Long Trail NEWS > FALL 2026



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

6 Flood Recovery Trail Work Underway

10 Summer Hiking Reports

16 Camel's Hump Rescue, 47 Years Later

Long Trail NEWS

Fall 2026, Volume 86, No.3

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 of GMC,



Owen Rachampbell

It has been an excellent summer season for the Green Mountain Club! Thank you to the staff and volunteers who are still hard at work throughout the state. I encourage you to take a hike to witness the new relocation on Belvidere Mountain, spend a night in the new Battell Shelter on Mt. Abe, or cross over the new, bigger bridge north of Peru Peak Shelter. These important projects — and more — will provide opportunities for hikers like you and me to enjoy the Long Trail System for many years to come.

I am excited to serve as the new vice chair of the Green Mountain Club Board of Directors. Growing up in a hiking family at the base of Camel's Hump, I have always benefited from GMC's work to protect and maintain the trails. As I hiked more in and outside of Vermont — I've hiked the Long Trail End-to-End and Side-to-Side, and thru-hiked the Appalachian and Continental Divide Trails — the more I came to appreciate the pioneering role our club played in creating the Long Trail, inspiring the trails and trail organizations that followed, and leaving a lasting impact on the lives of Vermonters. This influence encouraged me to volunteer with the Laraway section and eventually seek a leadership role. I hope to help others experience the same sense of connection and adventure that the trails have given me.

My tenure as vice chair began in June, when the club hosted its 116th Annual Meeting. Joining me as new officers are Susan Tobin as treasurer and Jeff Wehrwein as secretary. We have big shoes to fill — thank you to departing officers Nancy Thomas, Bob Paquin, and Anne Houser for their years of service on the board.

A key priority for me is working with Membership and Development staff to identify new opportunities for membership growth, engagement, and retention. Economic stress and inflation have meant a decline in contributions from lower-income supporters. This shift is not unique to our organization, and I will emphasize that GMC remains in a strong financial position with healthy overall contributions. Our challenge is to think creatively about how we engage and inspire people to give to ensure our membership continues to reflect the diverse community of people who use and care for the Long Trail System. To all of you reading this who see the value in GMC membership, thank you for your important and ongoing support.

As I continue to deepen my connection to Vermont's trails and GMC's mission, I'm planning some hikes this fall on historic routes of the Long Trail using old maps and guides. I hope it will help me appreciate how it has changed over the years. I encourage you to let the mountains play a larger part in *your* life as well. Seek out new adventures, and when you can, bring a friend or two to share the experience and create new memories. After all, that's what your support makes possible.

See you on the trail!

Owen Rachampbell

FRONT COVER: Kent Pond, by Todd Wilkinson

BUSINESS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The Mountain Goat

THE MOUNTAIN GOAT is a locally owned and operated outdoor outfitter in Manchester, just five minutes from the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail. It's a favorite stop for long-distance backpackers, as they offer pole and pack repair services, participate in GMC's bear canister lending program, and allow hikers to mail resupply boxes for pickup there. They also offer winter gear rentals, including cross-country skis and snowshoes, for exploring area trails in the snow.

"The Mountain Goat is so proud to support the Green Mountain Club as a business partner," says owner Anne Houser. "There are so many reasons we love to support GMC. First, many of our customers are outdoor enthusiasts who use the extensive trail network GMC maintains and manages, so the beautiful trail is a huge asset to our business and community. Perhaps even more importantly, we support access to healthy green space in Vermont, which aligns perfectly with GMC's mission and values. Finally, The Mountain Goat is proud to partner with such a professionally managed organization with a long legacy of Long Trail corridor protection and a reputation for being stewards of one of our state's most treasured outdoor resources — the trails."

—ANNE HOUSER, OWNER, THE MOUNTAIN GOAT



Anne Houser

Interested in becoming a business supporter of GMC? Contact Rhonda Forcier at rforcier@greenmountainclub.org for more information.

Long Trail Day Fundraisers Get Creative with Hike-A-Thon Challenges

AT PRESS TIME, THE ANNUAL LONG TRAIL DAY COMMUNITY FUNDRAISER AND HIKE-A-THON is chugging along toward its ambitious $80,000 fundraising goal. Thank you to everyone who has participated or donated so far and is making this year's fundraiser another success. The theme of Long Trail Day is "This is YOUR Hike-a-Thon," so here are a few ways hikers are celebrating the unofficial holiday on September 19! Fundraising will remain open after Sept. 19. To support these and other hikers and GMC's work on the Long Trail, make a gift at **greenmountainclub.org/longtrailday**



◀ **HERB OGDEN,** Killington Section President, is hiking 6.3 miles from Wallingford Gulf to Route 103, seeking pledges of $10/mile, or $63, to support his fundraising effort.

◀ **ALLISON HENRY** plans to hike the 24 miles of Long Trail/Appalachian Trail managed by the Killington Section, from Vt. 140 to Maine Junction, in 24 hours.



▲ **CHLOE MILLER,** *Long Trail News* editor, is taking on the Mount Mansfield to Camel's Hump challenge, 32 miles covering two of central Vermont's most iconic peaks.

THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM SECTION fundraises for Long Trail Day every year with sequential hikes along the northern portion of the LT. Last year, they hiked from Hazen's Notch (Rt. 58) south to the Frank Post Trail and this year they are continuing from the Frank Post Trailhead to Tillotson Camp, then south to Route 118.

Your Fall Hiking Guide to Vermont



Join a Guided Fall Foliage Hike on GMC's Short Trail.

FALL IS ONE OF VERMONT'S MOST ICONIC SEASONS, thanks to our high concentration of sugar maples and bold tapestries of red, orange, and yellow foliage. It's also a busy time on Vermont's trails and roads, as visitors from around the country flock to picturesque Vermont for the perfect vista. Whether you're entertaining visitors or simply want to savor the season, check out these free guided hikes and programs, as well as a few suggestions for great places to hit the trail this fall.

"We've been in a more normal range of precipitation this summer, with no record-breaking rainfall or drought like past years, so we're hopeful for a gradual, promising foliage display," says the Green Mountain Club's (GMC) Field Programs Manager Nigel Bates. The most likely period for peak color is late September through mid-October, though early September weather will play a role.

Visitor Center Programming

GMC's Rothberg-Birdwhistell Visitor Center has a full slate of fall foliage guided hikes and programming on deck — perfect for seasonal visitors or anyone looking to connect with the Vermont landscape in a new way.

Fall Foliage Guided Short Trail Hikes

September 25, October 2, 3, 9, 10; 2:00–3:00 p.m.

What makes the leaves turn red, yellow, and orange? Why is Vermont so well-known for foliage? Join Green Mountain Club staff on a guided hike on our 0.7-mile Short Trail to experience Vermont's foliage and learn more about this phenomenon.

Hike and Yoga

October 17; 7:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Join us for an invigorating morning hike followed by an easy therapeutic yoga class at the Visitor Center, led by Samara Anderson.

Fall to Winter Forests Guided Short Trail Hikes

October 24, November 14; 2:00–3:00 p.m.

What changes happen in the forest and its inhabitants after the leaves have fallen? Find out as we explore the last pieces of fall and the transition to stick season and winter.

Trails and Tales: Guided Hike and Storytime

November 7; 10:30–11:30 a.m.

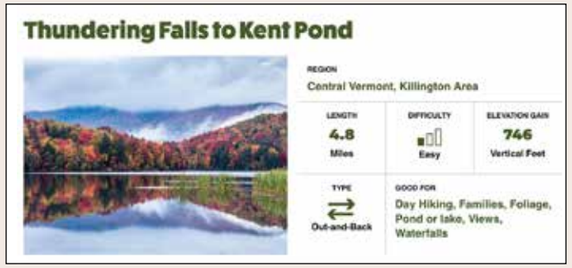
Looking to get outside with your young ones? Join GMC staff for a family-friendly, outdoor-themed story time, followed by a guided hike on our 0.7-mile Short Trail.

