See Field Notes, pg 14).

But beyond the programmatic changes, I wanted to learn how the season was changed for staff as individuals. Caretakers are essential for protecting the Long Trail and keeping it usable for anyone seeking outdoor solace. Were they able to find solace for themselves too? I met with several field staff members to discuss their experiences this year.

I asked **KATI CHRISTOFFEL**, the club's southern lead caretaker, how the outdoors relates to her other passions. I knew she would mention two things: watercolors and Stratton Pond. "I'm a watercolor painter, and hiking anywhere, but particularly Vermont, is very artistically inspiring for me," she replied. "I've been ranging farther and seeing more places this season than last summer, and have had the opportunity to paint new views (although Stratton Pond will always be my favorite view)." In summer Kati led virtual "Artwork on the Long Trail" workshops for the GMC.

Spending time in the outdoors can help us process life and nurture our growth. It has been a big part of finding my way in life. Those with long relationships with mountains easily understand why people go to them. When asked for the last place that took his breath away, Little Rock Pond Caretaker **BRIAN LAMOUREUX** recalled the Trinity Alps in California. "I had sat down in a cluster of plants to take it all in, and was amazed to find 14 species of wildflowers within arm's reach," he said. "Sometimes a flood of sensations overcomes me in daydreams, and shows me the scenes again. I cannot wait to get back there."

During times of collective strain it feels good to contribute to one's community. For some, that means building something. Before the field season **CLARA KUHN** planned to lead a Long Trail Patrol crew. Instead she spent the season caretaking on Camel's Hump. "I enjoyed some solo rock work for the first time in a while, which ended up being my biggest project (personally) ever," she recalled. "Put a few check-steps in a substantial gully."

When asked how the outdoors relates to other parts of her life, **RACHEL PALMER**, the Camel's Hump lead caretaker,

rejected any distinction between her life outdoors and elsewhere. “What happens along the trails and in the shelters is only an extension of what goes on in our communities,” she said. “I wish people stopped seeing these forests and mountains as separate from civilization or as ‘my sacred space to escape’ what’s going on in the world. If people can’t feel safe being who they are in towns and their own homes, then a tree canopy won’t shield them from discrimination and hate.”

We who are fortunate enough to do so are spending more time outdoors than

ever before, and it shows. The surge in usage in the White Mountain National Forest resulted in trash and human waste fouling trailheads and campsites. Asked how Vermont trails have been affected, GMC Field Assistant **NIGEL BATES** saw a glass half full. “People are escaping to the outdoors like never before, and we have the chance to teach a brand-new audience about environmental ethics and low impact practices,” he said. “The woods are crowded, but with the right approach they can be better off for it. And there are still quiet places, you just have to look a little harder for them.”

A recurring theme in our conversations was finding or rediscovering the importance of staying connected to the people and places we care about. We share an appreciation of the healing power of nature, for the clarifying aroma of conifers, for the call of a loon on a mountain pond. We have done much to protect the places we love, but we have far to go to. We must remember how connected we are to the natural world, how we need nature in our lives to keep us whole, and how much more we have in common than not.

~ JOHN PLUMMER
GROUP OUTREACH AND FIELD COORDINATOR



Rachel Palmer



Nigel Bates



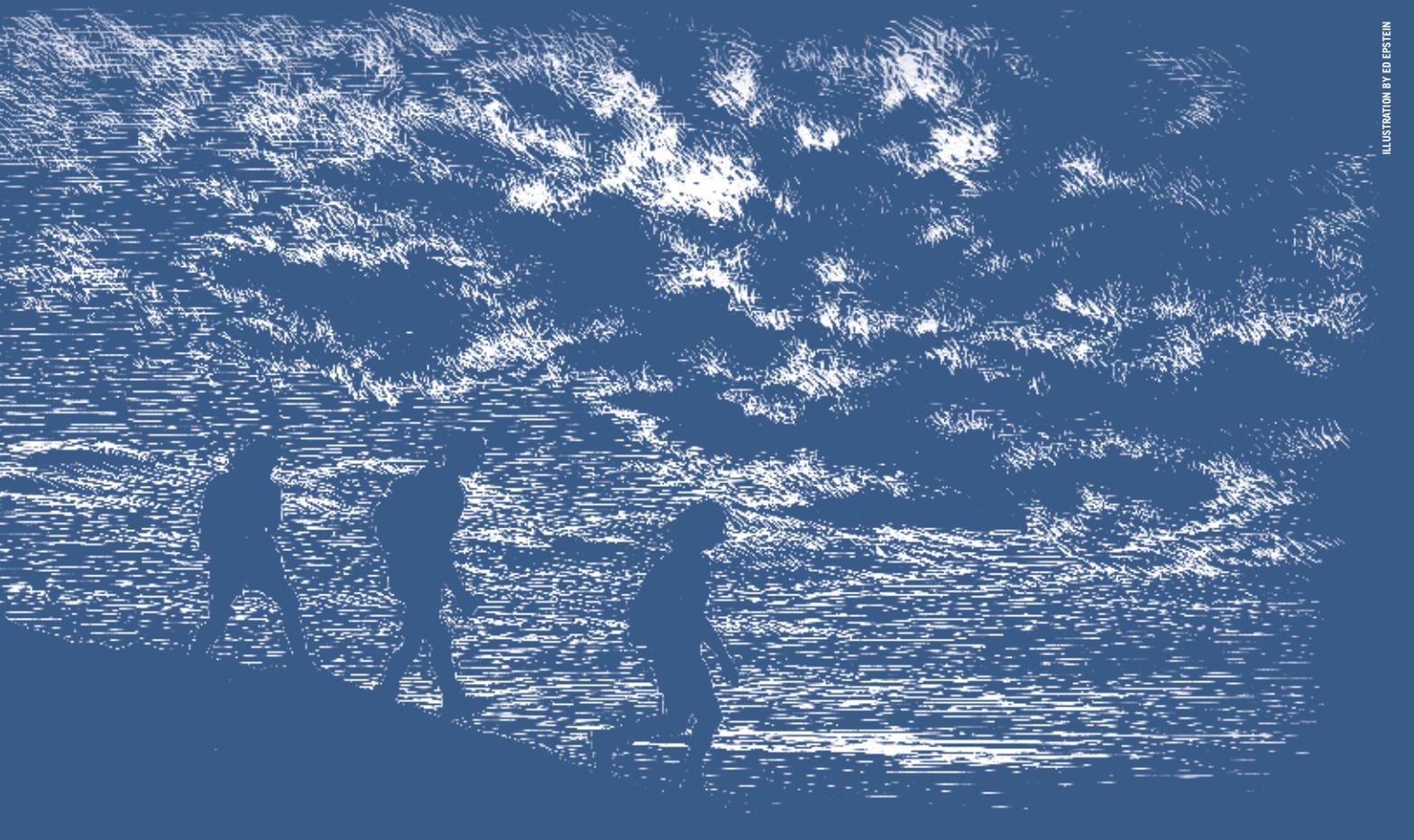
Clara Kuhn



Brian Lamoureux



Kati Christoffel



Hiking Vermont's Trails During a Global Pandemic

HIKER REFLECTIONS OF THE 2020 SEASON

BY RICK DUGAN, MEMBERSHIP DATABASE COORDINATOR

There's no way around it: hiking was different this year. I wanted to find out if the hikers themselves were different too. What were they feeling and thinking? What impact and role did the outdoors have on their lives? How did hiking connect them with others? What were the logistical impacts for thru-hikers?

This summer I reached out to hikers to learn about their experiences on the trail.

KEN ALLEN, a Boston-area resident who thru-hiked the Long Trail in 2017, was nearing the end of a 90-mile section hike. He had noticed no significant changes to the trail. Asked about differences between his two hikes, he first mentioned shelters. Shelters north of the Green Mountain National Forest were closed this spring, re-opening on June 26. Because shelters and privies cannot be

reliably sterilized, the club recommended backpackers take tents or other shelter in case a shelter was already occupied. Ken's answer: just don't use them. "Just tenting, avoiding shelters out of precaution," he said. "I figured it couldn't hurt."

