



# Green Mountain Club 2023 Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 17, 2023

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# Green Mountain Club

## 2023 Annual Business Meeting

Craftsbury Outdoor Center | Craftsbury, VT  
Saturday, June 17, 2023 | 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

### Business Meeting Agenda

9:00 to 9:05	Call to order and welcome by GMC Vice President Nancy McClellan
9:05 to 9:10	Secretary's Report by Caitlin Miller
9:10 to 9:20	Treasurer's Report by Nancy Thomas
9:20 to 9:30	Executive Director's Report by Mike DeBonis
9:30 to 9:45	Volunteer Awards
9:45 to 10:15	Managing GMC's Conserved Lands by Mollie Flanigan
10:15 to 10:30	Break
10:30 to 11:30	Trail Systems in Sterling/Laraway/Northern Frontier Sections 2023 Panel
11:30 to 11:50	Nominating Committee Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Announcement of New Board Members</li><li>• Honorary Life Membership</li></ul>
11:50	Adjourn for Lunch

*The mission of the Green Mountain Club is to make the 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.*

Green Mountain Club  
**112<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Minutes**  
June 11, 2022 at GMC Headquarters

Howard VanBenthuisen, President, called the meeting to order at 9:07 am. Howard welcomed everyone and noted that this is the first in-person meeting since 2019. There was a quorum present of the membership and all officers were present.

Howard introduced Caitlin Miller, Secretary, to call for a vote on the 111<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting meeting minutes. Motion to approve the minutes by Elisabeth Fenn. Second by Marge Fish. The minutes from the meeting were approved unanimously.

Howard introduced Nancy Thomas, Treasurer, to give the treasurer's report. Nancy thanked the staff for their good work over the last two years and noted the strength of the Club's financials. The Capital Campaign is closing out successfully and this is the third year in a row of a budget surplus. Nancy noted highlights from the FY23 budget, including increases in fee for service for Field Programs and wage increases. The budget for FY23 is \$2.7 million. Discussion about the budget focused on fee for service funding.

Howard then gave the President's Address, focusing on the state of the GMC. Howard recounted his introduction to the GMC as a past Gorham Lodge caretaker and compared the GMC of the 1970s to today. Howard noted the strength of the Club despite the pandemic, thanked the staff for their hard work, and touched on the slate of projects coming up for this field season. The Club completed another clean audit this year and Howard reiterated the success of the Capital Campaign. Howard commended the GMC community, including staff, volunteers, and the Club's membership.

Howard introduced Mike DeBonis, Executive Director, for the Executive Director's report. Mike introduced the office staff. Mike discussed the challenges presented by COVID to GMC operations and outdoor recreation in Vermont. Mike gave an overview of the Capital Campaign, which has met its \$4 million goal. Mike recognized the campaign team. 2022 is the end of the current strategic plan, the goals of which the Club has largely met. The new strategic planning process is beginning.

Howard then gave out the Club's President's Awards. President's Awards were given to the following individuals for their incredible service and dedication to the GMC and Long Trail System:

- Scott Christiansen
- Nancy McClellan
- Edmund Guest

Howard and Mike also gave a special award to Hugh and Jeanne Joudry for their amazing

tenure

as caretakers and stewards on Stratton Mountain for over 50 years.

Howard called for a break at 9:53 am. Everyone came back from the break at 10:09 am and Howard introduced Amy Kelsey, Vice President, to be the moderator for the Long Trail System in 2022 panel. Amy introduced the panelists and led the discussion. Panelists:

- Ilana Copel, Interim Northeast Regional Director for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- Keegan Tierney, Director of Field Programs for the GMC
- Mollie Flanagan, Director of Land Conservation for GMC
- Becca Washburn, Director of Lands Administration and Recreation for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Howard introduced John Page, chair of the Nominating Committee, for an update. John reviewed the charge of the Nominating Committee which is to (1) nominate a slate of officers, (2) nominate general directors to the board, and (3) nominate members of the GMC for the honor of life membership - the highest honor the Club can give.

The Nominating Committee nominated the following for officers to be voted on at the board meeting later during the day:

President: Howard VanBenthuyzen, Vice President: Nancy McClellan, Treasurer: Nancy Thomas, Secretary: Caitlin Miller

The committee nominated and the membership voted in Nika Meyers, David Hathaway, and Don Taylor as new general directors.

The committee nominated Lee Allen, Carol Langley, and Phil Hazen as Honorary Life Members for their outstanding, substantial, and long-term contributions to the GMC and Long Trail System. Members John Page, Andy Hood, and Ted Albers, respectively, introduced the honorees.

Howard invited any new business to be discussed by the membership. New business included a brief discussion about preservation of historical viewpoints along the Long Trail System.

Inge Brown moved to adjourn. David Hathaway seconded. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. The 112th meeting of the GMC was adjourned at 11:37 am.

Green Mountain Club  
**Treasurer's Report, Submitted by Nancy Thomas**  
113<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, June 17, 2023

Overview:

This report covers Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) which closed April 30, 2023, and the budget for FY24, which began on May 1, 2023. This was the Club's busiest year in recent memory with a tremendous amount of work accomplished in this past field season. But like the rest of the world, the GMC was subject to the effects of economic turbulence beginning in July with rapidly increasing inflation and borrowing costs. The same economic pressures impacted our donors and we saw a reduction in our anticipated year end and spring contributions. The staff worked hard to close the budget gap, but the GMC ended with a deficit for the first time in 9 years. The economic challenges will certainly continue for the next few years, but with a solid base, bolstered by the very successful Long Trail Legacy Campaign, the Club's work will continue strong and we will be able to weather the challenges.