View the latest schedule and programming offerings at **greenmountainclub.org/calendar-of-events**

Hunting Season

Please remember that fall is hunting season in Vermont and all land that the Long Trail (LT) crosses is open for hunting. To stay safe and share the woods, wear blaze orange and other bright neon colors, keep pets leashed or consider leaving them at home, and avoid hiking at dawn or dusk. Find more information on specific hunting seasons at **vtfishandwildlife.com/hunt**

Find a Hike Using GMC's New Web Tool



GMC launched a new website this summer, and we hope you enjoy it! You'll find redesigned and easy-to-explore hike planning advice and spotlights on GMC's work. We're excited to announce the new "Find A Hike" library tool which allows you to search a curated list of hike recommendations based on features like distance, difficulty, location, and special features. Check out the "Foliage" feature to find some of our favorite hikes of the season, customized for you!
Greenmountainclub.org/find-a-hike

HIKE RECOMMENDATIONS

3 Overlooks in Bennington

The town of Bennington is promoting a hiking challenge to three scenic viewpoints in town, including two on the Long Trail System. The third overlook, Zaphod's Overlook, is on Mt. Anthony and maintained by the Bennington Area Trail System.

Harmon Hill

This out-and-back on the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail (LT/AT) South from Route 9 climbs steeply up a stone staircase, which has been restored by the Long Trail Patrol crew in recent years. After 0.6 mi., the ascent becomes more gradual before cresting Harmon Hill (1.8 mi.). This hill is maintained as early successional habitat with occasional prescribed burns by the U.S. Forest Service and vegetation clearing by volunteers from the Bennington Section. The view to the west includes Mt. Anthony, historic downtown Bennington, and the Bennington Battle Monument.

Long Trail to Harmon Hill, 3.6 miles round trip, 965 ft. elev. gain.

Bald Mountain Trail

The west trailhead of the Bald Mountain Trail starts in Bennington. There is a good overlook at White Rocks (2.6 mi.) then an intersection with the West Ridge Trail at 4.0 mi., just south of the Bald Mountain Summit. You can extend the hike on the West Ridge Trail to Glastenbury Mountain and a junction with the LT/AT.

Bald Mountain West Trailhead to White Rocks, 5.2 mi. round trip, 1,670 ft. elev. gain.

Bald Mountain West Trailhead to Bald Mountain Summit, 8.0 mi round trip, 2,190 ft. elev. gain.

Zaphod's Overlook

This moderate climb starts at the parking lot on Mansion Drive in Bennington. Follow the trail up the mountain. There are signs to 'Lookout' just off Zaphod's Run. This is a multi-use trail system.

Zaphod's Overlook via Zaphod's Run, 2 mi. round trip, 800 ft. elev. gain.



PHOTO BY BARB RASKIN

Bennington Section volunteer removes vegetation on Harmon Hill.



PHOTO BY BILLY MARTIN

View from White Rocks on the Bald Mountain Trail.



PHOTO BY JONAH SPIVAK

Views from Zaphod's Overlook.

FIELD NOTES

Flood Recovery Trail Work Begins

BY KEEGAN TIERNEY, DIRECTOR OF FIELD PROGRAMS

THE LONG TRAIL SYSTEM, A LEGACY TRAIL NETWORK THAT PRE-DATES THE CONCEPTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE BY DECADES and whose founders might never have imagined receiving upwards of a million user visits annually, has suffered in recent years from increased frequency of catastrophic rain events. Three 100-year (or one percent-chance) floods in 18 months forced Green Mountain Club (GMC) staff and volunteers to consider what the future looks like for a trail system that, in many places, catches and holds water.

The floods on July 10, 2023, caused statewide damage to communities, businesses, roads, and recreation infrastructure, including the Long Trail (LT). In the 2026 season, our crews are finally able to address some of the worst of the damages (work on these project sites is ongoing as of publication).



Clara Bow flood damage.

The first site is **the Long Trail and the Clara Bow Trail's northern intersection in Nebraska Notch**. Both trails descend into the intersection and have long stretches of tread with failed drainage structures and treadway slopes well over half of the prevailing topography. (The "half rule" is a main principle of sustainable trail design. Learn more at greenmountainclub.org/sustainable-trails)

On July 10, the significant rainfall on the trail had only one path to follow downhill, and it carried with it large amounts of soil and subbase from the trail. When the water met at the trail intersection and just a few feet later merged with the overtopped waters of Clay Brook, the result was a total loss of the tread, massive gravel deposits into a downstream beaver pond, and elevated pond levels that submerged an additional 200 feet of trail running along the shoreline.

GMC crews are spending six weeks building new tread 40 vertical feet upslope, through challenging terrain filled with house-sized boulders, to mitigate future flooding threats while still providing views of the pond. This work is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency through a partnership between GMC and Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation.

By relocating the trail, we will avoid future water level fluctuations that would lead to long-term maintenance expenses.

In southern Vermont, the **Homer Stone Brook Trail in Wallingford** suffered a similar fate in the July 2023 flood, capturing water coming off the north slope of Green Mountain, carrying it down the treadway for roughly half a mile until eventually draining into Homer Stone Brook. In some places, as much as 36 inches of soil was washed away. In addition, large gravel deposits formed in less steep stretches of trail, as the flow of water slowed enough to leave behind massive piles of soil and gravel.

Crews spent six weeks on the Homer Stone Brook Trail earlier this summer, using the club's mini excavator alongside hand tools and labor. They installed two significant stone staircases by hand to harden impacted steep areas, and used the mini excavator to install large waterbars and increase drainage in places where the damage was beyond the scope of hand tools. While we considered relocating the impacted stretch of trail to sit further from the brook, private landownership and archeological concerns prevented that option.

GMC crews also spent three weeks on the LT at Bloodroot Mountain, five weeks on the LT north of Lincoln Gap, installed a new bridge at the Homer Stone Brook on the LT/Appalachian Trail (AT) in Wallingford, and worked on several other smaller flood repair sites.

GMC worked closely with our partners at the Green Mountain National Forest to secure funding for affected LT sites on federal land.

Reality of Continued Flood Impacts

This funding is critical to fixing urgent needs and significant erosion, but we face the reality of continued increases in heavy rain events causing significant trail damage.

While the trail has largely remained passable through our recent flooding, real threats exist to the continuity of the trail system. Prime examples of these threats include:

- Side trails that run along significant rivers (i.e., Cooley Glen or Broad Brook Trails) and could be washed away in their entirety. This happened recently with the East Dorset Trail, delisted as an official side trail by the Trail Management Committee in 2019.
- Locations where the trail passes through significant ecologically sensitive areas where relocations might not be possible.
- Areas where the protected trail corridor is narrow and may not accommodate relocation if a significant portion of trail was lost. This includes Gould and Sargent Brooks in Shrewsbury, the Lamoille River crossing, and several spots along the AT between Killington and New Hampshire.

Significant relocations are often the best solution for these flood-threatened trail portions, as their position along a river or their layout increases their risk of total loss. Relocations can be an intensive undertaking, as they are cost and resource heavy, and in many cases, involve a cultural shift in moving a historic and beloved section of trail.

Staff, volunteers, and our land management partners work cooperatively to ensure the Long Trail remains for future generations. **Your ongoing support as members and donors make this work possible — thank you.**

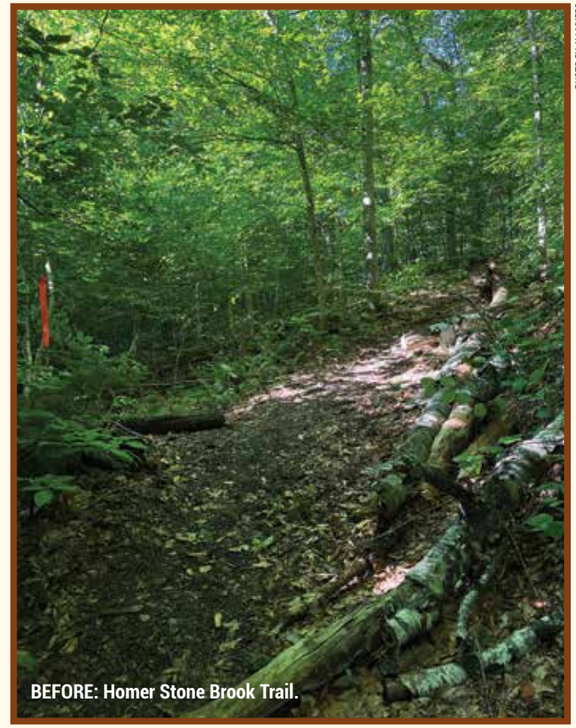


PHOTO BY ALI MYERS

BEFORE: Homer Stone Brook Trail.



