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Long Trail NEWS

SUMMER 2024, Volume 84, No. 2

The *Long Trail News* is published by the Green Mountain Club, a non-profit organization founded in 1910.

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.

We are committed to ensuring the GMC and Long Trail System are places that are inviting, safe, and open, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

The Green Mountain Club and Long Trail System are located on land which is the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples including the Western Abenaki. This land has served as a site of meeting and exchange among Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. We recognize and respect them as the traditional stewards of these lands and waters, whose presence continues to enrich our community. We strive to respect and protect the lands within our use.

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GET IN TOUCH! Email the editor with your feedback at cmiller@greenmountainclub.org. Staff and Board Directory can be found at greenmountainclub.org/about

Dear readers,

Some of you may know me from the trail, but most of you probably don't. I'm the Northern Lead for GMC's caretaker program, entering my third season with the club. I've done stints caretaking at Griffith Lake and Battell Shelter. In my second season as Lead, I will oversee the caretakers at Mount Abraham, Camel's Hump, Mount Mansfield and Sterling Pond. As many of us have, I fell in love with the mountains in northern Vermont, and I am coming back for more!



Adrienne Bartlett

At a glance, life as a caretaker appears simple. Our job is to protect and improve the trail we all know and love. Our tasks are critical for fostering an informed hiking public and for caring for the trail. We meet hikers every day, at shelters, summits and ponds, to teach them how to minimize impacts on the outdoors, and why that matters. We maintain trails in our ranges by removing blowdowns, clearing drains, and painting blazes.

Last season required quite a bit of real-time problem solving. The storms and flooding caused much more water and mud than usual, so we had to troubleshoot and build better drainages in the worst areas in real time. I'm looking forward to seeing how those sites fare this year, and what strategies we can devise to reduce overwhelmed drains in the future.

Caretakers are also responsible for maintaining composting privies. It's weirdly satisfying, and not as gross as you might think. But it's not without surprises: last fall a stealthy bear caused havoc and damage at a few privies, so we had to rig bear-proof storage methods for accumulated waste just before winter. Evidence showed the bear was after food and other trash thrown into the privies, so cue your friendly Leave No Trace reminder to ensure only human waste goes into a privy!

One of my favorite things about my job is how many it's-work-but-doesn't-feel-like-work moments I have. When working on Mount Mansfield on a clear bluebird day, it's sometimes hard to believe protecting that beautiful ecosystem is my job. When I'm learning new chainsaw or a crosscut saw skills, I'm having the time of my life *and* the work is benefiting the trails I enjoy.

When I can take what I've learned and teach it to folks new to the conservation world, I see them become empowered and passionate about the work, too. And it's thanks to you, the members, that I and my colleagues can do such rewarding and important work.

If you see me on the trail this season, say hi!

Adrienne Bartlett (she/her)

Northern Lead Caretaker

FRONT COVER: Kaylie Flannigan on the Winooski River footbridge.

GIVE BACK TO THE TRAIL

Volunteer Opportunities for You

Want to learn more and contribute to the work that goes into caring for the trails in Vermont? There are several open volunteer opportunities to get involved this summer; here are a few in high demand.

Trail Adoption

Adopt a portion of the Long Trail System and ensure its upkeep with thrice-annual visits to clear drains, remove blowdowns, and report bigger issues. All new trail adopters receive one-on-one training to build their trail maintenance skills. Several portions available.

Bark Mulch Packing

We need your help to improve the composting process at GMC's outhouses along the trail! We will contact you when outhouses are in low supply, and you can pick up a burlap sack of mulch at GMC headquarters, then haul it into the privy



A trail adopter clears drains in the NEK.

in need. Weight of the load you carry is flexible to fit your needs.

Volunteer Long Trail Patrol

There's still time to join the volunteer trail crew for a long weekend or more this summer. Volunteer crews will be stationed on the southern Long Trail/

Appalachian Trail near Dunville Hollow, working on a perpetually muddy section of trail. No prior experience necessary.

Corridor Monitoring

Love bushwhacking and using a map and compass? Become a trained corridor monitor volunteer, who works to maintain and uphold boundary lines around protected land and ensure land use policies are being upheld. Available parcels include:

- **SHREWSBURY:** Lottery Road to Cold River Road. 318 acres, 4.7 miles of boundary
- **BARNARD:** Chateaugay Road: 646 acres, 4.2 miles of boundary
- **WALLINGFORD:** North of Route 140: 582 acres, 6.5 miles of boundary

Email volunteer@greenmountainclub.org or visit greenmountainclub.org/volunteer to get started!

Include GMC in Your Estate Planning

Join the LONG TRAIL LEGACY SOCIETY and be a part of the Green Mountain Club's sustainable future.

Bequests can help the Green Mountain Club build its financial resources that makes our annual work on the trail possible.

As you prepare your will, you can remember the Green Mountain Club in several ways. Here are a few examples:

- A fixed amount (any amount)
- A percentage of your assets – e.g. "I designate the Green Mountain Club to receive 3.5% of my estate"
- A specific asset, such as real estate

If you have any questions, please reach out to Alicia DiCocco, (802) 241-8322, adicocco@greenmountainclub.org • Greenmountainclub.org/bequest


LONG TRAIL DAY 2024

September 21

GMC's annual community fundraiser is back with an ambitious goal to raise \$80,000 for the trail!

You can join the effort as an individual or part of a team, and set a goal to raise \$272, or \$1 per mile of the trail.

Learn more: greenmountainclub.org/longtrailday



Once in a Lifetime

Reflecting on the April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse

THE GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB'S ROLE AS A TRAIL MANAGER during mud season isn't always easy – we must constantly remind folks that trails on state land are closed, and hiking is discouraged to protect the fragile alpine ecosystems we're lucky to have here in Vermont.

In a typical year, the hiking community expects these closures. We're so grateful to the advocates who spread the message and abide by the guidance, opting for dirt road walks and rail trail explorations until the official start of hiking season.

This mud season was different...

A once in a lifetime solar eclipse, unseasonably sunny skies, a small state right under the center line of totality, and 160,000 out of state visitors arriving to witness the spectacle. Amidst all the excitement, we had fragile alpine zones and backcountry safety to worry about.

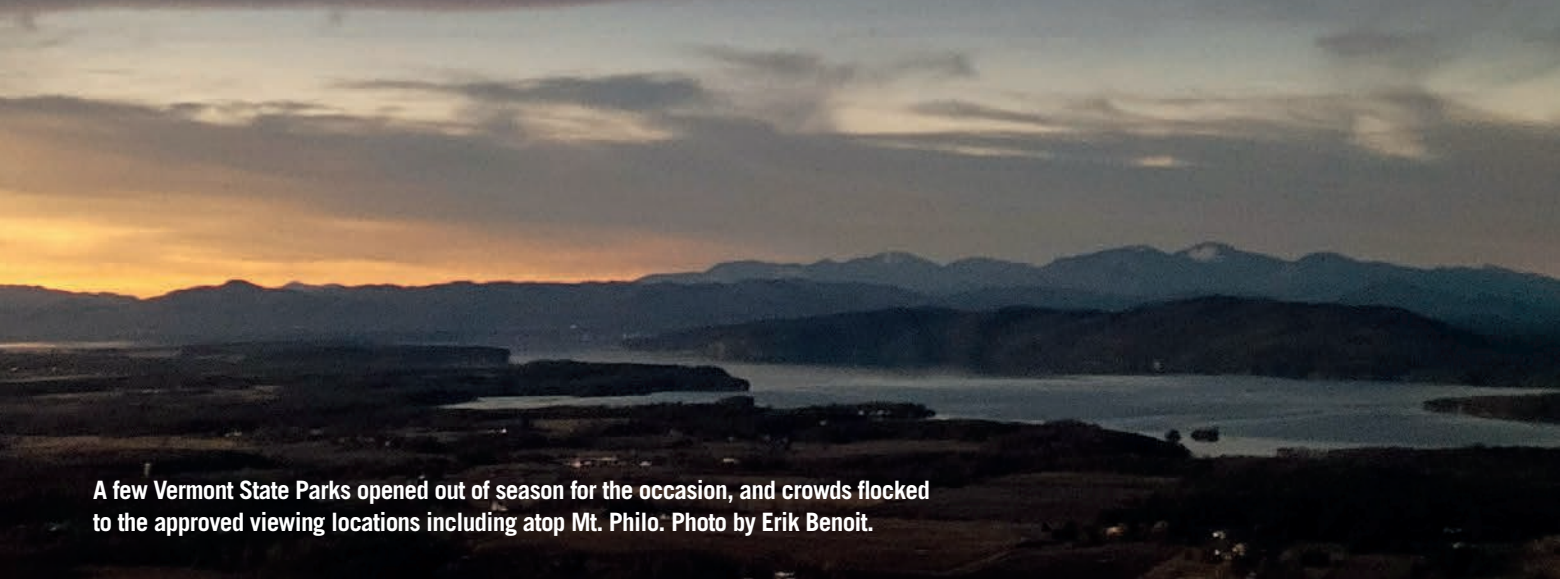
The Green Mountain Club led the charge on communicating hiking guidelines statewide, enlisting numerous partners to adopt and share the message: the Vermont Departments of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, Tourism and Marketing, ski resorts, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Vermont Trails and Greenways council, and others all utilized GMC's communications materials.