1. Fiscal Year 2023 – May 1, 2022 through April 30, 2023

Fiscal Year 2023 ended with a net deficit of \$129,281. The Club was able to use surplus funds from FY21 as well as a portion of the working capital fund to bring the deficit down to \$45,000. The working capital reserve is currently at \$131,000 or 5% of the budgeted expenses, our target for the reserve fund. During the coming year we will make a plan to retire the deficit in the near future.

Total operating revenue for the year was \$1.96 million, up substantially from last year, reflecting, in part the additional work that was done on the trails funded through fee for service funds and grants. Revenue in this area was down from the budgeted amount this year due to changes in the work plan for the field season after the passage of the budget. Contributions came in very close to budget and up significantly from the previous year, due in part to a successful Long Trail Day fundraising event. Previously the funds from this event went into the Capital Campaign. Membership was steady from last year's amounts, but at 91% of the budgeted amount. Thanks to the development staff for the monumental effort in bringing additional funds in the last 2 months of the year.

Some personnel expenses as well as building supplies and lumber were reduced due to the change in field work plans, but many aspects of the summer field work were increased when inflation took off in July. Vehicle costs, contracted professional services, and office expenses were all over budget. Staff and volunteer support was over budget with quarantine costs due to COVID. The staff worked hard to hold down expenses, especially late in the fiscal year with a freeze on expenditures and holding off on rehiring when vacancies occurred.

Non-operating income was up substantially from the previous year from \$362,399 to \$440,603 with the increase in the distribution from the endowment and distributions from restricted funds due to the successful capital campaign.

## 2. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget – May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024

The drafting of the FY24 budget began in December and worked its way through the Finance Committee and the Executive Board to be presented at the Board meeting in March. However, as we approached the end of FY23, it became clear that adjustments would need to be made, recognizing current economic realities. The budget being presented is version 3 and reflects those adjustments. Though this budget is less than the approved FY23 budget, there is growth from the last year's final figures.

On the revenue side, this budget continues to take advantage of federal funding opportunities to collaborate with a variety of partners on the Burrows Trail Restoration Project. The goal for contributions continues to grow. The membership goal is higher than the actuals for FY23, but reduced from the previous budget. Total operating revenues are projected at \$2.15 million and non-operating income from the endowment, restricted projects and the Northern Trail Capital Campaign funding of \$390,000 for a total of \$2.54 million.

Total operating expenses are projected to be \$2.53 million. There will be 3 Long Trail Patrol crews. The base rate of pay for seasonal staff has been increased to \$15/hour and as well as increases to HQ staff salaries as the Club works to be the Employer of Choice and remain competitive with other organizations. There is a decrease in contract and professional services as there will be no airlift this year. Transportation/vehicle costs have increased with inflation. Interest expenses have increased for short-term borrowing with the increase in interest rates. There will be ongoing challenges. The Club will continue to face inflation and economic uncertainties as we move ahead as well as a competitive employment market. With its dynamic staff leadership, the Club is in a good position to meet the challenges.

## 3. Endowment

Congratulations again to the GMC administration and volunteers who put so much effort into the Long Trail Legacy Capital Campaign, which wrapped up in last summer, having met — and exceeded — the ambitious goal of \$4 million. This created opportunity for important work on the trail and to significantly bolster the endowment. In addition, the new visitor center building, to be constructed this summer, is being funded through these efforts. While GMC has seen its endowment investments rise and fall as the stock market reacts to inflationary pressures and the crisis in Ukraine, the long term prospects outlook remains positive.

I would like to thank Mike, Jason, Alicia and all the staff as well as the volunteers who have contributed to the growth and strength of the GMC during these challenging times.

Green Mountain Club  
**Committee Reports**  
113<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting | June 17, 2023

**Budget & Finance Committee**

Budget & Finance Committee members: Nancy Thomas (Chair), Jonathan Breen, Lee Allen, Jeff Wehrwein, Stephen Klein, and Susan Tobin.

GMC staff representatives: Chief Financial Officer Jason Buss, Executive Director Mike DeBonis

The Budget and Finance Committee serves several vital functions in the club committee structure. It:

- Provides oversight and technical support on the Club's finances;
- Supervises the annual audit of the Club's financials and reviews other financial controls;
- Recommends the annual budget to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors.

The committee met six times during the year. Together with the staff, the committee had a productive year as it:

- Oversaw the successful completion of the Fiscal Year 2022 audit; the auditor did not find any deficiencies or material weaknesses;
- Continued oversight of existing financial controls; and
- Recommended the Fiscal Year 2024 budget to the Board.

The Green Mountain Club ended the fiscal year with a slight decrease in total net assets. Total liabilities and net assets decreased by 3.5 percent to \$14.5 million. This decrease was due to reduced cash equivalents and endowment value. The Endowment decreased from \$6.8 million to \$6.6 million due to market conditions, the Federal Reserve tightening monetary policy, and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Looking forward to FY24, we will continue to face tight fiscal operations as we spend more money and do more work than in previous years. Additional weeks of work in the field, land protection, marketing, and engagement add pressure to the coming fiscal year. Workforce shortages and increased administrative costs create additional stress. New public COVID recovery funding streams to support outdoor recreation create opportunities to make strategic investments in the trail resource. We will see a tight budget environment persist through FY24.

