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Long Trail NEWS

Summer 2026, Volume 86, 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.**

Dear Friends,



Nancy Thomas

I have had the pleasure of serving as the Green Mountain Club's (GMC) treasurer for the past six years, and it has been an exciting and challenging opportunity to be part of a dynamic organization that champions my love of hiking in the mountains. During my tenure, the club's budget nearly doubled, from $1.6M in FY2020 to $2.9M in the current FY2027 budget. We weathered multiple fiscal challenges due to the pandemic, major flooding, and government upheaval. Now as I turn my volunteer fiscal duties over to another dedicated volunteer, I am proud to report that the club holds no long-term debt, has substantial working capital, and is in a healthy financial position, able to accomplish its goals now and into the future.

My path to serving as treasurer and on GMC's Executive Committee began many decades ago. When I was 16, my dad and I joined an Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) hiking trip, spending eight nights hiking from hut to hut in the White Mountains. That time on the trail and sharing joy with others in the huts set me on a path I have followed all my life: scrambling across rocky summits, learning about alpine flowers, and sharing in the awe of thunderstorms and sunsets.

This was the 1960s and the AMC hut crews were all "boys only." I inquired about working in the huts, but it wasn't until a change in leadership that the idea was taken seriously. It started slowly, but I was there every step of the way: leading guided hikes one summer, then joining a hut crew for a summer of packing in supplies, cooking, giving nature lessons, and aiding hikers. Finally, in 1974 I had the honor of serving as the first female hutmaster for AMC. The opportunity to live and work with others, sharing in the stewardship of the mountains was challenging, exhilarating, and transformational.

After a long career in education, I was able to return to my love of hiking and stewardship in retirement by volunteering with GMC's Montpelier Section as well as with the Board and committees of the main club. My husband and I adopted Bamforth Ridge Shelter and participate in and lead hikes. We are able to contribute to the trails we hike on, in camaraderie with friends and fellow hikers. Volunteers are so vital in performing the annual maintenance that prepares the trail for the thousands of hikers it welcomes each season, as well as guiding the operations of the organization. All of GMC's accomplishments are achieved through the shared leadership of staff, volunteers, and members like you.

I have been lucky to have had the chance to partner with other caring hikers to support the stewardship of our beloved Green Mountains and the organization that cares for them. During my time as treasurer, we ran a successful capital campaign that raised $4 million for critical projects, including building the beautiful Rothberg-Birdwhistell Visitor Center, which opened in 2025. In 2021, we moved our investments to Morgan Stanley and took steps to align our investment portfolio more closely with our environmental values. Our endowment has more than doubled, an important investment into GMC's financial future as federal funding sources have become unreliable.

As I step down as treasurer, I look forward to seeing GMC's future growth and efforts to preserve the Green Mountains, while I continue hiking and joining our section doing shelter and trail work.

See you on the trail,

Nancy Thomas

Nancy Thomas, *Outgoing Board Treasurer, 2020-2026*

FRONT COVER: Excitement at the Northern Terminus, Makenna Morse, End-to-Ender Class of 2025

HIS BELOVED LONG TRAIL

The Beauty & Impact of a Planned Gift

A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH A LONGTIME GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB (GMC) MEMBER caused me to reframe how I thought about planned giving. I often avoided the topic because it felt taboo asking members to discuss their estate planning. What I was missing was the care and thought that goes into leaving a planned gift. Through this process, you are deciding what is most important to you – maybe your children, your family members, and for many, the Long Trail.

This particular individual was a proud Life Member who read the *Long Trail News* cover to cover each quarter. He and I met for coffee every year to chat about upcoming trail and conservation projects happening at GMC. We laughed, swapped stories of hikes gone wrong, and connected over being "almost End-to-Enders." When we first met, he shared that he loves GMC's work and has included us in his planned giving in addition to his annual support.

It wasn't until recently that I understood what this truly meant to him. During our annual coffee, he shared that he was on hospice and that meeting with me was on his final bucket list. It felt trite talking through our upcoming projects for the season, but I noticed his enthusiasm and curiosity for our work remained just as it had in years past. At his request, I pulled out maps, and shared details and long-term goals. He told me every day had incredible purpose, and that while he didn't know how much time he had left, he knew he wanted to make one more gift to the Long Trail.

We parted ways, I cried in my car, and then I quickly smiled thinking about the beauty of it all — that someone can care about the Long Trail so deeply that they make a gift for those of us that will use their beloved trail after they are gone.

I am so grateful to this member for his friendship over the years and for his contagious enthusiasm for the Long Trail. It is one of the great privileges in my life to carry out the final wishes of those who choose to support the Long Trail through a planned gift.

— Deputy Director Alicia DiCocco

Leaving a Planned Gift to GMC

If you are inspired to include the Green Mountain Club in your planned giving, you can do so through charitable bequests, naming GMC as a beneficiary in your life insurance or retirement plan, or by setting up a charitable remainder trust or gift annuity.

Charitable bequests are the most common and simplest way to leave a legacy. These require language in your will such as "I bequest [describe dollar amount, property to be given, percentage or proportion of your residuary estate] to the Green Mountain Club, a nonprofit organization located at 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Rd., Waterbury Center, VT 05677."

For additional information, you can reach us at **development@greenmountainclub.org**



FIELD NOTES

Season Preview 2026

BY KEEGAN TIERNEY, DIRECTOR OF FIELD PROGRAMS

AS TRAIL CREWS FINISH THEIR "MOCK HITCH" TRAINING, AND CARETAKERS TAKE THEIR STATIONS, the Green Mountain Club Field Program anticipates another busy season. It will focus on our trails' long-term sustainability, paying increased attention to alpine stewardship; and rebuilding flood-damaged infrastructure to withstand severe weather. We continue to plan large-scale projects to take advantage of one-time funds available for aging trails and overnight sites.

Backcountry Stewardship and Caretakers

The caretaker program will have 15 positions, including two leaders, caring for high-use summits and ponds. We will run the Volunteer Trail Steward program for its second year, with trained volunteers helping caretakers meet and educate hikers at the **Mount Mansfield Visitor Center** and the **Lincoln Gap trailhead**. We will also work with an intern from the University of Vermont to support alpine stewardship, interpretive education, and volunteer trail stewards.

We will finish the latest round of our alpine vegetation photo monitoring on **Mount Mansfield**. This project captures changes in alpine vegetation every five years to inform management of the mountain's ridgeline.

Caretakers will make small improvements at various sites: install new composting infrastructure at **Little Rock Pond Shelter** and the **Little Rock Pond Group Site**, and repair the privy at **Skyline Lodge**. We will upgrade tent platforms and build new ones at **Little Rock Pond**, and repair the roof and porch at **Skyline Lodge**. The kiosk **south of Middlebury Gap** will be moved to accommodate the new trail alignment at the **Middlebury College Snowbowl**.

Major Trail and Infrastructure Projects

We will field two professional trail crews, one in the north and one in the south. Four senior trail technicians will do backcountry construction, and practice emerging construction techniques, such as using the club's mini-excavator. Grace Law will work as a volunteer support technician to continue building the skills, organization, and orientation of volunteers. Partnerships with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps and, we hope, the National Civilian Community Corps will supplement our work.

Much of our work this year will repair damage from the 2023 and 2024 floods, with funds from two sources: the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) program for projects on the overlapping Long Trail/Appalachian Trail, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) money directed through the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for work on state-owned land. We are implementing sustainable practices into all flood recovery work; namely building back bigger and more durable bridges and trail structures that can better withstand future extreme weather events.



PHOTO BY OLIVIA BERNIER

Homer Stone Brook Bridge, shown here after the 2023 flood, will be replaced with a glulam stringer bridge.

From South to North, Here's the Season's Work Plan:

Continued reconstruction of the **LT/AT north of Route 9**, mostly stairs and retaining walls.

Relocation on the **LT/AT north of Stage Road,** begun in the 2024 field season by Greenagers, a Massachusetts youth corps. We will complete rebuilding a flood-damaged section of the **Lye Brook Falls Trail,** and senior trail technicians will replace a bridge over the Little Black Branch on the **LT/AT south of the Kelley Stand Road.**

Homer Stone Brook flooded in 2023, damaging the trail and a bridge. Crews will make major repairs to the **Homer Stone Brook Trail**. This will be another chance to test the efficacy of machine-built trails using our recently purchased mini-excavator on certain sections of trail.

Senior trail technicians will replace the bridge over **Homer Stone Brook** just north of Little Rock Pond. They will also replace a flood-damaged bridge just **north of Peru Peak Shelter.**

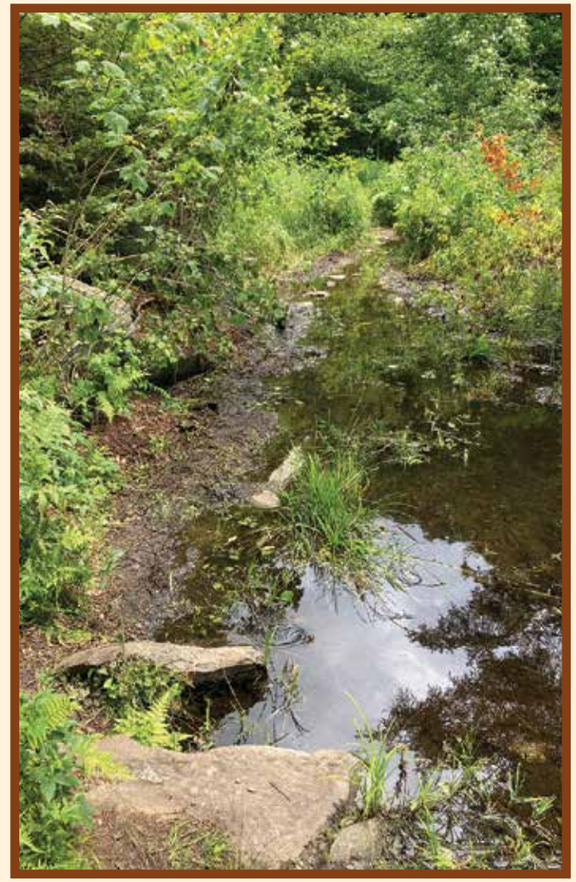
Additional tread repair is slated for the **LT/AT in Shrewsbury**, where repeated floods starting with Hurricane Irene have washed away the steep bank of Gould Brook to the trail's edge; and tread repair to the **LT north of Wetmore Gap**.