ADRIANA MORA of Stowe has been hiking in the Green Mountains for years. When asked if the trails felt different in 2020, she said she had not noticed any decline in trail condition but had noticed the number of people. "At the beginning of the summer, fewer people were hiking but, later in the year, I noticed more and more people using the trails."

Still, she said, "Hiking this year was the easiest way to social distance and still get to enjoy the outdoors." While she has always loved the trails, Adriana said she was more motivated to go outside this year to escape from all the uncertainty happening in the world.

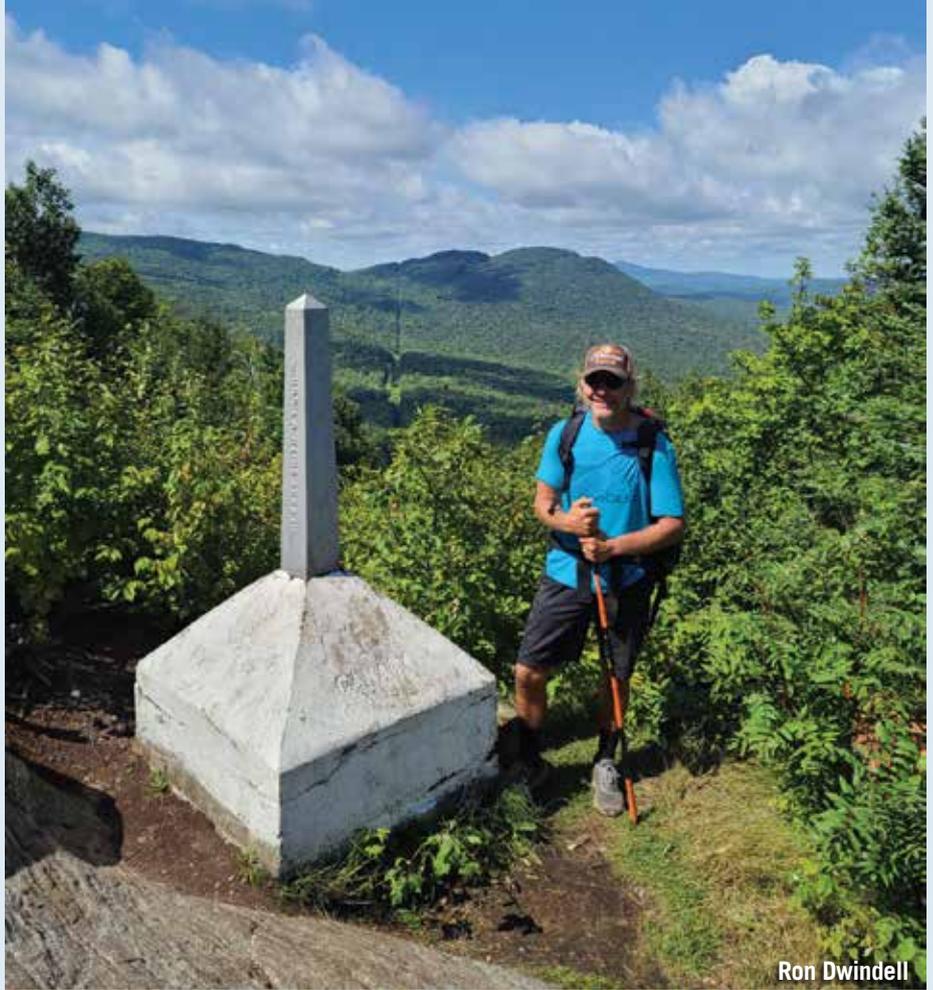
DANNY CARMICHAEL is a recent transplant to Vermont. As the virus raged around his home in Los Angeles, he and his wife reduced their possessions to fit in a new 24-foot RV. They buckled their two kids, aged three and five, into the back, and drove to Vermont, making few stops, bathing themselves in hand sanitizer, and seeing varying responses to COVID-19.

Danny experienced a sense of calm on Camel's Hump he had not felt for a long time. "Especially in 2020, but even before that, hiking in California was a lot like the roads . . . you got congestion," he said. "There are traffic jams and people out there. On a trail well-used and well-loved [in Vermont] you still feel like you're out in it." He didn't think increased use of trails had diminished his experience. "It felt nice and looked-after."

RON DWINDELL of White River Junction considered his 19 ½-day northbound hike on the Long Trail a welcome respite from headlines. When not thinking about his wife and children, he contemplated deeper questions, like the way the hike was an important transition period for him. He had lost a dear friend before the hike, and he wrote notes every night for a eulogy: “I had time to reflect and think about the last 25 years of our friendship.”

CATHY DEROCHEs of Richmond has always had a great enthusiasm for hiking and found it especially important for her and her two small children during the beginning of the pandemic, as she was navigating teaching remotely and managing a 5 year old and 2 year old at home. Hiking continued almost as normal during a time where so much was changing for all of them, even if there were noticeably more hikers on the trail.

She reflects: “Hiking, especially during the time of COVID, has given me and my kids a real and tangible way to connect our hearts and our heads to the physical ground around us. It makes you physically pick your head up and look at the world around you. Hiking has been a healthy way to disconnect from the stress of life and to find pure joy and gratitude in this magical place where we live.” Her son, Anson, says, “I like running and getting exercise,” while her daughter, Haven, comments that her reason for enjoying hiking is, “finding [red] efts.”



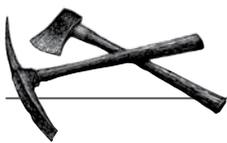
Ron Dwindell



Ken Allen



Cathy DeRoches with her children



The 2020 field season was like no other. Planned as a summer and fall of construction projects and trail improvements, it quickly evolved to keeping trails open under ever-changing responses to the global pandemic.

COVID-19 limited our field staff to one-third of normal levels, and all field staff members concentrated on backcountry caretaking. We were extremely fortunate to have dedicated returning staff members for the backcountry caretaker program: **Tyler Foldie, Rachel Palmer, and Kati Christoffel**, who worked on **Mount**

Mansfield, Camel’s Hump, and the Southern Ponds, respectively.

They were supported by an experienced office-based staff of Field Supervisor **Isaac Alexandre-Leach**; Education and Volunteer Coordinator **Lorne Currier**; AmeriCorps Group Outreach and Field Coordinator **John Plummer**; and Field Assistants **Rosalie Sharpe** and **Nigel Bates**. This team coped with many unknowns and surprises with optimism and grace.

We made progress toward our goal of replacing backcountry pit privies with more sustainable moldering (slow composting) systems. Field leaders coordinated logistics, volunteers and staff time for three privy replacements, with structures prefabricated in advance as much as possible.

We began at **David Logan Shelter** by hand carrying pre-cut materials half a mile up the New Boston Trail. With funding from the Vermont Recreation Trails Grant program, volunteers from the GMC Bread Loaf Section, and at-large volunteers, we finished the privy in two field days.

The **Rolston Rest Shelter** privy was completed similarly, also in two days. Recent land acquisitions by the Trust

for Public Land allowed materials to be brought close to the shelter.

Lastly the **Sucker Brook Shelter** privy received a long-desired upgrade. Those who visited recently may fondly remember the spartan amenities of the old privy – two walls and no roof! Special thanks go to volunteers from the Burlington office of Crowe LLP, a public accounting, consulting and technology firm; Middlebury College; and the Bread Loaf Section, for packing in materials.

All three shelters now have new universally accessible moldering privies designed to ensure that any trail user regardless of their ability can have easy access to backcountry sanitation. On top of that these privies also reduce pollution, are more pleasant to use, and are much easier to maintain. The Long Trail System has just 11 pit privies remaining (out of 66 originally), with funding confirmed for eight more replacements.

Mount Mansfield caretakers and Burlington Section volunteers made much-needed improvements to Taft Lodge, including replacing broken glass, reglazing, and painting windows; re-leveling the porch; and installing a new pier to anchor the porch to bedrock. They finished the work in time



New privy at David Logan Shelter

PHOTO BY ISAAC ALEXANDRE-LEACH



Keegan Tierney at Rolston Rest Shelter

PHOTO BY ISAAC ALEXANDRE-LEACH



Caretaker Rachel Palmer on Camel’s Hump

PHOTO BY LANA COPEL

for a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the lodge in September, including installation of a commemorative anniversary sign.