For the most part, the "don't go hiking" message was successful. It was widely covered in local news and social media, and the towns of Duxbury, Huntington, and Underhill closed roads to the Camel's Hump and Mount Mansfield trailheads, greatly reducing access for uninformed hikers. While an unprecedented challenge, the eclipse offered GMC a chance to raise our recognition and authority as the go-to hiking resource in the state.

Eclipse Day Response

Nigel Bates, Field Programs Coordinator, coordinated a few volunteers to station themselves at high-use trailheads on eclipse day. Trail closures are important, but they're not enforceable, and GMC didn't plan to try to stop any determined hikers, only to help educate them about the risks.

With a few exceptions, we have every reason to believe that many thousands of people did heed the warnings to protect themselves and the backcountry on eclipse day. Snow cover on the high peaks meant mud-season-like damage was minimized. And the best news of all: The volunteer backcountry rescue crews reported absolutely zero incidents or calls on eclipse day. Personal safety was really the number one priority, so that's a win.



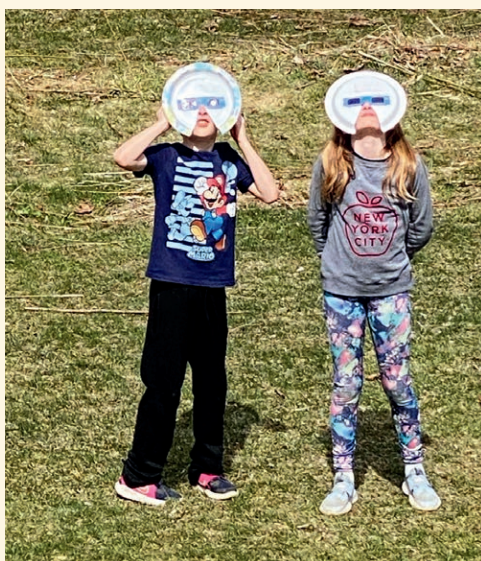
A few Vermont State Parks opened out of season for the occasion, and crowds flocked to the approved viewing locations including atop Mt. Philo. Photo by Erik Benoit.

Now, how about that moment of totality?

The energy in our house leading up to the 2024 total solar eclipse was big, and so wonderful. Our oldest kids (ages 9 and 7) spent months learning all things eclipse: their school brought in a planetarium, they talked to a “real live astronomer” at the library, and they consumed any available information along the way, often correcting adults about the earth’s distance from the moon and sun. Just before the totality, our kids gravitated towards my husband and me, our youngest (age 1) woke up from her nap, and we stood in our yard under the moon’s umbral shadow and shared what I can only describe as a truly majestic three minutes together. A profound beauty and awe that I did not expect (or really understand what all the fuss was about), and an experience that will sit in my heart permanently.

This shared experience and awe has infiltrated our community, bringing neighbors, colleagues and strangers together to appreciate the grandeur of the natural world around us, similar to the way the beauty and experience on the Long Trail connects us.

— ALICIA DiCOCO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR



The Green Mountain Club’s Connecticut Section President, Jim Robertson, had the foresight to book GMC’s Jean Haigh Cabin, on Wheeler Pond, for the eclipse, and several section members made the trip to view it. “The view of the eclipse over Wheeler Pond was a perfect moment in my life. It became noticeably dimmer and cooler. We watched a turkey vulture glide across our line of sight to the eclipse. Then for me, it seemed to snap into totality and there was applause, cheering, and the “Oh, WOW” moments. I think during totality we were awe-struck and a little quiet and even reverent for the time. We enjoyed the long wide “sunset” all around the Vermont woods. Staying over Monday night to drive back Tuesday was another great decision,” said Sven Renglund. “I think it exceeded all of our expectations,” added Jim.

Brattleboro Section President Bonnie Haug-Cramp traveled north from Newfane to Dead Creek Wildlife Preserve in Addison.

“We launched our kayaks, paddled out away from the roadside crowds, and viewed the eclipse in the path of entirety. It was perfect.”



John Predom, President of the Northeast Kingdom Section, said, “In the morning we visited Moose Bog [an accessible, mud-season-approved boardwalk hike] to show visitors the area. I thought it might be busy, but was not prepared for the crowds that we saw. Everyone was friendly and excited. We returned to our property in Island Pond to watch the eclipse from the field.”

PHOTO BY JOHN PREDOM



SPECIAL
PACKAGE

301 New End-to-Enders



Alexa "Spoon" Ringer

The End-to-End Class of 2023 Included:

- > 93 people who started in July (most popular month)
- > 5-year-old Ocean "Turbo Slug" King and 83-year-old Tony Hall (oldest and youngest hikers)
- > 95 section hikes and 206 thru-hikes
- > 17 repeat End-to-Enders (congrats, 94% first-timers!)
- > An average thru-hike time of 22 days

2023 WAS A TOUGH YEAR FOR THE TRAIL, for hikers, and for Vermont in general. After an early summer drought, heavy rain storms became the norm and on July 9, the state suffered under severe flooding. Many hikers were forced off trail, often in harrowing situations, and had to abandon their thru-hike attempts. Portions of the trail aged 20 years overnight. We are grateful to the entire hiking community for their understanding and support of the trail, the club, and the state through the flooding and aftermath. An extra kudos to the class of 2023 for their hikes.

Claudia Abbiati, Essex Junction, VT
 Jim "Bilbo" Abert, St. Louis, MO
 Tony Alcalá, Portland, ME
 Jade "Yard Sale" Alexander, Abercorn, Quebec
 David "Conehead" Alexander, Manchester, NH
 Samara "Sister Wives" Anderson, North Ferrisburgh, VT
 Terry "Slider" Anderson, Buffalo, NY
 Ethan "Neo" Anderson, Morganton, NC
 Benjamin "Currahee" Anderson, Middleborough, MA
 Julia "Fir Tips" Arduini, Marlboro, VT
 Jacob "Snow Bunny" Aubrecht, Esq., Mystic, CT
 Ian Ayer, Nashua, NH
 Jeanne Ayer, Nashua, NH
 Annelie "Made It" Bachmaier, Dresden, Saxony, Germany
 Steven "Urgent Cathole" Bailey, Ann Arbor, MI
 Molly "Mermaid" Baker, Burlington, VT
 Tim "Pan" Barnes, Amherst, MA
 Alan "Earl Grey" Barrett, Alton, NH
 Mary "Purple Haze" Barrett, Alton, NH
 Marion "Marion Bazinet" Bazinet, Montréal, Quebec
 Eric "Poncho" Bellavance, Attleboro, MA
 Melissa "Won't Get Up-WILL" Bellavance, Attleboro, MA
 Tim "Porkie" Bennett, Lancaster, PA
 Elianna "Boomerang" Bier, Durham, NC
 Luke "Bionic" Bisceglia, Waterbury Center, VT
 Will Bittrich, Duxbury, MA
 Michele "Squabbit" Blanchard, Randolph, VT
 Rylee "Bubba" Boden, Strongsville, OH
 Ashley "Forrest" Boden, Strongsville, OH
 Ellen "Ice Cream" Bowman, East Hardwick, VT
 Anne "Mapkeeper" Breña, Burlington, VT
 Matt "Team Mackie" Brouillard, Jericho, VT
 Madison "Muddy" Brown, South Burlington, VT
 Eric "Scout" Campbell, Mountain Home, ID
 Lucas "Scampers" Canavan, Pomfret, CT
 Erik "Cannonball" Cannon, Franklin, MA
 Christine "Trillium" Cannon, Franklin, MA
 Ben "Big Squish" Cardin, Syracuse, NY
 Alicia "Tenderfoot" Caropreso, Latham, NY
 Silvia "Momma Sil" Cassano, Portland, ME
 Chris Casserly, Winooski, VT
 Julia "Nutmeg" Castner, New Haven, CT