Crews will begin to repair considerable damage along the **LT north of Lincoln Gap**, in the first season of a two-year project. In 2027 we will relocate the trail there to a more sustainable grade. Staff will also finish the **Battell Shelter** overnight site expansion.

On the northern LT we will raise a section of the **LT at the Clara Bow Trail junction** about 40 feet, removing it from the beaver pond complex; and we will make significant repairs to rotten logs at historic **Taft Lodge**.

Crews will complete a small relocation on the **Sterling Pond Trail**; continue work on the relocation of the **LT on the south flank of Belvidere Mountain**; and last, will finish a major native timber puncheon replacement project on the **LT between Hazen's Notch Camp and Domey's Dome**, in partnership with volunteers from the Northern Frontier Section.

Upper Valley Ottauqueechee Section volunteers will repair puncheon on the **AT just south of Quechee-West Hartford Rd**. Volunteers from the Sterling Section will address wet areas of the **LT on the Sterling Mountain ridgeline** by constructing crush-fill turnpike, and will improve drainage and erosion issues on the side trails they maintain, including the **Whiteface Trail and Chilcoot Trail**.



The Clara Bow Trail near the LT junction will be relocated out of this flood-prone beaver pond.

System wide, we will continue our sustainable trails assessment. Now that we have a baseline GIS model, the trail assessment specialist will hike the **LT from Maine Junction to Canada** this season, writing field reports of trail conditions to record discrepancies with the online data and fine-tune the GIS-based model.

We expect the field season to be efficient and productive, with diverse projects, dedicated volunteers, a highly skilled staff with several returning seasonal employees, and the application of sustainable trail building principles to everything we do. Thank you to our members and donors for supporting the Green Mountain Club, for making possible our trail and shelter projects from the smallest to the largest.



Congratulations
NEW END-TO-ENDERS!

AFTER TWO YEARS OF CATASTROPHIC FLOODING, 2025 was marked by a swing in the opposite direction: drought. Late summer saw water sources on the Long Trail dry up and many hikers were forced to carry excess water. Despite the challenges of nature, the Long Trail continues to provide breathtaking, life-changing experiences for all those who set foot on it!

Marion Abba, Montreal, QC
Jenny "The Tangler" Adams, Northampton, MA
Stephanie "Whiskey" Agnew, Northampton, MA
Matt "Buzzz" Albritton, Fort Worth, TX
Nick "The Machine" Algee, Orlando, FL
"Kosher Frank," Brunswick, ME
Andrew "Badger" Amstutz, Proctorsville, VT
Al "Bodhi" Angel, Suwanee, GA
Lorelei "Acorn" Austin, Jericho, VT
Daniel "Sandbag" Bagwell, Quincy, OH
Gwen "Carrots" Baraniecki-Zwil, Philadelphia, PA
Davis "Beast" Barnett, Greensboro, VT
Jacqueline "Solo" Barnicoat, Portland, ME
Michael "Bullseye" Barrett, Athens, VT
Jaycee "Bumper" Beaulieu, Burlington, VT
Alicia "Five Minutes" Bednarski, St-Samuel, QC
Mike "Lead Off" Belanger, Dover, NH
Danielle "Sunshine" Beliveau, Wallingford, VT
Jonathan "Cyber" Bell, Chestnut Hill, MA
Yael Ben-Ozer, Cambridge, MA
Timothy "Tim" Benson, Randolph Center, VT
Olivia "Dairy Queen" Bernier, Burlington, VT
Eric "Night Terror" Bickford, Tallahassee, FL
Skyleigh "Tenderfoot" Bickings, Fairfax, VT

Blithe "Nadik" Bigelow, Kaysville, UT
Brett Billings, North Adams, MA
Ruth Blauwiekel, Colchester, VT
Tara "Travel Bug" Blondin, Burlington, VT
Dr. Karl "yet2b" Bodtorf, Wellford, SC
Scot "Lentilman" Bogert, PA Furnace, PA
Joseph Bonasia, Cape Coral, FL
Harriet "Big Squeeze" Booth, Biddeford, ME
Matthew Boothby, Palm Bay, FL
Sarah "Mumbles" Bortz, St Albans, VT
Jen "Fireball" Bostwick, Essex Junction, VT
Lucy "Head Down" Breckenridge, Essex, VT
Annelise "Torch" Brochier, Baltimore, MD
Thomas Broido, Hinesburg, VT
Benjamin Brooks, Watertown, NY
David "Toothbrush" Brown, Starksboro, VT
Maggie "Runaway" Buckton, Newton, MA
Casey "Sherpa" Bueche, Tuxedo Park, NY
Brian "ole-B" Burrows, Epsom, NH
Eric "Righty the L.A.S.H.E.R" Buse, Elmhurst, IL
Chad "Ghost" Campion, Willington, CT
Tori "Seamoss" Carroll, South Portland, ME
Andrew Carter, Paso Robles, CA
Bob Chiang, Montrose, CO

Shannon "Pole Chucker" Cleary, Bainbridge Island, WA
Holly "Wolffie" Cloutier, Charlotte, VT
Scott "My Bad" Coblentz, Frederick, MD
Michele "Loon" Coleman, Fredericton, NB
Patricia "Captain" Connerney, Middletown, RI
Steve "Fossil Feet" Cooper, Newton, MA
Glenn Cornell, Fredericksburg, VA
Pamela Cornell, Fredericksburg, VA
Andy Costello, Colchester, VT
Jeremy Cox, Columbia, MO
David "Flying Dragon" Crandall, Central Village, CT
Lori "Willow owl" Crandall, Central Village, CT
Jared "FireJack" Cronquist, Sloatsburg, NY
Ted "Gary" Crowell, Needham, MA
Samuel "Spark" Cushing, Old Orchard Beach, ME
Cathy "Firecracker" Cushing, Old Orchard Beach, ME
Katie "Twinkle Toes" Cuttitta, Williston, VT
Ash "Popeye" Czarnota, Burbank, CA
Andrew Czarnowsky, Towson, MD
Jay "Redwood" Dahlstrom, Southbridge, MA
Elise "Trail Boss" Daigle, Salt Lake City, UT
Lia "Life Saver" Darling, Burlington, VT
Marcie "Zookeeper" Davey, Colchester, VT
Peter "Durag" Davey, Colchester, VT
Hailey "Dunebuggy" Davis, Helena, MT
Timothy "Raven" DenHerder-Thomas, Minneapolis, MN
Heather "Detour" Dernlan, Littleton, CO
Steve "Stunt Man" Dernlander, Littleton, CO
Isidora "Finger" Dickstein, Saint Johnsbury, VT
Julia DiNardo, Denver, CO
Benjamin "Bread Truck (Bread)" Dio, Putnam, CT
Alex "Avalanche" Doering, Westminster, MA

Nicole Doner, Huntington, VT
Lydia "Hiccup" Downs, Oakdale, CT
John "Fondue" Draper, Burlington, VT
Douglas "Doug" Dulli, Madison, WI
Peter "Phantom" Eckhardt, Pittsford, VT
Jillian "Links" Eller, Burlington, VT
Alexandra "Shiny" Emerson, Denver, CO
Caroline "Blues Clues" Erickson, Branford, CT
John "Yukon Jack" Erickson, Danbury, CT
Nathaniel "Leprechaun" Evans, Brattleboro, VT
Daniel "Just Dan" Farris, Stittsville, ON
Becca "Honey Bee" Farrow, Redding, CT
Christina "Curly Turtle" Faulkner, Irmo, SC
Rick "Flex" Faulkner, Irmo, SC
Michael "Weatherman" Feeney, Quincy, MA
Tian Feng, Cambridge, MA
Catherine "Happy" Fengler, Wilder, VT
Thomas "Startled Beaver" Ferland, Golden, CO
Shams Ferver, Barre, VT
Geoff "The Grateful Dad" Fields, East Falmouth, MA
Jeff "Cobra 37" Fitz-Gerald, Chittenden, VT
Ethan Floyd, Boxborough, MA
Jesse Floyd, Boxborough, MA
Joe "Wrong Way" Fogarty, Chepachet, RI
Mike "Tyler Vek" Fournier, Moultonborough, NH
Jordan "RADAR" Fricke, Delphos, OH
Samantha "Ace" Fuller, Brooklyn, NY
Marissa "Mosey" Fulton, La Fayette, GA
Jessica "Sole Surfer" Gebbie, Rochester Hills, MI
Lauria "SAS" Giles, Hartland, VT
Francis "Blisters" Gill, Ste-Catherine-de-la-J-Cartier, QC
Shannon "Bird's Eye" Gillett, Middlebury, VT
Chris "Puddles" Gipson, Wellfleet, MA
Aila Givins, West Jefferson, NC
Alexandra "Skookum" Gonzalez, Bronx, NY
Jonathan "Yahtzee" Goodall, Philadelphia, PA
Lisa Gordon, Brockport, NY
Thomas "Gizmo" Gorman, Wilmington, DE
Mark "Chowder" Gorski, New Haven, CT
Adam Graff, Portland, ME
Patricia "OldnSlo" Graham, Pittsford, NY
Mathea "Little Twig" Graham, Burlington, VT
Ian "Brightside" Grana, Rochester, NY
Vincent Graziano, Perkinsville, VT
Darren "Juice" Greway, Chester Springs, PA
Rob Gryfe, North York, ON
Brian "Jeremiah Johnson" Gulde, Port St Lucie, Fl
Sue "Strong Like Bull" Hackney, Montpelier, VT
Steven "Easy" Haefner, Easley, SC
Gregory Haney, Redford, MI
Luke Harrison, Mt. Holly, VT

301 NEW END-TO-ENDERS!



They came from 39 states and provinces, with Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, and Connecticut taking the top spots.