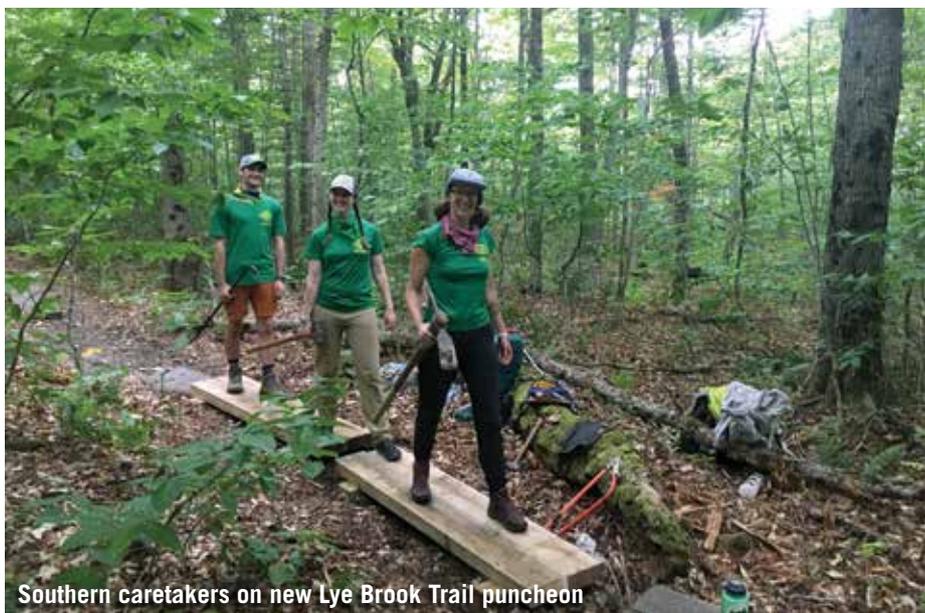
The **southern caretakers** finished the last work on the **Lye Brook Trail** relocation at **Stratton Pond**. Kati and her team replaced broken puncheon at the pond outlet, installed puncheon on the new trail section, and blazed and signed the new trail.

COVID-19 drove many people to explore new outdoor opportunities, including hiking in the Green Mountains. At most sites the club saw double digit increases in use. Overnight counts at **Hump Brook Tent Site** on **Camel's Hump** increased by more than 30 percent, while **Montclair Glen** and **Bamforth Ridge Shelters** saw increases in nearby dispersed tent camping. We welcomed this additional use and more people connecting with the outdoors. Additional use increased impacts on trails and structures throughout the Long Trail System. Looking forward, GMC will work to manage those impacts in an effort to protect the resource and provide everyone who has an impulse to escape to the mountains with equal opportunity to use the trail system.



Field staff clearing tree with chainsaw at Griffith Lake

PHOTO BY ISAAC ALEXANDRE-LEACH



Southern caretakers on new Lye Brook Trail puncheon

PHOTO BY KATI CHRISTOFFEL



Southern caretakers with new Lye Brook Trail sign

PHOTO BY NIGEL BATES



Field staff building Sucker Brook Shelter Privy

PHOTO BY ROSALIE SHARP

Going the Distance

Side-to-Side in Less Than a Week

BY NIGEL BATES

In July I set the fastest known time for hiking the 88 trails on the Green Mountain Club's list of Long Trail side trails in 6 days, 10 hours, 47 minutes and 43 seconds. It was a mighty endurance challenge, a daunting logistical puzzle, and a scenic tour of some lesser-hiked corners of the Green Mountains.

While the side-to-side trails total 166.1 miles, hiking all of them requires more than 200 miles, including round trips and sections of the Long Trail that connect side trails. My route totaled 226.66 miles—plus 56,947 feet of elevation gain, almost double the height of Mt. Everest above sea level.

Route planning and coordinating my support crew were perhaps as much fun as the hike itself, and I likely spent more time at it than hiking. It was an incredible amount of work, but I enjoyed the logistical puzzle. I had already done about 75 percent of the side trails, most of them while working on the GMC field staff. In a way, I had been scouting the trip for years! My crew and I made sure our plans and backup plans were solid, because trailheads often don't have cell service.

First and foremost, I determined the optimal route. Some choices were obvious—going out and back on the Journey's End Trail was the only move, for example—while others presented interesting tradeoffs among mileage, elevation and terrain. I had started sketching a path through the Mount Mansfield network of 27 intertwined looping side trails in the fall of 2019 when I was a backcountry caretaker there. This proved invaluable, both for planning my route and for negotiating the more technical trails in the rain. Route planning continued this spring and summer.

Then I lined up a support crew. I enlisted fellow GMC staff members Lorne Currier, John Plummer and McV LaPointe, who planned to meet me for breaks, carry my food and water, and, most importantly, keep my spirits up. We pulled off at least 30 meet-ups without an error. They shuttled the car (and sometimes me) between trailheads working in shifts, with only one person helping me at a time.

I carried only water, snacks, a phone to record progress, and a small first aid kit. A typical outing was between 12 to 18 miles. For longer sections (the longest was 24 miles) I added water purification tablets, an extra clothing layer and a headlamp. In the support car were more substantial food, big

View from Old Long Trail, near Duck Brook Shelter

water and Gatorade coolers, caffeine, changes of clothing, a foam muscle roller, and lots and lots of tape to fight the battle against chafing.

I am very grateful to my crew for taking care of other needs as they popped up. John made a hotel reservation when I decided I really needed a shower. McV got me onion rings when I craved them more than anything. And Lorne set up my favorite moment of the whole trip: at the end of a long fourth day, I was dreading the last hike of the day up the New Boston Trail. He saved the day by joining me with an imaginative scheme: casting me as the “ATV” (all-terrain vehicle) and himself as the “trailer” being pulled by the ATV. Together we pretended we were hauling lumber up to the David Logan privy for the impending replacement project (see Field Notes, page 14). I could go as fast as I wanted because I was an ATV, even if only in my mind. Lorne’s imagination and experience motivating people outdoors helped me get through a section of trail that proved mentally challenging.

As with most long-distance challenges, my trek was full of highs and lows, even on a single day. The morning of day two was a miserable slog completing all of the side trails on Mount Mansfield in pouring rain, but that afternoon the clouds parted to reveal a phenomenal view of Camel’s Hump from the Duck Brook Trail. In the Lye Brook Wilderness I suffered through a day of 90-degree heat and intense blisters, but was rewarded later with a gorgeous sunset over Stratton Pond. I enjoyed the hike more than I anticipated, and the despair of each nadir made the next zenith even sweeter.

Though my job as field assistant takes me all over the Long Trail System, I still visit regularly only the handful of sites that see the most visitation. The side-to-side was a good reminder there are wilder pieces of the Green Mountains, often requiring no more effort to reach than places like Camel’s Hump or Sterling Pond.

Here are a few favorite side trails from my trip:

Amherst Trail: This parallels the Long Trail for 0.4 miles along the Mansfield ridgeline. It’s a great option for a loop hike from the Mansfield Visitor Center; you can escape crowds and see Vermont’s highest mountain from a different perspective.

Skylight Pond Trail: The trail reaches the top of the Breadloaf Wilderness ridgeline



Lye Brook Trail

without any particularly rugged climbing (a rarity in Vermont). It switchbacks gradually for 2.5 miles to the Long Trail, and then descends another 0.1 mile to Skyline Lodge on the shore of Skylight Pond.

Shrewsbury Peak Trail: Though less than 20 minutes from the Killington ski slopes, it feels worlds away. A rugged climb through wild boreal forest leads 1.9 miles to a fine view at the summit of Shrewsbury Peak. Looping back on the Black Swamp Trail and the lightly travelled CCC road provides a gentler descent.

Homer Stone Brook Trail: This trail follows old woods roads along a lovely stream to Little Rock Pond. The moderate 2.3-mile climb showcases a forest gradually reclaiming an area once dominated by logging and farming.

