

# Long Trail NEWS



Quarterly of the Green Mountain Club

FALL 2021



## Hikers' Choice

Photo Contest Winner

*More of your photos inside*

A Day in the Life: Trail Crew | Helicopter Airlift | Long Trail Day | Ask the Visitor Center



# Long Trail

N E W S

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

Michael DeBonis, Executive Director  
Chloe Miller, Communications Manager &  
*Long Trail News* Editor  
Richard Andrews, Volunteer Copy Editor  
Sylvie Vidrine, Graphic Designer

Green Mountain Club  
4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road  
Waterbury Center, Vermont 05677  
Phone: (802) 244-7037  
Fax: (802) 244-5867  
E-mail: [gmc@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:gmc@greenmountainclub.org)  
Website: [greenmountainclub.org](http://greenmountainclub.org)

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 are not necessarily those of GMC.

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.

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

Copyright © 2021 The Green Mountain Club, Inc., 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677. Permission to reproduce in any form any of the material in this publication without prior written approval of The Green Mountain Club, Inc. is granted only to individuals for their own personal hiking convenience.

**FRONT COVER:** Ladder Ravine, by Kurt Wehde, winner of GMC's inaugural Hikers' Choice photo contest vote. More than 800 of you voted, and Kurt's lush capture received 28% of the vote for the prize — gracing the cover of the *Long Trail News*!

## CONTENTS

FALL 2021, Volume 81, No. 3



Maine Helicopters and GMC worked together to conduct a two-day airlift to five different backcountry sites. Here, the helicopter drops new tent platform and privy materials at Stratton View. Photo by Southern Field Supervisor Kati Christoffel. *Read more on page 10.*

## FEATURES

### 6 › A DAY IN THE LIFE: LONG TRAIL PATROL

*by Chloe Miller*

### 10 › FIELD CREW AIRLIFTS 18 TONS OF MATERIALS

*by Keegan Tierney*

### 12 › PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

### 14 › ASK AMY: SUMMER FAQs FROM THE VISITOR CENTER

*by Amy Potter*

### 20 › HONORARY LIFE AWARD HONOREES

## DEPARTMENTS

3 › From the President

18 › Sections

21 › Board Notes

4 › Mountain Views

20 › Honorary Life Award

22 › Field Notes

16 › Land Stewardship

21 › Trail Mix

23 › Journey's End



## From the President

I am honored to serve you as the newly elected president of the Green Mountain Club. As President, I walk in the footsteps of all the tremendous volunteer leaders who have gone before, and I am constantly inspired by their energetic and unselfish efforts.

My connection to the Green Mountain Club began in the 1960s when, thanks to my parents and Boy Scouts Troop 52, I began hiking and backpacking on the Long Trail. I took my first long-distance hike in the spring of 1970, hiking from Williamstown, Massachusetts to Vermont Route 140, and was then and there hooked on long-distance hiking. I became a GMC member and was persuaded by Ken and Alice Boyd to spend the summer of 1972 on top of Camel's Hump as the Gorham Lodge Backcountry Caretaker, and the summers of '73 and '74 as a GMC Ranger Naturalist on Mount Mansfield. I still recall those experiences as among the most rewarding and fulfilling of my life!

Later in life, I was drawn to the club through volunteerism. I adopted Hazen's Notch Camp in 1999, Roundtop Shelter in 2015, and the Long Trail across Bowen Mountain. Before long, I found myself carrying clippers and saws on every hike, and out doing trail maintenance on a regular basis. I was honored to serve as the Chair of the Trail Management Committee, where I was able to see firsthand the careful and intentional planning involved in the management of the Long Trail System.

I was even turned into a passable sign maker by our late friend and mentor Dave Hardy, former director of Trail Programs. I was recently leafing through a 1968 edition of the *Long Trail News* that I found in my shop, which included a story about how Herb

Ogden, Sr. made trail signs more than 50 years ago. It reminded me of all the great individuals, both past and present, who have shaped the club into what it is today.

I am grateful for all phases of my association with the club, and to be surrounded with so many hardworking volunteers eager to pick up a mattock, saw, shovel or paintbrush to get work done. Those volunteers are out in force throughout the year performing tens of thousands of hours of work on the trail and shelters, working in conjunction with GMC's professional trail crews and caretakers to keep the trail in safe and hikeable condition for the ever-increasing number of recreationists who visit it.

Moving forward, and as you read this, we are now in the midst of one of the busiest trail and infrastructure construction seasons in club history, with shelter, trail and privy construction proceeding at an amazing pace. Thanks to your support and the combined efforts of the board and GMC's professional staff, we successfully navigated the ongoing pandemic, have a balanced budget, a growing membership, and together with our partners, are constantly planning for new initiatives to preserve and protect the trail and system.

Usage during 2020 increased by 35% and remains high this year. There remain about six miles of the Long Trail that are unprotected, and these miles continue to be a priority for the club. We are ever mindful also of the miles of side and access trails which remain unprotected, and the best course of action to pursue protection going forward. We continue to improve sanitation and environmental impact at overnight sites by upgrading privies and replacing old-school-style pit privies. All of these efforts are underscored by our ambitious



**Howard VanBenthuyzen**

capital campaign, which has entered the public phase and should wrap up by 2022. I also want to thank those of you who participated in Long Trail Day, our summer fundraiser which you will read more about in this magazine.

As President, I hope to see a new multi-purpose office building completed to replace the aging Herrick building. In addition, an important goal will be to continue to work towards the creation of a permanently protected corridor for the entire Long Trail. Finally, I hope that the club will continue welcoming and stewarding hiker education for the many new and returning hikers on the trail. With a consciousness informed by a greater commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we will continue to ensure that the mountains will ever after play a larger part in the life of all Vermonters.

If there is one thing I love to do, it's hike, so I hope that over the course of my time as president that I will see you on the trail!

—HOWARD VANBENTHUYSEN  
GMC BOARD PRESIDENT





## Love for the Northern LT

To Keegan Tierney, Director of Field Programs: I read your piece in the summer *Long Trail News* ["Field Notes," page 14] and was interested to know that the southern and middle LT sections get significant funding for maintenance from USFS, NPS and local partners; and that the LT north of Rt. 15 is underfunded in comparison. This was clear to me after I hiked the LT north from Rt. 15 last weekend and encountered the ladder descending to the Lamoille floodplain side channel on an otherwise lovely hike. After my initial trepidation I made it down fine, and back up later.



Anyway, after I read your article I donated to the legacy campaign in the hopes that funds will eventually help upgrade the trail in these parts. I rejoined GMC a few years ago after joining the Women of UVM and hiking with that group. I attended UVM in the 70s and was a member for a while back then. I am grateful that GMC exists and that we have such great hiking opportunities in Vermont, and such great trail stewards! Thank you for all you do,

— NANCY KNOX, BURLINGTON

**Keegan replies:** Great to hear from you. The Lamoille Floodplain is a trail management challenge in and of itself! We are working toward better solutions for that ladder down the eroding bank and it will certainly be something we address as we chip away at the work on the northern trail. Thanks so much for your donation.

## Visitor Center Staff Help Make Memories

To Amy Potter, Visitor Center Manager: Thank you so much for your excellent advice! Following your suggestion, my son, and his husband, and I hiked to Lake Pleiad earlier this month with their four-year-old son, my grandson, Benjamin. It worked perfectly. Benjamin loved the hike, loved the views from the top of the Middlebury chair lift, and loved

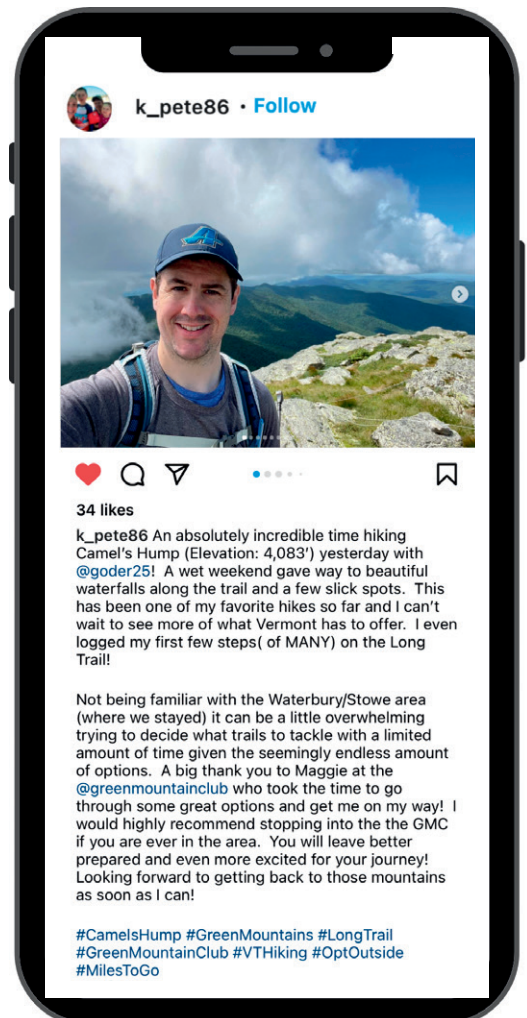


Jerry's son and grandson at Lake Pleiad, courtesy of Jerry Howard.