- 105 hiked the trail in sections, 196 thru-hiked.
- The oldest hiker was 80 (Tom Parent, who section hiked over several decades).
- The youngest was Elsie "Snoopy" Kidder, 13, of St. Johnsbury, who also section-hiked the trail from 2020-2025.
- 30, or 10%, had hiked it before.



Sarah "Bogs" Shine and Mason "Celt" Shine

"I started my Long Trail journey in high school, shortly after my family moved to Vermont. The LT was a major influence on my career choice in environmental science. I was on the LTP in the mid-70s and had completed 70 percent of the trail by the early 80s. I always had it in my mind that I should finish the LT end to end. Now, with the benefit of time in retirement and the help of a couple of those old friends from high school I have!"

—JEN BOSTWICK



Katie Buttitta with friends at the Northern Terminus.

Lauren “Critters” Healey, Newburyport, MA
Rachel “Sunshine” Hellman, Burlington, VT
Teresa “Tour Guide” Helms, Roxbury, VT
Matthew “Masochist” Hengst, Lake Forest, CA
Kirt “Trik” Henning, Poultney, VT
Joshua “EKG” Hertz, Westwood, MA
Kimberley Hing, Saratoga, CA
Phil “Sweeper” Hofmeyer, Munnsville, NY
Thomas “Hog” Hogeboom, Hardwick, VT
Daniel “Vamanos” Huette, Flower Mound, TX
Casey “Vegas” Huffman, Holmes Beach, FL
Alexa “Cholula” Hughes, Brookline, MA
Deb “Walking Carrot” Hunsicker, Sagle, ID
Olivia Hunt, Burlington, VT
Nancy “Ms. Chipper” Hutchinson, Randolph Center, VT

> “One of my most memorable moments on the Long Trail was the climb up Jay Peak at dusk on the Fourth of July. As we pushed upward, the sun was slipping behind the mountains, and we emerged from the woods into the open ski trails just below the summit. Suddenly, we were hit with fierce wind and a sky absolutely on fire with color. My adrenaline was raging. I remember howling into the wind, laughing, and shouting, ‘This! This is living!’”
>
> **—MADDISON “BEARTOOTH” WILHITE, BILLINGS, MT**



> “Hiking the Long Trail means I had an opportunity to create lifelong memories with my Grandpa. It also meant a lot to get to know Vermont so well, not just the beautiful mountains, but the trips we took driving to and from trailheads.”
>
> **— ELSIE “SNOOPY” KIDDER, 13, SECTION-HIKED WITH HER GRANDFATHER, TOM “KRUMMHOLZ” KIDDER**

Katie “Double Dip” Jackson, Conshohocken, PA
Mufaddal “Rain Man” Jafferji, West Roxbury, MA
Christine “CJ” Johnson, Seattle, WA
Hattie Johnston, Corvallis, OR
Courtney “Cheap Diamond” Jones, Essex Junction, VT
John “J-Bird” Kamb, Golden, CO
Lee “Shiner” Kamentsky, Arlington, MA
Dan Kearney, Avon, CO
Brandon “Wormwood” Kelone, Flagstaff, AZ
Tom “Krummholz” Kidder, West Newbury, VT
Elsie “Snoopy” Kidder, St. Johnsbury, VT
Ellery “Bowlplate” Kiefer, Salisbury, CT
Philip King, Alexandria, NH
Lisa “NOBO Squirrel” Kinsman, Rangeley, ME
Thomas “Pocatello” Kirkpatrick, Beavercreek, OR
Lane Kiser, Arlington, VA
Itai “Local” Klein, Santa Monica, CA
Laura Knapp, South Burlington, VT
Douglas “Babbitt” Knox, Sanford, NC
David Kronenberg, Burlington, MA
Bailey Kudla-Williams, Rochester, NY
Blayne “Lucky” Lachance, Gilman, VT
Judith “Cactus” Laflamme, Sherbrooke, QC
Jeff “Mule” LaFrenier, Warwick, MA
Nathaniel “Apothecary” Längle-Moore, Springfield, VT
Brianna “Nemo” Latourelle, Belen, NM
April “4-Low” LeSage, Savoy, MA
Jason “Hawk” Lewis, Hubbardsville, NY
Robert “Rocket Man” Lusthaus, Katonah, NY
Bruce MacKinnon, Wellesley, MA
John “Kid Rock” Magruther, Reisterstown, MD
John “Lamb Chop” Mahaffy, East Randolph, VT
Nicholas Maibroda, Montreal, QC
Christopher “Superfeet” Maixner, Somerset, NJ
Jack “Tony Hawk” Malczynski, Flanders, NJ
Kelle “Ellek” Malkewitz, Poultney, VT
Jerry Maloney, Georgetown, PA
Joey “Charity” Mancuso, Penfield, NY
James “Bananas” Mango, Cleveland, OH
Drew “Weatherboy” Manning, Denver, CO
Jillian “Jpop” Marshall, Raleigh, NC
Kelcey “Salt” Martinez, Rathdrum, ID
Elizabeth “Foxtrot” McCombs, Philadelphia, PA
Brien “The Jolly Turtle” McGonagle, Portland, CT
Mariel “Big Fris” McInnes, Rockville, MD
Jeff McManus, Oakland, CA
David “Sweeps” Methven, Austin, TX
Ian “2Towels” Minushkin, Patchogue, NY
Elise “Badass” Mitchell, Newbury, MA
Phil “Lincoln Legs” Montenegro, Montpelier, VT
Danny “Fiik” Mooney, Hanover, MD



> “I initially stepped foot on this trail as a scared, insecure young man who had a troubled past to work through. Hiking this trail didn't solve any of my problems, but it certainly informed and continues to inform all of my decisions off the trail, which is something I'm so very grateful for.
>
> This trail gave me a whole new perspective on life. It reminded me that I can re-write my own story, which is one of the most beautiful things we can do as human beings.”
>
> **—JACK “TONY HAWK” MALCZYNSKI, FLANDERS, NJ**

Adrienne “Twinkle Toes” Moran, Underhill Center, VT
Makenna Morse, Underhill, VT
Mackenzie “Rocky” Morse, Park City, UT
Sam “Moose” Morse, Park City, UT
William “Fireball” Moyer, Naples, FL
Celeste “Melman” Moyer, Essex Junction, VT
Millie “Early Bird” Mugica, Hollis, NH
William “Sundance” Musselman, Essex Junction, VT
Sylvain Naud, Quebec City, QC
Bridget “Sprinkles” Neely, Somerville, MA
Jefferey Nickless, Madbury, NH
Lily “Ziploc” Niemi-Moskowitz, Colchester, VT
David Norton, Columbus, OH
Sara “Boocha” Nosack, Newark, VT
Mickey “Mick” Nowak, Monson, MA
Trevor “Mr. T” O’Brien, Lynnfield, MA
John “Ice Cream Man” O’Malley Jr., DeLand, FL
Daniel “BeerStyck” Onks, Knoxville, TN
Diana “Dianimal” Osborn, Johnson, VT
Jacob Ouellette, West Seneca, NY
Elizabeth “Teddy” Paashaus, Montgomery Center, VT
Brandon “GT” Pace, Zirconia, NC
Maddie “Sugar Glider” Palmer, Melvin Village, NH
Mark “Popeye” Paquin, Stoddard, NH
Tom Parent, South Burlington, VT
David “One Pack” Parry, Avon, CT
Jon “Chicken Legs” Patterson, Wheat Ridge, CO
Emily “Shine” Peck, Austin, TX
Noreen Pecsok, Cornwall, VT

John “Pfrang Gang” Ped, Boulder, CO
Dale “Nurse” Perzanowski, Hartford, VT
Robert “Slide” Peters, Fernandina Beach, FL
Kyle Pfrang, Suffolk, VA
Kaila Pfrang, Boulder, CO
Susan “Sue Bear” Phair-Sullo, Gaylordsville, CT
Adam “INCH” Phillips, Pine Knoll Shores, NC
Christopher “Keystone” Pradel, Fleetwood, PA
Nick “Bottle Dropper” Projansky, New York, NY
Jennifer “JP” Puzey, Norwood, MA

Ryan Quinn, Eaton, NY
Bronwen “Snapdragon” Raff, Somerville, MA
Katie “Captain Planet” Rapp, Jefferson, NH
Chris “Cloppy” Reamer, Richmond, VT
Mark “Yardsale” Rebeor, Ballston Spa, NY
Justin “Shep” Rice, Gallup, NM
Jim “Ducky” Rieger, Plymouth, VT
Nicholas “Moose” Ring, Rumney, NH
Wilson Ring, Stowe, VT
Bill Rogers, Troy, NY



Alexandra “Skookum” Gonzalez

PHOTO BY ALEXANDRA GONZALEZ



"It means so much that it is hard to put into words, but here is a short summary. Over 20 days, I faced many bouts of mountain madness, 4 days of wet that left me smelling like a slug, and several heated arguments with rocks, roots, and leaves. But it was all worth it! I got some amazing sleep, met and shared stories with wonderful humans, and accomplished a long-time goal!"