Overall, my side-to-side adventure showcased a beautiful and unique cross-section of Vermont. I hope it inspires others to explore these often underappreciated trails, whether in a week or in a lifetime. 🐾

Nigel used his hike of the Long Trail side trails to raise funds for Outdoor Afro, a national not-for-profit organization that celebrates and inspires Black connections and leadership in nature. With nearly 90 leaders in 30 states, it connects thousands of people to outdoor experiences, and they are changing the face of conservation.



Trail intersection near Baker Peak



Nigel Bates at Broad Brook Trail

From Your Lens

GMC Photo Contest Entries



Frost Trail White-Throated Sparrow. Photo by Sheri Larsen.



Winooski River fiddleheads. Photo by Krista Cheney.



Unique Long Trail sign. Photo by Louis Demm.



View of Mt. Mansfield from Puffer Shelter. Photo by Andrew McNealus.



Mt. Ellen summer morning. Photo by Ernesta McIntosh.



Mt. Pisgah Garter Snake. Photo by Richard Moran.



Canyon North Trail ladder. Photo by Michell Kingsbury.



Sunrise at the Mt. Mansfield Chin. Photo by Andrew McNealus.

Winter Hiking Safety

BY NEIL VAN DYKE



PHOTO BY KRISTIN MCILANE

There are few times more beautiful for hiking than a crisp, clear Green Mountain winter day. The deep blue of the sky is experienced at no other time of year, and when coupled with trees blanketed in fresh snow it presents a truly unique landscape. The lack of crowds adds allure and a sense of solitude.

But backcountry winter hiking also has risks and challenges for which you must prepare. You should always take the ten essentials (see inset), but below are more things to be aware of:

Clothing and Gear

The right clothing and equipment is essential. Moisture is your enemy, so dress in layers that can be adjusted as exertion levels and weather vary. Start with a good wool or synthetic base layer against your skin, followed by insulating layers. Finish with a waterproof, windproof and breathable outer shell layer to protect you from wind, snow or rain. Always take one more insulating layer than you think you will need, and leave cotton clothing at home!

Insulated winter boots are a must. You will likely need several kinds of traction devices for your boots. Snowshoes are best to assist with deep snow, while Microspikes or crampons are necessary to prevent falling on ice. Bare ground at the trailhead doesn't mean you won't find snow or ice farther on.

Most people find ski poles a big help, since trekking poles without baskets sink through the snow. Consider taking some type of lightweight emergency shelter (tarp, bivy sack, sleeping bag) for the group. For more gear tips, see the inset.

Weather

Always check the weather forecast before you go, and be flexible. If intense cold or high winds are predicted, scale back your plans. Rain can be the most dangerous weather, because a rapid drop in temperature and a brisk wind often follow--a recipe for hypothermia. As mentioned in the clothing tips, your goal is to stay dry at all costs. If you get wet, turn around!

Remember days are much shorter than in summer, so start early, and plan to be out of the woods well before dark. Hiking in winter is slower and often much more arduous than in other seasons, so allow plenty of time. Take a flashlight or headlamp with fresh batteries. Better yet, take two.

Route Finding

The Long Trail is not maintained for winter use. White blazes are hard to see on snowy tree trunks, and blazes and signs may be buried in snow. Also, the trail corridor is not cleared for walking four to five feet above the ground, so the path may be obscured or blocked by branches.

Thus, many sections of the trail are essentially impossible to follow in midwinter. Unless you are experienced at bushwhacking and backcountry navigation, stick to popular and well-used trails. Take a paper map and compass and know how to use them.

Safety and Emergency Planning

If you lose the trail or get hurt in summer it's certainly a bummer, but typically not life threatening. But in winter even a minor

mishap can become a truly life-or-death situation. The leading cause of death for hikers in Vermont is hypothermia. Hypothermia can set in as you wait for help, so you must be prepared to keep warm.

Here are a few safety precautions in addition to those listed to the right:

- **Don't hike alone!** If something goes wrong, you may need to send for assistance. Most experts recommend a party size of four (three minimum), so one person can stay with an injured party and others can go for help.
- **Tell somebody where you are going and when you plan to return.** Give them a worst-case estimate so they'll know when to call the authorities (911) if they haven't heard from you. Be sure to notify them promptly once you have finished your hike!
- **Do not rely on cell phones for anything other than communication.** Cold weather severely reduces battery life, so if you need to call for help you'll be glad you conserved your phone's battery instead of using it as a flashlight or map. Make sure to fully charge your phone in advance. While you hike, leave it on airplane mode, and carry it in a pocket next to your body to keep it warm. Remember though, much of the backcountry in Vermont has little to no cell coverage, so a charged cell phone is no substitute for good equipment!
- **Have enough extra supplies to survive until help can arrive** – which may be many hours. Even if you can call 911 immediately, rescue groups will take time to assemble, hike in, and help you.

If you're new to winter hiking, it's a good idea to attend a workshop or go with more experienced folks so you can gradually learn skills and build confidence for more challenging hikes. Many GMC sections lead group outings that can be a great place to start. Check the GMC website for its calendar of outings and workshops.

By taking the above precautions you will be well on your way to enjoying hiking in Vermont in all four seasons! ❄️

Neil Van Dyke is the Search and Rescue Coordinator for the Vermont Department of Public Safety, and he has participated in and coordinated countless backcountry searches and hiker rescues. An avid hiker and long time GMC member, he provides search and rescue training each spring to the club's field staff.



First light at Skyline Lodge

PHOTO BY ANDREW MCNEALUS

10 ESSENTIALS

Nutrition

Food! Winter hiking burns a lot of calories. **PRO TIP:** Pack extra bars or trail mix in case you're out longer than expected.

Hydration

Two liters of water is probably adequate for most day hikes. **PRO TIP:** Insulate with an old sock, and carry the bottle upside down to keep the cap from freezing (the highest water freezes first).

Insulation

Spare clothing layers. **PRO TIP:** You haven't packed enough unless there's a layer left that you never needed to use!

Illumination

Head lamp (to keep your hands free) with spare batteries. If you can't easily change batteries in the dark with cold fingers (try it at home), an extra light will be better than spare batteries. **PRO TIP:** Lithium batteries last much longer than alkaline batteries in cold.

Navigation Aids

Paper map, compass, and GPS. **PRO TIP:** Practice using them until it's easy! You can find videos online or participate in a workshop.

First Aid Supplies

Everyone in your group should carry a complete first aid kit in case you get separated. **PRO TIP:** Sign up for a Wilderness First Aid class to gain confidence in backcountry emergencies!

Fire

Waterproof matches, lighter or flint. Don't assume you can start a fire with ice-coated and snowy wood until you've done it a few times. **PRO TIP:** Pack some Vaseline-covered cotton in a prescription bottle for a fire starter.

Repair Kit

Multi-tool or knife and duct tape. **PRO TIP:** Use your hiking pole as the core to make a small roll of duct tape so it's always handy.

Shelter

Tarp, tent, bivy sack. **PRO TIP:** A large contractor trash bag is an inexpensive option in a pinch.

Sun Protection

Sunglasses and sunscreen. Winter sun reflecting from snow can cause sunburn and snow blindness.

For more information on winter hiking and the Ten Essentials, see www.greenmountainclub.org/the-long-trail/trip-planning/.



110 PEAKS

Backcountry Skiing Vermont

BY SPENCER CRISPE

As a ninth generation Vermonter who has lived my whole life here, I started skiing when I was three. But with the price of lift tickets pushing the cost of running a luxury yacht, I left the resorts and headed for the back woods. I have now hiked and skied all 110 of the Vermont mountains above 3,000 feet.

I began hiking the 3,000-foot peaks several years ago, and then realized no one had ever skied them all—at least not on record. At first, I thought this was a somewhat ludicrous and daunting goal, but maybe that was part of the appeal. I began the effort in the winter of 2016-17, deciding to spend most of my free time climbing and skiing the peaks.

Let me emphasize that this was a dangerous undertaking, not least because many of the 3,000-foot peaks are trailless. I reduced risks by carefully studying maps for the best routes, taking

a satellite phone for emergency purposes, and packing enough supplies for a night in the woods. I always told two people where I would be and described my ascent and descent routes to them. I hiked the peaks in summer and fall by compass, but I took a GPS receiver in the winter.