Lake Pleiad. (In fact, at Benjamin's insistence, we returned to Lake Pleiad two days after the first visit!) The attached photo is my son and grandson at the lake's edge.

Thank you; thank you!

—JERRY HOWARD



### GMC Officers

Howard VanBenthuyzen, *President*  
Amy Kelsey, *Vice President*  
Caitlin Miller, *Secretary*  
Nancy Thomas, *Treasurer*

### GMC Directors

Cathi Brooks, *Northeast Kingdom Section*  
Michelle Connor, *Burlington Section*  
Elisabeth Fenn, *Sterling Section*  
Bob Fish, *Manchester Section*  
Kip Potter, *Northern Frontier Section*  
Anne Houser, *General*  
Andrew Hood, *Connecticut Section*  
Tom Kahl, *Upper Valley Ottaquechee Section*  
Mariah Keagy, *General*  
Nancy McClellan, *General*  
Ram Moensad, *General*  
Millie Mugica, *General*  
Andrew Nuquist, *Montpelier Section*  
Bob Paquin, *Laraway Section*  
Mike Peckar, *Worcester Section*  
Alexis Peters, *General*  
Ira Sollace, *General*  
Martha Stitelman, *Bennington Section*  
Larry Walter, *Killington Section*  
Matt Wels, *Brattleboro Section*  
Jeffrey Wehrwein, *General*  
Bruce Yelton, *Bread Loaf Section*

### GMC Staff Directory

Main Telephone: (802) 244-7037

Isaac Alexandre-Leach, *Field Programs Supervisor*  
E-mail: [isaac@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:isaac@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8218

Jason Buss, *Director of Finance*  
E-mail: [jbuss@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:jbuss@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8214

Lorne Currier, *Volunteer and Education Coordinator*  
E-mail: [lcurrier@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:lcurrier@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8329

Michael DeBonis, *Executive Director*  
E-mail: [mdebonis@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:mdebonis@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8212

Alicia DiCocco, *Director of Development and Communications*  
E-mail: [adicocco@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:adicocco@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8322

Rick Dugan, *Membership Coordinator*  
E-mail: [rdugan@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:rdugan@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8325

Mollie Flanigan, *Conservation Manager*  
E-mail: [mflanigan@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:mflanigan@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8217

Erica Harris, *Development Assistant*  
E-mail: [eharris@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:eharris@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 882-8107

Angela Hilsman, *Communications Coordinator*  
E-mail: [ahilsman@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:ahilsman@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8215

Matt Krebs, *Operations Manager*  
E-mail: [mkrebs@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:mkrebs@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8321

Chloe Miller, *Communications Manager*  
E-mail: [cmiller@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:cmiller@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8324

John Plummer, *Outreach and Field Coordinator*  
E-mail: [jgroups@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:jgroups@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8327

Amy Potter, *Visitor Center Manager*  
E-mail: [apotter@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:apotter@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8210

Keegan Tierney, *Director of Field Programs*  
E-mail: [ktierney@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:ktierney@greenmountainclub.org)  
Phone: (802) 241-8320

**We Welcome Your Comments!**  
[gmc@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:gmc@greenmountainclub.org) OR  
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, GMC  
4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road  
Waterbury Center, VT 05677





## Long Trail Day

### Supporting the Long Trail Legacy Campaign

I am simply overwhelmed with the generosity shown for Long Trail Day on August 28. Up and down the state, you all were out hiking and celebrating your success in raising more than \$70,000 to support the Green Mountain Club's ambitious Long Trail Legacy Campaign. Hikes varied from attempting a fastest known time of the Long Trail to using the trail for the first time, and everything in between. The day was a culmination of months of hard work spreading the word about the Green Mountain Club and encouraging others to participate or donate. I got to visit with Vermonters and visitors alike at Barnes Camp, sharing snacks and hearing what the Long Trail System means to you.

Long Trail Day was a crucial component of the Long Trail Legacy Campaign, which is all about investments in the future of Green Mountain Club and the Long Trail. Investing in our future by growing the endowment, investing in our people by rehabilitating GMC's headquarters, investing in our trails by improving the northern section of the Long Trail, and investing in our lands by rebuilding Beaver Dam Cabin at Wheeler Pond and permanently protecting more of the Long Trail.

These investments are in addition to our regular annual work of maintaining the Long Trail, side trails, Appalachian Trail in Vermont, and Kingdom Heritage Trails in the Northeast Kingdom. I am so grateful to those of you who have already stepped up to support the Long Trail Legacy Campaign. If you haven't donated to the Long Trail Legacy Campaign, please consider using the enclosed envelope to make a contribution or visit [www.greenmountainclub.org/legacy](http://www.greenmountainclub.org/legacy). We have raised \$2.5 million of the \$4 million goal, and a gift of \$272, one dollar for each mile of the trail, will really go a long way.

—ALICIA DiCOCO, DIRECTOR OF  
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

**THANK YOU to the following businesses for providing snacks and prizes for hikers:** The Mountain Goat, Outdoor Gear Exchange, MountainOps, Vermont Artisan Coffee & Tea Co., Vermont State Parks, Cabot Cheese, Laughing Moon Chocolates, Athletic Brewing Company, Wildgood, Kula Cloth, Good To Go.



**I celebrated Long Trail Day by hiking with my four-year-old Hugh and our eight-month-old puppy Meadow.**



PHOTO BY JOHN PREDOM

**The GMC NEK Section raised \$695 for Long Trail Day and celebrated with a hike up Jay Peak.**



**Long Trail Day fundraisers shared why they support the club and the trail while raising money from friends and family.**



**Alicia DiCocco and Erica Harris giving out trail magic at Barnes Camp on Long Trail Day.**



# A Day in the Life: Long Trail Patrol



L to R: Sarah Pillard, Lead Clara Kuhn, Sam “B.B.” Sylvester, Andrew Rosenthal-Baxter, Sam “Kenney” Kenney.

PHOTO BY CHLOE MILLER

**FOR MORE THAN 90 YEARS** the Green Mountain Club has hired seasonal crews to live and work on the Long Trail System. The Long Trail Patrol, GMC's professional crew, augments the efforts of the club's hundreds of volunteers to manage the effects of erosion by water and of wear and tear by hikers. The goal: keep water off the trail, and hikers on it. The crew prioritizes skilled and demanding rock work because stone stands up to the pounding of boots and the harsh Northeastern climate.

This year the northern crew concentrated on the Long Trail from Bruce Peak to Jay Peak, the first installment of a five-year plan to improve the Long Trail north of Route 15, the most rugged and historically underfunded stretch of the trail. GMC will field a dedicated crew to rebuild the northern trail to match the quality of the rest of the LT, which has benefitted from state and federal funding for many years. This investment will be funded by the Long Trail Legacy Campaign.

The crew started at “Site F,” a long, steep and badly eroded piece of trail just north of Route 242 near Jay Camp. Crew Lead Clara Kuhn and Field Supervisor Rosalie Sharp scouted the piece in the spring to plan at least 150 feet of restructuring and rock work. Two and a half weeks of work resulted in a new waterbar, about 15 feet of turnpike, seven check steps, and a 20-step stone staircase on the steepest section.

The story that follows, gained by observing the crew on two days separated by a week, describes just a sample of the work required for such a thorough reconstruction.

## 7:00 a.m.

The crew — Lead, Clara Kuhn; Sam “Kenney” Kenney; Sam “B.B.” (short for Big Beard) Sylvester; Andrew Rosenthal-Baxter; and Sarah Pillard — wake up in their own tents in the Jay Camp Tent Site; dress in long pants, boots and a Long Trail

Patrol T-shirt; and grab gloves, safety glasses and hard hats. They make their own breakfasts, lunches and snacks, and rotate turns cooking a communal dinner.

For breakfast the crew heads to the tarp-sheltered kitchen area to boil water on a two-burner Coleman stove, provided by GMC along with other kitchen gear.

They carried a steel bear box to the site when they arrived, and now they hang extra cooking items high in trees. Most crew members enjoy a typical backcountry breakfast: oatmeal, peanut butter, energy bars and coffee, though Sam Kenney sometimes opts for ramen.

## 8:00 a.m.

The crew hikes to the work site about 15 minutes from camp, drops day packs in the brush off trail, and fetches tools from a cache behind a large boulder about 50 yards off trail. For construction materials they will use rocks, soil and brush from the surrounding forest, taking care to leave little or no visible disturbance.

The crew considers the day's plan, and splits up to tackle its components. Earlier they rebuilt a failed waterbar, and now they will create a passable and obvious route so hikers will stay on a narrow and firm footpath, allowing the formerly widened trail to revegetate and avoid further erosion.

## 9:00 a.m.

Andrew and B.B. set to work on the third check step, a massive rock with a fairly flat top set into the trail, forming a step resistant to flowing water. Check steps, quarried from the surrounding area, are typically placed three to five feet apart on gentle grades.

Using **pick mattocks** they carve a bed for the step, a couple feet deep and just wide enough to fit the rock. But it's more complicated than that. A check step must be set so the supporting earth won't settle or erode, displacing it before its time. The best steps sit sturdily on other rocks below ground rather than on impermanent earth. Crews must sometimes clip tree roots to make room for check steps, but avoid it if they can.