— MUFADDAL "RAIN MAN" JAFFERJI, WEST ROXBURY, MA



PHOTO BY LIA DARLING

Lia "Life Saver" Darling

Kelly Rooney, Bennington, VT
Bailey Ross, Brookings, SD
Isadora Rosselli, Burlington, VT
Mary "Wizard" Roth, Cambridge, VT
Tess "Storyteller" Rowan Jannery-Barney, Takoma Park, MD
Osa "Privy Girl" Ruben, Brooklyn, NY
Karl "Weatherman" Sanfaçon, Québec, QC
Alex Saunders, Calais, VT
Evan "Simple Things" Schillinger, Davenport, IA
Trilby "Tito" Schmidt, Dallas, TX
Jay "Bear Taco" Scudder, Palmyra, VA
Kerry Secrest, Brattleboro, VT
Stephen "Sidetrack" Selin, Shelburne, VT
Melanie "River" Serguiev, Craftsbury, VT
Lexi "Wildflower" Shear, Montpelier, VT
Catherine "Snack Time" Shearer, Essex Junction, VT
Sarah "Bogs" Shine, Goffstown, NH
Mason "Celt" Shine, Goffstown, NH
Brian "Shark Bait" Shultis, Lakewood, CO
George "Papa George" Sibley, Nordland, WA
John "Sherpa" Sluk, Quincy, MA
Frank "Spanky" Smiddy, Thompsonville, MI
Rachel Smith, Columbia, MO
Allen "Rusty" Smith, San Diego, CA
Jim "Gravity" Smith, Oak Ridge, TN
Cody Soule, Denver, CO
Joseph "Morning Joe" Spangler, Cuyahoga Falls, OH
Sydney "Rotesserie" Stammelman, Essex Junction, VT
Liz "WLIZ" Subin, Essex, VT
Eric "Orono" Swanson, Chester, NH
Megan "The Bard" Tammaro, Burlington, VT
Deb "Sundial" Taylor, Hanover, MD
Alice Terrett, Montreal, QC
Jason "Jiffy" Thomas, Macungie, PA
John "Jack Shepherd" Tidwell, Pell City, AL



PHOTO BY ITAI KLEIN

Itai "'Local'" Klein, and friend, Greenwall Shelter

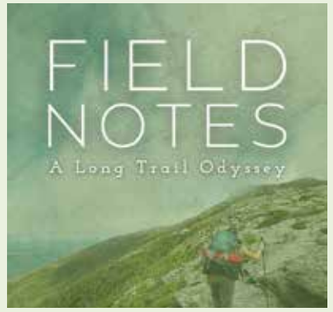
Congrats to 2025 Side-to-Side Hiker, who hiked all 88 side trails that intersect the Long Trail.

Philip "Earlylite" Warner, Bristol, VT

Learn More about the Side-to-Side Challenge: greenmountainclub.org/side-to-side



PHOTO BY CRUISE CONTROL



20-year-old Tess "Storyteller" Rowan recorded audio diaries and interviewed other hikers on her June 2025 thru-hike. She produced an audio documentary, Field Notes: A Long Trail Odyssey, available to listen to on podcast streaming platforms like Apple, Spotify, and Google Play. Scan to listen on Spotify.

"Weighing in at 35 pounds, my pack includes essentials like my sleeping bag, water filter, a couple days of food, and my audio recording equipment. I pack one outfit to hike in and one to sleep in. I pack deodorant, knowing it won't help at all. I will go days without a shower, a bed, electricity, air conditioning, running water. At least the kind of running water that comes from a sink and not a mountain stream."

"I'm walking in mud and I start playing the alphabet game for words or phrases related to hiking. D is for deciduous forest. F, F is for fern. I is for, I thought I liked the outdoors. S is for Stink."

Matthew "TRAX" Traxler, New Cumberland, PA
Jeremy "Xtra Hot" Tretiak, Waitsfield, VT
Sid "Stairmaster" Underwood, Blacksburg, VA
Peter "Goat" Van Dien, Vermontville, NY
April Vanderveer, Waterville, VT
Tim "Captain" Vincent, Nottingham, NH
Patrick "Guinness" Walsh, Cleveland Heights, OH
Ryan "Steep Randy" Walters, Lanesborough, MA
Brian "That Hiker Guy" Ward, Coatesville, PA
Peter Warrington, Shelburne, VT
Greg "Snack Bag" Warrington, Shelburne, VT
Cecilia "Sunshine" Wendling, Hartland, VT
Hugh "Q" Wendling, Hartland, VT
Heidi "Monarch" Westerberg, Elkins, NH
Dan "Nightcrawler" Whittle, Wallingford, CT
Zen "Zen" Wilhelm, Bellingham, WA
Maddison "Beartooth" Wilhite, Billings, MT
Joan Williamson, Essex Junction, VT
Kevin Winters, Tom's River, NJ
Geetha "Ninja" Wunnava, Middlebury, VT

CURIOUS WHAT A LONG TRAIL thru-hike or section hike is really like? Check out the 2026 End-to-Ender Panel on YouTube. Panelist Tian Feng, below, spoke about her experience as a solo female hiker, among other topics including resupply, food storage, favorite shelters and snacks, training, and gear. Thank you to all 2026 panelists!

Holly Cloutier
Tian Feng
Jessa Gebbie
Tom Kidder
Chris Reamer
Lexi Shear
Mason Shine
Sarah Shine
George Sibley



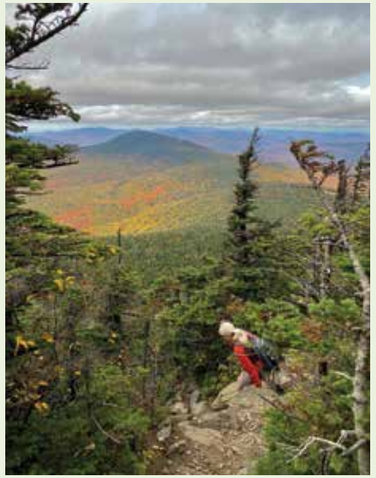
Tian Feng at Northern Terminus.

youtube.com/watch?v=dbOrmN6H420

SUMMER HIKING CHALLENGE: Hike the VT5!

NOW THAT HIKING SEASON IS FINALLY HERE, it's the perfect time to set some hiking goals or try some new-to-you trails. Here are some of our favorite ways to summit Vermont's five high peaks over 4,000 feet – choose the white blaze, blue blaze, loop, or extended adventure that's right for you!

Full trail descriptions and maps can be found online at **greenmountainclub.org/how-to-hike-the-vt-5**



Killington Peak, 4,235 ft.

Killington Peak is Vermont's southernmost four-thousand-footer and the second-highest peak in Vermont. Its slopes are home to Killington Ski Area. The Long Trail (LT) doesn't pass directly over Killington's summit, but it can be accessed by a challenging 0.25-mile spur trail from Cooper Lodge.

ROUTES

Long Trail South > Killington Summit > Sherburne Pass Trail Loop
15 miles round trip (RT); 3,860 ft. elevation gain
Long loop on both the LT and AT

Bucklin Trail > Killington Peak
7.4 miles RT; 2,480 ft. elevation gain
Short(er) and direct



Mount Abraham, 4,006 ft.

Mount Abraham is Vermont's shortest four-thousand-footer, but it packs a punch! The summit offers panoramic views of New Hampshire, the Adirondacks and Lake Champlain, and the Green Mountains north and south. It is also home to a small area of rare alpine vegetation, so take care to walk only on the rocks at the summit.

ROUTES

Long Trail North from Lincoln Gap
5.2 mi RT; 1,640 ft. elevation gain
Some rock scrambles and steep terrain

Battell Trail > Long Trail North to summit
5.8 miles RT; 2,600 ft. elevation gain
Classic blue-blazed side trail



Mount Ellen, 4,083 ft.

Tied with Camel's Hump as the third-highest peak in Vermont, Mount Ellen is a viewless summit just south of the Sugarbush Mount Ellen ski area. Be sure to take in the views from the top of the ski hill on your way to the summit! You get beautiful views looking east toward the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains to the north.

ROUTES

Jerusalem Trail > Long Trail South > Battell Trail
10.5 miles; 3,230 ft. elevation gain
Tackle both Mount Ellen and Mount Abraham on this point-to-point hike (requires a car drop or shuttle).

Jerusalem Trail > Long Trail South to Mount Ellen
8.4 miles RT; 2,483 ft. of elevation gain
Out-and-back with views from the ski slopes



Camel's Hump, 4,083 ft.

Once called Couching Lion, Moziozagan, and Tawapodiiwajo, Camel's Hump is an iconic peak, the only undeveloped 4,000-footer in Vermont. Camel's Hump is home to rare alpine vegetation, so please follow white blazes and stay on the rocks, especially on the summit. Please park only in designated lots and follow all posted signage on this busy mountain.