As always, the Club appreciates your many contributions to our mission and looks forward to your continued involvement in the years ahead.

*Respectfully submitted by Treasurer Nancy Thomas and Chief Financial Officer Jason Buss*

### **Camps Committee**

Camps Committee members: Chair Paul Trojano, Alison Henry, Ann Gotham, Bob Fish, Catherine Brooks, Chad Forcier, Dann Van Der Vliet, Paul Houchens, RJ Thompson, Kathryn Wrigley (FPR Liaison)

GMC staff: Director of Land Conservation Mollie Flanigan and Director of Field Programs Keegan Tierney

GMC's Camps Program is currently renting Bolton Lodge and Bryant Camp in the town of Bolton, and Wheeler Pond Camps (Hadsel-Mares Cabin) in the town of Barton.

Construction of the new cabin at Wheeler Pond Camps commenced in December 2022 and is currently ongoing. The new cabin will replace the former Beaver Dam Cabin and be named in honor of Jean Haigh. Construction is expected to be completed in the summer of 2023.

Rental Data in Fiscal Year 2023:

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Percent Occupancy</b>	<b>Number of Different Rental Parties</b>	<b>Percent of Renters who are GMC Members</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Hadsel-Mares	66%	101	24%	Season: May 1, 2022- April 30, 2023; cabin closed for maintenance December and January
Bryant Camp	69%	105	38%	Season: August 1, 2022- March 31, 2023
Bolton Lodge	56%	95	24%	Season: July 1, 2022- March 31, 2023

*Respectfully submitted by Camps Committee Chair Paul Trojano and Director of Land Conservation Mollie Flanigan*

### **Development Committee**

Development Committee members: Anne Hauser (co-chair), Nancy McClellan (co-chair), and Don Taylor.

GMC staff representatives: Deputy Director Alicia DiCocco.



The Development Committee has two primary roles:

- Support GMC staff in the solicitation and stewardship of donors, expanding and enhancing the club's base of support; and
- Keep the board apprised of Development Committee activities and facilitate board involvement in fundraising efforts, including providing the necessary support and training.

The Development Committee met regularly through Fiscal Year 2023 and assisted the staff development department in bringing in revenue for the club. They provided staff support throughout the fiscal year, especially when Alicia was on maternity leave. They also called to thank donors and to invite them to GMC events, strengthening their connection with the club.

Key accomplishments of the Development Committee in Fiscal Year 2023 include:

- Including the fundraising participation guidelines for board members in new board member orientation;
- Contacted first-time donors through the Donor Thank You Caller program;
- Supporting the work of increasing the planned giving program at GMC, including providing a planned giving training to the Board of Directors by consultant Andy Robinson
- Continuing the GMC Outdoor Business Member Coalition where local retailers commit \$500 to be part of GMC's hiking season media outreach and support the growth of GMC's brand, fundraising, and membership;
- Supported a successful Long Trail Day fundraising campaign that raised over \$40,000 for the Long Trail Legacy campaign; and
- Providing GMC's Board of Directors with fundraising articles and specific ways to participate in fundraising activities and communications on a regular basis

*Respectfully submitted by Development Committee Chair and Deputy Director Alicia DiCocco*

### **Endowment Committee**

Endowment Committee members: Tom Candon (Chair), Ken Perine, Nancy Thomas, Stephen Klein, Lisa Burns, and Jeff Wehrwein.

GMC staff representative: Chief Financial Officer Jason Buss.

At fiscal year-end on April 30, 2023, the GMC endowment's invested assets totaled \$6.6 million, compared with \$6.8 million a year earlier, making it one of the club's most valuable assets from a monetary perspective.

The Endowment Fund distributed over \$238,530 in the past fiscal year to GMC in support of the club's mission. The Endowment Committee recommended, and the Board approved, a \$304,465 distribution from the endowment in support of FY24 operations. This reflects

increasing the Endowment Distribution for FY24 by CPI (7.1%), and a \$50k increase in the distribution to support the Caretaker program. The Caretaker funds in the endowment were donated in the recently completed and very successful Capital Campaign. The total distribution amounts to 4.86% of the last 12 trailing quarters and 4.6% of the endowment value on 4/30/2023, in keeping with the adopted distribution formula.

Morgan Stanley's Alpine Legacy Group, based in Colchester, Vermont, manages the GMC's invested assets.

In 2021, following a comprehensive multi-year study and search by the Endowment Committee, the GMC Board voted to place the GMC Endowment Fund with Morgan Stanley's Alpine Legacy Group, based in Colchester, Vermont. With the assistance of Morgan Stanley, the Endowment Committee completed the updating of the GMC Endowment Policy to include investment reporting requirements. Morgan Stanley is providing a sophisticated Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) screen to ensure the Board's commitment to have the values and mission of the Club reflected in the investment of its assets.