Next they use heavy steel **rock bars** and strategy—not brute force—to lever a 200-plus-pound rock into position.

## 10:00 a.m.

B.B. and Andrew still struggle with their mammoth rock. It often takes hours to set a rock right, and this one is proving finicky. Each places a rock bar beneath an edge of the rock, trying to nudge it into a stable set. One slides his bar under an edge seeking a “bite,” or hold, and little by little they raise one side and shift the rock. They



test the set by standing on each corner and axis of the step, sensing the slightest rocking or movement.

### 11:00 a.m.

"Hey Clara, what time is it?" B.B. asks.

"It's eleven o'clock on the dot," says Clara — the crew's typical lunch break.

"Well, that means this rock is going to set itself, and we can go to lunch," quips B.B. with lighthearted sarcasm, and just a hint of frustration. A full morning of work, and nothing to show for it...yet.

Lunch is a quiet affair. Each crew member carries a bear-proof canister as a lunchbox. Calories are important; space and weight are too, though less so than on an overnight hike. Tortillas stuffed with hummus, cheese, tuna, or peanut butter are common (not all together, usually). And plenty of water.

I ask what they usually eat. Kenney says Sarah eats "stuff that requires my knife." Sarah says she usually eats "B.B.'s apple cores" — the Leave No Trace ethic runs deep. Andrew reads an e-book on his phone, while Kenney tosses thought provoking conversation starters, like takes on the classic "trolley experiment" conundrum of the study of ethics.

### 11:30 a.m.

Clara, in her fifth season with GMC and her first as LTP Lead, keeps a close eye on the clock. Lunch break is 30 minutes, and they break for 30 minutes at midafternoon.

### 11:35 a.m.

While B.B. and Andrew continue wrestling with what must be the most difficult check step in GMC history, Kenney and Sarah

finalize the 15-foot section of **turnpike** just above the new **waterbar**.

Turnpikes are deceptively complex. They often raise and harden a boggy piece of trail, but this turnpike is designed to funnel hikers to a narrow path to the staircase. A turnpike is built in layers to drain water: large rocks, smaller rocks, golf-ball-size "crush," topped with firm **mineral soil**. A well-constructed turnpike looks like an ordinary packed section of dirt, but there's a lot hidden beneath the surface. Sarah makes crush, slamming mid-size rocks with a sledgehammer until they shatter, while Kenney gathers mineral soil from the pit he dug several yards off trail.

### 1:00 p.m.

After the challenging rock is finally set, the crew decides it's time to bring in the big

## Trail Maintenance 101

### TURNPIKE

A stretch of built-up trail that raises the level of the walking surface and hardens it. It

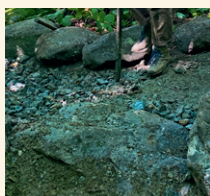
consists of a layer of large rocks, a layer of medium-size rocks, and a layer of small golf-ball sized "crush," all topped with mineral soil and held in by larger stones along the sides.

### SCREE

Rocks set off the side of the treadway to prevent erosion, by water or foot traffic.

### GARGOYLE

A particularly large, pointy, unappealing rock, purposefully placed to deter hikers from using it as a step and to funnel traffic onto the intended Treadway.



### CRUSH

Crushed rocks, broken up by a single or double jack sledgehammer,

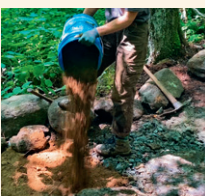
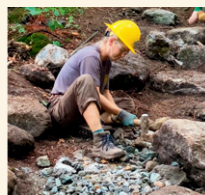
used to fill in the spaces around trail structures to add stability and improve drainage. Crush is also used to create a durable, well drained walking surface. Usually covered by mineral soil.

### MINERAL SOIL

Soil dug from beneath the ground's surface that has little organic content, and therefore does not absorb as much water as surface organic soil.

### WATERBAR

A common drainage structure. A stone, timber, or earthen structure used



to support a drain that directs water off the trail. When water flows down a trail and hits a waterbar, the shape of the drain slows the water flow, diverts it off the trail, and disperses it away from the walking surface.

### CHECK STEPS

Stone or timber steps, usually set three to five feet apart on gullied-out sections of trail with a medium grade. They help slow the flow of water down the trail, retain soil, and help create a durable walking surface for hikers.

### STAIRCASE

A structure used on steep sections of trail to retain soil and harden the tread surface. Steps are set directly on top of one another, staggered up the trail to create a series of linked steps.





# Frequently Used Tools

## ROCK BAR

A long, heavy steel pole with a beveled end, used for getting leverage under and moving large rocks.



## GRIPHOIST

A manually operated hoist that employs metal jaws and a wire rope to gain mechanical advantage when moving rocks or other large objects.



## PICK MATTOCK

A hand tool with a combination head: a pick on one side and a narrow adze on the other. These are primarily used for loosening, digging, and removing soil, or moving rocks.



## SINGLE JACK

A small, four-pound hammer used most frequently to create crush. A bigger eight-pound double jack is used for larger rocks.



## HIKERS

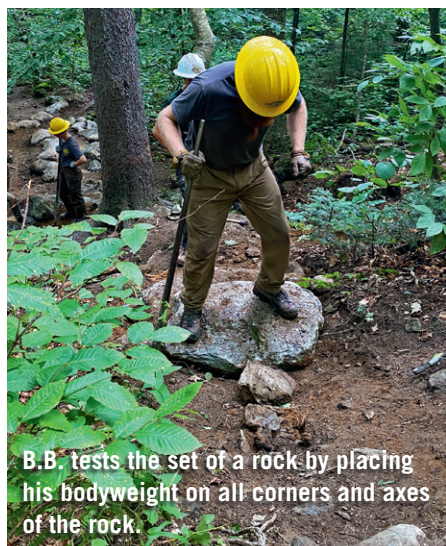
Observed to see if they'll follow the crew's intended trail line, which informs the crew of any necessary structure adjustments or scree placement.



gun: the **Griphoist**, a manually operated hoist that pulls wire rope with metal jaws to haul rocks uphill, through long distances, or over obstacles. This piece of trail is particularly steep, making it hard even to get a foothold, let alone a solid grip on a massive rock.

## 1:15 p.m.

Clara reviews methods of wrapping rocks with slings made of **webbing**, sized for varying loads. Granite or schist, typical Vermont types of stone, weigh 150 to 175 pounds per cubic foot. Some not-so-



B.B. tests the set of a rock by placing his bodyweight on all corners and axes of the rock.

scientific eyeballing puts these future steps at 600 to 800 pounds each.

Andrew stands at the Griphoist, which is anchored to a large tree about 20 feet uphill. Clara clips the cable to the webbing, adjusting it for the desired direction of movement. "Ten-SION!" announces Andrew as he starts to crank the metal arm of the hoist back and forth.

Slowly but steadily the slings tighten, and the rock begins to move inch by inch uphill, over the previously placed check steps, as Clara guides it over obstacles with a rock bar. This **gargoyle** rock is destined to form a border along the check steps to confine hikers to the staircase. Using the Griphoist is slow, but sometimes it's the only way to shift really large rocks or maneuver them along tricky upgrades.

## 2:00 p.m.

As the afternoon wears on, the crew tackles three more portions of the never-ending staircase. Kenney and B.B. anchor the hoist to different trees chosen in line with each rock's intended destination. Repeatedly moving the heavy tackle from tree to tree is time consuming, but it's better than a faulty position, which risks a rock slipping from its slings and skittering 20 feet downhill, where the crew takes care never to be.

## 2:30 p.m.

The crew takes its second break, snacking or discussing weekend plans. Reading is popular – B.B. describes his current place in *Dracula*, which others have recently read. Sarah is reading *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, while Kenney laments that he's read everything on his Kindle, and needs to download some new options.

## 3:00 p.m.

Kenney and B.B. are once again nudging and fudging a rock for that perfect set. Clara looks on with her discerning eye. The crew thinks they have a set, but Clara shakes her head and points out a subtle rocking on one axis of the step. "There are a lot of bad rock staircases out there," she says. "This is not going to be one of them." When the step is finally set, they quickly grab bucketfuls of mineral soil and small crush to secure and level the edges and surfaces of the step.

## 3:30 p.m.

On the lower half of the staircase Andrew and Sarah pause to let some day hikers pass. Carefully watching where they go, Andrew guides them down the staircase rather than along the drainage swale, which will later be brushed in to better define the footway.



Observing hiker behavior is a valuable tool in trail maintenance as well as construction. If what hikers consider the clearest or easiest path is off the desired trail line, maintainers can install **scree** or other materials to delineate the proper course.

Hikers thank the crew as they descend the challenging trail. “It will be easier soon!” the crew responds.

### 4:15 p.m.

The workday is winding down, but finishing is not as simple as punching a clock. The crew can’t leave hazardous boulders half-set. They strategically finish the last big move or set, and refrain from starting what they can’t finish. They account for all tools, and re-cache them before enjoying downtime before group dinner.

The hike back to camp is quick today, and a few hours of daylight remain for a hike up Jay Peak. Andrew heads up to relax, while Kenney summits to reload his Kindle via the strong wireless signal there.