PHOTO BY ALI MYERS

AFTER: Homer Stone Brook Trail.

A Trail Adopter's Thrill

LIZ MULLER, TRAIL ADOPTER

ADOPTING MEANS CARING FOR, which, along the Long Trail, generally means disciplining errant growth and redirecting water flow. Sometimes, though, there's a thrill in recovering hidden gems from the mud.

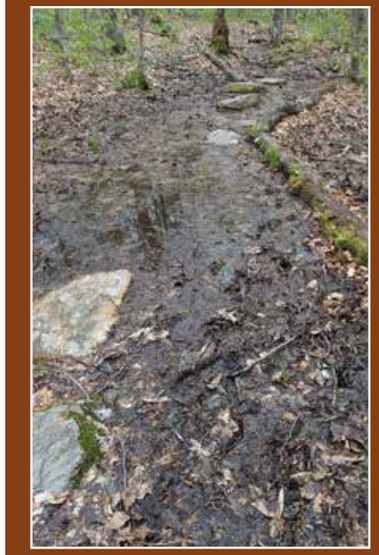
Six and a half miles from the trail's southern terminus, in the 1.2-mile stretch of Long Trail from Roaring Branch to Consultation Peak for which I am responsible for providing annual maintenance, I'd been confounded by a mud pit with seemingly no place for water to go. Most hikers crossed the span on deteriorating tree trunks, which can block water's exit and exacerbate the mud problem as the logs act as an organic sponge holding moisture. This spring, while I tried to dig out a waterway between the trunks, a hiker approached, trudged through the mud, tripped, and stepped onto a sunken flat rock — previously hidden from view —to make his way across.

With a surge of energy and urgency, I wielded my hazel hoe to pry the logs from the mud and hurl them into the woods (OK, they rolled reluctantly). A slurry of mud seeped out exposing the hiker's stepping stone and several others!

During a presentation at the Bennington Section's annual meeting in 2024, just after I had signed up as a trail adopter, I learned what it took to place a stepping stone like this one. Dig a hole, crush big rocks into small rocks to fill the hole, search for the perfect flat rock, and erect a grip hoist to move the stone into place. Sometime in the past, at least a decade ago, based on the muddiness, a trail crew's hard labor had set each of these valuable stones. I worked my hazel hoe around each rock to remove the built-up detritus blocked by the tree trunks. Soon, I had that just-flossed feeling — a gleaming smile on my face reflecting the trail of newly exposed stepping stones.

In late summer, I was thrilled to see the stones were still shining brightly and the persistent mud puddle had not returned. While admiring our area's natural beauty, I had a great sense of satisfaction for having helped maintain a few steps of the Long Trail.

A version of this article first appeared in the Bennington Section's Stepping Stone *August Newsletter.*



BEFORE: Mud pit with sunken stepping stones.



Liz Muller clears out a mud pit with a hazel hoe.



AFTER: Trail with newly exposed stepping stones.

Reimagined VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREW Helps Belvidere Trail Relocation Cross the Finish Line

FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS, the Green Mountain Club (GMC) has worked with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to host six to eight weeks of volunteer trail crew, working on major trail improvement projects on the Appalachian Trail/Long Trail (LT/AT) corridor in southern Vermont. It's a unique volunteer opportunity that gives individuals the chance to experience life on a trail crew for one long weekend at a time (hitches run Thursday-Tuesday to minimize time off from other jobs). We sometimes call it "Volunteer Vacation."

This year, the standard funding from the AT National Park Service unit wasn't available, and we couldn't run the program at its typical 6-week full capacity. However, we still recognize the value of the volunteer trail crew structure and wanted to offer the opportunity to interested participants.

We settled on a two-week hybrid volunteer crew structure that would work alongside the professional crew on the Long Trail (LT) relocation on Belvidere Mountain in August. The opportunity was offered only to previous volunteer crew participants to streamline recruiting and training.

The volunteer crew – 10 participants over the two weeks – helped accelerate tread finishing work on the relocation project and allowed GMC to complete and open the relocation at the end of August, ahead of our anticipated schedule. With the significant experience these volunteers brought to the project, and the effective leadership of Volunteer Supervisor Grace Law, this crew doubled the amount of work we were able to do during their time with us.

"The volunteers worked alongside the professional crew on site, which created multiple efficiencies: supervisors could visit both professional and volunteer crews on the same site visit, and volunteers provided a welcome boost of energy to the project," said Volunteer Coordinator Lorne Currier.



PHOTO BY LILY LARESINA

Volunteers Kristen Pizarro (back) and Jerry Perkins (front) work on the trail relocation.

"It's rewarding to think about the fact that a couple thousand hikers will hike over this and may not think much of it, but hopefully their day will be a little bit smoother thanks to the work we've done," said volunteer Mike Prosalik, who returned to the crew for his second year.

The volunteers focused on hardening the lower section of the Belvidere Trail relocation, cutting new tread, and hardening the upper relocation. Most of the relocation route had great mineral soil with which to create a durable surface, but there were occasional pockets of organic soil or rocky ledges that needed rockwork to make the tread appealing to hikers and to avoid mud in the future. The crew was split between working on rockwork projects, such as retaining walls, check steps, and stairs, while others were cutting new tread where the mini-excavator couldn't reach or polishing tread behind the mini-excavator.

Our team learned a lot from this evolved version of the volunteer trail crew, most notably the possibilities that arise when we can rely on private, unrestricted funding from members and donors like you. We can put resources and crews onto the project sites that need them most. Thanks to your support, and a small, dedicated crew of experienced volunteers, we accelerated the timeline of this major trail relocation with efficient and high-quality work. Given the increased uncertainty of federal funding, your donations are as important as ever in allowing us to host meaningful professional and volunteer crews and complete large-scale sustainable trail relocations like this one. Thank you.

More information on LT relocation on Belvidere Mountain will be included in the Winter edition of the *Long Trail News*.

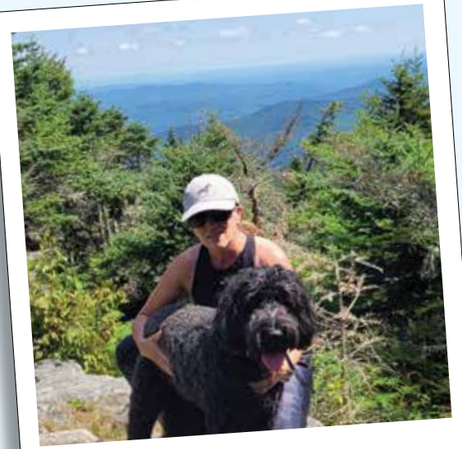
HIKE IT

From the parking lot on Route 118, hike north on the LT. After about 0.2 mi, the trail bears west as you begin hiking over new tread. The new trail, built with a combination of a mini-excavator and hand tools, follows a sustainable layout for 0.9 mi through the hardwood forest. At 1.1 mi, return to the original route of the LT and climb steeply over some rocky ledges to Belvidere Saddle (2.8 mi.) and a junction with the Forester's Trail. Bear right on the Forester's Trail to reach the Belvidere Summit and 70-foot fire tower, which offers sweeping views. **Greenmountainclub.org/belvidere-mountain-via-long-trail**

Your Summer HIKE REPORTS

Photos and Reflections of Awe-Inducing Hikes on the Long Trail System this Summer

Send us yours at **gmc@greenmountainclub.org** or tag us on social media **@greenmountainclub**!



View from Shrewsbury Peak by David Fitts

"Fun day hiking Shrewsbury Peak up the Shrewsbury Peak Trail, down the Black Swamp Trail and took the CCC road back to the car. Solid hike."

— DAVID FITTS, AUGUST 2026

"I backpacked the Cooley Glen-Emily Proctor Loop in the Breadloaf Wilderness going clockwise with a few friends. We went up the Cooley Glen Trail, followed the Long Trail across the ridge, enjoyed views south toward Killington on Mt. Roosevelt, stayed the evening at Skyline Lodge, and hiked out the next morning on the Emily Proctor Trail. This loop is a popular longer day hike, but it was nice to break it up into a two-day hike for some extra time to enjoy this section of trail for the first time.