*Respectfully submitted by Endowment Committee Chair Tom Candon and Chief Financial Officer Jason Buss*

### **Land Conservation Committee**

Land Conservation Committee members: Chair Preston Bristow, Alexis Peters, Bob Paquin, David Hartman, Harris Roen, Howard VanBenthuyzen, Joseph Bahr, Kip Potter, Lee Allen, Marge Fish, Melissa Reichert, Paul Kendall, Richard Andrews, Richard Windish, Rolf Anderson, Russ Ford, Sheri Larsen, Tom Kahl, Matt Stevens (ATC), Becca Washburn (FPR)

Staff liaison: Director of Land Conservation Mollie Flanigan

#### **Strategic Planning:**

The Land Conservation Program has nearly completed its strategic conservation plan. A final report is coming to the committee's late June meeting and will be presented to GMC's Board of Directors at their fall meeting. This two-year planning process has been focused on recommending the future scope of the Long Trail Protection Campaign. It has assessed the current legal protection for the Long Trail System, set conservation goals and criteria, and mapped out strategies for accomplishing those goals.

#### **Long Trail Land Protection:**

*Judevine Brook Headwaters Tract:* On December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, GMC transferred the 12.9-acre Judevine Brook Headwaters tract in Johnson, Vermont to the State to become part of the Long Trail State Forest. GMC first purchased the property in December 2020 and owned it for two years until the state was ready to acquire it. This tract, while small, is a critical property for the Long Trail corridor in Johnson. It is within the 1,000-foot corridor for the trail and has a log landing off of Plot Road that will be turned into an off-road trailhead parking area.

**Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Standards and Practices:**

GMC's Land Conservation Program continues to improve its data management systems to bring greater efficiencies and capacity to GMC and meet Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. This past year GMC focused on digitizing our land records to make them accessible while working remotely and to create a duplicate copy. Over the course of 2022-2023, GMC scanned about two-thirds of our land records onto GMC's server and plans to continue this project in 2023.

**Corridor Stewardship:**

*Corridor Monitoring:* Over the past year, the Green Mountain Club worked with our volunteer corridor monitors to help ensure against encroachments on GMC-conserved parcels and maintain property boundaries. There are currently 57 active corridor monitor volunteers who monitor and maintain the boundaries on Long Trail and Appalachian Trail lands and easements. In 2022, GMC's volunteers monitored and maintained just under half of the boundaries on GMC's Long Trail conserved lands (84 miles out of a total of 178 miles) and contributed over 350 hours of volunteer effort to the project. On the AT, volunteers monitored and maintained 40% of the boundaries (51 miles out of a total of 128) and contributed 265 hours of volunteer effort to the project.

*GMC Conserved Lands Boundary Inventory Initiative:* In 2022, GMC completed our boundary line inventory to assess the condition of all 178 miles of boundary line GMC maintains along the Long Trail. Through that effort we have mapped more than 6,000 boundary points and now can accurately map and plan for the maintenance and resource needs for maintaining our boundary lines. Our inventory found that

- 47% (82.85 miles) are good (*line is well marked with blazes, signs, and corner monuments*)
- 21% (37.79 miles) are fair (*line is findable but not well enough marked with blazes and/or corner monuments be in good condition*)
- 16% (28.76 miles) are poor (*line is not marked by blazes and/or corner monuments and can only be followed by careful navigation*)
- 8% (14.74 miles) are lost (*line is not monitorable without being surveyed*)

Based on the results of this inventory, the land conservation program will evaluate how we should move forward with poor and lost boundary lines and will be talking with our partners at the state.

*Fee land management:* GMC's consulting forester, Harris Roen, worked with GMC over the last year to inventory and update the Club's 10-year forest management plan for the "Meltzer" property in Lowell. This large (1,846 acre) property hosts the LT, Foresters and Frank Post Trails as well as Tillotson Camp and Belvidere Fire Tower. The land is enrolled in the Use Value Appraisal Program and a management plan is required every 10 years to keep the property enrolled. No timber harvest is recommended in the next 10 years under the adopted plan. The Committee considered enrolling the property in a carbon offset program but decided instead to

manage the forest for carbon emission reduction, sequestration and storage but not pursue enrollment in a carbon market at this time.

*Appalachian Trail Open Areas Maintenance:* In 2022, GMC and our partners at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and US Forest Service ran another successful year of Open Areas maintenance. GMC, ATC and GMNF staff all worked on the project and together mowed Woodward Hill (Bridgewater), Howard Hill (Hartford), Upper Lewis Field (Woodstock), and Dana Hill (Pomfret). In addition, invasive species were controlled at Arms Hill, Dupuis Hill, Bartlett Field, and Dana Hill in Pomfret.

### **Indigenous Land Access:**

The Land Conservation Committee has begun discussing how to act on GMC's Land Acknowledgement commitment to *"Support Indigenous efforts for land and water access on GMC-owned lands for ceremonial and cultural purposes."* Research is currently underway to determine the best options for GMC and the current needs of Vermont's indigenous community and the Land Conservation Committee will continue to discuss the topic in the coming year.

*Respectfully submitted by Land Conservation Committee Chair Preston Bristow and Director of Land Conservation Mollie Flanigan*

### **Membership Committee & Section Working Group**

Membership Committee members: Owen Rachampbell (Chair), Beth Eliason, Collier Shutter, and Nika Meyers.

GMC staff representatives: Membership Coordinator Rick Dugan

GMC membership continues to be stable alongside increased usage on the Long Trail and side Trails in 2022. After a hiatus during COVID-19, the Membership Committee was successfully reformed with a focus on growing At-Large Membership and converting trail users into GMC members. The Section Working Group continues to support the sections of GMC and works as an extension of the Membership Committee to help support section communication and membership.