### 6:30 p.m.

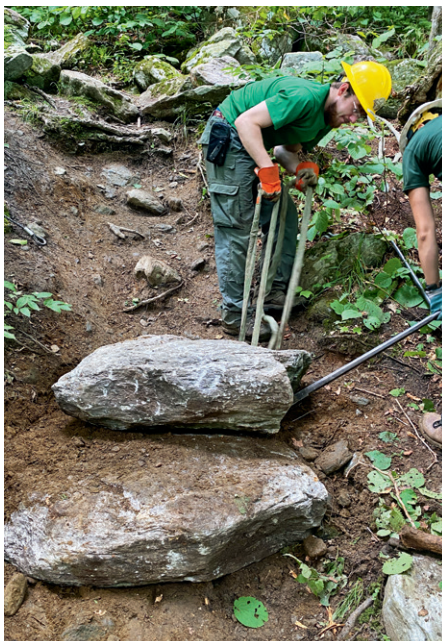
Tonight is Sarah’s turn to make dinner: burritos with black beans, rice, peppers, onion, cheese and salsa. Andrew helps prep, and the whole crew makes sure there are no leftovers. After cleanup they play a round of “Midnight,” a favorite camp game involving dice. Betting coveted Fig Newtons keeps things interesting.

### 8:00 p.m.

As the sun dips behind the trees, the crew retires to their tents, eager for rest before another long day of rock work.

Each increment of trail work may seem small, but at the end of each week the crew can look back with satisfaction on a vastly transformed stretch of trail, both more durable and easier to hike than the washed-out mess it was before. Well-built stone structures can easily last many decades, though the Green Mountain environment is tough, and there are no guarantees. As hiker traffic and extreme weather intensify, the club must continually adapt its trail maintenance strategies and plans. 🐌

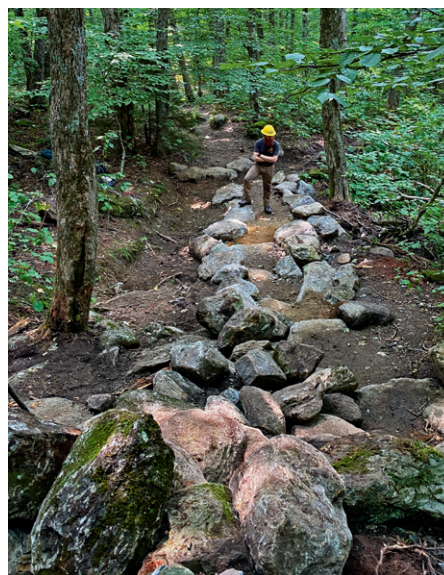
*By Chloe Miller. Isaac Alexandre-Leach and Rosalie Sharp contributed to this article.*



On left, Kenney sets a step for the upper staircase. Behind him, you can see the steep, eroded trail condition. On right, the completed upper staircase of 8 stairs.



Clara guides a rock over obstacles with a rockbar while Andrew operates the Griphoist.



B.B. surveys the crew’s handiwork.

Through funding by the Long Trail Legacy Campaign, GMC will run an additional Long Trail Patrol crew dedicated solely to the Northern Long Trail for the next five years, to help manage increased year-round use and the impacts of a changing climate, including more frequent and more intense weather events. You can support this work by donating online ([greenmountainclub.org/legacy](https://greenmountainclub.org/legacy)) or with the enclosed envelope.



# GMC teams with Maine Helicopters to Airlift 18 TONS of Material

BY KEEGAN TIERNEY

If you were on the Long Trail between Massachusetts and Stratton Pond in late July, you may have noticed something a little out of the norm. No, not the vast amounts of rain, though our field staff can certainly attest that it was one of the wettest Julys ever in southern Vermont.

Over two days in July and more than 50 trips, the Green Mountain Club and Maine Helicopters transported more than 18 tons — 36,000 pounds plus — of construction materials into five backcountry sites. While other trail organizations often use helicopter airlifts, GMC limits fly-ins to cases when there are significant backcountry construction projects on the schedule. This year one airlift supported the following projects:

- Replacement of Seth Warner Shelter
- New privy and shelter roof materials for Melville Nauheim Shelter
- New privy and shelter roof materials for Kid Gore Shelter
- New privy to add capacity at Stratton Pond Shelter
- New tent platform materials at Stratton Pond Shelter
- New shelter and privy materials for Stratton View Campsite

Organizing and executing a multi-site airlift is no small feat. We staged and flew from borrowed space (the Stratton Sun Bowl Ski Resort parking lot and the Woodford Country Store parking lot) into five widely separated sites, all while chasing clear weather forecasts and managing logistics and staffing. I thank numerous folks for getting the pieces to fall in line.

The process began with preparation last winter, which trail crew field supervisor Rosalie Sharp spent ordering lumber and precutting privy kits. Volunteer Jonathan Bigelow designed and precut a shelter for the long-planned replacement of Seth Warner Shelter at a new location 2.2 miles north of its current site, while Brattleboro section volunteers helped design a new shelter for Stratton View Campsite, and worked with the U.S. Forest Service to get it approved.

Rosalie spearheaded much of the logistics of the airlift, which involved sorting materials and transporting them (18 tons, remember) in advance to one of two pick-up sites. Nigel Bates, caretaker field supervisor, coordinated the staffing of





each pick-up and drop site, recruiting the entire caretaker cohort to spend two long days in the south.

On the day of the airlift crews of caretakers and field staff supervisors woke early to hike in to drop sites, or to start stacking materials into liftable piles (600-700 pounds each) at pick-up sites. At Stratton Sun Bowl alone, we had more than 30 piles wrapped with straps ready for their flights.

Pilot Mark Hitchcock obsessively checked weather reports, and when he found a flight window, he fueled up and started his rotors, while ground crews donned head and ear protection and readied for the drops. Using a lead and hook dangling 75 feet to the ground, the helicopter snatched each pile at a pick-up site, flew seven minutes due west, then radioed to staff on the ground at Stratton Pond to direct him towards the drop site. The materials landed, ground crews hopped into action like ants to clear each 700-pound pile from its narrow drop area, and the process began again. In two days Mark flew at least 50 trips into the five drop sites.

I commend our field program staff and our caretakers, and the professionals at Maine Helicopters, all of whom helped the airlift go so smoothly. Two days, 50 flights, and 18 tons of materials cost \$24,000 — which breaks down to 66 cents per pound, not bad given the rates of shipping and handling these days. And, had we deployed volunteers to pack-in the materials by hand, it would have taken nearly the entire summer. Materials for a single new privy build take an estimated 95 person-trips to move from a trailhead to a site, and some of these pack-ins would have been over three miles of hard hiking. By maximizing the number of sites and projects covered by a single airlift, we saved time and money for our construction crews and volunteers. Any way you look at it, the airlift (four privies, two shelters, tent platforms and roofing materials) was a no brainer.

—KEEGAN TIERNEY  
DIRECTOR OF FIELD PROGRAMS

*See page 22 for more on the 2021 Field Season.*



Caretakers Emily Abbott and Sarah Bailey



Pile Pick Up from Stratton Sun Bowl



Crew at Stratton moving dropped off materials.



Drop off near Melville Nauheim Shelter.



# Green Mountain Glimpses

Winners & Favorites of the GMC Photo Contest



Looking south on the Long Trail from Mt. Ellen by Sam Yang — Grand Prize Winner



Buchanan Shelter by Nathanael Asaro — "Trail Features" Winner



Maple Ridge on Mt. Mansfield by Sheri Larsen



Stairway to Heaven on Mt. Mansfield by Matt Emsley





Early morning light at Sterling Pond by Marissa Saltzman — “Scenes & Landscapes” Winner



Camel's Hump summit by Geri Knortz



Sunrise on Bromley Mountain by Michele McKee



Hadsel Mares Cabin at Wheeler Pond by Nathanael Asaro



On the Chin of Mt. Mansfield by Marcus Keely — “People” Winner



Snail friend by Emma Sekercan



## ASK AMY:

### The GMC Visitor Center's most Frequently Asked Questions

Amy Potter, an experienced backpacker, manages the Marvin B. Gameroff Hiker Center. She and her staff, Maggie Mae Anderson, Maggie Twitchell, and Rick Hopkins answer questions from hikers throughout the year by phone, email, and online.

The visitor center closed to the public last year because of the pandemic, limiting contact to email and phone, so we were thrilled to re-open weekends this summer. Every year brings new and interesting questions, especially as more people are hiking. Here are some of the most common questions this year:



#### How can I get a ride from the trail into town, and where can I park overnight?

Questions about transportation and parking along the trail are by far the most popular the Visitor Center receives. Since there are very few loop hikes in Vermont, the transportation logistics are an important part of planning a Long Trail hike. The transportation list we provide is a mix of volunteers we call "trail angels," and businesses like taxis and buses that shuttle hikers up and down the trail. There are also some recommended parking areas that are usually safer than overnight trailhead parking. If you are planning an overnight on the Long Trail and would like transportation options, email [gmc@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:gmc@greenmountainclub.org)

#### Where should I take my kids for their first backpacking trip?

Because the outdoors was considered a safer environment during the pandemic, we heard from more folks wanting to take their children backpacking for the first time. As mom of a three-year-old, I know the challenge of hiking and camping with kids. I try to suggest trips **with interesting destinations and terrain** to keep children excited and motivated to explore. Kids like trails with puncheon, bridges, shelters, fun rock scrambles, and any body of water.