Two things that were particularly memorable were the sheer amount of moose poop spotted along the trail, and each member of my group selecting nature poems from a collection of Mary Oliver's work to share with each other while sitting on the porch of Skyline Lodge."

— LILY LAREGINA, AUGUST 2026



Christina Bartonicek in Devil's Gulch by Chloe Miller

"I finally hiked into Devil's Gulch, via the Ritterbush Pond Trail (managed by Northern Vermont University) and the Long Trail. It was calming and quiet, scrambling through boulder tunnels and over wet wooden ladders, and admiring the moss-covered rock walls on all sides."

— CHLOE MILLER, JUNE 2026



Nicole Bostdorff and son Logan 17, on Mount Mansfield

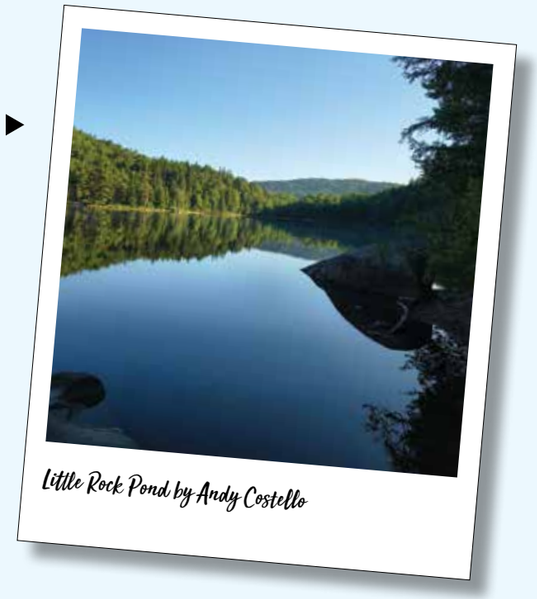
"My son Logan and I took on Mount Mansfield. Some of the boulder scrambles on Laura Cowles were more than I could have managed on my own. I truly could not have made it without Logan. At one point, we came to a massive boulder section that I simply couldn't climb. Logan went up and looked back with encouragement. I tossed him one end of my trekking pole and held on to my end of the pole, and with all my might pushed off with my stride. With his strength and my momentum, he got me safely to the next boulder. Physically, I could not have made it to the summit without him.

The trail was demanding, relentless, and pushed me beyond what I thought I could do. But Logan never wavered. He encouraged me, steadied me, and believed in me every step of the way. What I'll remember most isn't just reaching the summit; it's seeing the incredible young man my son has become. Looking into his eyes, I saw confidence, strength, and a quiet determination. I knew he would never let me fail."

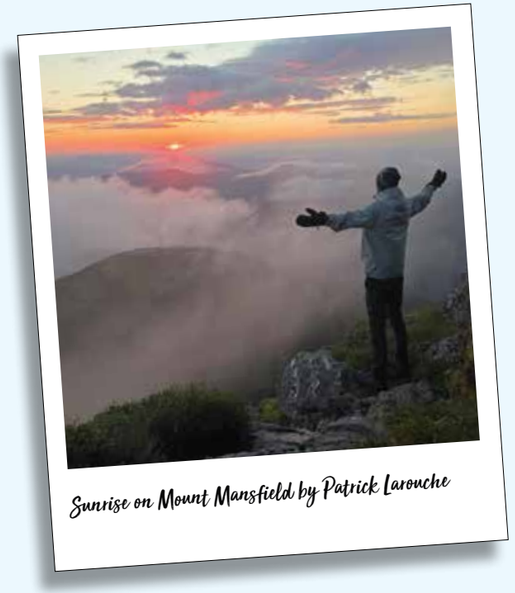
— NICOLE BOSTDORFF, ALLAMUCHY, NEW JERSEY, JUNE 2026

"I hiked north on the Long Trail from FR 10 to Little Rock Pond, then made a loop and took the Green Mountain Trail back to FR 10. The Green Mountain Trail was in especially good shape."

— ANDY COSTELLO, JULY 2026



Little Rock Pond by Andy Costello



Sunrise on Mount Mansfield by Patrick Larouche

"Sunrise on Mount Mansfield, started hiking at 2:30 a.m. and reached the summit at the perfect moment. I took the Sunset Ridge Trail, which in my opinion is the most beautiful one."

— PATRICK LAROUCHE, QUEBEC, JUNE 2026



PHOTO BY EVAN SCHILLINGER

BOLD GOALS; BOLD COMMITMENTS: 40 Years of Land Protection at GMC

BY MOLLIE FLANIGAN, DIRECTOR OF LAND CONSERVATION

IN 1986, THE GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB (GMC) WAS FACING A CRISIS. The northern third of the Long Trail (LT) existed mostly on private land, based only on "handshake agreements" with the landowners. Many of those private properties were owned by lumber companies who were experiencing changing economic circumstances and listing their high elevation, least productive lands for sale at an alarming rate. Over 30 miles of LT were on properties actively listed for sale.

The club needed to act and boldly decided that the best way to protect the trail was to buy the land itself. From that decision forty years ago, the Long Trail Protection Campaign was born.

An August 1986 *Long Trail News* article by Preston Bristow, chairman of the Fundraising Committee, proclaimed, "*Preserving Vermont's Green Mountain Profile, [is] the slogan of the Club's newly formed Long Trail Protection Fund...**It is a bold slogan indeed, but a challenge currently faces the Long Trail that requires boldness and action.***"

And it was bold, because at that time GMC had never mounted a capital campaign and needed to raise $1.6 million to meet initial LT protection goals. Bold, because the club had just three paid staff members. Bold, because the land protection movement nationwide was in its infancy, and the nuances for what it meant for a nonprofit to purchase and protect land were only just emerging.

I marvel at the courage it took to launch the Long Trail Protection Campaign, and at the success GMC has realized. Thanks to the hard work of Bob Lincoln, Preston Bristow, Sue Shea, and many others in the initial years of the campaign, GMC rapidly built up the capacity and funds to launch this new field of work. In 40 years, with the support of partners, members, and donors, the club has completed over 100 conservation projects, conserved 25,000 acres of land and protected more than 78 miles of LT. Today, 98% of the LT is permanently protected, with just 4.5 miles currently without legal protection. By any measure, the Long Trail Protection Campaign has been wildly successful.

The work of the campaign is ongoing today, guided by GMC's strategic conservation plan. GMC aims to protect the entirety of the LT (the remaining 4.5 miles), prioritized side trails (12.5 miles),and the 1,000-foot trail corridor that makes it a "footpath in the wilderness."



The Long Trail News

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LONG TRAIL PROTECTION FUND

MAJOR CAPITAL FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN IS BEGUN

By Preston Bristow, Chmn. Fund Raising Committee

GMC Executive Director Harry Post on summit of Robbins Mt. (Photo courtesy T. Talbot)

After Closing the Deal: Keeping the Land Protected

So much focus and effort go into completing land protection projects. It naturally feels like mission accomplished once the property is purchased and the papers are signed. But after the trail is protected on paper, the work of keeping it protected begins.

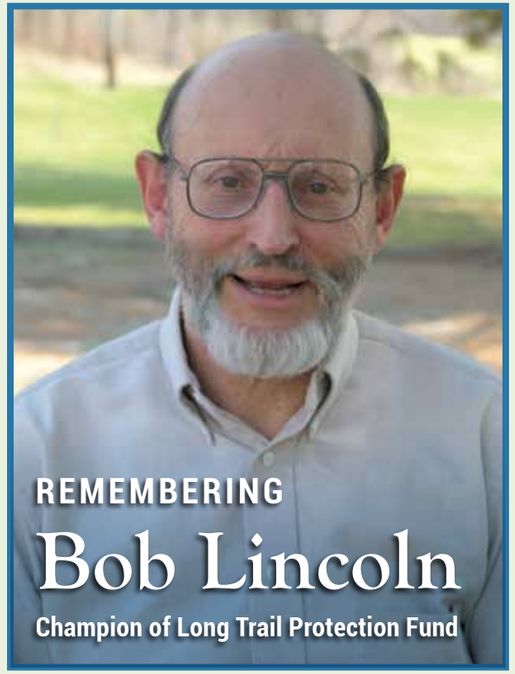
The land we conserve is conserved in "perpetuity," meaning forever, and that is the bold goal of ongoing land stewardship work. Bold, because it depends on the organization to be operational and capable of taking care of the land forever (for example, by maintaining adequate staff and volunteer capacity). Bold, because it establishes constraints and conditions for how the land is to be used in the future (usually in the form of a conservation easement). And bold, because there are sure to be challenges to the landscape that we protect in the centuries to come (these might come in the form of increased storms and impacts of climate change). With this far-reaching scope of work, how does an organization ensure it can achieve its mission, even as the challenges of the future emerge?