Eric Cavanna, Boston, MA
 Marc Chen, Kitchener, Ontario
 Austin "Hot Spice" Chenelle, Pittsfield, NH
 Ryan "Cotton" Clark, East Haddam, CT
 Meg "Sparks" Clews, Peaks Island, ME
 Jordan "Professor" Clouse, Burlington, VT
 Jessica "Soco" Cohen, Mechanicville, NY

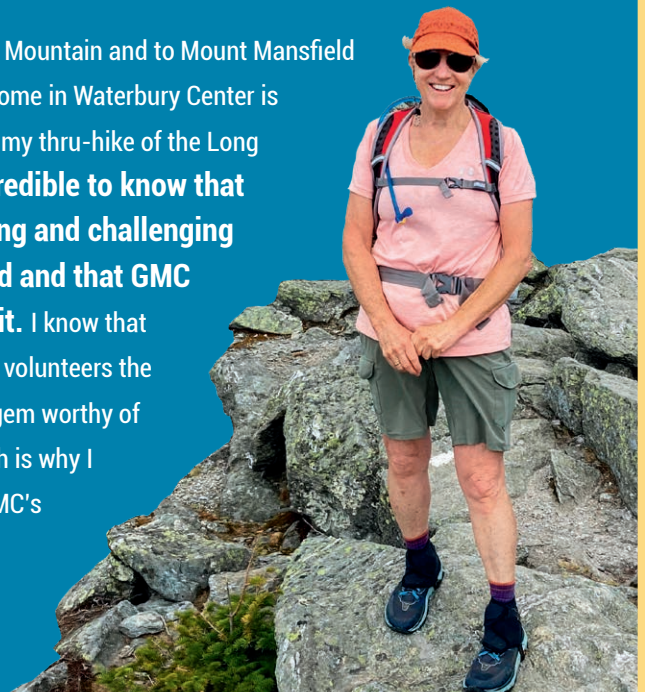
Nathaniel "Gastro" Colegrove, Friday Harbor, WA
 Jeff "Jabez" Colvin, Chagrin Falls, OH
 Jake Connell, La Habra Heights, CA
 Kelsey "Linus" Connelly, Valhalla, NY
 Aaron "OZ" Conover, Brooklyn, NY
 William "Bill" Corson, Woodstock, VT
 Christina "Cheez-It" Cozzens, Hampstead, NH

THOUSANDS OF HIKERS have completed the entire Long Trail over the years, and while their hike may be over, many continue to give back through volunteering, donating, driving hiker shuttles, leading workshops, or remaining active members. You will see several of them highlighted throughout this magazine. What will your connection to the Long Trail be now that your hike is over?

Barbara Blauvelt, End-to-End completed in 2019 *How Barbara Supports the Long Trail Today:*

MONTPELIER SECTION MEMBER

"Looking out to Bolton Mountain and to Mount Mansfield and beyond from my home in Waterbury Center is partially what inspired my thru-hike of the Long Trail in 2019. **It's incredible to know that there is this amazing and challenging trail in my backyard and that GMC works to maintain it.** I know that without donations and volunteers the trail suffers and it's a gem worthy of ongoing support, which is why I continue to support GMC's work on the Long Trail annually with my membership dues."



Owen Rachampbell, First End-to-End completed in 2010

How Owen Connects with the Long Trail Today:

BOARD MEMBER, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBER



"The Long Trail is the place I feel most at home. I give what I can, both in money and volunteer time, so the trail will always be here. If my contributions can help the GMC allow others to feel the same way that I do, it is worth it."

Benjamin "Neon" Craver, Gilford, NH
Nathan Crouch, South Portland, ME
Gary Cuchural, Cambridge, MA
Maura "Sawyer" Cullen, South Burlington, VT
Sadie "Sketchy" Curry, Brookings, OR
Trevor "Ice Man" Cutler, Peach Bottom, PA
Betty "Crazyquilt" Czyz, Boston, NY
Andrea Dannenberg, Cincinnati, OH
Marissa "Blue" Darling, Burlington, VT
Heather "Maple" Davis, Halifax, Nova Scotia
James "Glow Worm" De Paz, Allen, TX
Drake "Kansas City Kobra" Deasley, Jefferson City, MO
Logan "Pipes" Demarco, Fort Wayne, IN
Kelly Demeo, Fairfield, CT
Christopher "Scavenger" Denu, Lafayette, CO
Joe "Middleman" Dery, Montreal, Quebec
Isabelle "Lion Queen" Desjardins-David, Brossard, Quebec
Morgan "One Speed" Dewey, Sunapee, NH
Loretta "Lolo" Dewey, Sunapee, NH
Samuel "Solitaire" Diedrich, Middlebury, VT
Jennifer "Search" Dinardo, Underhill, VT
David "Off Trail" Dinzeo, Dover, NH
Dillon "Enigma" Dise, Westfield, NY
Mira Disilvestro, Exeter, RI
Martha "Martha" Doelle, Enfield, NH
Lora "Splash Zone" Doerfer, Warwick, RI
Joan "Scbikerider" Donohue, Columbia, SC
Nicolas "Frenchi" Doyon, Sherbrooke, Quebec
Heather "Keys" Drake, Essex Junction, VT
Joanie "Dora The Explorer" Dupont, Brossard, Québec
Eric "Bubba Gump" Dupont, Brossard, Quebec
Izzi Duprey, Medfield, MA
Mike "Silk" Eaton, Pembroke, MA

Peter "Whistler" Evans, Webster, NY
Christopher Evers, Lakewood Ranch, FL
Carrie "Backtrack" Fenn, Charlotte, VT
Jameson "Lorax" Fetzer, Fleming Island, FL
Carissa "Mountain Dew" Finnerty, Madison, NJ
Kaylie "Sudsy" Flannigan, New York, NY
Sterling "The Mountain" Ford, Millboro, VA
Drew "Stripes" Foster, Cumming, GA
Ava Frans, Culver City, CA
Rose "Apparition" Freeman, Eastham, MA
Howard "Stubahh" Friant, North Waterboro, ME

Mark "Chimes" Fuller, East Sandwich, MA
Ashley "Double Shot" Furness, Gorham, NH
Mike "Zap" Garavelli, Hinesburg, VT
Melanie "Rain Angel" Garcia, South Burlington, VT
Dean "4Runner" Gay, Highlands Ranch, CO
Peter Gelzinis, Palm Bay, FL
Rachel "The Knight Who Says Knee" Gilbert, East Burke, VT
Kate "Cliffhanger" Grace, Boston, MA
Sheryl "Sunshine" Graves, Winooski, VT
Bobby "Dundee" Graves, New York, NY
Christopher "DIY" Gregorio, Hanover, NH
Samuel Griffin, Orchard Park, NY
Michael Grosman, Pelham, NH
Doug "Doug'o" Grout, Milton, VT
Bruce "Papa" Gunning, Woodstock, GA
Nicolas "Chef" Gutierrez, Lancaster, PA
Rory "Lion Queen" Haff, Killington, VT
Paul "Newton" Hake, Madison, CT
Cyndy Hall, Shelburne, VT
Tony Hall, Shelburne, VT
Julia "Tiptoe" Halm, Somerville, MA
Tim "T" Hammond, Princeton, MA
Zander Harrigan, Marion, MA
Josie Harris, Waitsfield, VT
Amanda Harris, Waitsfield, VT
Stewart "Decade" Harsant, Lakewood, CO
Shane Hartley, Bristol, United Kingdom
Alex "Dirty Bean Can" Hein, Houston, TX
William "Teaberry" Henry, Palmetto, FL

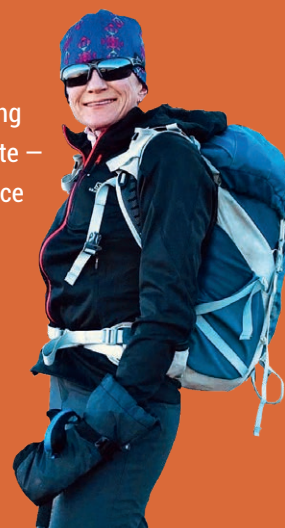
Sue Johnston, First End-to-End completed in 1989

How Sue Supports the Long Trail Today:

TRAIL ADOPTER, AT-LARGE MEMBER

"I have hiked in all 50 states but always seem to return to my beloved home state's long-distance trail, the granddaddy of them all, with six end-to-ends of the Long Trail between 1989 and 2021, one of them – my favorite – in winter. The Long Trail is a wonderful way to experience the wilder side of Vermont and reconnect with the natural world. The physical, mental, and spiritual gifts of such a journey are immeasurable.