ROUTES

Monroe Trail > Long Trail South to Summit > Alpine Trail > Monroe Trail
6.6 miles RT; 2,583 ft. elevation gain
From the east (Duxbury) side of the mountain

Forest City Trail > LT North > Burrows Trail
5.5 miles RT; 2,446 ft. elevation gain
Classic, challenging loop from the west (Huntington) side



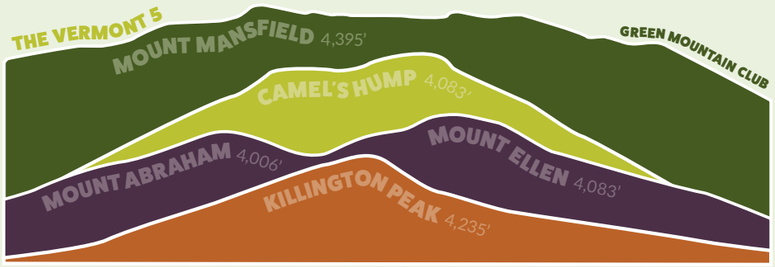
Mount Mansfield, 4,395 ft.

Mount Mansfield is Vermont's northernmost four-thousand-footer and the tallest peak in the state, standing at 4,395 feet. Its distinctive, long ridgeline resembles a face, with the "Chin" being the highest point. Mount Mansfield is home to Vermont's largest area of alpine vegetation, so please remain on the rocks and avoid stepping on vegetation. There are numerous ways to summit and explore the Mansfield ridgeline – we highly recommend a Mansfield Area map!

ROUTES

Maple Ridge Trail > Long Trail North > Summit > Long Trail South > Sunset Ridge Trail
8.8 miles; 2,700 ft. elevation gain
Challenging loop along the ridgeline

Long Trail South > Chin
5.6 miles RT; 2,850 ft. elevation gain
Most direct route to the summit; loop options possible. Begin at Barnes Camp in Stowe.



Complete the VT5 this summer and email us a trip report, and we'll send you a new VT5 sticker!
gmc@greenmountainclub.org

BE PREPARED

Tips to Tackle a 4,000-footer

Build Your Stamina. These peaks all feature steep, rugged trails with significant elevation gain. It's okay to build up to them over time. Try GMC's "Couch to Camel's Hump" training program, or explore our website for easy and moderate hikes to kick off your journey.

Know Before You Go. Weather conditions can change drastically once you've climbed 4,000 feet from the valley floor. Check out the National Weather Service's Mountain Point Forecasts before you go, and don't be afraid to turn around if the weather worsens as you go. The peak will always be there another day.

There are multiple trails on each of these mountains, and many pass through ski areas as well. It's not hard to get turned around. Use a paper map and make sure you know your intended route ahead of time so you descend to the correct trailhead.

Find Your Footing. These trails can be steep and rocky, and some require some light scrambling near the summits. Be sure you have sturdy, well-fitted hiking boots or shoes, and consider using trekking poles for additional stability. Some trails may have exposed areas that can be tricky for those with a fear of heights or those hiking with pets. You can always call GMC's Visitor Center at (802) 244-7037 to ask questions about specific trails and get a recommendation tailored for you!

DIRECTOR OF LAND CONSERVATION
MOLLIE FLANIGAN REFLECTS ON

A Decade of Land Conservation Work at GMC


Mollie on the job in 2018.

FOR THE PAST DECADE I'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING to permanently protect the Long Trail System and the Green Mountain Club's conserved lands through the club's Land Conservation Program.

I began in February 2016 as the Land Stewardship Coordinator, a reinstated position to help GMC uphold the conservation lands secured in the previous 30 years of land protection work. Before GMC, I had gradually built up my experience in land stewardship in Vermont through a series of seasonal and temporary positions in land trusts, environmental education, and research. Joining GMC, I was thrilled to have the long-term opportunity in the career and the state I was committed to.

I settled in, pawing through drawers of paper records, photocopying and coloring paper maps because we had no mapping software, and struggling to understand where and how many miles of boundary lines our volunteer corridor monitors were aiming to maintain.

Step by step the program has developed, grown, and recommitted to its core purpose of ensuring the conservation of the Long Trail System today and for the future.

In that journey, we have gone from paper records to digital, so both current and historic program records are available online and in a searchable database.

We have progressed from hand-drawn maps to a fully integrated ArcGIS computer mapping system that enables us to make professional-quality maps, and to track spatial information, like the boundary sections that volunteers monitor and the condition of property lines, within the map database.

We have gone from a volunteer corridor monitoring program, valiantly organized and run by the volunteers themselves, to a staff-led effort supporting a cohort of professionally trained volunteers oriented and empowered to be the eyes and ears of GMC's conserved lands on the trail corridor.

The program continues to follow, and now regularly re-examines its work by Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. This ensures we are using the best practices in the field of land conservation work.

We fully re-examined our Long Trail System protection goals, and set our direction for the future, through a comprehensive strategic conservation planning process.

We have conserved 202 acres of land and 2.5 miles of Long Trail through ten conservation projects like the recent Deer Camp land purchase and Middlebury College Snowbowl trail easement projects.

And we have expanded the program from my original 80 percent of one full-time position to two full-time staff positions, a Land Conservation Director and a Land Stewardship Coordinator. This enables us to meet the twin responsibilities of the program: proactive land protection, and vigilant land stewardship.

Looking Forward

I intend to maintain these gains so GMC can continue meeting our mission to protect Vermont's mountains. Land stewardship work requires relationships, vigilance, and steadfast commitment to land and people for permanent success. To protect something forever is a bold goal, and only through adequate staff and a robust volunteer program can GMC meet its legal responsibility.

Land protection often takes years to bring to fruition, and it relies on relationships and patient persistence. A decade at GMC under my belt has created ever-increasing value in terms of continuity in relationships, project knowledge, and persistent attention. Private landowners, public land managers, our partner organizations, community members and volunteers in combination make the trail system possible. The more continuity in leadership that GMC can provide in this collective effort, the greater the long-term goals we can achieve together.

Before coming to GMC I worked in the land trust world to hold the line against deleterious large-scale forces like invasive species, forest fragmentation and climate change. That's a tough frame of reference for judging career satisfaction. At GMC I still work against those forces, but the frame of reference is outdoor recreation, which makes all the difference.

Here I've worked with coworkers and volunteers inspired by the Green Mountains, who have received so much from the trail that they are eager to give back. When I speak with landowners, community members, and partners about the importance of protecting the landscape around the Long Trail, I often encounter an established shared understanding of the value of the trail system. That is an incredible context in which to build a land conservation career.

Thank you, members and supporters of this organization. You create the opportunity and community in which to do this inspiring work. I relish the prospect of diving into my second decade of protecting the Long Trail System with you.