We do this in two ways: First, we maintain a full-time professional staff and more than 60 volunteer corridor monitors who together provide the in-house capacity to meet GMC's stewardship responsibilities. Second, GMC maintains a stewardship endowment that helps cover annual program expenses as well as costs to protect and defend the LT against threats and encroachments. With costs to maintain conserved lands increasing each year, the club is working to grow our endowment to make sure we can meet land stewardship responsibilities now and in the future.

Anniversaries are a chance to take a step back, reflect on the journey, and recommit to the path ahead. The past forty years have been a journey of bold goals, hard work, and strong partnerships, all laser focused on the overarching aim to legally protect the Long Trail System. As we near our goal of full LT protection, please join me in envisioning and committing to keeping our conserved lands protected in perpetuity. Your support can help make our bold future possible.

To learn how you can help protect and steward the Long Trail, please contact Mollie at 802-241-8217 or mflanigan@greenmountainclub.org

◀ **1986 issue of *Long Trail News*.**



REMEMBERING

Bob Lincoln

Champion of Long Trail Protection Fund

BOB LINCOLN, who worked in fundraising for the Green Mountain Club (GMC) for 19 years, passed away on April 21, 2026, in Berlin, at age 88.

Bob joined GMC in 1987 to lead fundraising efforts for the fledgling Long Trail Protection Campaign, the ambitious initiative to purchase private land along the Long Trail corridor and permanently protect the trail. In addition, as Director of Development, he helped secure funding for the purchase of GMC's current headquarters property on Route 100, and for construction of the Back Forty (field staff housing), during the club's Second Century Campaign. He retired from the club in 2008 but maintained close relationships with many coworkers and volunteer leaders up until his death.

The Long Trail Protection Campaign launched with the ambitious goal to mount GMC's first-ever capital campaign and raise $1.6 million for land acquisition over five years. This kind of fundraising was brand new for the club at the time and Bob's experience was invaluable. He helped organize volunteers, build momentum, and guide the campaign to early success.

Continued on page 21

POWERED BY COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS TO

Increase Access to Hiking Trails

BY LILY LAREGINA, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

CLOUDS AND MIST HANG LOW IN SMUGGLERS' NOTCH and a steady rain falls as a group of ten hikers follow the Barnes Camp Loop trail. The stream is running higher and faster than normal, covering the rock hop, so we prepare to safely ford the stream. Some take off their shoes and socks, while others opt to keep theirs on, and one by one we wade across, laughing and exclaiming at the pull of the current and the cold water. Despite the wet pant legs, the participants' spirits seem even higher once they reach solid ground on the other side.

It's only the group's second hike together, and for many it's the trickiest terrain and longest hike they've been on in years — maybe ever. A few weeks prior, the group came together at Green Mountain Club (GMC) headquarters for a Hiking 101 workshop led by Visitor Services Manager Emily Mosher. It's part of a new partnership between GMC and POWERED Magazine, a Vermont nonprofit founded by and for the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community. POWERED aims to create equitable pathways to outdoor recreation to support mental, physical and social well-being, while emphasizing joy and community building.

Sung-Hee Chung founded POWERED in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic, the accompanying social isolation, and simultaneously increasing racial tensions took a toll on BIPOC communities. "We were talking about what was happening that was causing stress, but we weren't talking about how to manage it," she reflected. "And so I kept coming back to the question, based on my lived experience, 'What if access to the outdoors could become part of a solution for our community members?'"

Today, POWERED offers opportunities across a range of human-powered outdoor activities, providing BIPOC adults with high-quality instruction and group settings to build knowledge, skills, and confidence to continue participating. POWERED partners with organizations that share its commitment to equitable access, combining relationships, expertise, and resources to complement each other's strengths.



The group was all smiles, despite the rain, during their second hike together on the Barnes Camp Loop.

"GMC brings generations of experience in hiking trail stewardship and outdoor education," Sung-Hee explains about the partnership. "POWERED brings relationships with community members who may be taking their first hike in Vermont, returning to hiking after time away, or who may not have previously experienced outdoor recreation as accessible or welcoming. They may want stable support to reenter or regain their confidence. Together we create opportunities that neither organization could create as effectively alone."

While most hiking trails, including the Long Trail System, are free to use, the activity still requires certain clothing and gear, planning knowledge, confidence in one's own abilities, and trust in their safety among other hikers. That's where we started in the Hiking 101 workshop, reviewing maps and online resources for finding trails, selecting proper gear for conditions, and reviewing on-trail safety. Then we put those skills into practice on the 0.7-mile Short Trail at GMC headquarters. By the time we tackled the Barnes Camp Loop a few weeks later, participants were putting their new and renewed skills into practice navigating rocks, roots, and mud. They had rain jackets, solid footwear, water, snacks, and positive energy. The cold stream crossing was both a lesson and a moment of joy.

Sara, a hike participant who first joined POWERED through their cross-country ski programs, shared, "Crossing the stream on the Barnes Camp Loop hike was exciting, and at the same time, it was hard! During our hikes I've learned about using three points of contact on harder terrain, about how helpful trekking poles can be, and other important safety precautions and techniques."


PHOTO BY LILY LAREGINA

◀ Participants learned hike planning and wayfinding skills at a classroom Hiking 101 session in June.


PHOTO BY LILY LAREGINA

We then put our skills to the test on GMC's Short Trail. ▶


PHOTO BY LILY LAREGINA

◀ The group summitted Jay Peak on August 15!

The series culminated on August 15 with a hike on the Long Trail to Jay Peak. With a longer hike and the payoff of a panoramic view at the top, it was a perfect step up in the series' progression. Participants could see examples of GMC's sustainable trail work as we climbed stone stairs, and learned about camping, water filtration, and composting privies during a short detour to Jay Camp.

"Through the Visitor Center's public programs, we hope to connect more people to Vermont's hiking trails through education, access, and community. With our partnership with POWERED, we're able to go even deeper with those goals over the course of a summer." Emily said. In future years, we hope to grow the partnership by helping to facilitate backpacking outings, providing gear, and using participant feedback to shape future workshops and outings.

"Outdoor recreation is a pathway, not a destination for us," says Sung-Hee. "Our destination is people experiencing joy, belonging, confidence, health, community, and eventually, leadership. Our partnership with GMC helps make that journey possible by reducing barriers, creating welcoming experiences, and demonstrating that Vermont's trails belong to everyone."

Learn more about POWERED and the work they do at PoweredMagazine.org



The author (right) and her husband Robert beginning their fateful hike, August 19, 1979.

A HARROWING DAY ON CAMEL'S HUMP REVISITED

Reconnecting with Our Rescuers Nearly Half a Century Later

AUGUST 19TH IS OUR ANNIVERSARY. NOT OUR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY, but the 47th anniversary of our most memorable hike in the Green Mountains of Vermont. August 19, 1979 – the day a great hike became a disaster and one of us needed to be carried off the mountain in a litter.

The story of our long night of rescue was published in 13 different newspapers, including the front pages of the *Burlington Free Press* and *Toronto's Globe and Mail*, though we didn't know anything about our rescuers until recently. I was revisiting the incident and was fortunate to locate and speak with four rescuers.

In 1979, my husband, Robert Letovsky, and I were graduate students in Toronto, visiting family in Montréal and hiking and camping through Vermont. My sister, Bonnie, and her husband, Mark, and their seven-year-old son David, decided to join us on a day hike to the Camel's Hump summit.

August 19 was unfortunately a rainy day. Bonnie suggested that in light of the weather, the wisest decision was to shop instead of hike, but the majority prevailed and we proceeded to the Duxbury trailhead of the then-called Forestry Trail (now Monroe Trail). After we signed in, a ranger from the Green Mountain Club (GMC) greeted us and told us that there would be few hikers given the weather but assured us that it would be safe to summit.