The Membership Committee is in the early stages of analyzing and engaging current and future At-Large members to support the growth and longevity of the club. The committee has begun planning outreach that includes:

- Exploring outreach that will engage younger overall members to begin shaping the next generation of GMC membership
- Keeping DEI at the forefront of engagement strategies so that the Long Trail and side trails continue to be open to everyone
- Planning inclusive events to help attract new members to GMC

The Section Working Group continues to serve as a necessary tool between headquarters and the sections to troubleshoot section-specific issues as well as monitor section membership retention and growth. The working group has also proven to be useful in cross-section collaboration and will continue to serve as a common ground for sections to meet with HQ membership and communications staff, maintain a consistent brand statewide, and collaborate ways to retain and grow section membership.

Membership by the numbers:

- 9,497 total voting members
- At-Large: 5,447
- Bennington Section: 150
- Brattleboro Section: 156
- Bread Loaf Section: 312
- Burlington Section: 1093
- Connecticut Section: 177
- Killington Section: 253
- Laraway Section: 65
- Manchester Section: 250
- Montpelier Section: 495
- Northeast Kingdom Section: 272
- Northern Frontier Section: 72
- Upper Valley Ottaquechee Section: 340
- Sterling Section: 119
- Worcester Section: 189

*Respectfully submitted by Membership Coordinator Rick Dugan*

### **Nominating Committee**

Nominating Committee members: John Page (Chair), Andy Hood, Tom Candon, and Mike Peckar.

GMC staff representative: Executive Director Mike DeBonis

The Nominating Committee has three functions:

1. Nominate General Directors to represent the membership at-large
2. Nominate Officers
3. Nominate individuals for honorary life membership

1) This year the committee nominated two first term general directors and three second term general directors:

- Michele Kupersmith – 1<sup>st</sup> term
- Owen Rachampbell – 1<sup>st</sup> term
- Mariah Keagy – 2<sup>nd</sup> term

- Alexis Peters – 2<sup>nd</sup> term
- Anne Houser – 2<sup>nd</sup> term

## 2) Officers

- Nancy Thomas - fourth year as Treasurer
- Nancy McClellan - new incoming President
- Caitlin Miller - third year as Secretary

## 3) Life Membership

One individual was recommended for Honorary Life Membership by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Board of Directors in 2023.

*Respectfully submitted by Nominating Committee Chair John Page and Executive Director Mike DeBonis.*

## **Publications Committee**

Publications Committee members: Don Taylor (Chair), Martha Stitelman, Cindy Griffith, Millie Mugica, Jeff Wehrwein, Mike Dacey, Paulina Murray, David Hathaway and Bruce Yelton.

GMC Staff representative: Operations Manager Matt Krebs

Publications Committee members volunteer time supporting projects; writing, editing, and fact-checking trail descriptions; taking photographs; and creating illustrations. The GMC's publications program continues to be successful, thanks to the dedication and talents of GMC volunteers and staff. Sales of all GMC publications support the Club's work to protect and maintain the Long Trail, Appalachian Trail, and Kingdom Heritage Trails in the Northeast Kingdom.

Publications Committee members have experience in editing, writing, photography, graphic arts and book production. As needed, the committee contracts with writers, editors, photographers, cartographers and graphic designers. Most GMC publications are printed on paper with recycled content and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

The Publications Committee is responsible for developing new books, maps, posters and other types of printed and electronic products for sale in the GMC Visitor Center and club's online store. Products are also marketed to retailers around Vermont through GMC sales representatives and wholesalers.

The Publications Committee's charge is as follows:

*to identify, research, produce and publish educational and stewardship guidebooks, maps, and associated products that support the Club's mission of helping the Vermont mountains play a larger part in the life of the people.*

The committee aims to achieve its mission in every way possible, including the use of electronic and interactive media to reach today's, *and tomorrow's*, hikers where they are most likely to find and use information we provide, as well as feel more closely connected to the Green Mountain Club and Vermont's vibrant hiking and outdoor community.

This year the Publications Committee accomplished the following:

- Completion and publication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the *Killington Area Hiking Trail Map*.
- The Publications Committee has undertaken a comprehensive strategic planning effort over the course of the last year. We have taken a hard look at the publishing program in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The committee has conducted a thorough review of our committee mission, vision, and values. Our goal with this process has been to develop a program based strategic plan, compatible with the larger GMC strategic plan, that will more strongly emphasize digital products, more critically examine possible partnerships and help GMC provide more relevant content to the hiking public. As a result, we hope to put better systems in place to evaluate product feasibility, consider product value to the community, and make product updates more straightforward and formula driven.