I am a trail adopter because I feel a strong sense of duty to give back and help maintain the paths we use and love. I feel it is important for all trail users to contribute in whatever way works for them."



How I Got My Trail Name

NO ONE REALLY KNOWS where the concept of a “trail name” originated, though it seems to have really taken off in the 70s and 80s, alongside the backpacking boom. Unofficial rules dictate that another hiker must give you your nickname, typically after a notable situation or encounter. In the departure from daily life that is life on trail, a trail name helps solidify the revised identity a hiker takes on. Here is a sampling of how the class of 2023 adopted their new monikers.

“My husband and I came up with the trail name Lotus together. I wear a lotus necklace around my neck. Lotus flowers are symbols of optimism and resilience in Vietnamese culture. They are beautiful flowers that grow in the mud and muck. So, it was fitting that during the Vermont section of the AT was when I donned my trail name. I grew into a stronger and more confident person from the metaphorical and literal mud of the trail.”

— Kathy “**Lotus**” Rohn



“I got a care package from my mom with some homemade dehydrated food, but we didn’t have time to chat about what makes a good recipe for dehydrated food. Some recipes required me to simmer for 15-30 minutes, and all of my shelter mates were getting ready for bed while I was still waiting to eat dinner. The next day, I was christened Slow Cooker!”

— Liam “**Slow Cooker**” Morley



“I went through four blocks of Seriously Sharp Cabot cheddar cheese on my thru hike, which I added to my peanut butter wraps for lunch, or to my ramen, or simply ate by the block as my favorite trail snack.”

— Sarah “**Cheddar**” Stratton

“Slug is from going slow, pretty much just going slow. Turbo is because I started going faster and beating my mom going uphill.”

— Five-year-old Ocean “**Turbo Slug**” King,
the youngest End-to-Enders this year.

“I had stayed at the Clarendon shelter with fellow thru hiker Thorny, who was a lot more experienced than me (2x AT!). The next day we hiked up Killington together and he gave me my trail name at the top. It comes from my name Rory, like Roar-y, and because we had just crushed Killington. It was really special to get my trail name in my hometown. Could not have asked for a better place (or a cooler name).”

— Rory “**Lion Queen**” Haff

“Other hikers on the trail and in town asked me my name and I didn’t realize there was such a thing as a ‘trail name’ so I would reply, ‘I am just John.’ A fellow hiker suggested I drop John and become Just. The definition of Just is behaving according to what is morally right and fair. That’s how I live my life.”

— John “**Just**” Phaneuf



“I got turned around at Carleton Mountain and went back to the beginning. Imagine my shock at arriving at the Northern Terminus an hour and a half after I had left it.”

— Carrie “**Backtrack**” Fenn

See a Slideshow from
the Class of 2023's

BEST IMAGES

Capturing
Their Hikes



Angela "Purple Puff" Hoffnung-Warantz,
Highlands Ranch, CO

Adam Hoffnung-Warantz, Highlands Ranch, CO

Jeanne "Moon Shine" Hosig-Mulac, Colchester, VT

Nick Houseman, Goffstown, NH

Anastasia "Not A Rock" Houze, Marlboro, VT

Noah Huebner, Reading, VT

Jeffrey "Navy Guy" Hughes, Saratoga Springs, NY

Rob Hunter, Waitsfield, VT

Sophia "KTX" Hwang, Middlebury, VT

Iris "Snot Report" Irwin, Milton, VT

David "Towelie" Irwin, Essex Junction, Vt

Christian "Sonic" Jobst, Haar, Bavaria

Paul "Legacy" Jones, Smithfield, ME

Nick "Nick" Kanning, Shoreview, MN

Alexander Kansky, Orwell, VT

Josh "No Hitch" Keating, Hilton Head Island, SC

Friederike "Interloper" Keating, Jericho, VT

Andrew "Porcupine" Kemp, Natick, MA

Tim Kindseth, Plano, TX

Ocean "Turbo Slug" King, Keaau, HI

Robin "Penguin" King, Keaau, HI

Jim "Kamikaze" King, Keaau, HI

John "Trenchfoot" Klaess, Boston, MA

Sarah "Nutellaface" Klein, Karlsruhe, Germany

Grace "Psycho" Kline, South Hero, VT

Nicholas "Barepaw" Kniffen, Woodlawn, TN

Ava "Sunny-D" Koenigsberg, Newry, ME

Ava "Funky Chicken" Koessick, Gainesville, FL

Ian Kolb, Wilmington, DE

Gregory "Brunch" Krowicki, Colonia, NJ

Owen "Sandbagger" Kupferer, Essex, VT

Matthew "Green Bean" Kusper, Kannapolis, NC

Molly Lamb, Medical Lake, WA

Conrado "Ninja" Lautenberg, Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo

Paul Leckey, Wilbraham, MA

Jake "Bear Can" Lehoullier, East Greenwich, RI

Aimee "19x19" Liu, Dearborn Heights, MI

Laurence "Scrub" Lohman, Waveland, MS

Ed "Watcher" Lomas, Elko, NV

Keane "Yogi" Mahoney, Essex Junction, VT

Sean Mallari, Williamsburg, MA

Steven Martin, Lexington, MA

John "Splash" Masselli, Casco, ME

Sônia "Bacon" Matias, Billerica, MA

Lauren "Peaches" Matka, Brooklyn, NY

Greg "High Profile" McDaniel, Colorado Springs, CO

Addie McDonough, Takoma Park, MD

Ezra McGinley-Smith, Hanover, NH

Wade "Shufflin" McIsaac, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Garrett "Seafish" McMillan, Middlebury, VT