On each mountain, I ascended and descended by the same route to avoid unexpected cliffs and other dangerous or impassable terrain. To enable tight turns in dense woods without snagging brush, I used extremely short randonee skis. And I wore goggles to protect against smacks in the face by branches in the dense obstacle course that is Vermont's backcountry.

The Long Trail crosses many of the 110 peaks, so I snowshoed long stretches of it during this project. The trail is a different animal altogether in winter, when it is not maintained. Snow obscures

its footpath, and its white blazes are hard to spot even if the trees are free of snow. Snowshoeing and skiing on three- to five feet of snow elevates you so your head is among branches you'd never even notice in summer. It's almost as tough as bushwhacking.

Glastenbury, Peru Peak, Breadloaf, and Bolton mountains were especially memorable Long Trail summits to ski because of their interesting terrain and bottomless snowpack. I did East Ethan Allen just after a near-record winter storm. Ascending through more than four feet of fresh powder felt like an exhausting eternity, even though I had bought 40-inch-long snowshoes for better "flotation." It was worth it, though, because the descent was the best powder skiing I've ever experienced in all of Vermont—the kind of powder ski magazines scour the globe to cover.

Vermont mountains are blessed with



Spencer Crispe on Gilpin Mountain



Skiing on Burke and Umpire Mountains



Deep snow bushwack ski conditions

abundant natural glades and chutes, making for some of the most heavenly powder ski lines around. There's no need to cut illegal trails. An example is the northeasterly ridge of Signal Mountain in Groton. The terrain was an open glade field with deep powder and some of the best turns I'd ever experienced. As a bonus, the sun was out and the sky was blue. I remember feeling like life doesn't get any better.

Some densely forested mountains, however, do not lend themselves to backcountry skiing in any manner. They were hazardous and nearly impossible to ski. I descended with extraordinarily slow and wide S-turns, at a walking speed. Going any faster could have caused serious injury or even death.

For example, the cone of Dewey Mountain is steep, and has some of the thickest conifers I encountered. Another extraordinarily formidable peak is Whiteface Mountain (also known as Sterling Mountain) in Morristown, with conifers so thick that sometimes it was hard to advance in any direction.

The Worcester Range has steep, rocky terrain with thick conifers too, and feels like the Adirondacks. East Seneca Mountain is so far off the beaten path you have to climb for many hours over West Seneca Mountain through thick forest just to reach it. (I've never claimed to ski every mountain fast.)

Skiing the Vermont 110 ensures you will get hit in the face with branches, shred your clothing, and break skis—I broke two pairs. Strenuous ascents in deep unconsolidated snow will slow you to a crawl.

But the mental and physical benefits of earning your turns by snowshoeing to a summit cannot be overstated. And I discovered that much of Vermont's terrain is well-suited for backcountry skiing with the bonuses of stunning winter scenery, great exercise, and heavenly powder turns that don't cost a dime.

It feels great to be the first person I know of to ski all 110 major mountains in the state. It was a huge commitment of effort and hours during several winters, but it reinforced my conviction that Vermont is the most beautiful place on the planet. 🌨️



Back Country fresh tracks in the Worcester Mountain Range



Skiing on Mt. Worcester



Dedication Runs Deep: Volunteering During a Pandemic

During my first field season as GMC Volunteer and Education Coordinator I did not expect to ask hundreds of club members *not* to volunteer.

I expected to begin a carefully planned schedule of training, site visits and section workdays. Instead, trail and shelter adopters defied their impulses to emerge from winter to clear trails and sweep shelters. Sections resisted the urge to gather for trail work. Board and committee members switched from meeting with trail chatter and pizza to Zoom software and reminders to mute themselves. As hard as it was, they “stayed home and stayed safe.”

On April 23 the State of Vermont finally announced that limited “micro-crews” could work outdoors. Donna Dearborn and Wally Kangas, adopters of the Green Mountain Trail, said it best: “This is our 19th year as adopters for the Green Mountain Trail, our 21st year as adopters with the Green Mountain Club. It was so great to receive word that we were cleared to get out there to check our trail.”

However, COVID-19 continued to significantly limit 2020 volunteer operations. Travel restrictions kept out-of-state volunteers and sections at home. Section maintenance outings, normally occasions of grand camaraderie, were reduced to a few sections operating in small groups. Among school community groups, normally a large portion of our summer volunteer program, only Sterling College carried on as scheduled.

Barnes Camp Visitor Center, staffed entirely by volunteers, operated from July 4th to Indigenous People’s Day. Volunteers provided trail and area information to 3,340 visitors this year.

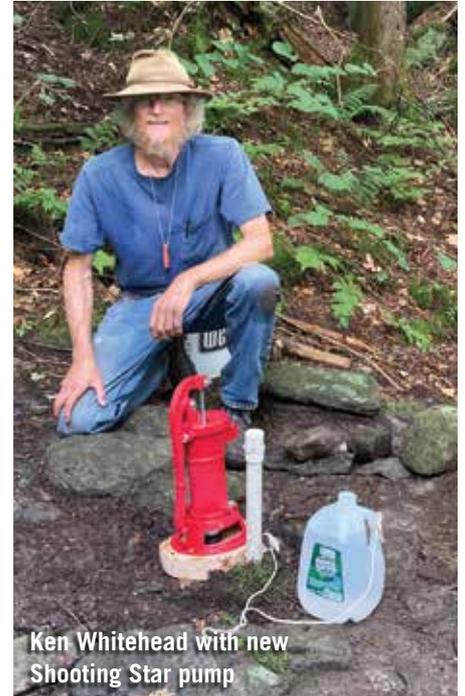
Still, the Long Trail System opened, and was kept up to standard as much as possible. By early October trail and shelter adopters had completed 289 work trips, totaling 3,862 hours. That was 52 visits and 450 hours more than last year! Elsewhere in the woods GMC’s corridor monitors marked property boundaries to protect conserved land.

Volunteers in Action

Ken Whitehead

Ken Whitehead, president of the Northern Frontier Section, keeps tabs on 18.7 miles of the Long Trail between Hazen’s Notch and the Canadian border. In his first year of semi-retirement as an electrician, Ken had plenty of free time. He spent most of it on the Long Trail, starting when he checked on Jay Camp on May 7. “I was just very glad to get out on the trail,” Ken said. “Knowing that so many people were going to be using it and were using it already, it was crucial to get these things done as best we can.”

Ken also took time to help me welcome and orient three new trail adopters in the Northern Frontier Section. I’ll never forget the late-night phone calls with him after our separate work trips, discussing new volunteers, the state of the trail, and how to tackle the next project.



Ken Whitehead with new Shooting Star pump



ASUP service trip painting blazes by Tillotson Lodge

Ira Sollace and Cindy Griffith

You've probably met Ira and Cindy if you've been to Barnes Camp Visitor Center, on the east side of Smugglers' Notch. Most likely they were outside, wearing GMC volunteer T-shirts (sometimes matching), ready to give you information you didn't even know you wanted about the notch, the GMC, or the Long Trail.

Ira and Cindy have coordinated volunteers at Barnes Camp since 2015. They now adopt Barnes Camp Loop Trail, after 25 years as adopters of the Dean Trail. Both have served on multiple committees, and are remarkably kind and helpful.

Ira and Cindy were essential in developing ways to safely operate the volunteer program at Barnes Camp in the COVID-19 pandemic. I met them at the historic building on a Friday morning in June, and we walked through the many details of a volunteer shift, identifying problems and potential solutions.

"We need to put a plan in effect, and it must work, protect the volunteers and be flexible" Cindy said. "It must meet and balance the concerns of all volunteers and the visitors to Barnes Camp." And it did. Barnes Camp finished a successful season on October 12, but not before a crowded leaf-peeping weekend when a mounted cowboy trotted by. Ira and Cindy gave a friendly wave, took a picture, and stood by in case he required trail information.

When not at Barnes Camp, Ira and Cindy completed the side trails of the Long Trail System, becoming certified Long Trail Side-to-Siders. "The nice thing was we did lots of hiking to lots of different places with very little interactions with people," said Ira. "When we did encounter people on the trail it felt like playing chicken!"

What are Ira and Cindy most anticipating at the end of the pandemic? "More thorough enjoyment of those spontaneous interactions that make us human."