**Little Rock Pond Shelter** is a favorite beginner overnight. It has three approach trails of varying length and difficulty, and also offers a loop from Forest Road 10 via the Green Mountain Trail to challenge older kids. With tent sites, a shelter, and several swimming spots, it serves as a fun base camp for exploring the pond.

#### Do I have to stay in the shelters along the trail?

During the pandemic many people preferred tents over shelters to provide more distance from other hikers. It isn't always obvious where and how to primitive camp along the Long Trail, because it crosses private, state, and federal land, and each has different regulations. You can definitely find places to tent all along the trail, but we ask that you learn the rules of your overnight site location to minimize your impact. The **Long Trail Guide** is the best resource for camping regulations for each section of the trail.



## How should I store my food to keep it from bears?

Every hiker must secure food and waste to limit bear-human interactions, so this is among the most important hiker education we provide.

In 2019, the U.S. Forest Service issued an order **requiring proper bear-safe food storage** in the Green Mountain National Forest. We strongly encourage carrying a bear canister or using another approved storage method on all Vermont overnight hikes.

Anything with a scent, including food, food waste, soap and toothpaste, must be stored in one of the following ways:

- A locked vehicle
- A bear box if available
- A bear canister or Ursack
- Properly hung high in a tree

The Green Mountain Club launched a **free bear canister lending program** for hikers this year to help encourage proper food storage.

A properly hung bear bag will be at least 12 ft high and 6 ft away from any trunks or branches (and at least 100 feet off trail!!)

## Why are trails closed for mud season, but not during the rainy July we had?

It was a wet and muddy summer to say the least, so many people had this question.

During mud season (roughly April-May) we see more consistent muddy conditions due to spring snow melt and other conditions, so we can prepare ahead of time with our trail management partners to discourage high-elevation hiking.

While hiking in mud can damage trails anytime, trail conditions vary unpredictably through the hiking season. It's not practical to monitor current conditions on more than 500 miles of trail. So we encourage folks to always **hike through mud** rather than around it to avoid widening trails and trampling vegetation, and to do the **rock hop** when possible. If you can choose where to hike, seek dry trails, and turn back if you don't want to walk through any mud you find. And always pack dry socks!

## How do I apply for my End-to-End hike certification?

GMC used to require hikers to submit trip journals to certify End-to-End hikes.

Today fewer people keep journals, but document journeys with digital photos or social media posts. **Journals are now optional**, but we ask each applicant three questions designed to foster reflection on the experience and to share memories with GMC. We enjoy reading your answers, as well as journals and photo albums if you submit them.

If you have questions about an upcoming hike please know that the staff of the Green Mountain Club Visitor Center are a free resource available to answer your questions and lend their hiking and backpacking knowledge.

For more information on all of the topics covered here, scan the QR code for additional articles and videos on our website.

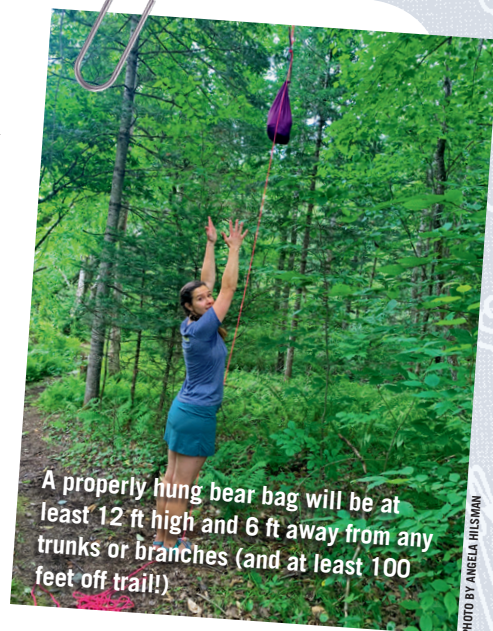


PHOTO BY ANGELA HILSMAN



PHOTO BY ELISE HEDGLEN



PHOTO BY TED CROWELL





# Photo Monitoring Project Continues on MOUNT MANSFIELD

BY JOHN PLUMMER, VHCB AMERICORPS GROUP OUTREACH COORDINATOR



The data collection process.

Mount Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak, is home to many rare, threatened and endangered species, so it has long been a focus of scientific research. The Green Mountain Club has left most research to those in academia, but in 2004 we started a study to learn how trail design and maintenance, and hiker education, are affecting alpine vegetation.

Photo monitoring is a simple tool that uses repeated photographs to monitor change. In 2004 GMC staffer Matt Larson photographed trailside vegetation at 84 spots on the main ridge of the mountain. Now we are photographing the same places at approximately five-year intervals.

The specific locations for photo-monitoring were chosen because there was evidence of vegetation trampling by hikers — the bedrock had been almost, if not completely, laid bare of vegetation because of hikers walking on alpine vegetation instead of staying on the rocks. In 2015 former caretaker and current GMC Board member Elisabeth Fenn conducted the first round of repeated photography and data analysis. Her findings were encouraging. Most sites showed dramatic increases in vegetation cover, though some remained unchanged even after eleven years.

This summer I completed the second

round. Data analysis is ongoing, but I am seeing results like Elisabeth's—many sites recovering, but others largely unchanged. It appears that where the trail is clearly delineated and hikers can pass one another on a durable surface, vegetation can recover.

From 2004 to 2015, vegetation in the quadrat plots increased by 29 percent, indicating that even highly impacted sites can revegetate quickly. In fact, a handful of sites revegetated so well that pins glued to bedrock to identify the sites are completely hidden by soil, moss, and other plant life. Sixteen years ago, much alpine meadow vegetation had been reduced to gravel, but we often now see mountain sandwort (*Minuartia groenlandica*) growing in a thick bed of mosses, interspersed with bog billberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*) and Bigelow's sedge (*Carex bigelowii*).

While we must continue data analysis to determine whether the revegetation rate has increased, decreased, or remained steady, we have clues about how to use the accumulated

data. Rates of recovery may depend on location. Some sites are wetter, some closer to the trail, or near a popular feature. A wet site may grow back a little faster. A site close to the trail may grow back more slowly than a distant one.

This photo record will help determine what trail features are working and what might need to change. It will help us decide when to install puncheon or stepstones in the alpine zone. Where vegetation is not recovering, we may need to relocate the trail or harden a "pull-off" for hikers to pass one another. How we educate hikers and maintain the trail can also influence how well vegetation can recover. Vegetation trampling appears where the trail narrows, so we may need to more effectively teach hikers how to pass one another.

Vegetation is generally thriving, even alongside the tens of thousands of annual visitors to Mount Mansfield's ridgeline, which is evidence that our efforts — from hiker education on social media to mountain caretakers — are working.



2004



2015

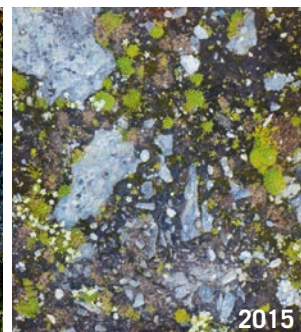


2021

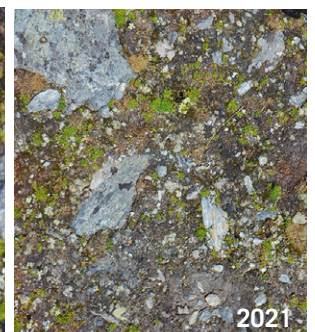
Transect 23, which is located just south of the summit.



2004



2015



2021

Quadrat 2b, which is located near the "National Natural Landmark" plaque.



# Stewarding in Perpetuity

## GMC Develops Management Plans for Club Owned Lands

If you've hiked the Long Trail between Routes 242 and 105, you may recall sweeping views and rugged climbs. You probably didn't know that three miles of your hike were on the "Atlas I parcel," owned and managed by the Green Mountain Club. It is the most recent subject of GMC's endeavor to develop land management plans (LMPs) for club-owned properties.

Before my six-month term as an AmeriCorps member helping GMC with land stewardship, I never thought much about how the land the Long Trail traverses is owned and managed. Since then I've learned that a lot of work by the club and its management partners takes place behind the scenes to foster an aesthetic, continuous, forested corridor. One property blends into the next, unnoticeable to the majority of hikers despite the numerous ownerships and use agreements.

Land management planning is a critical tool for responsible stewardship. Each LMP describes a property, details its legal restrictions and natural resources, and sets goals and restrictions for its use.

I was assigned to work on an LMP for the Atlas I parcel. The project was a deep dive into the nuances of legal restrictions, trail management philosophies, and natural resource inventories, starting with GMC's paper records. Each GMC property has paper file folders full of documents accumulated over decades. Letters, notes, and other documents record the hopes and motives of landowners, and the persistent work of GMC staff members and volunteers to protect the Long Trail.

Also included are the pertinent legal documents, less absorbing than the letters, but specifying restrictions essential to the LMP. In addition to the LT, Atlas I hosts a logging road right of way, a utility line easement, and a state highway right of way. Each right of way or easement requires approval from an outside organization whenever GMC needs to do work within it, typically at trail crossings.