Fred "Mutant" Meyer, Falmouth, ME

Alex "Dreamcatcher" Meyer, Brunswick, ME

Jeff Mihalek, Derby, CT

Edward "Fast Eddie" Miller, Queensbury, NY

Tom "Doubtful" Milliman, Lee, NH

Ethan "Cookie Monster" Mitchell, Plainfield, VT

Michael "Newt" Mitton, South Portland, ME

Daniel "Weightwatcher" Moiseev, Dearborn Heights, MI

Michael "Michaelangelo" Moran, Portland, ME

Isabel Morichi, Washington, DC

Liam "Slow Cooker" Morley, Jamaica Plain, MA

George "5:30" Mudge, Terrytown, LA

Patrick "Reboot" Murphy, Guilford, VT

Maureen "Snickers" Murphy, Hinesburg, VT

Michael-Luca Natt, New York, NY

Ronald "Mr. Jenny" Neidigh, Lake Charles, LA

Caitlin Nilles, Burlington, VT

Stephen Northrop, Santa Rosa Valley, CA

Kia Northrop, Camarillo, CA

Kate O'Neill, Pownal, VT

Karen "Gneiss" Obando, Cedar Grove, NC

Daniel O'Connor, New York, NY

Kaitlyn "Mayfly" O'Donnell, Brighton, MA

Tony "Two Ton" Oehler, Saratoga Springs, NY

Tanya Osadchey, Washington, VT

Josee "Grits" Painchaud, Quebec, Quebec

Joe Palisi, West Hartford, CT

Ben "Iceman" Palladino, Indianapolis, IN

Patrick "Tortoise" Parillo, Burlington, VT

Ethan "Pots" Parrish, Adamant, VT

Tyler "Rabbit Foot" Pendleton, Lyman, ME

David "Donuts" Perez, West Orange, NJ

Sonja "Ursa Major" Perkins, Sarasota, FL

Pierre-Luc "Big Tom" Perreault, Sherbrooke, Quebec

Benjamin Perry, Barre, VT

Annie Petersen, Concord, MA

Brian Pfeifer, Lagrangeville, NY

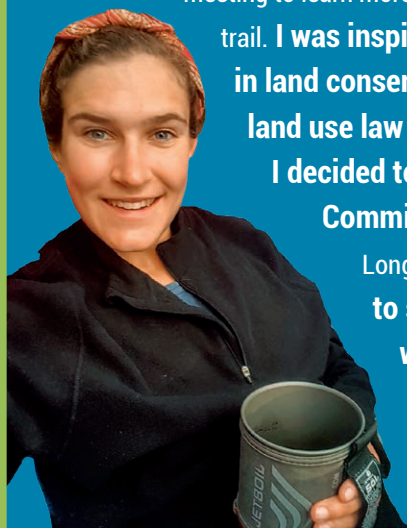
Bonnie Pfeifer, Lagrangeville, NY

Alexis Peters, End-to-End completed in 2017

How Alexis Supports the Long Trail Today:

LAND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE CHAIR AND BOARD MEMBER

"After my thru-hike of the Long Trail in 2017, I attended GMC's annual meeting to learn more about the organization that manages the trail. **I was inspired by the work they were doing in land conservation, and with a background in land use law and passion for land stewardship, I decided to join the Land Conservation Committee**, so I've remained connected to the Long Trail despite living out of state. **It's nice to support GMC's work around trail work and land conservation for the Long Trail**, a resource that means so much to me."



John "Just" Phaneuf, Plymouth, MA
 Maggie "Eagle Eye" Phaneuf, Plymouth, MA
 Maria "Deuces" Piroli, Columbia, SC
 Kendal "Fox trot" Pittman, Bozeman, MT
 Elizabeth Ploof, Westford, VT
 James "Subway" Porter, Somerville, MA
 Eric "Blueberry" Porter, Rockville, MD
 Tim "Morpheus" Poutre, Newmarket, NH
 Jeremy "Lotto" Prasch, Wilder, VT
 Chloe Rehm, Whitehall, NY
 Jeff "Bluej" Reist, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Eric "Mountain Goat" Richard, Rindge, NH
 Alexa "Spoon" Ringer, Philadelphia, PA
 Ian "Hillwalker" Ritter, Underhill, VT
 Jason Ritter, Underhill, VT
 Joe "Mudflap" Robinson, Scarborough, ME
 Joshua "Almost There" Rodriguez, Stroudsburg, PA
 Kathy "Lotus" Rohn, Jamaica Plain, MA
 Kevin "Stretch" Rohn, Jamaica Plain, MA
 Joseph Romano, Rowley, MA
 Brian "Frizzle" Roper, Phoenix, AZ
 Louise "Blueberry" Rosales, Jericho, VT
 Chuck "Coach" Rounds, Berryville, VA
 Michael "Toboggan" Rousseau, Manchester, NH
 Yvon "Bourbon" Roy, Laval, Quebec
 Captain "Moose" Rudolph, Middlebury, VT
 Shannon "Cheese Fingers" Ruppert, Burlington, VT
 Patrick "Pigeon" Salaway, Blue Point, NY
 Nicholas "Hillsquat" Salonga, Jacksonville, NC
 Emily "Emily" Samsel, Morristown, VT
 Sarah "Faith" Sanden, Woodbine, GA
 Laura "Sau Bear" Sau, Hinesburg, VT
 Dakota "Seven" Savage, Rutland, VT
 Addison "Particle" Scanlon, Essex Jct, VT
 Ariela "Willow" Shear, Cambridge, MA
 Will "Laffy Taffy" Scheffel, Concord, MA
 Dominik Schmidlein, Ottawa, Ontario
 Celeste "Mockingbird" Schoonover, Dalton, NY
 Richard "Philmont" Scott, Stowe, VT
 Tim "Semper Dry" Seibert, Ephrata, PA
 Pam "Pippin" Shields, Brunswick, ME
 David "Shoemaker" Shoemaker, Londonderry, NH
 Kristen "Critter" Shull, Burlington, VT
 Ari "Excel" Singer-Freeman, Boston, MA
 Cambyr "Kaleidoscope" Skade, Amesbury, MA
 Jocelyn Smith, North Clarendon, VT
 Zack "Ziggy" Smithood, Huntington, VT
 Hannah Snell, Providence, RI
 Todd Snell, Woodstock, VT
 Andrew "Stix" Snow, Milton, VT
 Sean "Book-It" Speckin, New Lebanon, NY
 Justin Stanwyck, Milford, CT



Emily Mosher, Section End-to-End completed in 2022

How Emily Supports the Long Trail Today:

VISITOR SERVICES MANAGER

"My hike of the Long Trail was a chance to immerse myself in the woods and mountains of a place I'd visited many times. **I use the experience I gained on my hike almost every day in the Visitor's Center, from answering trail questions to helping people plan their hikes.** It has been a huge help to me to have hiked the trail and have a working understanding of trail towns, side trails, terrain, and what to expect along the way."

Joe "T-Spoon" Steiner, Reston, VA
 Sarah "Cheddar" Stratton, Raleigh, NC
 Zac "Ruffles" Stygar, Windham, CT
 Lev "Encyclopedia" Sugerman-Brozan, Boston, MA
 Mike "Fish" Suniga, Medical Lake, WA
 Erik "E.T." Thomsen, Fremont, NH
 Allie Thut, Green Bay, WI
 Dana "Ninja" Tokarzewski, South Plainfield, NJ
 Wyatt "Purge" Tompkins, Shoreham, VT
 Paul "Hazmat" Trulove, Annapolis, MD
 Nina "Road Oats" Truslow, Burlington, VT
 Rowan "Blunder" Turner, South Portland, ME
 Jackie "Team Mackie" Turtur, Jericho, VT
 Jason "Twiggsy" Twigg, Frostburg, MD
 Mark "Rings" Ungar, Toronto, Ontario
 Bob "Gadget" Vosburgh, Williston, VT

Kate "Zen" Vozar, Saline, MI
 Angie "Scoops" Walker, Fairfield, CT
 Tom "Tomtom" Walling, Brunswick, ME
 Claire Walton, Reading, VT
 Ashlee "Stiltz" Ward, Shavertown, PA
 Eric "Full Moon" Weigt, Edgewater, MD
 Eric "Eric" Weissman, West Dover, VT
 Joshua "Specs" Werblin, Boston, MA
 Ben "The Rookie" Wileman, Lowell, VT
 Steven "Undertoe" Will, Ocean Gate, NJ
 Fran "Ladybug" Wolfe, Boise, ID
 Chantal "Poof" Wood, White River Junction, VT
 Sam Worley, Boston, MA
 Petrit "Torque" Xhudo, Post Falls, ID
 Katarina "Tambo" Young, Manchester, NH
 Erik Zetterstrom, Duxbury, VT

CONGRATULATIONS to the 3 New Side-to-Siders Who hiked all 88 side trails to the Long Trail!

Jay Cipolla, Montpelier, VT
 Chelsea "Slick" Colby, Williamstown, MA
 Margaret Gish, Weybridge, VT





PHOTO BY MOLLE FLANIGAN

BEFORE: A brush-in on the Burrows Trail, October 2022.



PHOTO BY SYLVIE VIDRINE

AFTER: The same in May 2024. The brush-in has started to break down.

TRAIL TALK

Social Trails & Brush-ins

BY CHLOE MILLER WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LORNE CURRIER

"STOP WITH THE STICKS!!!!" read an impassioned email from a hiker, sent to the Green Mountain Club and the Vermont Department of Forests Parks and Recreation in late 2022. The sender had noticed and objected to large and, by any definition, ugly, piles of organic matter lining the Burrows Trail.

However, those apparently disorderly piles are a key piece of trail infrastructure. Called brush-ins, they define trails, keep hikers on them, and protect the surrounding environment.