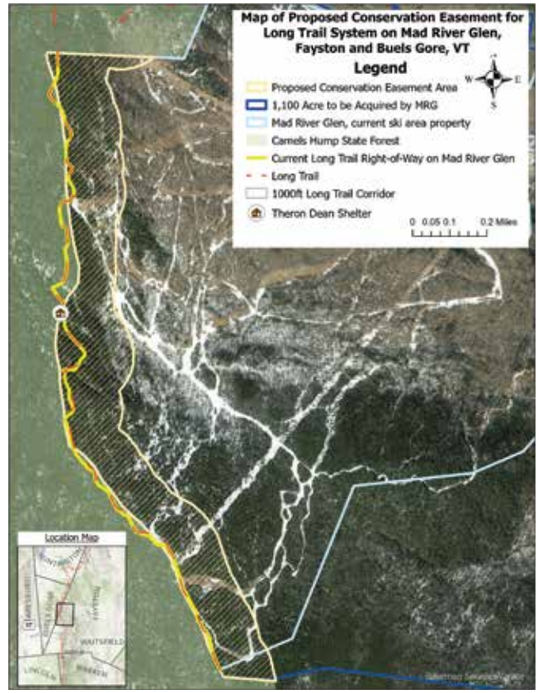
ENHANCING THE PROTECTION OF

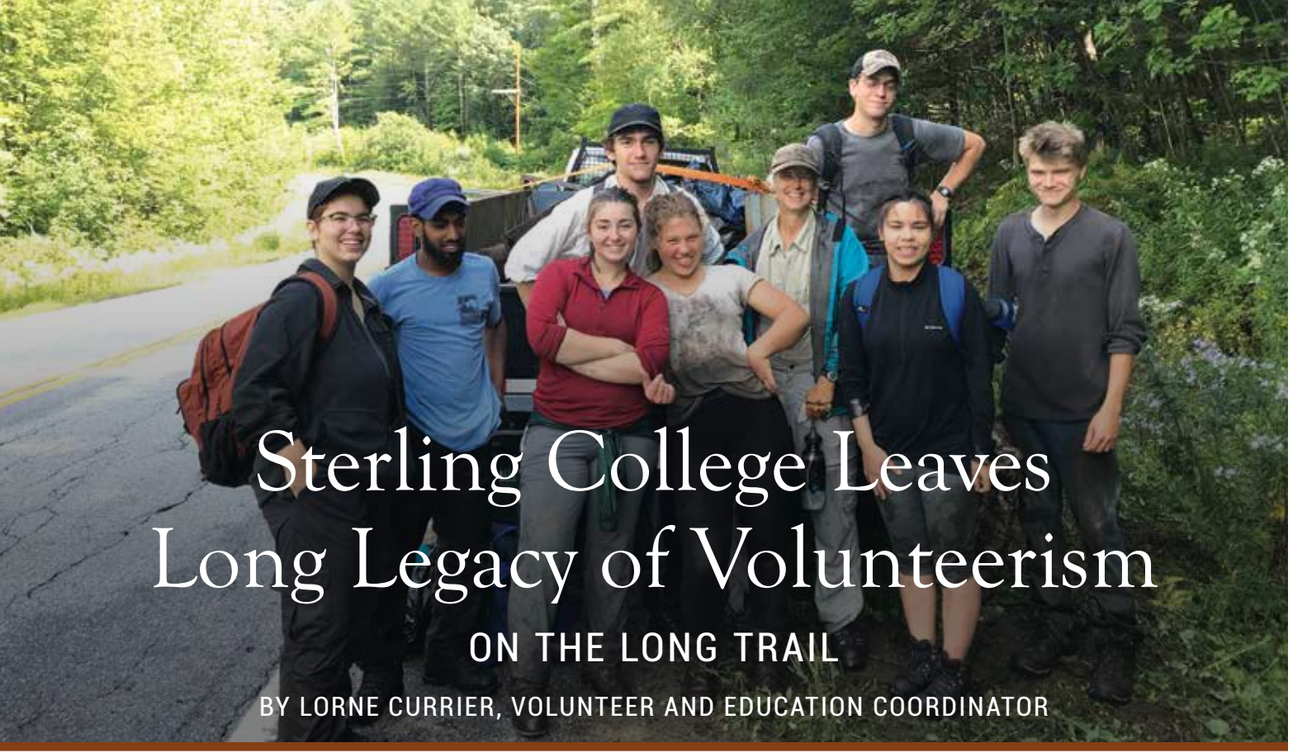
The Long Trail Along the Monroe Skyline

THE MONROE SKYLINE is a beloved stretch of the Long Trail between Lincoln Gap and Appalachian Gap. This winter, the Skyline was enhanced by the purchase of 1,100 acres of forested land by the Mad River Glen Ski Cooperative (MRG). MRG is a locally owned and operated Vermont ski area on the northern end of the Monroe Skyline. They held a right-of-first refusal to purchase 1,100 acres of privately owned land south of their alpine area. MRG chose to exercise that right when an offer to buy the land was made this past year.

The property offers many recreation opportunities, but for GMC, it is important because the land hosts 300 feet of unprotected Long Trail. In their purchase, MRG has committed to conserving the property under a conservation easement, which will include Long Trail protection. GMC looks forward to working with MRG to legally protect this section of Long Trail over the next two years, their timeline for easement drafting and closing. In addition, this acquisition presents an opportunity for GMC and Mad River Glen to strengthen the legal protection of the 1.6 miles of Long Trail across the current Mad River Glen ski area by upgrading the standing trail right-of-way easement into a conservation easement for the trail's full 1,000-foot corridor and Theron Dean Shelter site. This is an exciting opportunity for GMC to grow our partnership with Mad River Glen to expand conservation of the Long Trail in the Mad River Valley.

This purchase was made possible thanks to the generous donors who contributed to Mad River Glen and Stark Mountain Foundation fundraising campaign. Thank you to all who support land conservation throughout Vermont and who made this purchase and future conservation of the property possible!





Sterling College Leaves Long Legacy of Volunteerism

ON THE LONG TRAIL

BY LORNE CURRIER, VOLUNTEER AND EDUCATION COORDINATOR

STERLING COLLEGE, IN CRAFTSBURY COMMON, concluded its degree-granting programs at the end of the Spring 2026 semester. The Green Mountain Club (GMC) expresses heartfelt thanks to the Sterling College community for their many decades of volunteerism on the Long Trail (LT). As trail adopters, board members, seasonal employees, or education partners, the contributions of Sterling students, faculty, and alumni to the Long Trail System were a meaningful component of our volunteer programming.

Founded in 1958 as a boys' preparatory school named the Sterling School, it became an accredited, degree-granting institution in 1983. Sterling was among the first colleges in the United States to offer a liberal arts curriculum focused on sustainability and was a member of the Work Colleges Consortium. Sterling students worked on the college farm, or in the cafeteria, sugarhouse, or local preschool, conducting meaningful work that contributed to the college and the surrounding community. Sterling's motto, "Working Hands, Working Minds," was evident in the volunteerism and strong work ethic they brought to the Long Trail System for so many years.

According to volunteer records, Sterling College completed 42 separate work trips with GMC since 2011 alone. These projects engaged 290 Sterling faculty and students and totaled 1,960 hours of volunteer time. As GMC's Volunteer Coordinator, I first connected with Sterling in 2017 and have seen the meaningful contributions they've made to the LT over the years. Here are some of the highlights of Sterling's commitments:

Course Credits on the Long Trail

Since 2018, Sterling's student orientation course, "A Sense of Place" (ASOP), has included a multi-day backpacking trip on the LT, with one of those days dedicated to a volunteer project.

Each year, Sterling has worked with GMC to host six different volunteer group projects, ranging from cleaning drainages to staining shelters and building privies. Sterling Professor Adrian Owens noted how "ASOP volunteer opportunities allowed students to more fully appreciate the trail features they hiked on, and let them give back to the trail and trail community."

That's the goal of GMC's Service Learning Program: a mutually beneficial partnership where students or other groups learn about the effort it takes to maintain the Long Trail System, develop new skills, and unite as a team to make a positive impact. GMC benefits immensely, thanks to an enthusiastic group of new volunteers and the ability to tackle projects that are too large for a single volunteer adopter or smaller GMC section.

Adrian is especially fond of the workday where Sterling delivered all new metal roofing to Corliss Camp in a downpour, the students using the metal roofing as a pseudo-umbrella. With Sterling's delivery, GMC's Laraway Section could step in and quickly replace the existing mossy, crumbling roof in a day.

Another stand-out project, which also occurred in a frightening thunderstorm, is the removal of an abandoned hunting camp on a newly conserved land parcel adjacent to the LT. Students made dozens of trips back and forth on a slippery half-mile path, hauling garbage, including a rotting mattress, a refrigerator, propane tanks, and roofing shingles. Though soaked to the bone and a little afraid of the thunder, the students had an enormous smile the whole time. These are the types of projects GMC knew Sterling could be trusted to see through to the finish.

Trail Adoption

Sterling College has been the adopter of the LT from Hogback Road to Prospect Rock Road since the mid-2000s, when former GMC board member and Sterling professor John Zaber began leading maintenance trips. Now under the helm of Professor John McKinnon, students have learned trail maintenance by removing blowdowns, painting blazes, and replacing puncheon. If you've enjoyed the beautiful view of the Lamoille River at the top of Johnson's Prospect Rock, Sterling College is the one to thank for the well-maintained trail conditions!



Service Learning projects teach students how to work together, and help make GMC's work more efficient. Carrying metal roofing at Corliss Camp.

Wheeler Pond Cabins

GMC staff have never been as outworked by volunteers as they were on wood stacking days with Sterling at the Wheeler Pond Cabins. In fall 2025, it was almost necessary to institute a speed limit as students navigated a loaded wheelbarrow down the narrow path between woodsheds. Sterling students worked at one pace, and that pace was fast. They've probably stacked hundreds of cords of firewood and have been responsible for keeping hundreds of cabin renters warm on winter nights.

Winter Trails Day

GMC used to host an annual Winter Trails Day festival, with guided hikes and workshops designed for families. Sterling's commitment to outdoor programming and experiential learning meant their students could gain meaningful work experience while supporting GMC's event planning. Sterling's fresh ideas, hard work, and big smiles were always major contributing factors to a successful day.

THANKS

While Sterling is closing as an accredited college, their impact on the Long Trail System will be felt for years to come. Thank you to all those at Sterling College who found the LT a worthy place to volunteer. If you're an alum looking for volunteer roles, there are some big shoes to fill!



Sterling students split and move firewood with gusto!

◀ Sterling has organized dozens of student groups who volunteer to complete meaningful work on the Long Trail during their student orientation each year.

RIPARIAN TREE PLANTING AT GMC HEADQUARTERS

Improves Flood Resiliency and Watershed Health

THIS SPRING, FRIENDS OF THE WINOOSKI (FOTW) PLANTED HUNDREDS OF TREES AND SHRUBS to protect riparian areas around Alder Brook, the small stream that flows through the Green Mountain Club (GMC) headquarters' property in Waterbury Center. Based in Montpelier, FOTW's mission is to protect and restore the Winooski River Watershed. We interviewed Sam Puddicombe, Project Manager for FOTW, about this project.

What is a riparian buffer planting?

A riparian area is a transitional zone from a water body, such as a river, to an upland area. These are critical spots for the health of our waterways and wildlife habitats. A riparian buffer planting consisting of native trees and shrubs protects and enhances such areas. These woody plants filter water from upland areas, stabilize the soil around the river, and provide food and shelter for animals on land and in the water.

Alder Brook begins on the hillside behind GMC headquarters. It flows south into the Waterbury Reservoir, which drains into the Winooski River. This planting established 1.5 acres of trees and shrubs along the main stem of Alder Brook, between GMC and the neighboring Vermont Artisan Coffee and Tea property, plus an additional 0.5-acre planting around a small, erosion-prone tributary by the Short Trail.

The project is supported by state and federal funds for its benefits to water quality and wildlife habitat, at no cost to the host sites.

FOTW has done plantings near the LT, too, including 400 new trees at the confluence of Preston Brook and the Winooski River, near the Long Trail on Duxbury Road.



Planting along an erosion-prone tributary on GMC's Short Trail.

What role do these plantings play in Vermont's increasingly variable climate?

Reforesting a river buffer can help calm a lot of the impacts of climate change. Considering more frequent and powerful storm events, forested buffers slow the rate at which water moves into rivers, decreasing the speed at which rivers rise. When rivers do rise and flood, riparian buffers help slow the flow of water moving across the landscape. These flood resiliency benefits also slow the rate at which pollutants move into rivers, keeping our waters cleaner. In instances of increased heat and drought, trees keep our rivers cooler and fuller. Tree canopies shade the river, significantly reducing water temperatures (which stabilizes habitat) while their roots help regulate the flow of water into the river and the water table.