The three-hour ascent was relatively easy and the five of us were having fun, engaging in easy banter. Once there, it began pouring, and we quickly descended via the Long Trail to get below the tree line. We were relieved to have completed what we thought was the most difficult part of the hike. In retrospect, we may have been too complacent.

Around 4 p.m., amidst our laughter, Bonnie slipped on the wet trail, heard a snap and cried out, "I broke my leg." We were all gripped by fear, but knew we had to do whatever was necessary to manage a potentially life-threatening situation. Mark tried to cut off a branch of a tree with a Swiss Army knife to make a crude splint. David, quite environmentally conscious even at that time, yelled, "Don't cut down a tree, Daddy!"

We were poorly equipped and had no extra clothes or supplies with us. We had limited hiking experience and, there was no widespread public education preparing hikers for the unexpected. We knew not to move Bonnie and tried to keep her warm as she slipped into shock.

Luckily, two hikers with a Sterno stove and some dry clothes came on the scene and assisted. One of them went up to the GMC ranger at the summit for assistance. One of the hikers went up to the GMC ranger at the summit, Ben Davis. Ben coordinated the rescue and vividly remembers it to this day. Robert descended to the trailhead to inform the ranger there (believed to be Colin Whiteman), who notified first responders, likely Waterbury Ambulance Service, Inc. (WASI). In those days, WASI relied on the Waterbury Fire Department (WFD) to do backcountry rescues, since dedicated teams such as Camel's Hump Backcountry Rescue did not yet exist.

Robert and Colin then ascended to join the group and Colin splinted Bonnie's leg, while Ben assessed the situation and assembled a team of hikers and GMC personnel to assist in the evacuation. GMC had a litter at the summit, a relatively new practice, which sped up the rescue time dramatically. To this day, Ben remembers the accident site as a "really difficult rock slab where it's easy to slip," especially when wet.

Meanwhile I took young David down to the nearest shelter, Montclair Glen Lodge, to get him warm, dry, and hopefully some rest.

It wasn't until about 8 p.m. that the rescue party of about 15 people started carrying Bonnie down the trail in the litter. Per Ben, this descent from the Camel's Hump summit is one of the most rugged sections of the LT.

By the time the litter party reached Wind Gap, a mountain pass located just below the cliffs of the summit, the clouds had cleared and the sunset view was apparently magnificent. Each of the rescuers we've located spoke of the challenge of navigating Bonnie in the litter over Wind Gap. Some WFD firefighters had been called in as "grunts" to assist with the passage, recalls retired WFD firefighter Jim King. Ben Davis recalls seeing the headlamps of the firefighters as they ascended the trail. David Jennison, another retired WFD firefighter, remembers how tricky it was to pass the litter down the mountain, as those not holding it had to step aside into the thick underbrush bordering the trail. Bonnie vividly recalls hearing the rescuers discussing strategies for navigating Wind Gap — someone had pulled a woolen hat over her eyes so that she could not see the steep cliffs. As it was now dark, GMC personnel provided some headlamps for those carrying the litter, but there were not enough to go around.

At about 11 p.m., the rescuers took a break at the junction of the LT and the trail to Montclair Glen Lodge. Mark hiked the side trail to the shelter to retrieve David, who was thankfully asleep, and me. I was unable to sleep listening vigilantly for sounds of approaching footsteps; I did not anticipate waiting as long as I did!

Approaching the end of the trail around 2 a.m., we were stunned by the brightness of all the lights from numerous emergency vehicles, including WASI and their auxiliary unit. The ambulance transported Bonnie and Mark to the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont in Burlington. Their drive down steep, dirt Camel's Hump Road was a slow one as every bump was excruciatingly painful for Bonnie. What we thought would be a quick casting for a broken leg and immediate discharge ended up being a several-weeks' stay for a complex repair of a trimalleolar ankle fracture, followed by rehabilitation.

Ben describes the incident as "a dramatic rescue," due to the challenging terrain, darkness, and lack of communication technology, which we often take for granted today. To this day, each time Ben hikes past the accident site, he pauses to reflect upon the complex rescue.

Several years later, Robert and I permanently relocated to Vermont and have done a great deal of hiking in the forty years we've lived here. Our experience on Camel's Hump in 1979 taught us to always be prepared. We learned that nature is very fickle, and a pleasant afternoon's hike can easily turn into a life-threatening situation.

The 10-hour process of getting Bonnie down the mountain seems grueling, yet it is pretty standard for search and rescue operations to this day. A "hasty team" typically goes ahead to find and stabilize the victim, while a larger team of rescuers must pack in, often to remote areas, carrying heavy gear, before the slow process of carrying a victim out with a litter. A 2018 *Long Trail News* article recounting a more modern rescue on the very same trail as Bonnie's mishap reports, "Eight hours from accident to ambulance is the fastest, most effective rescue I could have dreamed of."

Our sincerest thanks to the following rescuers and historians:

Ben Davis, GMC
Colin Whiteman, GMC
David Jennison, WFD
Jim King, WFD
Francis "Bubby" Wilder, WFD
Brian Lindner, historian; Waterbury Backcountry Rescue member
Gary Dillon, current WFD Chief
Fellow hikers
Bonnie's medical team

By Sheila Stober of Jericho. Sheila and her husband, Robert Letovsky, are long-time GMC members and avid hikers.

If you were one of the hikers or first responders involved in this rescue, contact GMC and we will put you in touch with the author so that she can express her gratitude.

Sterling Section Volunteers

COMPLETE MAJOR TRAIL UPGRADES

A FEW SATURDAYS EACH SUMMER, A DEDICATED GROUP OF STERLING SECTION VOLUNTEERS GATHER IN THE WOODS between Chilcoot Pass and the Lamoille River and spend a full day upgrading muddy and eroded sections of trail. They move and set large rocks as steps or waterbars and build turnpikes to raise and dry out the trail. It's a unique hybrid model of volunteer work that goes beyond typical annual maintenance, benefitted by Sterling Section President Kevin Hudnell's past career as a Green Mountain Club (GMC) caretaker and field programs supervisor for six years. When he finally "retired" from trail work, he joined the section and continued his passion for trail work and project planning by working to harness its volunteer capacity.



PHOTO BY KEVIN HUDNELL

Scott Christiansen breaks rocks for a water bar as Ron Osbourn watches (Burlington and Laraway Section volunteers who joined Sterling's work day).

GMC generally asks volunteer sections to perform routine annual maintenance to get their assigned stretch of trail ready for hiking season. This trail work includes clearing waterbars and clipping back brush, which many sections conduct over the course of one to three weekends in the spring and fall. "Our section wanted a reason to get together more than once a year, so we came up with the model of twice-a-month work days all summer long," Kevin explains. With a few former field staff and other longtime volunteers among the ranks, the skill level and appetite are in place for more involved trail work.

The Sterling Section's approach to trail work nicely complements our staff's focus over the last few years on increasing the skills, competency, and independence of on-trail volunteers. GMC's Education and Volunteer Coordinator Lorne Currier and Volunteer Supervisor Grace Law do their best to provide regular hands-on training to both new and returning volunteers, but they can't attend every section workday as they juggle the calendars of nearly 1,000 volunteers and service-learning groups. Enter experienced volunteers like Kevin, fellow section member Emily Benning, who used to lead GMC's Volunteer Long Trail Patrol, and Ed Rogers, who runs the section's monthly knotweed pulls along the Lamoille River. These long-tenured, experienced volunteers can help spread the skills and training GMC hopes to deploy to the entire volunteer corps.

Kevin works closely with Lorne to coordinate projects that complement the work of the professional Long Trail Patrol crews and individual adopters. With six to eight experienced volunteers often showing up to each summer workday, Kevin has found that they can make significant progress working together on a small handful of trail infrastructure improvements. Still, he is careful to keep their volunteer status in mind. "When planning projects, I know it has to be fun, it has to be memorable, and it can't be swarming with black flies," says Kevin.