Planning and building trails is an exercise in human behavior management as much as engineering and construction. Trails and landscapes are damaged by

two main forces: water and human footsteps. Water rushes down the path of least resistance, which is often a trail, threatening erosion and washouts that we prevent or manage with durable stone staircases and drains. Human footsteps cause erosion, too. But humans are less predictable than water, and will often create "social trails" that defy a trail builder's intent and vision.

Social trails are unplanned paths worn by repeated footsteps. Typically, hikers look at a constructed trail and see a steep step or another unattractive feature, like a puddle or severely eroded section. They walk beside the trail, where the going is more pleasant. When enough people do the same thing, the social trail begins to look like a proper path, and the problem worsens.

Trail crews address social trails in two ways.

ONE, they fix the official trail to make it more desirable. On the Burrows Trail, this includes installing dozens of stone steps to bridge the gaps between severely eroded steep steps.

TWO, they make the social trail less attractive. That's where a big brush-in comes in. These piles of organic matter — downed trees, rotted logs, sticks, and leaves and duff from the forest floor — are meant to obscure the social trail, eventually decay, and foster revegetation so the social trail disappears.

“ These things should be big, heavy, ugly and hard to move. They should make the undesirable tread you're trying to close off the last place that a hiker would want to walk. They should force people to walk where you want them to walk, which is the proper trail. This should be bigger than you expect. Three or four branches won't do the trick. ”

—Definition of a Brush-In
from GMC's Volunteer Trail
Adopter Training Manual

Brush-ins accomplish three things to improve the health of a trail environment.

First and foremost, they deter traffic from an undesirable area, like a social trail.

Second, they encourage revegetation of a barren area. Hundreds of hikers on a social trail kill vegetation, causing soil erosion. After just a season or two a new brush-in becomes much less conspicuous as it settles under snow and autumn leaves, and starts to decay. In a few more years the social trail merges with the forest.

Finally, brush-ins slow down erosion. Water rushing down the bare soil of a social trail removes that soil. Brush-ins slow and filter flowing water, and divert it gently onto the surrounding

forest floor. Properly placed, they also can help preserve major structures like stone staircases, by forming erosion-proof barriers.

While not appropriate everywhere, on heavily used routes like the Burrows or Sterling Pond trails, brush-ins help keep hikers on trails, and eventually improve the appearance of trails as well as the surrounding landscape.

So the next time you hike a popular trail, see if you can spot a brush-in. Even better, try to spot the traces of an *old*, almost invisible brush-in. You'll soon appreciate the purpose of those piles of sticks! 🌿



Students from Putney Student Travel pose with their brush-in on the Sherburne Pass Trail north of Route 4 in 2020.

FIELD NOTES

Summer 2024

BY KEEGAN TIERNEY, DIRECTOR OF FIELD PROGRAMS

AS I WRITE THIS, THE FIELD SEASON LOOMS EVER CLOSER, and by the time you read this, it will have begun. Seasonal hiring has wrapped up, and seasonal staffers are doing onboarding paperwork, receiving gear lists, and preparing to move to staff housing. The work schedule is set, and we are planning mobilization of staff to work sites. We are making some changes this year to increase work and cost efficiency. After all, your support and donations make this work possible.

Nearly half of our 30 seasonal staff members are returners to the club. We will run two **professional trail crews** for large trail projects, a **volunteer trail crew** for eight weeks, and will employ two **backcountry carpenters**. **Caretakers** will be stationed at high-use sites with some minor adjustments to ranges and responsibilities.

Trail Crews

One trail crew will spend its first 12 to 14 weeks completing the multi-year **Burrows Trail Restoration Project**. They will then move south for the first of two years planned on the **Long Trail/Appalachian Trail** between the **Massachusetts border** and **Risky Ranch Road** to the north. This year they will move the trail out of a flat, wet hollow onto a sidehill, and will harden significant stretches of tread to make it drier and more durable. In 2025 we will relocate the trail on both sides of the state line from private to public land.

A second trail crew will begin their season on the **LT/AT** through the **Lye Brook Wilderness**. This area is perennially wet, and hard to drain because it is very flat. The crew will install stone and wood structures to raise the tread.

Then they will work on a project with the North Country Trail Association on the **North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST)**. In 2019 Congress extended the trail into Vermont, co-locating the trail with the LT System from the **Sucker Brook Side Trail** to the Long Trail south to **Maine Junction**, where the NCNST terminates.

This season's work marks the first investment in the NCNST in the Green Mountain National Forest. The crew will cut new tread

in **East Middlebury**, harden the tread and improve drainage in the **Moosalamoo National Recreation Area**, and make general trail improvements along the **Sucker Brook Trail** and the **LT** south of **Sucker Brook Shelter**. We will do some of the work with mechanized equipment as a test of its cost efficiency.

Volunteers

The **volunteer trail crew**, led by returners Ella Xu and Maya Heikkinen, will work all summer on the **LT/AT** south of **Route 9**. In 2023 a professional trail crew restored many staircases here, and the volunteer crew will continue trail improvements from the top of the staircases southward toward **Harmon Hill**. They will do many small relocations and install tread hardening structures in wet low spots.

Several projects will be carried out by volunteers this season, including shelter repairs at **Skyline Lodge** and **Thistle Hill Shelter**, new **wash-pits** throughout the system, and a new tent platform at **Peru Peak Shelter**.

Backcountry Construction

One change this year is a continued evolution of our backcountry construction work. We will field two talented returning backcountry carpenters, **Dylan Norris** and **Andrew Muller**, who worked on our construction crew last season. Their major projects are reconstruction of the **Forest City Trail Bridge**, removed in the fall of 2023, and replacement of the **LT/AT bridge** over an unnamed tributary to **Bourn Brook** at the top of **Rootville Road**. **Justin Towers**, Burrows Trail Project Coordinator, prefabricated the engineered trusses of the Forest City Bridge at GMC's headquarters during the spring to ensure a smooth installation this summer.

Andrew and Dylan will also each lead volunteers and trail crew members on smaller carpentry projects, including converting pit privies at **Minerva Hinchey**, **Wintturi**, and **Lost Pond Shelters** to moldering composters. They will also straighten the piers on **Lost Pond Shelter**.

Caretakers

GMC's caretakers educate hikers, protect sensitive ecosystems, maintain miles of trail, and manage human waste in the backcountry, and their work has a broad impact. Each caretaker talks with hundreds of hikers each season. Positive encounters with caretakers give hikers chances to develop stewardship ethics for Vermont and elsewhere.

The caretaker program is consistently the most costly item for the club in our field budget, because little public funding is available, and market wages continue to rise. Your support of this program is essential. Without it, alpine vegetation would suffer, privies would be left unmanaged, and pond shorelines would suffer further erosion.

Adrienne Bartlett returns as **Northern Lead Caretaker** and will manage staff at **Mount Mansfield, Sterling Pond, Camel's Hump, and Mount Abraham**. Two caretakers on Camel's Hump will manage overnight sites and staff the summit, while the **Mount Abraham Caretaker** will take on an expanded ridge running range to **Cowles Cove**.

Chris Neureiter returns as **Southern Lead Caretaker**. We are also expanding a southern caretaker role to include ridge running from **Griffith Lake** to **Bromley Mountain**. All southern

caretakers will rotate through summit duty on **Stratton Mountain** on busy weekend days and holidays. Caretakers will also be stationed at **Little Rock Pond** and **Stratton Pond** as usual.

Other Projects

Construction of the new **Bromley Observation Tower** should start as soon as Bromley Ski Area opens their access road to vehicle traffic. Renaud Brothers, a local steel fabricator, prepared steel for the tower in 2023, but was pulled into emergency flood response work before they could erect it. We expect the tower to be complete this season.

Large trail projects almost always take many years to plan and fund, and our office staff combines routine work with preparing for future projects. An example is finalizing permits for a relocation on **Belvidere Mountain** to move the trail from a badly eroded old logging road to public land protected by the club's land protection program.


In the field, advance work will include scouting the long-awaited **Dry Ridge Relocation** to remove the Long Trail from **West Settlement Road** in Johnson, and scouting the far northern Long Trail for installation of puncheon by volunteers. 



PHOTO BY LILY LAREGINA



PHOTO BY DAN LANE

▲ Caretakers do privy maintenance in 2023. Nearly half of the 2024 seasonal staff cohort are returning to GMC for another season.