I made numerous phone calls to the Vermont Agency of Transportation, researched the property's location, and studied its history. I learned that GMC had worked with The Nature Conservancy to buy the 1,100-acre tract from Atlas Timber Company in 1991. The purchase was funded through donations to GMC and by a grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, which placed several restrictions on the use of the property.

My draft plan summarizes the physical, natural, and cultural resources of the property; infrastructure, recreational resources, and forest and timber resources; restricted and allowed uses; and management goals and policies. Maps translate data into digestible visual depictions of terrain, recreational resources, and rights of way.

Beyond hosting the Long Trail and Shooting Star Shelter, Atlas I has potential for future timber production, and provides significant habitat for a variety of wildlife, including Bicknell's thrush, the black-



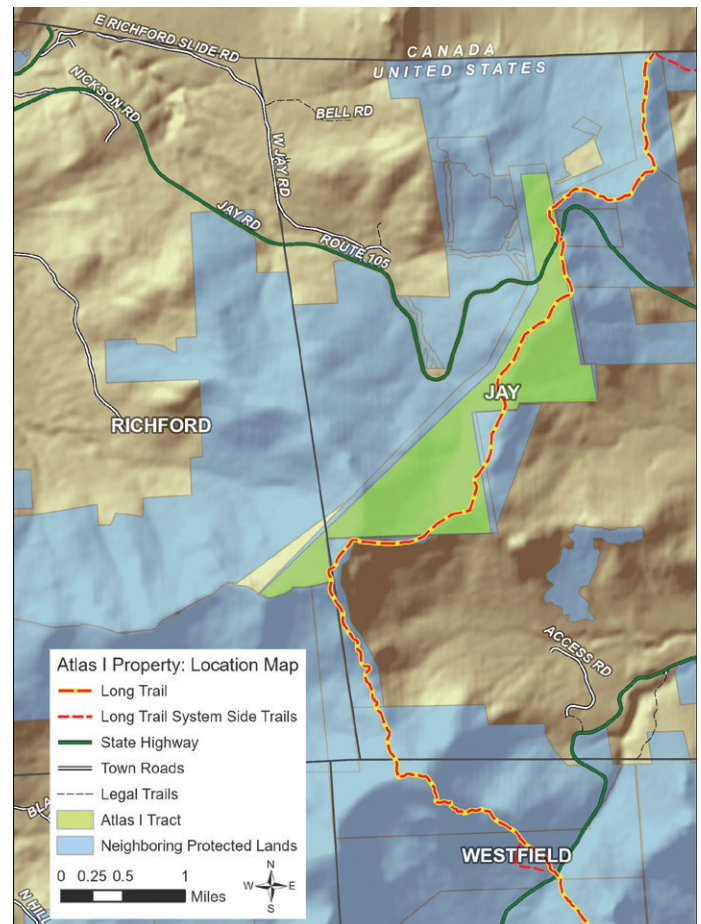
throated blue warbler, and the Canada warbler. The LMP condenses this information so stakeholders can easily understand and consider the property's resources and management goals, and it directs readers to more detailed documents they may need.

In the last year GMC has adopted one LMP and drafted two more. Eleven plans remain to be developed, a task the Land Conservation Program will tackle in the next five years as time and capacity allow.

The club's goal is protection of the Long Trail in perpetuity, so plans must long outlast today's staff members and volunteer leaders. If I hike the Long Trail north of Route 242 twenty years from now, I'll know the history of what guided protection of the land I am walking, and the management considerations that shape its appearance.

—ELIZA LETOURNEAU, VHCB AMERICORPS STEWARDSHIP ASSISTANT

*Eliza Letourneau (she/her) served GMC as the VHCB AmeriCorps Stewardship Assistant from March to September 2021. She helped support the Land Conservation program by monitoring and maintaining property boundaries and supporting the volunteer Corridor Monitoring Program.*



**A map of the Atlas I Parcel, which includes three miles of the Long Trail and the Shooting Star Shelter.**





## Sections Make the Club

### Meet the Presidents of GMC's Regional Membership Sections

We continue our section president profiles with the Montpelier, Bread Loaf, Burlington, and Sterling Sections.



#### DANA LAWRENCE Montpelier Section

"I borrowed a packing frame. I felt like a bull moose," recalls Dana Lawrence, president of the Montpelier Section, describing the hike to Bamforth Ridge Shelter carrying boards for rebuilding tent platforms last summer. "They were 2 inches by 10 inches by 10 feet long. That length is just miserable to carry. They stuck three feet below my waist, and four feet over my head."

That was Dana's first year as president, but not his first with the section. He joined the 521-member section four years ago, after learning that Bamforth Ridge Shelter needed an adopter. The section maintains 8.7 miles of the Long Trail between Camel's Hump and the Winooski River Footbridge, and 6.9 miles between Smugglers' Notch and Chilcoat Pass.

Dana is no stranger to the outdoors. "My dad and mom did a ton outdoors with us," he says, noting that they hailed from Vermont, though they lived in western New York. His father shared his love for hunting and fishing with his sons, and his strong environmentalist viewpoints. "From age three I spent a lot of time doing wild stuff in wild weather."

Dana kept those passions when he entered the University of Vermont in the 1970s. In his environmentally focused dorm he immediately joined the outing club, helped compost food waste, and advocated with Vermont Public Interest Research Group. "We were like a family. Every weekend we'd hike in the Whites or the Green Mountains or the Adirondacks."

Dana's desire to make a difference has fueled most of his work, including his 43-year career as a social worker with Vermont Child Protection Services. His GMC goals



reflect interests in both child welfare and the environment.

"At a certain point, you start thinking about the legacy you'll leave," says Dana. "I want to think more about how I can link younger people and families to what we're doing. As a GMC member, you have a unique opportunity to connect with people who care about the same things. It's really about kindred spirits doing activities you love together, while making a difference."

#### JONATHAN BREEN Burlington Section

Jonathan Breen became president of the Burlington Section last year, just as COVID-19 restrictions began. But the pandemic didn't rob him of leadership in the hiking community.

"We still celebrated Taft Lodge's 100-year anniversary," he says, including a commemorative gingerbread house, a book, two guided hikes to the lodge, a plaque, and a Ben & Jerry's ice cream truck. "Rallying around something important to the club and the section felt good."

With more than 1,000 members, the Burlington Section is the biggest as well as the oldest of GMC's 14 sections. It manages 25.5 miles of the Long Trail between the Winooski River Footbridge and Smuggler's Notch, plus 28 side trails.

Jonathan was strongly attracted by its long history. "It's definitely cool being part of an organization that's been around since 1910, and the Burlington Section has been around as long," he says.

Jonathan joined GMC in 2011 when he moved to Vermont. As a certified public



accountant, the GMC Budget and Finance Committee was a natural fit. He became more involved with the Burlington Section in the last four years, and occasionally leads outings.

His interest in hiking began in college. He grew up in Oregon before attending the University of Puget Sound in Washington, whose orientation included a three-day backpacking excursion in the Olympic Mountains.

"That's how I started off backpacking. There are bears, and it's wet. But there are no poisonous animals," he laughs. After graduation Jonathan taught environmental education before thru-hiking the Pacific Crest Trail in 1998.

Then he became an administrator in the Colorado Outward Bound School office; moved to New Hampshire and started a new career in accounting; and settled in Vermont to become a CPA.

Starting his second term, Jonathan considers it his role to help talented volunteers reboot trail maintenance and outings as pandemic restrictions relax, and to make the section more visible. Projects include a new roof for Puffer Shelter and new deck planking at Taft Lodge.

He's optimistic, based on last year's successes. "We hit a lot of core trails, and ones we don't normally hit as well. Because of the pandemic it was a lot more effort to pull off, but members put in a lot of work," he concludes.

#### KEVIN HUDNELL Sterling Section

Visitors often fall in love with the Green Mountain State. It's less common to stay and leave a mark.

Sterling Section President Kevin Hudnell needed a job when he finished thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail in 2010, but the North Carolina native had missed the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's and the Appalachian Mountain Club's hiring seasons. Luckily the Green Mountain Club had a few fall positions open.

"Once I was up here, I didn't ever want to leave," Kevin says. He worked as caretaker





on Mount Mansfield that year, and became caretaker at Stratton Pond the next. In 2012 he moved up to GMC lead caretaker, and in 2014 he became GMC field supervisor.

He became acquainted with the Sterling Section, a then-dwindling group of GMC volunteers maintaining the 13.1 miles of Long Trail between Chilcoat Pass and the Lamoille River. "I had gotten attached to that area of trail," he recalls. But Kevin and his partner planned to move to Montana.

Still, "If I wasn't leaving, it felt like one of those projects would be neat to get more involved with." So when the couple returned in 2017, Kevin got more involved. He began informally coordinating work trips and organizing the section's annual meeting. In 2018 members elected him president.

Kevin takes pride in leading more strenuous maintenance projects than most volunteers take on, like the heavy duty rock work of turnpiking and installing other erosion controls. "Traditionally, volunteers shy away from this sort of complex work," he says. "But people remember this more than clipping ephemeral bushes. They get excited."