Stephanie LaBarron

Stephanie LaBarron is the veteran volunteer corridor monitor of a conserved property in Jay, where she monitors its condition and maintains its boundaries. Her motivation? "It's a little selfish, but I love having my own piece of Vermont to explore." The challenge of bushwhacking and navigating has always been rewarding, but it has become even more



so this year. "Since I'm walking the boundary, I know I'm not going to run into anyone else. It's a great way to recreate right now while trail use is high."

In fact, it's such a motivator that Steph volunteered to adopt two more parcels this spring! Time in the quiet and calm of the Green Mountains is especially welcome now because she is dealing with the challenges of the pandemic at her job as a practice manager for several specialty medical practices. "It's great to know this monitoring work is important for GMC and the conserved lands, but personally it's just as rewarding to have a way to get outside and explore Vermont. I find it grounding and relaxing, and it helps to keep me balanced."

Beth and Ross Richards

In their volunteer application to the club, Bennington residents Beth and Ross Richards wrote: "We are high energy folks that love to hike and camp. Any day in the woods is a good day for us." I soon learned that their entire yard in downtown Bennington is a vegetable garden, and they explore a new corner of Vermont nearly every weekend. They were perfect to adopt the long-unadopted 3.1 miles of the Long Trail from Massachusetts to County Road.

Newcomers to trail maintenance, Beth and Ross were a bit nervous when we met on their first day. "We didn't know what to expect on the trail, knowing that no one had been there for a while. We assumed we were going to run into all kinds of problems without knowing how to fix them." But they learned the ropes quickly, and their segment of trail was in great



shape at the end of the day. However, I warned them that in a non-drought year they will watch over some of the finest "Vermud" on the Long Trail.

Asked what they would most like to see when the pandemic abates, Beth and Ross said "[M]ore hikers. A big part of us joining was to meet like-minded people to go on hikes with and to share this with. Hiking is something bigger than ourselves, and it'd be nice to share that." They have started packing shavings in to moldering privies, and they participated in the GMC volunteer day at Smokey House Community Farm, helping at every opportunity. May they have a more social year in 2021!

The community of GMC's volunteers continues the mission of the Green Mountain Club, despite a year of jarring changes and challenges. I'll remember 2020 for late-night phone calls, cherished field visits, and a record number of adopter reports. Thank you to each and every volunteer for all you do to maintain the Long Trail System!

—LORNE CURRIER
VOLUNTEER & EDUCATION COORDINATOR



Putney Student Travel Service Project

A highlight of our education program this year was joining with Putney Student Travel to provide education and volunteer programming for six days in mid-July. Based in Putney they offer middle and high school students summer programs abroad focused on community service, language immersion, outdoor adventure and pre-college experiences. Faced with the COVID-19 challenges of international travel, Putney Student Travel created a new program in 2020 that hosted 32 students for two weeks at Castleton University.

Kati Christoffel, a member of GMC's field staff, led a virtual "Artwork on the Long Trail" class, with each student creating their own watercolor painting. The club also introduced the students to trail maintenance methods they would use on an ambitious project: revegetation of numerous social trails braiding their way along the Sherburne Pass Trail up to Deer Leap in Killington.

The Sherburne Pass Trail north of U.S. Route 4 is probably the most blown-out half mile of trail on the Long Trail System. Convenient to the road, the relatively short hike and the excellent view from Deer Leap combine to attract crowds.

The trail first contours a steep talus slope that confines hikers to the treadway. But at a U.S. Forest Service sign stating, "Please Stay on the Trail," the trail heads directly uphill through open hardwoods, an ideal environment for the development of braided trails.



Putney Students in the field

At the edge of what we'll call the trail I found many relict waterbars, stone staircases and blue blazes, all obscured by hobblebush: evidence of migration of a trail that had broadened to 20 feet of eroded dirt and rocks. Without intervention, hikers would continue to wander, damaging trailside vegetation and hastening erosion. Putney instructor Phoenix Kenney acknowledged that the trail is a human trace that can't be eliminated entirely, but said the impact could be minimized if hikers stay on the trail. For the students, few projects could be more satisfying than revegetating the impacted area to direct future hikers to the sole trail, instead of the many it had become.

Students learned basic trail design as they identified problems and solutions. They earned their rest as they completed the three-stage process of aerating

compacted soil, covering it with seed-containing duff, and gathering massive logs to protect soil, define the trail, and encourage hikers to stay on it.

"I think they liked it!" Kenney said. "Anytime hikers passed by, students spoke up, explaining why they were there and what they were doing. The pride in the students was really fun to watch."

After more than 450 hours of work, the students' reward was repeated thanks from passing hikers, a GMC hat and sticker each, and a clear day with a great view from the top of Deer Leap. With soils now protected from hiker traffic and a healthy slug of organic matter ready to flourish, we're hopeful significant improvements will grow from this in future years.

—LORNE CURRIER
VOLUNTEER & EDUCATION COORDINATOR



The Taylor Series 2020/21

The 29th Annual James P. Taylor Speaker Series will be held virtually this winter! Join us from the comfort of your couch, regardless of time zone or pajamas, for an evening of entertainment and inspiration. Visit GMC website, greenmountainclub.org, as well as social media for the full calendar and registration.

One speaker, Maya Dizack will give her presentation **Paddling the Mississippi** on January 21. Inspired by a daydream in a boring lecture, UVM graduate Maya Dizack ('20) spun a summer adventure into an academic project. In the summer of 2019, Dizack kayaked the Mississippi River and sampled for microplastic abundance alongside fellow student Michael McGuire ('20) who served as a documentarian and support. Over 2,152 miles, they navigated an unprecedented flooding season, experienced countless acts of kindness, and worked towards a scientific objective. Dizack will be discussing her time on the river, sampling design, and how this research plays a greater role in understanding the state of our environment and society.

A Closed but Busy Visitor Center

It was great to see so many people enjoying Vermont's trails this summer. While the Green Mountain Club Visitor Center was closed, my staff and I kept busy answering questions and shipping maps and publications to support the hiking adventures of our members and other hikers.

In spring and early summer I mostly helped folks understand the guidelines and restrictions established by the governor to keep people safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. As time wore on backpackers became comfortable planning thru-hikes of the Long Trail, so we switched to answering trip planning questions. A larger than usual volume of calls and emails was noticeable, and it continued well into late October, as it usually does before subsiding for winter.

Most surprising was that though the larger world was experiencing so much change, the hiking world was comparatively normal. People needed the usual trail descriptions, hike suggestions, and locations of water sources. Hiking was one of the few ways for people to safely get out of their homes, so I was happy to provide trail advice.



Belen Baigorria on Mount Abraham

I hope that as we enter winter you will continue to turn to trails for much-needed nature therapy, and that you remember the GMC is here to help. We can provide winter hiking recommendations, advice on gear, and help planning your hikes for next year.

—AMY POTTER
VISITOR CENTER MANAGER



HikeVT ❤️ GMC

It may have seemed that most summer and fall activities were cancelled this year, but the fun of hiking most definitely was not. The GMC provided all the information needed for any hike—easy, moderate, difficult, or accessible—from trailhead directions and trail descriptions to places to visit along the way.

From Jeannette Damato (who also wrote a blog post about hiking with her children): “Thank you, thank you. This series inspired me to think Camel’s Hump was doable, and just this past Wednesday I achieved it with my husband and two kids (nine and 13.) —Yes, we had a family hug at the top. 🥰🥰🥰”

Hike suggestions will live on our website to help you plan your adventures. And because our summer and fall offerings were so popular, we will provide more suggestions this winter. Visit greenmountainclub.org/hikevt so you can HikeVT. (❤️ GMC)

—ALICIA DiCOCCO
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS



Jeannette Damato on Camel's Hump



Cisco and Amelia Damato in their HikeVT shirts



Reflections from the Field

Bushwhacking the Long Trail Corridor

AmeriCorps service comes in all forms. I was fortunate to spend six months as a stewardship assistant for the Green Mountain Club, monitoring and improving boundary lines of GMC and state land which hosts the Long Trail in northern Vermont.