◀ Justin Towers cuts pieces of the new Forest City Bridge at GMC Headquarters in March.

GEOLOGY of Vermont's

VERMONT'S GREEN MOUNTAINS WERE FORMED

over hundreds of millions of years, in three major events called the Grenville, Taconic, and Acadian Orogenies, all more than 350 million years ago. An orogeny is a mountain-building process caused by enormous tectonic plate shifts and collisions, which alter the original rock formations.

In Vermont, bedrock layers of rock were compressed, deformed and chemically changed under great pressure and high temperature, allowing metamorphic minerals like biotite and garnet to grow. The rocks in the southern Green Mountains are generally older than those in the north.

Today's Green Mountains reached their basic shapes through eons of erosion and uplift. Then, during the last ice age, roughly 100,000 to 13,000 years ago, glaciers further diminished the mountaintops, smoothed bedrock surfaces, steepened south-facing slopes by plucking, and filled lower areas with glacial till.

These photos, taken on the Long Trail from Massachusetts to the southern boundary of the Breadloaf Wilderness, illustrate the main types of materials a hiker is likely to encounter on the southern Long Trail.

PETER THOMPSON is a geologist who co-edited the 2011 Bedrock Geologic Map of Vermont. He and his wife Thelma mapped bedrock in the northern Green Mountains from 1986 to 2000. Since then they have been hiking the Long Trail south to north watching for interesting geologic features. They are retired from teaching at Cornell College in Iowa and the University of New Hampshire.



Southernmost Green Mountains

Stamford Granite

The southernmost Green Mountains are made of very old Precambrian rocks of Laurentia. This granite has been dated radiometrically to be about 960 million years old, one of the younger Precambrian rock units. The rock is composed of feldspar (pinkish to white), black biotite mica and quartz (clear to bluish).



Pine Cobble Trail, MA

Cheshire Quartzite

Five hundred million years ago, beach sand was deposited along the eastern margin of the ancient Laurentian crust. It metamorphosed into quartz sandstone, and then quartzite. Note the planar joints and curved fractures. Because of strong internal bonds within quartz, quartzite tends to break with curved "conchoidal" fractures.

Southern Long Trail

BY PETER THOMPSON



North of Stratton-Arlington Road

Glacial Boulder of Gneiss

North of Stratton-Arlington Road, the Wisconsin Glacier left many boulders in its wake. These are called erratics when they differ from the type of rock underneath, meaning it was transported by the force of the glacier. In this case, the boulder and bedrock are both gneiss, so the boulder was likely not transported far.



Baker Peak, near Griffith Lake

Schist with Quartz Veins

Mudstone and shales are metamorphosed to schist at Baker Peak (near Griffith Lake). During metamorphism, many of the chemical reactions release silica and water. They may escape to Earth's surface, but more commonly they crystallize as veins and pods of quartz where conditions favored precipitation.



Champlain Valley

Weathered Marble Breccia

Marble is rarely seen along the Long Trail (though it is abundant elsewhere in Vermont, like the Champlain Valley). Marble is metamorphosed limestone. Both marble and limestone are soft and easily weathered by chemical reactions.



White Rocks, near Wallingford

Cheshire Quartzite

The steep surface of the cliff at White Rocks (near Wallingford) is a bedding plane, which rotated during mountain-building from near horizontal to about 45 degrees toward the west. 🌀



Conservation and Climate Change

PROTECTING THE LONG TRAIL TWICE

BY MIKE DEBONIS

IMAGINE THE SURPRISE IN 1986, when Green Mountain Club leaders learned that private lands hosting 32 miles of the Long Trail were for sale on the open market. From this existential threat to the trail, the Long Trail Protection Campaign was born: “Preserving Vermont’s Green Mountain Profile,” read the August 1986 *Long Trail News*. Thirty-eight years later, the effort has protected 88 miles of the Long Trail and conserved more than 25,000 acres of land. By all accounts the Long Trail Protection Campaign has been and continues to be a tremendous success, with just over six miles of Long Trail left to be protected.

Permanently protecting the Long Trail was the top goal in 1986, and remains a priority today. But the benefits of land conservation have evolved to serve purposes beyond protecting the narrow footpath.

The 25,000 acres the campaign has conserved, including 21,500 acres transferred to the Vermont State Forest system, are managed for multiple uses. In addition to providing a permanent

route for the trail, these conserved trail lands improve air and water quality, and provide critical wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing opportunities, and on- and off-trail recreation access.

Conserved lands also help us adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Conserved lands sequester carbon, buffer floods, and provide valuable habitat for plant and animal species at risk. That’s one reason the Vermont General Assembly passed the Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act in June 2023. The act sets the goals of conserving 30 percent of Vermont’s landscape by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050.

In 1986 losing access to portions of the Long Trail was the biggest risk we faced with unprotected land. Today, climate change is the biggest risk to the trail, posing the challenges of 1) maintaining sustainable trails and 2) rebuilding trails and associated structures after catastrophic storms like we saw in July and December in 2023.

Trail Investment through Conservation

As a trail manager, when I consider the benefits of land conservation, the one that stands out is the opportunity conserved lands afford us to invest what is needed to maintain and repair trails, shelters, bridges and other structures in the face of an unprecedented climate impacts.

Last year’s storms damaged long stretches of the Long Trail, and it will take years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to repair them. The scope and cost of repairs is more than we can accomplish with our usual annual funding. Frankly, without the permanent land protection we have, we wouldn’t be able to make investments necessary to do this work.

The Burrows Trail in Camel’s Hump State Park is an example of a capital trail investment designed for climate change. Reconstructing this old and badly eroded trail from top to bottom was about half done when the storms of July 2023 hit. The trail made it through intact, due largely to new and reinforced trail structures at the top, which slowed water on the trail below. We budgeted the complete reconstruction of this heavily used trail to take three years and \$750,000. There is no way we could have made such an investment in the trail if it weren’t permanently protected.

Not all trails are on protected public land like Camel’s Hump State Park. The club holds 95 easements on public and private land. These agreements provide permanent protection for the trail while enabling landowners to retain ownership and manage their land for other purposes.

The best trail easements provide permanent trail protection with enough flexibility to allow for changing trail and landowner needs. Examples are relocating a washed out part of a trail, or relocating some of a trail in a ski area to allow a new lift or access road. Easements typically provide for such adjustments when agreeable to the landowner and easement holder, but funding them is a different story.

The club can raise money for trail work on unconserved land, but we couldn’t justify it without assurance the trail would remain there. Thus unprotected portions of trail are more subject to damage or loss from climate change, because we might be unable to repair or rebuild them after extreme weather. Long term protection of land with treasured recreational assets like the Long Trail is one of the best tools we have to maintain recreation resources and combat the impacts of a changing climate.

The Long Trail Protection Campaign is close to its goal of permanently protecting a 1,000-foot corridor along the whole Long Trail, but it has also achieved much more. The 25,000 acres of conserved lands really protect the trail twice: First by ensuring the trail can exist forever, and second by enabling us to invest as needed to keep it there.



In 2022, GMC helped permanently conserve the 13-acre Judevine property in Johnson. Now, another 100-foot stretch of the Long Trail is permanently protected, allowing for additional investment in trail infrastructure on the land.

PROTECTING THE LONG TRAIL SYSTEM		
	Protected	Unprotected
Long Trail (Maine Junction to Canada)	96% (148.5 miles)	4% (6.7 miles)
Long Trail/Appalachian Trail (Mass border to Maine Junction)	99.8% (101 miles)	0.2% (0.2 miles)
Side Trails (that access the LT or AT)	93% (160.75 miles)	7% (12.5 miles)
Appalachian Trail in Vermont (Maine Junction to New Hampshire)	99.3% (40.75 miles)	0.7% (0.3 miles)
1,000-foot corridor (full system)	82% (386 miles)	18% (85 miles)



YOUR STORIES

Turnaround Triumphs

One tenet of the HikeSafe hiker responsibility code is to “Be prepared and know when to turn back.” If the weather, physical stamina, or happenstance affects your hike and it becomes longer than planned, it’s often best to resist the allure of the summit or destination and postpone the rest of the hike — the mountains aren’t going anywhere. In the spirit of celebrating those difficult but prudent decisions, the Green Mountain Club conducted an essay contest in early 2024 for your best tales of hikes when turning around was the right call. Here, our favorites.