*Respectfully submitted by Publications Committee Chair Don Taylor and Operations Manager Matt Krebs*

### **Trail Management Committee (TMC)**

**Voting Members:** David Hathaway (Chair), Caitlin Miller, Lee Allen, David Morrissey, Ira Sollace, Kathy Astraukas, Lars Botzjorns, Marge Fish, Andrew Nuquist, Peter Hope, Richard Andrews, Tom Candon, Martha Stitleman, Wayne Krevetsky, Mariah Keagy, Matt Vezina, Richard Windish, Larry Bruce, Paul Beliveau, Bruce Bushey, Howard VanBenthuyssen, Cathi Brooks

#### **Agency Representatives and Staff**

- Appalachian Trail Conservancy Representative: Hawk Metheny,
- VT Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation Representative: Walter Opuszynski,
- USFS Green Mountain National Forest Representative: Steve Pytlik,
- GMC staff representative: Director of Field Programs, Keegan Tierney

*To oversee and encourage effective management of the Long and Appalachian Trail footpaths and associated facilities; and to provide guidance to GMC's participation in other Vermont trails and trail issues.*

The Trail Management Committee (TMC) is one of the largest groups serving the GMC and is composed of passionate and devoted members of the club and partner organizations. The 2022/2023 winter meeting series was low on policy decisions. However, the committee heard a

number of updates on existing matters and was briefed on upcoming trail management matters. These included:

- Planned upgrades to lifts at Sugarbush ski area and preliminary planning to add backcountry ski zones within Sugarbush Resort's private land holdings
- Being briefed on the upcoming expiration of the Kingdom Heritage Trail Corridor Manager agreement
- Reviewing the trail management aspects of the GMC strategic plan
- Review and feedback on a proposed VAST trail crossing of the LT in Mendon and AT in Killington
- Review of final comment on the Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project on the Green Mountain National Forest
- Review of the Strategic Conservation Plan being developed in the Land Stewardship office
- Final review of the draft Long Trail System Management Plan

The Long Trail System Management Plan is now with our partners at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy for review and adoption as the GMC's Local Management Plan for the AT in Vermont. The TMC anticipates many new topics on its agenda for the coming year.

*Respectfully submitted by Trail Management Committee Chair David Hathaway and Director of Field Programs Keegan Tierney*

### **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Working Group**

DEI Working Group Members: Caitlin Miller, Tom Candon, Andy Hood, Nancy McClellan, Nancy Thomas, Elisabeth Fenn, Marge Fish, Millie Mujica, John Zaber, Nika Myers

Staff Representatives: Executive Director Mike Debonis

GMC's DEI Working Group was established in November of 2020 to advise the Board of Directors and provide leadership to the organization as it works to address diversity, equity, and inclusion at the club.

Work conducted by the working group includes:

- DEI discussion at Board meetings;
- Incorporated DEI elements into board orientation;
- Planned and held a Board DEI retreat in September 2023
- Began analyzing systems to make the board nominating process more inclusive; and
- Built out an online Board DEI resource library

*Respectfully submitted by Executive Director Mike DeBonis*





# Green Mountain Club Section Reports



## Bennington Section

### About this year:

Bennington Section has begun a community outreach program that we hope will make our section more visible locally to the general public. Here's a link to the explanation on our website: <https://www.benningtongmc.org/outreach>. The section has been offering more events as we are moving further from COVID-19 shutdowns.

### Upcoming:

In late July, the Bennington AT community committee is holding their second Trailfest celebration in Bennington. Several of our section members are active with that group.



## Brattleboro Section

### About this year:

Brattleboro Section is proud of consistently strong volunteer turnouts for Trails and Shelters work dates and special projects. Notable projects include quality work on a large number of puncheon replacements and continued focused repair and restoration of Spruce Peak Shelter.

### Upcoming:

The Brattleboro Section is looking forward to increasing our active membership numbers this year with a greater social media presence and offering a full calendar of events, outings, and work days. As always, special projects that represent our dedication to the maintenance and careful management of our section of the Long Trail are a priority.

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## Bread Loaf Section

### About this year:

The Bread Loaf Section had wonderful participation in outings, events, talks, and trail work throughout the year. Shifting to a "reduced" COVID environment enabled us to host more in-person events, outings, and meetings. Our trails were a positive outlet for folks during COVID

and the section continues to steward that connection so many of us deepened over the last few years. We focus on offering a wide range of outings and events in hopes of attracting more people to the club and creating activities for a diverse audience.

**Upcoming:**

We continue to organize and facilitate the great programs we have in place and find ways to engage and attract new people to the section.

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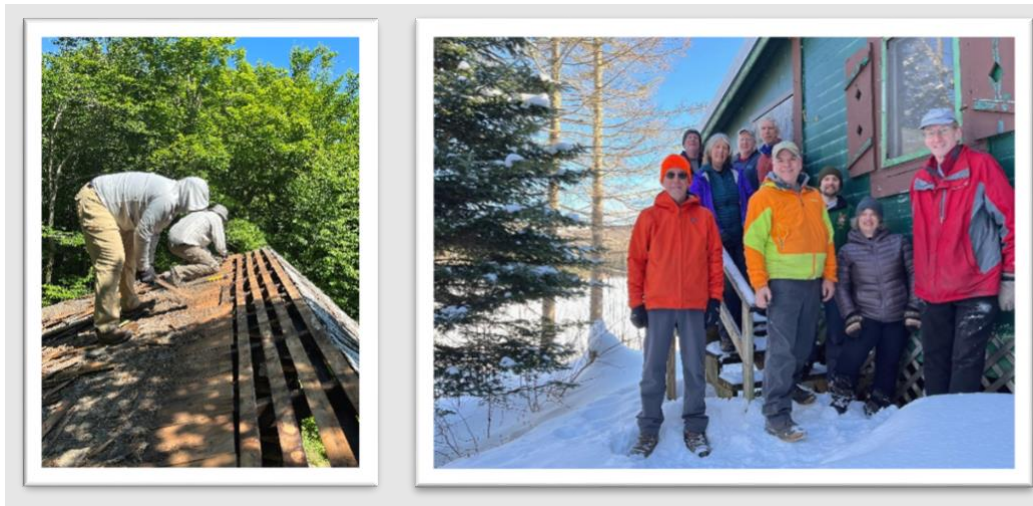
## Burlington Section