How did FOTW identify GMC as a planting site?

Keith Fritchie, Winooski Basin Planner for the Department of Environmental Conservation, conducted a remote "riparian gap analysis." This created a list of properties that, from the maps, looked like they could use more woody vegetation along a stream. Prior to planting, these two zones lacked trees or shrubs immediately next to the stream, making them good candidates for improving the riparian buffer.

The property also lies within the Shutesville Hill Wildlife Corridor which provides habitat connectivity between the Green Mountains and the Worcester Range. The Staying Connected Initiative describes it as one of the most important wildlife corridors in Vermont and recommends encouraging vegetation growth along waterways, promoting native plant growth, and maintaining forest cover. Given the ecological benefits to both the Winooski watershed and the Shutesville Corridor, GMC agreed to become a host site.

What are the short-, medium-, and long-term intended outcomes of the GMC planting project?

Years one through three are the stewardship years. FOTW will be putting time and resources into making sure the trees are healthy and growing well. We want to make sure they grow above competing vegetation, are not browsed by animals, and have resilient root structures.

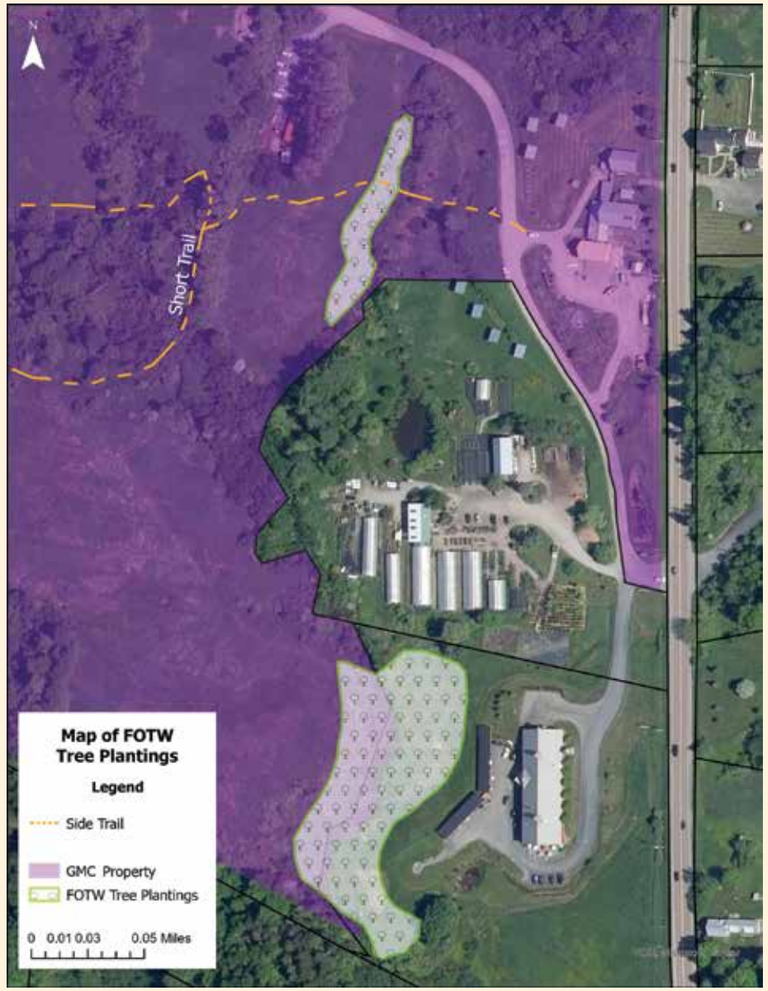
By year five, these plantings should be self-sufficient. The trees and shrubs will have grown above the competing vegetation, and it will start to look like a young forest. At this point they will be providing some real habitat benefits and filtering water.

Our restoration projects aim to jumpstart a natural process that has been disrupted through historical agricultural land use and development. We are not planting to replicate an ecosystem that may have once been here, but rather to get it started down the path to recovery and ecological complexity.

In 20-30 years, we hope to see an area that looks entirely different. The wetland by Alder Brook will be a thicket of willows, speckled alder, and dogwoods. The upland areas will have oaks and pines providing an overstory canopy. The previous blanket of field grasses will have been shaded out with native understory plants. Ideally, natural processes will have taken over and many species that we did not plant will be in the landscape. The area will support a large diversity of wildlife and act as a sponge for water in the landscape.

Downstream we will also see the benefits of the flood-resilient tributaries; slower water flow into the tributaries means less chance of the Winooski itself overflowing its banks in future intense rain events. That bodes well for the portion of the LT that traverses the Winooski floodplain in Bolton, which has been closed after recent flood events.

Sam Puddicombe is a Project Manager at Friends of the Winooski River. Among other projects, he manages their tree planting program. He coordinates five to seven tree planting sites per year, averaging around eight acres in total with 3,000 stems planted.



Friends of the Winooski planted trees and shrubs along Alder Brook at GMC headquarters to improve watershed health.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy Study Provides New Estimates for Trail Use

A NEW STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC) reports that there were 16.9 million visits to the Appalachian Trail (AT) in 2025, including 532,000 to the AT in Vermont. If usage patterns on the rest of the Long Trail (LT) hold similar to the 150 miles of AT in the state, we can effectively estimate **over one million visits to the Long Trail System per year** — a far cry from the long-used estimate of "at least 200,000 users per year," first cited in the *Long Trail News* in 1996!

This is the first comprehensive estimate of trail usage we've had in a few decades, as counting trail use on a dispersed system that is free to enter is notoriously difficult. Monica Mogilewsky, ATC's visitor use data manager, explained how the study was conducted and how we can use the findings to better maintain and protect the trail and connect with the hikers who use it.

The data captured in the survey came from a combination of trail counters, field observations, and aggregated mobile data. ATC contracted with a company called Placer.ai to build an algorithm that could estimate how many people were visiting a certain portion of the trail based on location data gathered from anonymized and aggregated cell phone signals.

This form of data collection and analysis has been used more frequently in recent years and is incredibly accurate in dense, urban settings where it can be compared to hard user counts like ticket sales at a stadium, for example. In dispersed, rural settings — like the 150 miles of narrow AT corridor in Vermont — it was less proven as a use case. Monica spent the last three years fine-tuning the methodology with the National Park Service, including its social sciences unit, which mandates strict official count procedures, and several different vendors to get an accurate count.

The visitation counts were much higher than Monica's team was expecting, even when using a conservative approach to counting. "It's strong evidence for how well the AT is being managed through the cooperative management model," she explains. "It's a huge testament to all the agencies, managing clubs (like the Green Mountain Club), and volunteers who maintain and manage the trail."

So, why are user counts helpful? They help us make management decisions and concentrate our outreach, funding, and trail work in the areas that need them most. They help us understand how hiker use is contributing to trail damage, which we can compare to natural forces like water drainage and storm impacts, and then determine the best methods to fix and prevent further damage. We can use this information to prioritize where we position caretakers and volunteers, and tailor our educational resources to the places where they will reach the most trail users, improving everyone's enjoyment and stewardship of our natural places.

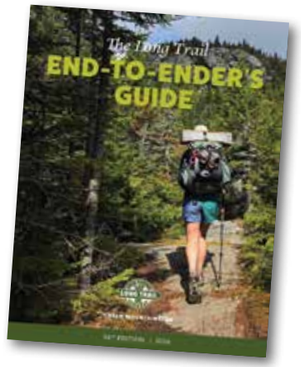
To learn more about ATC's study results, please visit **appalachiantrail.org/visitation**

All New *End-to-Ender's Guide* Updated for Digital Age

The 2026 *End-to-Ender's Guide* is now available as a free digital download. GMC has published this essential handbook since the 1990s. It is primarily a logistical resource, detailing businesses and amenities to help thru and section hikers get in and out of town and resupply along their journeys.

If a long hike is in your future, we encourage you to download the new *End-to-Ender's Guide*. It's an interactive PDF best viewed on a desktop or tablet, and can easily come with you on the trail and be accessed from a smartphone.

Greenmountainclub.org/end-to-ender-guide



Volunteers

SECTIONS HIT THE TRAIL FOR SPRING MAINTENANCE

EACH SPRING, VOLUNTEERS FROM GMC'S 14 REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP SECTIONS hit their assigned section of trail to ensure it is in top shape for hiking season. They serve as the eyes and ears of the trail system, employing strategies to keep hikers on the trail and water off of it (clipping back overgrown brush, removing fallen trees, clearing and repairing waterbars).

They also identify emerging issues that could lead to a trail defect and work closely with GMC staff to implement solutions.



PHOTO BY DAVID HATHAWAY

Burlington Section clears blowdowns on Nebraska Notch Trail.

"We used our chainsaw to clear four different blowdowns, including one high step over and a couple that completely blocked the trail. This was despite having been told by three guys who had just hiked the entire route we covered that there were no blowdowns to deal with. It goes to show that if you aren't looking for them, you may not notice them as you walk around them."