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

I Can and I Will

BY AMANDA “RALPH” HUGES

I STOOD AT THE BOTTOM OF MOUNT MANSFIELD trying to process the weather report. The women from yesterday echoed in my head “There is a significant amount of rain on Friday!” In the moment, I laughed, shared my appreciation and offered words of reassurance. Then another warning as I passed a woman leaving Johnson. She rolled down her window, and we chatted. She mentioned the storms and I reassured her. I couldn’t stop at the bottom of Mansfield; I had just started to feel good.

My first days southbound on the Long Trail were grueling. I had thrown up at the top of Doll Peak. Sat through thunderstorms on top of Butternut Mountain. I am convinced that Haystack tried to kill me. I couldn’t stop at Mansfield.

I asked the gondola attendant for their thoughts on the weather. She looked at me and said “I’m not going to tell you what to do, but I would not feel right sending you up there. They are calling for catastrophic flooding. You will get up there, but not down.”

I went with the local advice, despite wanting nothing more than to push on. I found a ride to town and a place to stay. The torrential rain started at around 4 p.m. I kept thinking “I could have made it to Butler.”

I woke up early the next day and looked outside. The driveway was flooded. The river had burst its banks, and furniture and full trees were floating down. I went to find coffee in the lobby, the woman behind the counter was crying. She shared that her best friend’s home was underwater, a single mother. She lost everything.

I now knew I needed to leave the trail.

HONORABLE MENTION

The Kindness of Strangers

BY ROBERT "DADZO" SUMMER

IT WAS THE FIRST YEAR OF COVID, August 2020. My three daughters and brother-in-law were working on our sixth consecutive summer section hiking the Long Trail. Kaia was 13, Ruby 11 and Eliza nine. On our fourth night of a planned five-night trip, we bunked at Sucker Brook Shelter. The next morning, while packing up, Kaia tried removing a water bag from a tree branch only to have a piece of bark fall in her eye.

With Kaia in a lot of pain, a kind hiker offered to use his contact solution to flush her eye. We decided to cut short our trip and take a side trail to the road to find help. The three girls walked with Kaia in the middle so she could hold their hands and keep her eyes closed. Uncle Rob and I hiked ahead to get cell service to call for help. Finally, we reached a dirt road but still no service.

A Massachusetts plate car flew by us despite our raised hands. Then we saw a Vermont plate on a slow-moving SUV. Local cook Cappy cut short his search for a fishing spot and offered to drive

my brother-in-law to the road so he could get cell service. Rob called a trail angel and the Middlebury emergency number.

Within ten minutes, the police, the trail angel, and the ambulance arrived. After the EMTs tried flushing Kaia's eye, they recommended we go to Middlebury hospital. The policeman cheered up Kaia joking about how when he gets something in his eye his wife calls him a big baby.

Cappy offered to drive Rob and the two younger girls to one of our cars about 30 minutes away. Cappy told Rob he wouldn't accept any money for gas, explaining it was "his good deed for the day." He told comical stories about working with kids at Sugarbush resort.

One EMT related stories of his LT hiking days to me as the ambulance siren blared. He and his buddies hiked the whole trail in 24 days! The emergency room doctor said nothing was in the eye, but Kaia had a scratched cornea, and it would feel like something was still in the eye for a while. After giving us some eye drops, she directed us to a creemee stand to help Kaia, and all of us, recover.

I am forever grateful for the kindness of strangers in Vermont!

I got a ride back to Burlington. As we drove, I saw the destruction all around me. The community that had taken me under their wing was hurting. I felt helpless.

As the following days unfolded, stories of hikers that had become stranded after attempting to cross blown out creeks began to come out. They couldn't get off the trail. I was thankful I made it off when I did, but heartbroken.

I was inspired by the Vermont community as they recovered and healed, and I came to accept my choice. And this year, I will finish the Long Trail. I can and I will.

Amanda Hughes poses at Whiteface Mountain, just days before she had to get off the trail because of flooding. ►



DAY HIKE CATEGORY WINNER

Turning Back, Turning Within

BY MATTY "FACELESS" ADAMS

IT IS EASY TO DO, to fall into the trap where you believe the summit is the whole point. I have been turned back by a surprise whiteout, by heat exhaustion, by a companion's twisted ankle, by running out of water, time, daylight, or willpower. I hike with more possibilities now.

On an August morning I found myself parking the only car at the Bluff Mountain trailhead in Brighton, Vermont. I had a destination in mind: the two summits named Bluff Mountain, the south one first, then her twin, 13 feet shorter and a mile farther. I also had a mission to take a



PHOTO BY MATTY ADAMS

When a storm turned him back early, Matty Adams delighted in the red raspberries he found on trail.

picture of the Nulhegan Basin sprawling below and to the east.

I climbed the challenging iron rungs and spied the town of Island Pond through a cleft in the trees. I made my way through the increasingly overgrown trail, up and up. Lanced by briars, my feet covered in muck, I pushed on. To the west I caught a narrow view, noting a bruise-colored thunderstorm in the distance. Upwards still I went.

I passed through tight spruce and hardwood groves, and glades overgrown with chest-high pricklers. I kept alert for moose and bear. The wind changed. The air noticeably cooled, darkened. I was now racing a storm, high on its target ridge, when I found the first summit completely forested. Rain hit the storm-tossed canopy. No view, no photo. I reversed direction.

At the briary glen the storm abruptly shifted course. Glistening red raspberries appeared. I casually grazed. Continuing, I came to a perfect stone staircase leading through a ledge. Later, I found a spring arising from a stone fissure. Not disappointed, my journey felt whole, satisfying.

All this made me remember my first time up New Hampshire's Mount Monadnock. I was just six. Dad's colleague, Mr. Bailey shouted, "If weren't for you and your knapsack, Carl, Matthew and I would be at the top by now!"

Was it the knapsack, Dad? Or were you silently soaking in the autumn aromas of dried leaves, that apple you carried? Or had the hike ushered in memories for you, of summiting Katahdin, canoeing the Allagash? You must have known there is no defeat in turning back.

To the contrary, it is a special success. Look closely at the footpath, stop to eat berries, and know it's the journey that changes you, not the destination.



Read more of
our favorite
entries online ►



SECTION/THRU HIKE CATEGORY WINNER

The Universe Doesn't Want Me To Finish This Hike!

BY TIM "PORKIE" BENNETT

IN JULY 2022 I began an end-to-end hike of the Long Trail to celebrate my recent retirement and to honor my father's legacy. In 1937 he hiked the Long Trail from Sherburne Pass to Bolton to celebrate his high school graduation. Armed with his 1937 trail journal, I planned to retrace his steps and compare journeys. But the universe seemed to have other ideas. My plan was interrupted when I was struck by a car crossing Route 4 at Sherburne Pass.

The accident was devastating. My injuries were serious, but after great medical care, I was able to return to the LT a year later. I made it as far as Montclair Glen Lodge before the universe intervened again. This time, it was rain. Lots of rain. Catastrophic flooding rains.

I don't mind hiking in the rain, but this was different. The major storm created dangerous conditions that forced me to carefully consider how and when to continue. There were plenty of reasons to bail out, assuming I could safely get off the mountain. Some parts of the trail were within my abilities, while others were a bit of a push. That's the confounding thing about the Long Trail. One minute I'm feeling great, my feet

powering towards Canada. The next I'm flat on my back in a mud puddle trying to figure out what happened.

After sheltering at Montclair Glen for two days, the weather broke. I was able to climb Camel's Hump and make it to the Winooski River. That's where my father's journey ended, so there was a sense of accomplishment. And I was safe!

In the aftermath of the floods, the Green Mountain Club recommended that hikers come off the trail. I wanted to finish the Long Trail but needed to be smart about it. The universe didn't force my hand this time, it just strongly suggested that it was time to quit. The choice was mine. Do I really need to hike to Canada? I've got nothing left to prove. I can head home instead. So that's what I did.

During my trip home, the GMC announced the LT was reopened. Arrrrgh... Now the universe was just teasing me! But heading home was the right call. There's no need to continue. I can take a hint. The universe doesn't want me to finish.

A few weeks later, I defied the universe and hiked to Journey's End! 🐾



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