**About this year:**

Burlington Section saw positive growth in our outings schedule during the first year after pandemic restrictions were lifted. With David Hathaway's leadership, there were more than 70 scheduled trips including hikes, paddles and biking offerings, not only in Vermont but also in the White Mountains and Adirondacks. We were fortunate to have more than 15 trip leaders, including several new leaders. The trend has also continued into the current year. A second significant success was a complete redesign of our section's website at [gmburlington.org](http://gmburlington.org). We would like to thank our webmaster John Need for his many hours of work, vision, and dedication to making this happen. The redesign makes it easier for visitors to find information about outings, read our newsletters, and become members of the Green Mountain Club. The site is an important resource to keep updated because of its use as both a communications tool for our current activity and an archive of Burlington Section history.

**Upcoming:**

The Burlington Section is hoping to connect with Vermonters with a restart of our Young Adventurers Club. Section outings tailored to non-adults have been essentially dormant for a number of years. Corinn Julow recently joined our Executive Committee to take on this challenge. This summer we hope to incrementally add outings that will appeal to this younger age group.



## Connecticut Section

### About this year:

Over the past year, 11 different Connecticut Section members led 66 recreational events including two multi-day treks on the A.T. in Maine, two winter trips to Bryant Camp and Hadsel-Mares Cabin, and a week-long trek on the A.T. in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. The Section spent four work weekends on the Long Trail between Glastenbury Mountain and Stratton-Arlington Road. Work included clipping, blowdown removal, re-blazing and removal of the old cedar shingles from Kid Gore Shelter in preparation for the GMC construction crew to install a new roof.

### Upcoming:

The section is leading a two-week trip in September to Isle Royale National Park and Voyageurs National Park.





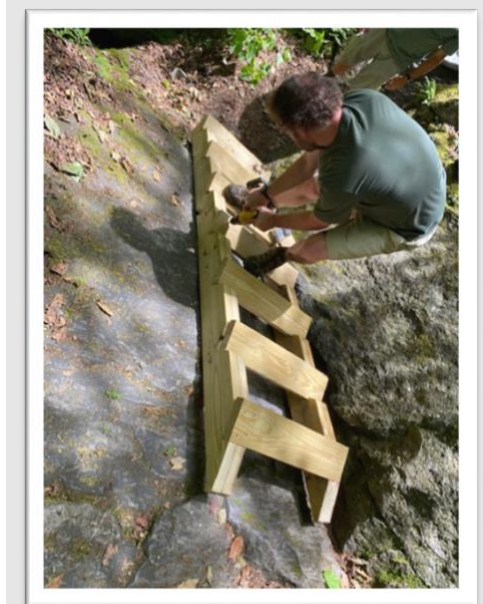
## Killington Section

### About this year:

Memorializing the site where the Long Trail Lodge stood on Sherburne Pass in Killington from 1923 until it burned in 1968 has been on the Killington Section to-do list for many years. This year, with approval from Mike DeBonis, a plan for the site was devised by the Killington Section History Committee (Amy Peacock, Chair, Herb Ogden, Bruce Peacock, and David Wright), and approved by the Killington Section Board. The plan is ready to be implemented when approval is secured from Killington Resort, owner of the land on which the site sits. This plan includes creation of an interpretive experience for visitors with signage highlighting historically significant areas, as well as restoration of the nature trails and lookouts that were present in the lodge's early years. Also included in the plan is the relocation of the Sherburne Pass trail to the original footpath of the Long Trail that ran through the site and directly through the lodge itself. In an effort to keep the tradition of the original builders of the Long Trail, the new route will pass by the many features still in existence on the site today such as stone steps and an erratic called "Pulpit Rock." It is the hope of the Killington Section that this plan will both memorialize and honor what was once described by Professor Will S. Monroe, builder of the Monroe Skyline Trail on the Long Trail, as "the finest mountain camp in the world" (GMC archives). Our Co-Chairpersons of the Section's Trails and Shelters Committee, Larry Walter and Dave Coppock, worked with a local school group in clearing blow downs this winter. The students learned about the trail and the work involved in maintaining it. Proper usage and safe handling of a two-person crosscut saw was a real hit with the group.

### Upcoming:

The Section is looking forward to a return to more "normal" pre-pandemic summer and group social activities, expanding our hike schedule in the coming year.



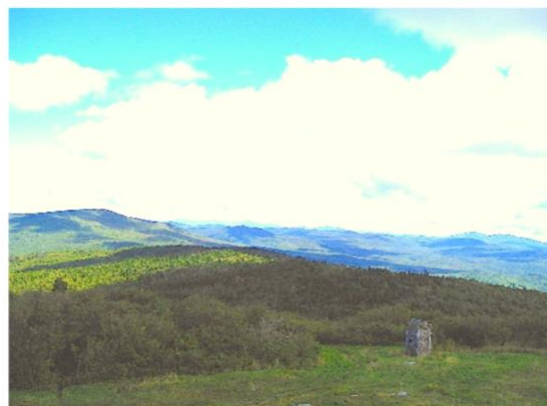
## Laraway Section

### About this year:

The Laraway Section's focus is still trail and shelter work. We have a small group of loyal volunteers that have been doing trail clearing and clipping on six Saturdays each spring for 20 years. With the use of our website there have been new volunteers contacting us to help with the spring work trips.