— David Hathaway, Burlington Section



PHOTO BY BARB RASKIN

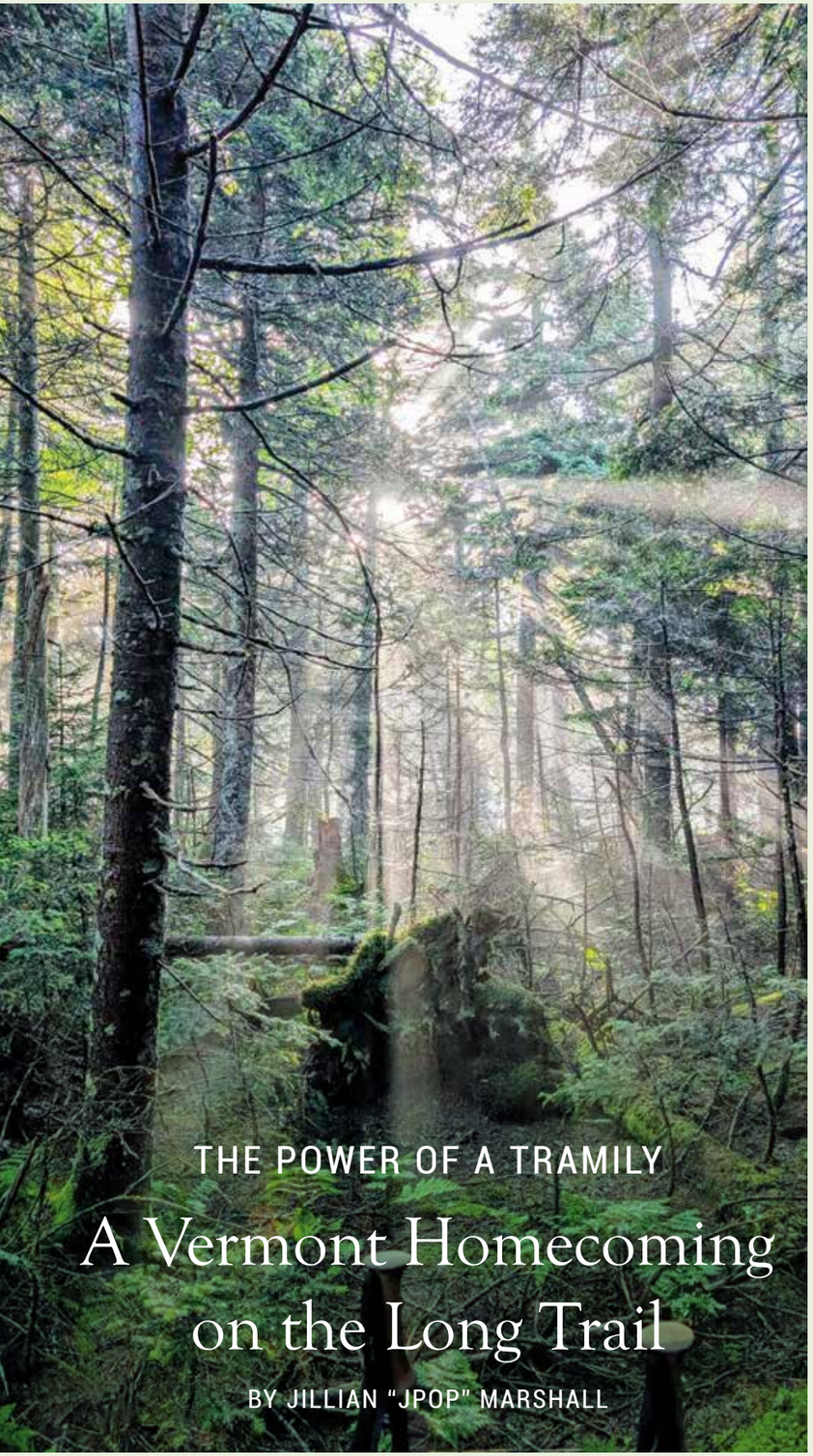
Bennington Section volunteers conducted maintenance on the LT from Route 9 to Harmon Hill.



UVO volunteers identified a section of sidehill trail that was sloughing away, which means the outside, downhill edge was migrating downhill due to gravity and hiker traffic. UVO Section volunteers will repair the trail this summer, using benching techniques to re-establish the tread with a firm and stable backslope, tread and outslope.



Manchester Section volunteers on a spring work day maintaining the LT/AT from Griffith Lake to Styles Peak.



THE POWER OF A TRAMILY

A Vermont Homecoming on the Long Trail

BY JILLIAN "JPOP" MARSHALL

I LEFT VERMONT IN A HURRY AT AGE 17, but it wasn't because I didn't love the Green Mountain State.

A Vermonter born and raised, I grew up in a ramshackle farmhouse at the end of a dirt road in Fairfield. Its pastures, woods, and stone walls were straight out of a Robert Frost poem, and I loved Vermont's nature so deeply that it contours the terrain of my soul to this day. My father nurtured my reverence of Vermont's wilderness with section hikes of the Long Trail (LT) — which, though exciting, felt (and likely were) perilous as a ten-year-old.

But while I always felt at home in Vermont's mountains, I also dreamed of travel, experiencing other cultures, and nurturing my creative interests in music, art, and writing that are hard to do in a state with the smallest Queen City in the country. Since setting off for college at 17, I've lived around the world: Chicago, China, Japan, and, for the past eight years, New York City.

Yet no matter where I've gone, I've always looked for Vermont: places where I can hear the wind's melodies, marvel at wildflowers (even if they're pushing through concrete), and be blissfully alone. Among the array of truths I've observed that come into clearer focus with age, I realize that I not only love Vermont — something I've never questioned — but that I love *hiking* as well.

Turns out those childhood backpacking trips with my father left a deep impression.

So, to detox from the New York hustle, reconnect with my roots, and claim my heritage as a hiker — my father and sister have both done the LT *and* the Appalachian Trail (AT) —I set off to hike the LT in the summer of 2025.

I expected my northbound (NOBO) hike to be a solo mission, not least because I had heard that June isn't a popular time on the trail (I won't lie, the bugs *were* brutal). But other than a three-day stretch when the only other souls I encountered were a deer, three partridges, and an enormous sloth-like porcupine, I was surprised to find so many wonderful people hiking their own hike.

> "...what's really stayed with me is the incredible sense of community among LT hikers who push themselves to spiritual and physical limits..."

There was Bob, who was heading southbound to Skyline Lodge but stayed with me at Emily Proctor because I know how to play cribbage, and he'd brought a board. There was a mother-daughter trio at Battell Shelter who'd bumped into my father at Lincoln Gap (where he surprised me with a sandwich and a whoopie pie). And Moose, who recognized me from logbook entries, came down the trail at the exact moment I was panicking about Ladder Ravine, and showed me a good foothold. Camel and I tearfully reunited at Montclair Glen after having not seen each other since the two nights we spent at Melville Nauheim and Kid Gore, 145 miles south. It was also at Montclair Glen that I met Uffda, who ran in just before "Hiker Midnight" at 8 p.m. (his usual arrival time, as it turns out), and two NOBO flip-floppers who would become my trail family, or *tramily*: a pair of cousins named Double Diamond, with whom I finished the trail, and Equinox, who got off at Plot Road not because he lacked grit, but because he learned a valuable lesson — you've gotta keep those feet dry!

Hiking alongside AT folks for the first 104 miles, I'd felt out of place. They'd been with each other for months and could practically taste Katahdin. But me? I've ascended many mountains in my adult life — including bigger climbs like Mt. Fuji — but my LT training consisted of walking to and from Brooklyn restaurants in lieu of taking the subway. Much of my gear was improvised hand-me-downs, and my father later admitted that he didn't think I'd make it past Manchester (which might explain why he kept surprising me at road crossings with big smiles and non-instant food once I hit Route 4).

Luckily, I discovered that LT hikers were often as ragtag as I was, and I quickly trusted that we belonged on the trail as much as an AT NOBO pulling 30-mile days. Double Diamond overpacked and hiked with a food bag slung around his neck; Camel somehow ran out of fuel on day two; Uffda hung his bear bag a mere five feet off the ground; Equinox hiked Mansfield with what might have been literal trench foot. We LT hikers learned as we went and gained confidence and overcame our fears as a team.

At Round Top Shelter, with the biggest climbs behind us and just forty-odd miles to Canada, my tramily and I made a fire. After sharing battle stories — scaring off bears, getting sliced open on blowdowns, climbing Camel's Hump in a torrential storm, outracing another on the top of Mansfield — we talked about how the LT was so much different than what we'd anticipated. I shared my assumption that the only people I'd meet would be "weird outdoorsy people," and we all laughed.

Turns out, of course, that we *are* the "weird outdoorsy people."

Reflecting on my NOBO LT adventure, I remember the beauty: the twinkling octaves of the hermit thrush, *komorebi* (A Japanese word for sunlight streaming through leaves), and those rainy days when I had to be creative about finding the silver lining (*Hey, no bugs!*). But what's really stayed with me is the incredible sense of community among LT hikers who push themselves to spiritual and physical limits often for the first time, and discover not only what they're made of, but what Vermont means to them.



The author, center, discovered the power of a trail family while hiking the LT, including new friends "Double Diamond" and "Equinox."

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Pick a hike of any kind, grab your friends, and sign up now to support the trails you love.

Registration is open now!

greenmountainclub.org/longtrailday



"Our team had so much fun participating in the Long Trail Day Hike-a-Thon! Not only was it a fun day hiking with friends, but it felt great knowing we raised funds to support the trails we love. Since we chose to hike Burrows Trail on Camel's Hump, we were easily able to see evidence of the incredible work GMC does to maintain and protect the trails. Fun on the trails for a great cause? Win-win!"

— MELISSA BROTT, GMC member and first-time Long Trail Day participant with her fundraising team, Essex Hikers