As a boy Kevin often hiked with his family. He also credits the Boy Scouts for his outdoor skillset. "It makes sense intuitively that if I can go hiking all the time for free, then I should also be the one making the trails hikeable," says Kevin.

But trail work isn't all he is known for, he admits. "I don't know why anyone wears pants in the woods. I got a kilt in 2012. It's comfortable; looks cool; has good air flow; is a good conversation starter."

From work to fashion, Kevin continues to leave his mark on Vermont.

## RUTH PENFIELD Bread Loaf Section

Sometimes people stumble upon their passions. Sometimes they catch them from the right people. Ruth Penfield married the man who sparked her passion for tending trails.

Ruth grew up loving the outdoors, but Doug McKain, now her husband, introduced her to trail maintenance when he was on the trails committee for the Connecticut



Forest & Park Association. When they married in 1991, Doug was already a lifetime member of the Green Mountain Club, and had thru-hiked both the Long Trail and the Appalachian Trail. He was a trail adopter, which piqued Ruth's interest, so she started helping care for his trails.

Wanting to learn more, Ruth completed a trail maintenance training, and helped with trail relocations. "It's very satisfying when you're done and can look at how you've improved the trail," she says.

But that's not the only reason she's out there. "I like talking to people. When I say, 'I'm a volunteer,' they have a hard time believing that. But seeing their reactions and appreciation for what you're doing is really worth it."

Ruth says anything social draws her. She recalls offering trail magic – drinks and other goodies for hikers – at Appalachian Gap. "I really liked seeing hikers up there, getting to talk for a while."

Ruth could engage hikers anywhere, but Vermont's landscape was decisive. She and Doug vacationed in Vermont several times, then relocated to New Haven in 2007. "We hike and road bike in the Champlain Valley. We're halfway between the Adirondacks and the Whites. We can cross country ski here, and we have the Long Trail."

After attending a few GMC Directors' meetings with Doug, Ruth began volunteering with GMC's Bread Loaf Section as an outings leader and trail worker. The section maintains 11.4 miles of the Long Trail between the Sucker Brook and Emily Proctor Shelters.

In 2015 she filled the section president's seat. "The people on our executive committee are doers," Ruth says. "They don't want to administer like I do." But a doer as well, she still leads outings and maintains the section's website.

Ruth is having a blast with her friends in the section. "I like hearing their hiking stories and their plans for trips," she says. "The Middlebury community has a lot going on. And our executive committee is awesome; I just think they're the best."

— ANGELA HILSMAN  
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

# Rapid Fire Questions

## Go-To Trail Snack?

"Peanuts and yogurt."

— Dana

"Nutter butters. I've been known to strap on a pack of cookies onto the back of my pack when need be."

— Jonathan

"I mix chocolate chips into jars of peanut butter and let it melt a bit so it turns to giant Reese's cup that I then eat in giant spoonfuls."

— Kevin

"Toasted almonds and raisins and M&Ms. (It's gorp without peanuts)."

— Ruth

## Gear you can't live without?

"My beat-up GMC hat. I like having a baseball cap."

— Jonathan

"A kilt. I can't count the number of times I've been running along the Mansfield ridgeline, kilt flapping in the wind, and thinking, 'God I look cool right now.'"

— Kevin

"My backpack with my Camelback. I need to have water easily accessible. When I have that on, I don't even feel it; it's a part of me."

— Ruth

## Favorite local hike?

"Spruce Mountain in Plainfield."

— Dana

"Up to Butler Lodge—it's a bit of a tough up hill, but the views are incredible when you get up there."

— Jonathan

"I love Devil's Gulch in Laraway Section. It's a scramble little section with lot of fun rock hopping."

— Kevin

"I like Abbey Pond Trail. It's one of the first ones we did when we lived here."

— Ruth

For the full section directory and to learn more about joining a section, visit: [www.greenmountainclub.org/members/our-sections/](http://www.greenmountainclub.org/members/our-sections/) or contact Rick Dugan, Membership Coordinator at [rdugan@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:rdugan@greenmountainclub.org) or (802) 241-8325.

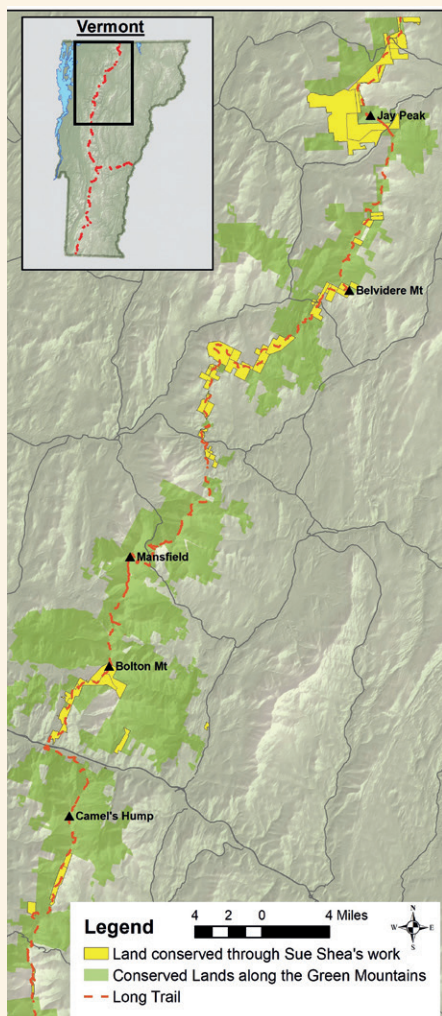


# Honory Life Membership Award Honorees

The Honorary Life Membership Award, the Green Mountain Club's highest honor, is bestowed upon those who have made extraordinary contributions to the club. GMC was pleased to present **Susan Shea** and **Jim Sullivan** with these awards at its annual meeting in June, which took place over Zoom.



Immediate Past President Tom Candon presents Susan Shea with her award at a socially-distanced ceremony at GMC headquarters.



Land Susan Shea worked to conserve in northern Vermont.

## Susan Shea

Permanent protection of the Long Trail corridor has been a top priority for the Green Mountain Club since the Long Trail Protection Campaign began 35 years ago. Susan Shea, who joined the club's staff 31 years ago, was a critical force in that quest, orchestrating more than 90 projects to protect 12 shelters, more than 25,000 acres of land, and more than 61 miles of the trail, including major water crossings.

Land conservation work doesn't follow a standard path; each project requires patience, finesse, a little luck, and most of all, hard work. Sue approached every project with integrity and keen attention to detail, keeping in mind both the particular needs of the project and the overall goal: protecting the Long Trail and wilderness experience.

The club had limited funds and no power of eminent domain, so Sue cultivated relationships with landowners, often for years, to reach deals that worked for all parties. She and the club worked closely with public agencies, the Vermont Legislature, and other conservation organizations to protect the trail and the conservation benefits of the lands that host it. Today protection of the Long Trail and surrounding lands have strong public support.

The Long Trail Protection Campaign was a bold and significant undertaking whose success to date is due very largely to Sue's efforts over the decades of her service. We owe sincere thanks to Sue, who rolled up her sleeves and did the work, keeping at it without knowing how successful she would be, and never giving up on the goal.

## Jim Sullivan

In the Green Mountain Club's database of volunteers, this is the entry for Jim Sullivan: "Trail adoption – southern Vermont, Green Mountain National Forest, south." That's no exaggeration. It accurately describes the scope of Jim's activity, which now totals thousands of hours. A member since 1994



Executive Director Mike DeBonis (right) presents Jim Sullivan with his Honorary Life Membership Award.

and a volunteer since 2008, he is the point of contact for GMC field programs in southern Vermont, and he knows the trail system there intimately.

For new volunteers, staff, and partners, understanding complex trail relocation or shelter projects that took years to develop can be daunting. Jim has a knack of demystifying them, providing historical context and helping club leaders move in the right direction. His extensive GPS trail data collected over years of scouting trips is used to generate maps of future trail locations throughout the Long Trail System.

In 2013 Jim was working on a piece of trail in Stamford near the Massachusetts border, and saw a "For Sale" sign at the trailhead. The mile-long section of trail through the property was poorly protected with only 100-foot easements on each side. Because Jim spotted the sign, local conservationists were able to buy the property at auction and eventually add it to the Green Mountain National Forest.

Jim worked closely with Dave Hardy, GMC's late longtime Director of Field Programs, and helped keep field programs in southern Vermont running when Keegan Tierney succeeded Dave in 2018. Jim's love of the trail and passion for the Green Mountain Club is unmatched. Jim not only has made significant contributions to the trail, but he is also a friend to and has improved the lives of scores of summer field staff, agency partners and volunteers.





## New Historical Marker Unveiled in Downtown Burlington

If you strolled through downtown Burlington in August, you might have seen a new Vermont Roadside Historic Marker at the site of the former Van Ness House on the corner of St. Paul and Main Streets, now the site of TD Bank. In 1910 the Green Mountain Club was born at a meeting at the Van Ness House, the hotel where founder and Long Trail visionary James P. Taylor lived much of his adult life.