### Upcoming

We have also identified a few muddy sections on the trail to install stonework later this summer.



## Manchester Section

### About this year:

After 13 years of work fundraising and advocating, the new Bromley Mountain Observation Tower should be built and usable by leaf peeping season. We continue to have great success involving school groups in trail work throughout our section.

### Upcoming:

We plan to host a big party at Bromley Tower once construction is complete.



## Montpelier Section

### About this year:

The pandemic was a significant challenge for us to face both for connecting in person and holding outings this year, particularly given the average age of our members. Despite this we were able to keep our membership numbers strong, schedule regular section outings and increase our numbers and efforts on our twice-yearly trail maintenance days on our sections of the LT. In addition to our regular seasonal maintenance efforts, we partnered with the Burlington section and main club on rock work projects and a new caretaker platform at Sterling Pond. Kudos to our former trails and shelter coordinator Morgan Irons and her partner Alan Paschel for the excellent work on this.

### Upcoming:

At our recent outdoor annual meeting we ushered in a new slate of executive committee members, some experienced folks in continuing roles and some new young(er) folks who together sparked some energetic discussions about how we can add more spontaneous outings to our longer term published approach and ways we could expand and diversify our membership and recruitment. The meeting concluded with another spirited discussion about how our next annual meeting would be an indoor potluck with recognition awards and a presentation on a new adventure that we needed to start exploring right away.



Our resident emeritus member and historian Andrew Nuquist pointed out, as he often does, the importance of preserving the history of our section and how in many ways our present reflects our past and a predictor of some of our future. To pirate a Seussian metaphor, oh the places we can go and the things we can do. That is what we are looking forward to.

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## Northeast Kingdom Section

### About this year:

Volunteerism has been outstanding! From trail adopters to event leaders, we have some incredible volunteers. Long Trail Day continues to be a great success each year, both in fundraising and turnout.

### Upcoming:

We will celebrate the grand opening of Jean Haigh Cabin on Wheeler Pond when construction is complete, expected late summer or fall.





## Northern Frontier Section

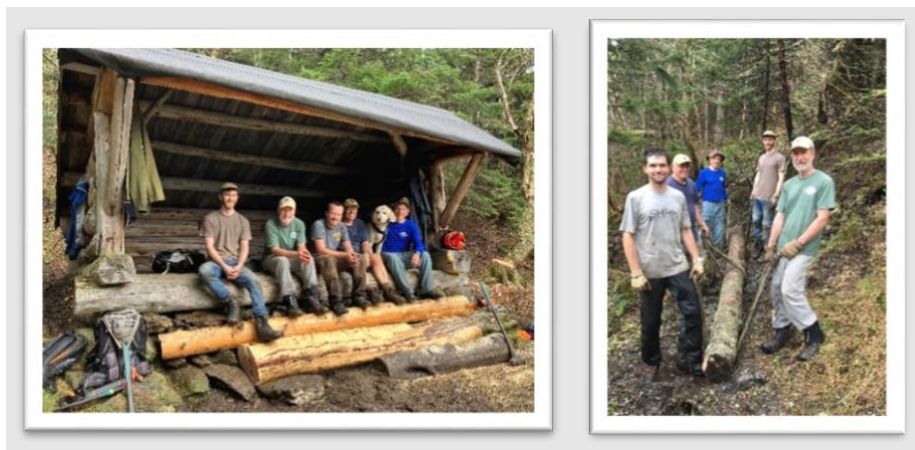
### About this year:

We are a small section with about 60 members and it's taken us years to increase our attendance on group hikes, outings, and our annual meeting. During the past year, we've had some of the highest attendance of all. We had a successful trail work year which included some reblazing, privy work at Shooting Star Shelter, clearing lots of blowdowns, a new ladder for Chet's Lookout, and the inclusion of new adopters (a high school outing club) for a section of trail. Our section helps maintain the LT from RT 58 to Journey's End.

### Upcoming:

We're looking forward to helping host the GMC Annual Meeting at Craftsbury Outdoor Center and seeing the staff and club members and go on the hikes. We're also looking forward to Long Trail Day (we set up a table at Jay Pass where we pass out snacks and GMC info) and a hike and cookout with the NEK Section in Jay this fall.

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## Sterling Section

### About this year:

We accomplished lots of major projects in 2022, the most exciting being a long-planned replacement of the log-and-stone step into Whiteface Shelter and some ambitious trail-hardening south of Bear Hollow Shelter.

### Upcoming:

We have plenty of trail projects planned for this summer with lots of mud and glory. We're also starting to gain momentum on major restoration work at Beaver Meadow Lodge and Burling Camp in the next few years.



## Upper Valley Ottauquechee Section

### About this year:

We have scheduled three outings on most weeks, and trail maintainers have done a stellar job.

### Upcoming:

We are looking forward to rerouting a short piece of the AT south of Thistle Hill Shelter, including installation of switchbacks to bypass a failed stone staircase.



## Worcester Section

### About this year:

The Worcester Section is bouncing back from the pandemic and continues to grow in membership. We continue to maintain the Stratton Mountain section of the Long Trail and side trails in Vermont.

**Upcoming:** We are looking forward to working with other land conservation organizations in our area to conserve more land.