That led to this June's project site, a steep, fall-line section of Long Trail around Bear Hollow Shelter. Kevin walked the stretch in early summer, noting muddy spots where a waterbar would divert water off the trail, a wet logging road crossing where stepping stones would improve the hiker experience. "These problem spots have been on my radar for about five years, but there was always something more pressing to address," he says. Because GMC has some funding for professional crew time on the Whiteface Trail in 2027, and the black flies were persistent at another potential project site in June, this site got the attention.

> "... [Trail work is] more about stamina than strength...there's always something to be done that contributes to the work at any level of skill or strength."

GMC's efforts to recruit, train, and upskill individual adopters have also increased the Sterling Section's efficiency. Skilled and committed adopters perform the annual maintenance of the Sterling Range, freeing up the section to address more complex projects. A new volunteer adopted the Whiteface Trail in 2025 and left it "immaculate" during spring maintenance, so Kevin's crew didn't need to spend one of their monthly workdays clearing out waterbars.

We often refer to the three-legged stool of trail maintenance: professional crews, organized volunteers in sections, and individual volunteers. These groups often overlap in the portions of trail they work on and are responsible for, as is the case in the Sterling Range. While that can cause some occasional confusion or duplicative work, in a perfect world, each cohort of volunteers is playing to their strengths and contributing to the overall quality and care of the Long Trail System.

Kevin is always seeking new volunteers for the section who are eager to learn different trail work skills. The section has a small but mighty group of regular volunteers but would love to add to the bench. Workdays are open to anyone, and despite the more complex scope of the section's projects, no previous experience or special skills are needed. "In general, it's more about stamina than strength," says Kevin. "We rotate frequently between any of the strenuous tasks so no one is stuck doing anything for too long, and there's always something to be done that contributes to the work at any level of skill or strength."

The section's other summer workdays have included standard maintenance on the Beaver Meadow Loop Trail, rehabilitation work on Beaver Meadow Lodge (follow-up to work completed by Senior Trail Technicians last year), and an ambitious turnpiking project north of Whiteface Summit for Long Trail Day on September 19.

Interested in Volunteering for Trail Maintenance?



Each of GMC's 14 regional sections is responsible for annual maintenance of a section of the Long Trail System. Individual adopters manage annual maintenance for other portions of the trail, with occasional overlap. Interested in getting involved in volunteer maintenance? Visit greenmountainclub.org/volunteer-opportunities or email volunteer@greenmountainclub.org

Volunteer Awards

The Green Mountain Club's (GMC) 116th Annual Meeting was held at the club's Waterbury headquarters in June. The membership approved amended bylaws, which you can review online here: **greenmountainclub.org/bylaws**

We also presented our annual President's Award to Jeff Wehrwein and the Honorary Life Membership Award to Nancy Thomas.



PHOTO BY LILY LAREGINA

Honorary Life Membership Award
NANCY THOMAS

IN JUNE 2020 – THE MIDDLE OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC – NANCY THOMAS TOOK ON THE ROLE OF TREASURER. The pandemic had closed our office, and we were holding every meeting on Zoom for the first time. It was a disorienting way to begin, and Nancy navigated it with the quiet steadiness that would come to define her time in the role.

GMC before and after the pandemic are almost two different organizations. The way staff and volunteers work together, the way we communicate, the way members engage – all of it has changed. And financially, the club that Nancy hands off today is bigger, stronger, and more complex than the one she inherited.

The pandemic wasn't the only headwind. During Nancy's tenure, the club weathered two historic flooding events, navigated repeated government shutdowns, and managed through an economy buffeted by federal funding uncertainty, global conflict, and inflation. Through all of it, Nancy brought the same thing to every budget meeting and every hard conversation: a calm, measured presence that made the people around her steadier, too.

She guided the club through a $4 million capital campaign and saw it to completion. She oversaw the funding and construction of our new Visitor Center, a building that will welcome hikers for generations to come. We transitioned GMC's investment portfolio to Morgan Stanley, incorporating equity, social, and governance principles that reflect the club's values. We grew our capital reserves and reduced our dependence on outside borrowing, and she leaves the club today with no long-term debt and substantial working capital. This is a financial foundation that will serve us well for years to come.

In 2024, when the club needed to make some genuinely difficult changes to improve our operating efficiency, she helped explain the reasoning to leadership clearly and honestly, and she made the case for why the changes mattered even when they were hard to hear. At the same time, she never lost sight of the future: advocating for strategic investments in fundraising capacity, major donor development, and planned giving – the kind of patient, long-view thinking that has always distinguished her approach.

Beyond her work on the Finance and Budget Committee, Nancy serves on the Endowment, Governance, and Executive Committees. Nancy and her partner, Dana, are active in the Montpelier Section and can often be found on the trail doing trail work or on an outing.

That's what strikes me most about Nancy. She came to this work the same way so many of us come to GMC: out of love for these mountains and the people who care for them. She expressed that love through six years of careful stewardship, steady guidance through hard times, and wise counsel that helped this organization grow stronger. The club is better for her service, and we are grateful for it.

— PRESENTED BY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER JASON BUSS



PHOTO BY LILY LAREGINA

President's Award
JEFF WEHRWEIN

JEFF WEHRWEIN'S WORK AS CHAIR OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE STANDS OUT FOR ITS SIGNIFICANT AND POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ORGANIZATION. The committee was formed in May 2024 to conduct a thorough review of GMC's bylaws and to assess whether GMC's governance systems are best meeting the needs of the organization.

Jeff has led the committee with dedication and integrity, overseeing more than 20 full committee meetings and numerous sub-group meetings, totaling over 600 hours of work. The committee gathered feedback from stakeholders via surveys of the board and sections, many one-on-one discussions, more than 10 Section Presidents' meetings, a facilitated board retreat, and repeated meetings with an independent legal expert on nonprofit law. Jeff has personally invested hundreds of hours into this process to improve GMC's governance.

Governance work is some of the most difficult, yet important work that the organization can undertake, because it involves contemplating changes to culture, power, and organizational norms. Thanks to Jeff's patience and diligence in overseeing the governance review process, GMC is well-positioned to serve our mission and meet our full potential as an organization.

Jeff joined the board of directors in 2021 and continues his service in volunteer leadership as the new Board Secretary. Jeff grew up skiing at Bromley, attended Middlebury College, and became an active member of the Burlington Section following graduation. Today, Jeff lives in Boulder, Colorado, and visits Vermont often to spend time with his parents in Middlebury, to hike his beloved Green Mountains, and to continue giving back to GMC.

— PRESENTED BY GMC BOARD CHAIR, DON TAYLOR

Remembering BOB LINCOLN

Continued from page 13

"I met Bob in 1986 when I was asked to join the Long Trail Protection Committee," recalls former GMC President Rolf Anderson. "Bob made friends easily with his wonderful sense of humor and genuine love of people. He was a consummate professional and was instrumental to the success of the Long Trail Protection Program.".

"I worked with Bob Lincoln for sixteen years, raising funds for the Long Trail Protection Program. Together, we worked on grants and took prospective donors out to visit some of the land parcels we wanted to purchase. Bob was fun to work with and we became good friends," says Sue Shea, who worked in land conservation at GMC from 1990-2013, the height of the club's land protection work.

After the initial Long Trail Protection Campaign concluded in 1991, Bob briefly left GMC for another position in Vermont before returning in 1992 as Director of Development, a role he held for the next 16 years.

"Fundraising was always a team effort with Bob," says former Director of Land and Facilities Management Pete Antos-Ketcham. "From the Long Trail Protection Campaign, Field Program projects, headquarters upgrades, appropriation requests to Senator Leahy, and finally the Second Century Campaign, while I was helping Bob he was also teaching me. The invaluable skills I learned continue to support me in my nonprofit work today."

Colleagues remembered Bob as a genuine people person who built long-lasting relationships with donors and mentored many younger colleagues. He was a high-spirited and enthusiastic colleague, developing the nickname "Uncle Bob."

"He would shout 'Printing!' from downstairs before sending a big job to the printer...Even though I work at home, I still find myself tempted to shout 'printing!'" remembers Pete.

Bob's contributions to GMC, the Long Trail, and the people who knew him will endure for generations. His impact lives on in every protected mile of trail.



Tim Bennett

KITCHEN TABLE

Conversations

This essay is an excerpt from a memoir, *One Mountain After Another*, by Tim "Porkie" Bennett, End-to-End Class of 2023. It is slated to be published in late 2026.