PHOTO BY CHLOE MILLER

Many GMC volunteers worked to apply for the historical marker, including Ted Albers, Annette Seidenglanz, Reidun Nuquist, John Page and Tom Candon. The application was submitted in 2018, but the process of maintaining the club's historical records began long before that.

The Long Trail is the subject of one other historic marker, at the trail's Route 2 crossing near Bolton.



BENNINGTON BANNER

## Bennington Achieves Appalachian Trail Community Designation

In June the Appalachian Trail Conservancy recognized Bennington as one of 50 official Appalachian Trail Communities in an online ceremony. Bennington Section volunteers including Silvia Cassano proposed and advocated for the recognition. The co-aligned LT and AT pass through the township of Bennington, and the village center is a popular stopover for hikers craving a meal or shower.

GMC is grateful for and proud of Bennington's commitment to stewarding the LT/AT and their local side trails, including the town's recent investments in trail access and parking and its dedication to serving hikers. Norwich and Manchester are the other AT Communities in Vermont. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy consists of 31 hiking clubs that maintain the AT, including the Green Mountain Club.



## Board Report

*The Green Mountain Club Board of Directors met on June 12, 2021, by videoconference.*

President Tom Candon welcomed newly elected general directors: Ram Moennsadt, Millie Mugica, Jeff Wehrwein (first terms) and Nancy McClellan (second term). He also welcomed newly elected section directors: Andrew Nuquist, Montpelier Section; Andrew Hood, Connecticut Section; and Kip Potter, Northern Frontier Section. Tom thanked departing board members Lars Botzjorn, Hope Crifo, Jim Fritz, Russ Ford, and George Longenecker for their service.

The board reviewed and approved minutes of the March meeting. Treasurer Nancy Thomas reported that the club ended the fiscal year in great shape. Despite challenges from the global pandemic, the club finished the year with a surplus, and saw growth in both unrestricted donations and membership.

Executive Director Mike DeBonis reported that the Vermont General Assembly had appropriated \$85,000 in the capital bill to buy the Judevine Headwaters property to protect the Long Trail

from a land sale or development.

Mike thanked the board and staff members for their flexibility and hard work during a difficult year, and attributed the club's strong position to their efforts.

Alicia DiCocco, director of development, reported on the Long Trail Legacy capital campaign, which has raised \$2.3 million in donations and pledges toward the goal of \$4 million. Directors were encouraged to participate in Long Trail Day in August as a fundraiser for the campaign.

The nominating committee presented the following slate of officers: Howard Van Benthuyzen, president; Amy Kelsey, vice president; Nancy Thomas, treasurer; and Caitlin Miller, secretary. There were no other nominations, and the board approved the committee slate unanimously.

The board scheduled the following meeting dates: September 18, January 8, March 19 and June 11. Howard thanked Tom for his service as the 42nd President of the Green Mountain Club.

— ED O'LEARY, SECRETARY





## Field Notes

For more on the 2021 field season thus far, read Keegan's piece on the helicopter airlift on page 10.

The helicopter airlift didn't tackle every project on the busy field crew's roster, and we leaned on dozens of volunteers to take on grueling manual pack-ins. We are building new privies at both Emily Proctor and Boyce shelters, both of which are in designated Wilderness areas where mechanized equipment is not permitted (yes, even if the helicopter doesn't land). So, more than 80 individual volunteers committed 1,050 volunteer hours over seven weeks to move the materials over challenging sections of trail. This included local adopters, section members, and numerous volunteer groups coordinated by GMC's **Lorne**



PHOTO BY JOHN PLUMMER

**Currier, John Plummer, and Miriam Akervall.** Thanks to GMC's foundation of volunteerism and the perseverance and spirit of volunteers, both new and returning alike, for making this organization, and the ongoing 2021 field season, what it is today.

As of this writing, the 2021 field season is still in full swing, with crews on the ground and caretakers on the summits well into October. We said goodbye to our summer-only crew members in mid-August and are welcoming new and returning folks to the team. I look forward to updating you all on the ongoing projects on and around Jay Peak, Stratton Pond, Emily Proctor, and more in the winter *Long Trail News*, once the work has concluded and we can take stock of this whirlwind season. Enjoy the fall hiking season, especially if your excursions take you up the new 20-step stone staircase on the Long Trail just north of Route 242 or across the rehabilitated Clarendon Bridge, or past any of the many new and revitalized facilities and trails the crew has worked on so far this season.

—KEEGAN TIERNEY  
DIRECTOR OF FIELD PROGRAMS

◀ More than 80 volunteers carried heavy, awkward pieces of lumber for the Boyce and Emily Proctor privy pack-ins.



PHOTO BY SCOUT PHILLIPS



PHOTO BY SCOUT PHILLIPS

### 2021 Field Staff



BACK ROW, L TO R: Elijah Grenier, Lucy Wood, Eva Gerstle, Kate Songer, Emily Abbott, Penguin Krute, Sarah Pillard, Halle Vernon, Dylan Norris, Sarah Bailey, Halie Gehling, Field Supervisor Nigel Bates, Field Supervisor Rosalie Sharp

MIDDLE ROW, L TO R: Field Programs Coordinator Isaac Alexandre-Leach (standing), Nora Hughes, Sam Kenney, Emily Hollander, McV LaPointe, Duncan Shippee, Emma Korowotny, Southern Field Supervisor Kati Christoffel, Sam Sylvester, Andrew Rosenthal-Baxter, Andrew Muller, Miriam Akervall

FRONT ROW, L TO R: Teddy Lindberg, Zack Chastain, Myles Lehman, Scout Phillips, Hailey Lynch, Dora Bean, Dana Gould



# Green Mountain Home

BY LETTIE STRATTON

During the height of the pandemic, I dreamt of Vermont. As I sat in my West Sussex flat sipping my fifth cup of tea and staring at the same four walls like everybody else, I longed for the hills of my home state, the bright autumn leaves, and the smell of the forest floor after a good long rain.

It was the longest I'd ever been away without a visit - nearly two years. I arrived in England about a month before the pandemic hit, and spent all of 2020 and more than half of 2021 across the pond. A lot about that time was good - great, even. I walked a lot of beautiful public footpaths. I explored a lot of lovely green fields. But I missed the woods. There's just something about being home.

My favorite way to re-enter a place I love is through its trails. I never feel I'm fully back until I've explored my old favorites, and perhaps even discovered some new ones. Now that I've been back in Vermont for a month, I finally feel as though I'm really here. I have arrived.

I grew up in the Bennington area and have always used outdoor adventure and exploration as ways to connect to Place, whether in this place or in faraway countries. I've traveled and lived all around the world, but I always return to Vermont to reset and rejuvenate. I need my Green Mountain fix.

After everything 2020 threw at us, being here feels especially cathartic. During my first few hikes, I was overwhelmed by a variety of thoughts. I can't believe I'm finally back. Everything is so lush and green. I forgot how hard it can rain here. Is it ever going to stop raining? The woods smell so good. And, I have a lot of mosquito bites.

Sometimes when I walk around town I feel like a tourist in my own state. I no longer recognize the businesses on Main Street, and I ask friends about cafes and restaurants that are gone. It makes me wonder where I belong.

After a hike the feeling fades, and

I know I belong here and now - in the woods and on the trail. I belong at Lye Brook Falls, on Harmon Hill, at Equinox Preserve, in the Park McCullough Woods. I used to train on these trails for cross-country running and Nordic skiing - practice after practice, running, hiking, bounding, and exploring. These places are home.

I've been using my time in Vermont's nature to clear my head. I'm at a life transition point, and change can be scary. I don't do well with the unknown. I'm here for now, but what comes next? What does the future hold? Here, I find solace and refuge on trails so familiar and so dear. Every time I crunch a stick beneath my shoe, nearly slip on a wet tree root, or catch a glimpse of a pair of cardinals playing in the tree branches, I am not thinking about the future - I am present.

Now more than ever it is such a gift to be able to go outside and simply walk in the woods. I know Vermont will always be here for me no matter how long I'm away. I'll forever be comforted by coming home. Even when businesses change

and my favorite coffee shop has boarded up windows, the trails, mountains, and streams remain. They are steadfast, and I am grateful.

*Lettie Stratton (she/her) is a writer and founder of Wild Wanderer, an online community for LGBTQ+ adventurers.*



Lettie Stratton soaks up Vermont summer



Equinox Pond in Manchester





GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB  
4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road  
Waterbury Center, VT 05677

Periodicals Postage  
PAID  
Waterbury Center  
and Additional Offices



*Long Trail News is printed using 0% VOC, Soy Based Inks, 100% Certified Renewable Energy and paper that is certified by Bureau Veritas to the FSC standards.*

## Follow along with Derick Lugo's LT Hike!

**We know you've heard of Derick Lugo,** the Brooklynite who thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail with no prior backpacking experience. He wrote all about it in his memoir, *The Unlikely Thru-Hiker*. We've partnered with "Mr. Fabulous" himself to bring his storytelling to the Long Trail.



Derick is currently hiking Vermont's 272-mile footpath and giving real-time updates along the way. Join him via Instagram (@DerickLugo, @greenmountainclub) as he talks to caretakers, helps with trail maintenance, stops by GMC's Waterbury headquarters, and explores the length of Vermont. Join the fun online, and say hi if you see him along the trail!