Boundary marking consists of repainting surveyor-blazed trees, hanging flagging tape, and posting signs so anyone can recognize and follow the line. I also watched for evidence of important wildlife, and for encroachments such as maple sugaring, clearing of ski glades, and logging. After each field visit I completed a report for the club's official property file, which tracks the status of the property lines.

Most GMC boundary marking is done by a dedicated volunteer corps of corridor monitors, each of whom adopts a tract of land or a stretch of boundary line. But before this summer 60 miles of boundary had not been monitored for many years, and current conditions were unknown. I walked those boundaries, documented their condition, and improved their integrity.

I bushwhacked through the woods with three important tools: a property survey map, a compass and a GPS receiver. I used the survey map and compass to follow the bearings of each boundary line, and I used the GPS to record important features like blazed trees and property corners. This documented the condition of each boundary, and supplied data for GMC's electronic geographic information system.

Properly maintaining boundary lines ensures that neighbors and the public know what land is protected, and it should decrease the likelihood of future encroachment.

The importance of this work was clear on a property called Black Falls, part of Jay State Forest. I came across an area where an adjacent property had been recently logged—right up to the property line. Thankfully, the boundary had been well marked, and no logging had occurred on the protected land. But I could easily see how an encroachment could have occurred if the boundaries hadn't been well defined.

On my job I was able to participate in a great adventure. Navigating mountainsides and bushwhacking through the backcountry of Vermont was truly a wild—and fun—experience. Many might not find working through thick spruce-fir stands and fending off swarms of black flies enjoyable, but I'll recall my memories fondly.

The Green Mountains are important land, both ecologically and recreationally. I'm glad I was able to do my part in protecting them.

—ANTHONY ERWIN
VHCB AMERICORPS STEWARDSHIP ASSISTANT

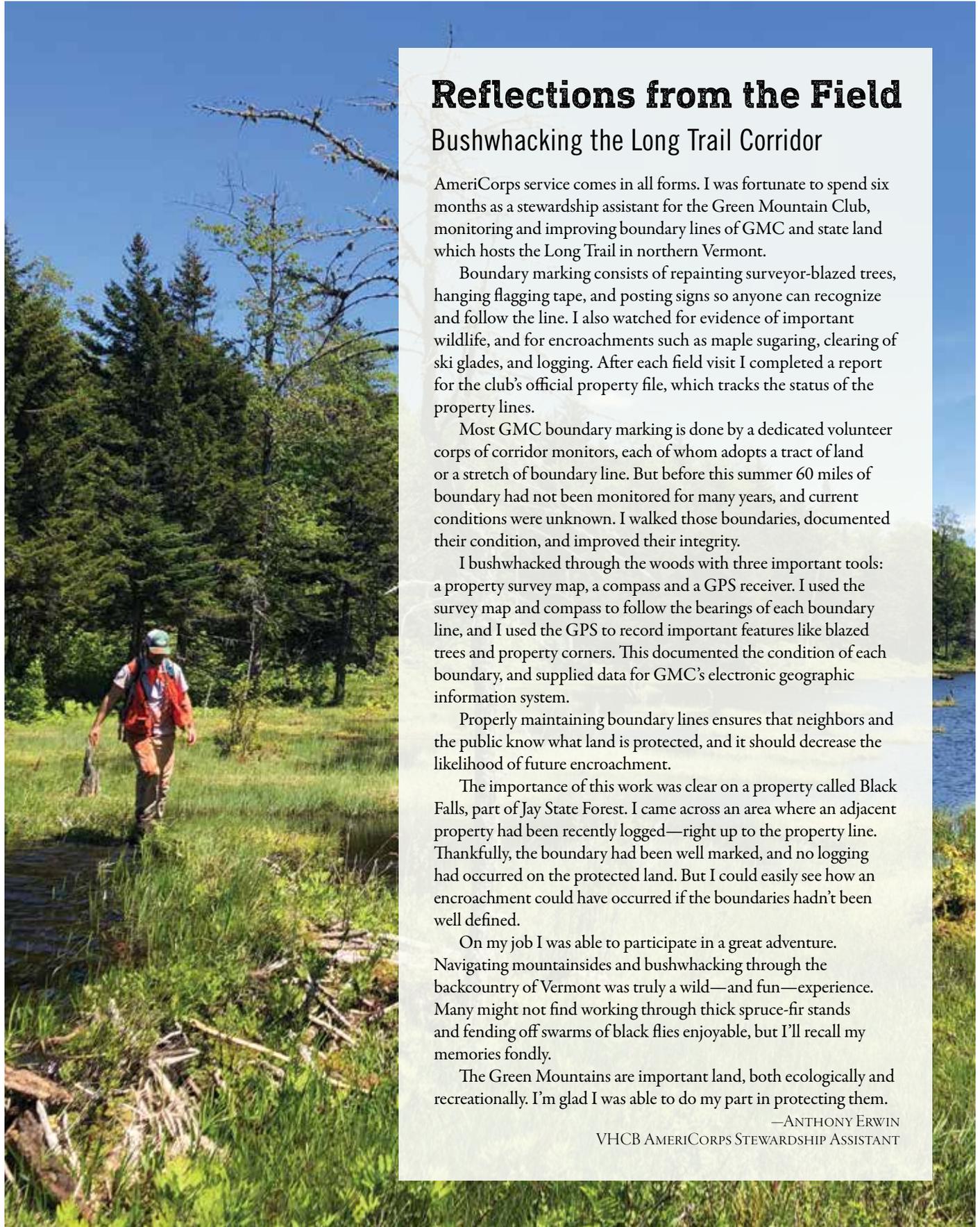
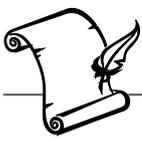


PHOTO BY MOLLIE FLANGAN



The Green Mountain Club Board of Directors met electronically on June 13 and September 19, 2020, due to the global pandemic.

JUNE 13, 2020

President Tom Candon reviewed budget challenges facing the Green Mountain Club in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also reported that diversity, equity, and inclusion would continue to be integrated into the club's work, and that a stronger relationship between headquarters and the sections will be emphasized. He thanked everyone for their commitment to GMC.

Tom introduced four new board members: Alexis Peters, Anne Hauser, Cathi Brooks, and Mariah Keagy. He acknowledged members finishing their terms: Robynn Albert, Dann Van Der Vliet, John Zaber, Annie Janeway and Steve Klein. Steve Klein received a special recognition for his service as treasurer for six years.

Director of Finance Jason Buss provided adjustments to the fiscal year 2021 budget, required by projections of significantly reduced revenues as a result of COVID-19. Bolstered by brisk sales of maps and guidebooks, May was a solid month financially despite the pandemic.

Executive Director Mike DeBonis provided an update on office operations and the status of the Long Trail System and the club's field staff plans. He reviewed progress in the Legislature in modifying Act 250 to better accommodate recreational trail construction and management.

The following slate of officer nominees was moved, seconded and approved unanimously:

- Tom Candon, *President*
- Howard VanBenthuyzen, *Vice President*
- Ed O'Leary, *Secretary*
- Nancy Thomas, *Treasurer*



Sunset Ridge view

PHOTO BY WANESSA LAKE

SEPTEMBER 19, 2020

Treasurer Nancy Thomas and Director of Finance Jason Buss reported that donations for May and June were strong, revenues remained stable, membership was up, expenses were reduced across the board, and the endowment fund stood at \$5.4 million at the end of August. While finances through the first quarter of the fiscal year looked good, the club was managing the budget with an expected 10- to 25-percent drop in revenues.

President Tom Candon said he was impressed by the club's numerous accomplishments this year under difficult circumstances, including including strong financial performance and membership growth, effective committee operations, and amazing volunteer work.

Alicia DiCocco, Director of Development & Communications, discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on fundraising, and reported that a resilience fund had been created to seek donations to help the club manage COVID-19 impacts.

Director of Field Programs Keegan Tierney reported that there had been no Long Trail Patrol this season because all seasonal staff were serving as backcountry caretakers. Increased trail use caused unusual management challenges and resource impacts, particularly at overnight sites.

Conservation Manager Mollie Flanigan reported the acquisition of the Codding Hollow property on September 8. The property protects a third of a mile of the Long Trail with a perpetual easement, and is now part of Long Trail State Forest. Mollie reported that the stewardship assistant funded by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board had inventoried more than 35 miles of GMC property boundaries. This work almost completes a full inventory of the club's 175-mile property boundary.