The table inside Birch Glen Camp was old and weathered, but solid, and clad in a layer of pitted brown sheet metal. Relief carvings of a maple leaf and the outline of Vermont adorned one of the heavy benches, adding to the historic charm. Embracing the vintage vibe, I sat down to gather my thoughts.

Out of curiosity, I pulled the shelter logbook out of its plastic bag and flipped to the first page, where someone had written in large block letters:

Dear Hikers:
Welcome to Birch Glen Camp!
I hope you're not weary or damp
But if that's the case
Rest well in this place
Before you continue your tramp.

A perfect welcome message for a shelter built in the 1930s. The word "tramp" evoked the trail's early history and GMC publications, which often featured lighthearted trail humor. I didn't have anything profound to add, so I just signed my trail name and closed the logbook to write in my journal instead.

Since returning to the Long Trail in 2023 after a car accident cut my 2022 hike short, my writing had been messy, disjointed, and incomplete. I wanted to record daily observations, but it often felt like a chore after arriving at camp late and exhausted. Most nights, I struggled to stay awake long enough to scribble a few words by headlamp after settling into my sleeping bag. Even at the motel in Waitsfield last night, I dozed off, waking to find my journal open on the bed, the pen between the pages, and a half-finished entry.

Hoping to fill in the gaps, I spent a few minutes at the table comparing my father's observations with mine. He hiked the Long Trail from Sherburne Pass to Bolton back in 1937, and I discovered his trail journal a few months before I began my own thru-hike. It wasn't clear whether he slept at Birch Glen on his 1937 hike. His notes only stated that it was "a nice camp near the top of the Stark Mountains." The mileage didn't line up, but Birch Glen felt right.

The rustic table brought me back to my youth, when Pop and I sat at our kitchen table, talking about camping, fishing, and hiking. My mother worked evenings back then, so it was our opportunity to spend time together bonding as father and son.

Memories began to appear in flashes: maps of the Allagash in Maine, the sound of a knife blade being drawn across a whetstone, the smell of the honing oil, a dog-eared Herter's Hunting and Fishing Catalog, the flickering of an 8mm projector screening home movies on the reflective refrigerator door; he and I discussing grand adventures.

I could almost hear his voice, pontificating with complete confidence about the best way to rub neatsfoot oil into leather boots, how to build a cooking fire in the rain, or John Muir's recipe for insect repellent using pine tar and oil of pennyroyal.

Damn, I missed him. Sitting at the shelter table, I had many questions: What inspired him to take this hike? Did he have a mountain-top epiphany? A mantra for tough times? Had he hiked other sections of the LT? Did he enjoy his journey in the moment, or only afterward, when looking back on it?

But no matter how many times I looked at his journal, I wasn't going to find the answers there. I regretted not asking more while he was alive, and now I could only hope that following his path might provide the clarity I desperately sought. After writing for a while and reviewing maps and trail notes, it was time to decide. Continue hiking as planned or stay? Another question with no answer in the pages of his journal.

I chose to stay, ignoring my inner drive to push for more miles. The connection with my father felt strong at Birch Glen, especially at the table. I found myself thinking less about my hike and more about his.

From the beginning, my goal for this trek was to compare our journeys. But the daily challenges made that difficult. Too often, I compared myself to the hiker I was before the accident, rather than to my father.

But slowly, organically, I began to feel a genuine connection. I sensed the slightest hint of it on the summit of Mt. Abraham. Then it grew stronger during our "conversation" at the table in Birch Glen. By the time I reached Burnt Rock, it truly felt like I was tramping the same path he had, step-for-step.

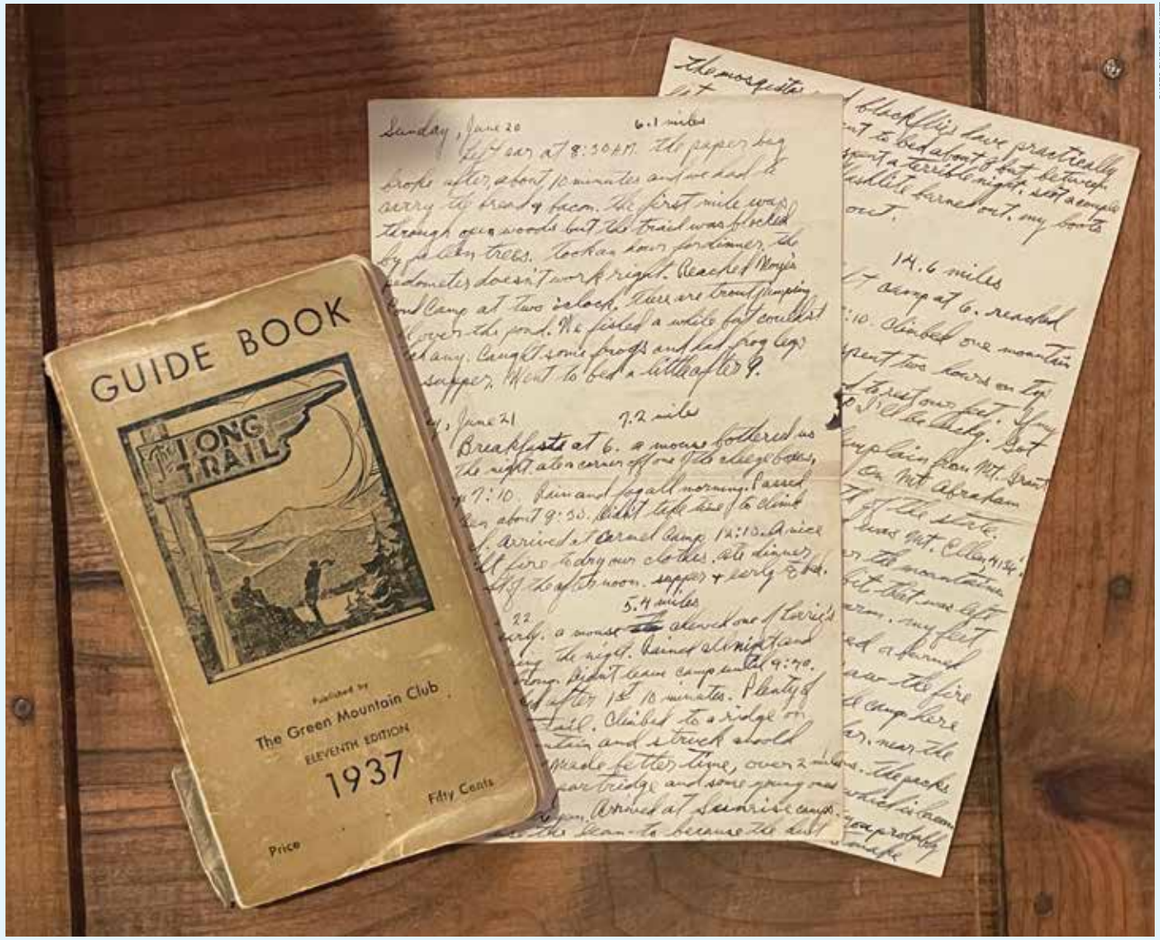


PHOTO BY TIM BENNETT

Tim Bennett used his father's Long Trail journal and a 1937 *Long Trail Guide* to deepen his experience on his own Long Trail thru-hike.

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Waterbury Center, VT 05677

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Fall Leaf Identification

Use this guide to determine the tree species creating the fall rainbow on your hikes this season.



Sugar Maple

- Pointed 5-lobed shape
- Deep U-shaped indentations between lobes
- Turn red, orange, and yellow



Red Maple

- Also has pointed 5-lobed shape
- Shallower, V-shaped indentations between lobes
- Serrated edges
- Turn deep red



Beech

- Smooth and shiny surface
- Symmetrical, parallel veins
- Prominent vein endings give it an almost serrated look
- Tapered oval shape



Elm

- Pointed oval shape and asymmetrical base
- Serrated, double toothed edges
- Turn golden or dull yellow



Birch

- Oval or triangular shape
- Serrated, doubly toothed edges
- Turn golden yellow



Ash

- Compound leaf of 5-9 leaflets on a stem
- Leaves are symmetrically opposite
- Tapered oblong shape