The board voted to approve the following:

- The 2020 list of standing committees
- Establishment of a working group to seek improvements in diversity, equity and inclusion in the club's activities

Finally, Executive Director Mike DeBonis assessed the club's performance in accomplishing our strategic plan. He said the club is making good progress on many of its goals, though COVID-19 will certainly affect some elements of the plan.

Tom closed the meeting by announcing a celebration marking the 100th anniversary of the construction of Taft Lodge, to take place in Stowe after the meeting.



ILLUSTRATION BY ED EPSTEIN

Section Directory

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President: Reed Goossen, (215) 595-6391
E-mail: rgoossen@gmail.com
Website: benningtongmc.org

Brattleboro

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

Bread Loaf

Location: Middlebury area
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Website: gmcbreadloaf.org

Burlington

Maintenance: Winooski River Footbridge to Smugglers' Notch
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Website: gmc Burlington.org

Connecticut

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

Killington

Location: Rutland area
Maintenance: Vt. 140 to Maine Junction
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Laraway

Location: St. Albans area
Maintenance: Lamoille River to Vt. 118
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E-mail: brbshey@comcast.net
Website: gmclaraway.org

Manchester

Maintenance: Vt. 11 and 30 to Griffith Lake
President: Marge Fish, (802) 824-3662
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Website: gmc-manchester.org

Montpelier

Maintenance: Camel's Hump to Winooski River Footbridge and Smugglers' Notch to Chilcoat Pass
President: Dana Lawrence, (802) 223-1007
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Website: gmcmontpelier.org

Northeast Kingdom

Maintenance: Willoughby and Darling State Forests and the Kingdom Heritage Lands
President: John Predom, (802)-377-9654
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Website: nekmc.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: gmsterling.org

Worcester

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

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PHOTO BY KATE EMMONS

A gift of appreciated stock to the Green Mountain Club can benefit you in two ways: you receive a charitable income tax deduction for the full fair market value of the securities, and at the same time you may avoid capital gains taxes on appreciated stock. This helps stretch your gift even further.

This extra funding can result in more trail maintained, more land conserved, and more education programs.

To get started on your stock donation, please contact Alicia DiCocco at adicocco@greenmountainclub.org.

Thank you, Jocelyn!

Jocelyn Hebert, long-time editor of the *Long Trail News* and a valued employee of the Green Mountain Club, concluded her service in June. GMC was fortunate to have Jocelyn as a member of our team for nine years during which time she distinguished herself as *Long Trail News* Editor and made significant contributions to our organization. We wish Jocelyn well in her future endeavors.



House on Her Back

Jill Rubin, Hartland, Vermont

One of the greatest joys of my teenage years was discovering backpacking, the self-reliance of carrying everything I needed on my back and discovering how little I needed. As a parent it has been an equal thrill sharing my love of nature and the outdoors with my kids.

Pandemic life has been hard on my kids. They miss friends, family and activities; they find it hard to feel safe in a world with a deadly virus; and they are bored and lonely staying home most of the time. One source of relief from their stress and confusion has been catching aquatic critters, fishing, hiking, swimming and camping among Vermont's forests, ponds, rivers and streams.

On the first weekend of August I took Lilja, my nine year old daughter, on our second backpacking trip in the Green Mountains. Last year we hiked up to Sterling Pond. This year we went to Little Rock Pond. Lilja is small for her age, and she doesn't excel in organized sports. But we have always taken her in the outdoors, whether hiking, cross-country skiing or viewing the night sky. She won't ever be the fastest runner on the field, but she has a superpower in the outdoors: she can carry her bed, her closet and her kitchen on her back, and she can climb mountains.

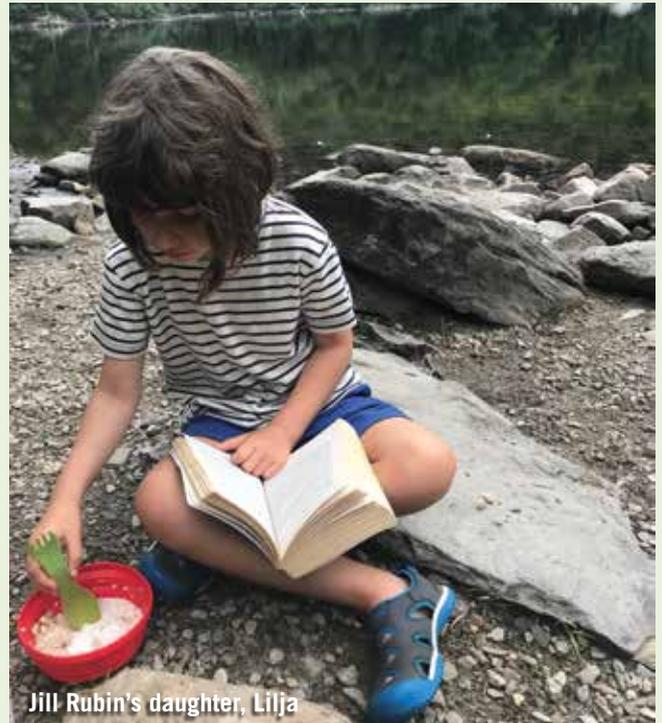
On this year's hike we stopped for a snack by a glistening stream dotted with mossy rocks. Lilja noticed how the water moved in repetitive patterns, and we talked about rocks, gravel and riffles as we gazed into the water together. She started to share her inner thoughts, and I listened as we continued up the trail.

After we set up our tent at the campsite we walked around Little Rock Pond. Almost halfway around we found a gorgeous spot to hang our hammock, and Lilja read for the next couple of hours. We watched a loon surface not far from our hammock. Later we ate our dinner on the pond shore, and she wandered the shallows trying to catch northern spotted newts and stalking a green frog. I watched her worries slip away as she focused on catching the frog.

Later that evening Lilja carefully created a log cabin pattern with small twigs, and found dry leaves and birch bark for tinder for a small campfire. She insisted on lighting it herself, and we roasted marshmallows. Before we headed back to our tent she carefully spread the flickering sticks apart and added water.

The next morning we ate our breakfast by the pond and went for a short swim. The other campers were striking their tents as they prepared to continue on the Long Trail or return to the trailhead, so we were the only people in the pond, surrounded by boulders, trees and the sounds of birds. On our drive home we stopped for breakfast burritos and ice cream, a final joy on a wonderful trip.

Backpacking creates extraordinary chances for one-on-one time with Lilja, but it also gives her survival skills in a world that isn't so gentle these days. She can build a fire, carry her house on her back, climb mountains, and tread lightly in awareness of beauty. 🐸



Jill Rubin's daughter, Lilja



Jill and Lilja



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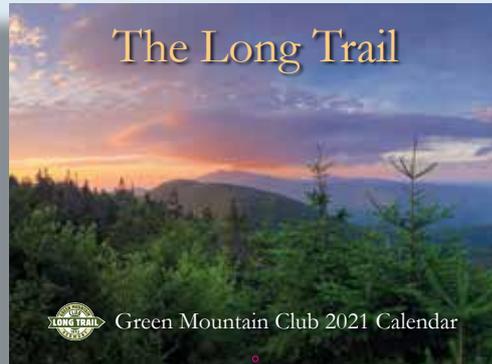
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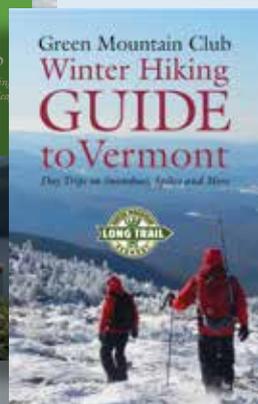
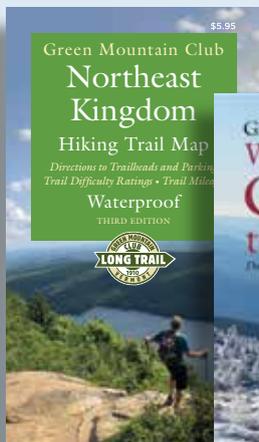
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