



Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club

Volume LIV, Issue I January to March 2022 Fred Clark, Editor

President's Message
Winter 2021

The Year in review. As we look back on 2021, much has changed in 12 months. With widespread COVID-19 vaccinations leading to relaxed travel restrictions and the re-opening of many recreational resources, the Connecticut Section was able to resume Long Trail maintenance in the Spring, and hold a number of multiday events in other states, including Virginia, Maine and Wyoming. In addition, we continued to enjoy the great resources we have right here in Connecticut. Let's hope that 2022 will bring further mitigation of the pandemic impacts and allow more restoration of "normal."

GMC Legacy Campaign. You may have received a mailing from the GMC with an appeal to contribute to the Legacy Campaign which seeks to raise funds for significant investment in the Long Trail system and lands, people, and the Club's future as a whole. This is a multi-year campaign similar to the Long Trail Protection Fund effort in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the Long Trail Stewardship effort in the 2000s. This initiative is separate from the year-end fundraising solicitation which you may have received recently. If you are interested in learning more about the Legacy Campaign, please go to the URL <https://www.greenmountainclub.org/legacy/>

Andy Hood is an End-to-ender! Congratulations to Andy for finishing a classic flip-flop end-to-end of the Long Trail. As mentioned in the Fall newsletter, Andy had completed the southern part of the LT from Massachusetts to Sherburne Pass/US Route 4 in June. In September he started south from the Canadian border, reaching the Inn at the Long Trail on Route 4 on September 23. In the midst of his trek Andy even found time (and a telecom signal) to connect via Zoom to the September 17 meeting of the GMC Board of Directors! That's going an extra mile, and then some.

And FINALLY, Return of the Cheshire Grange Annual Dinner and Meeting? Activities VP Dennis Himes has been communicating with the Cheshire Grange regarding our 2022 annual dinner. While not definite, the Grange has communicated its willingness to host us again, conditional on there being no significant worsening of the COVID-19 pandemic and no new restrictions on indoor gatherings. Dennis asked the Grange to hold Saturday March 26 for us. Details will follow. I'm cautiously optimistic that we'll be able to get together in person again and enjoy the Grange's roast beef/vegetarian lasagna dinner once again.

See you on the trail,

Jim Robertson



*Carol and Sarah on Mt. Jackson,
September 11 – see page 3*

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Inquiries: Please direct all inquiries regarding the Connecticut Section to the President.

New Members: The Connecticut Section welcomes these new members who recently joined:

Amy Bateman

Cathryn Dolan

Zak Wright

We look forward to meeting you at our upcoming events.

Publication Schedule: *Trail Talk* is published four times a year in March, June, September, and December. E-mail activity reports to the Editor at fpclark1@comcast.net no later than the fifth day of the publication month. Activity reports must be a Word Document sent as an attachment.

Membership: When filling out an application to join or renew your membership in the Green Mountain Club, circle **Connecticut Section** on the application. You will receive, at no extra charge, the Connecticut Section's newsletter

Dues:

Individual Adult	\$45.00
Family	\$60.00
Senior (70 or older) or Limited Income	\$25.00
Sponsor (Individual/Family)	\$75.00

Send annual dues to:

Green Mountain Club

4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road

Waterbury Center, VT 05677-9904

You may also join or renew online at:

<https://www.greenmountainclub.org/>

Special Thanks to member Charlotte Hitchcock. Each issue Charlotte facilitates the e-mailing of *Trail Talk* by formatting the layout and reducing the file size.

Want to help the Connecticut Section reduce expenses and save trees? Just send an e-mail to the Editor, requesting that you be e-mailed *Trail Talk*, rather than having it mailed to you. You'll receive *Trail Talk* sooner, too.

Calendar of Events:

Upcoming events are listed here:

<http://www.conngmc.com/newwiki/doku.php?id=start>



ACTIVITY REPORTS

New Hampshire Backpacking Crawford Notch to Rattle River Parking September 7-9, 2021 by Carol A. Langley

Jocelyn Linnekin and I met at the Rattle River parking. Then Jocelyn drove to Crawford Notch Route 302 where we started hiking. Because it was already midafternoon, we only hiked into Ethan Pond Campsite. We each had our own platform. After supper we went down to Ethan Pond where we watched fish and other aquatic life create water rings from their underwater movements. Soon the sun set and Saturn was the first planet to be visible in the western sky. I was exhausted from the drive up and hiking in so I retreated to my tent early. Jocelyn stayed a bit longer and was able to see a spectacular star show including the Milky Way. This is something that we in Connecticut can never view any more from all the pollutants in our atmosphere.

The next day we had an early breakfast with several hikers, then packed up and moved on. Our next break was at Zealand Falls Hut, elevation 2,630'. It was a steep rocky climb of 5.2 miles. If you have plans in your future to hike this section do yourself a favor and stay at the hut. Our destination for the day was Mt. Guyot Shelter & Campsite. The miles were not long for regular terrain but here in the White Mountains it is a different story.

When I reached the side trail into Mt. Guyot, I was in trouble as my vertigo had kicked in. I shouted to Jocelyn to send someone out to help me hike in. In 40-plus years I have never needed help. A young man named Guy who was part of the ski patrol came to my rescue and carried my pack. Reaching the shelter, I had to climb the stairs holding on to the stairs with my hands since there were no railings. Well, this really made me feel like an OLD LADY. I laid down my sleeping bag and pad then made my dinner.

The shelter was packed and unfortunately there was a band of hikers who had taken over and were smoking pot, swearing and cooking in the shelter. Every backpacker's nightmare! Bad storms were predicted for the night so no one wanted a wet tent in the morning.

I was up early the next day but exhausted since I was awake most of the night. When we left Mt. Guyot, we were at 4,580 feet but had to hike over North & South Twin at 4,902. It was a slow go for this old gal. We took a short break at Galehead Hut before we continued on to Rattle River Trail. I had done this trail before with Jim Robertson and it was easy. Today my tail feathers were dragging. We had only hiked 7.7 miles from Mt. Guyot but it is the terrain that matters in the White Mountains.

After collecting Jocelyn's car, we stayed the night at the Town & Country Inn. Sarah O'Hare and I met up the next day for more hiking.

Crawford Notch to Mt. Washington September 10-12, 2021 by Carol A. Langley

Sarah O'Hare and I met for breakfast at the Town & Country Inn before we started our hiking trip. Sarah's car was left at the Cog Railroad parking lot and I drove to Crawford Notch to park mine. It was a lovely Fall day and we were ready to go. The trail meanders slowly along to the top of Webster Cliffs. We hiked slowly as there were many places where we were climbing rocks and more rocks. Suddenly the wind started to blow as we were reaching the Webster Cliffs, next the fog moved in, then heavy rain and some hail mixed in. After a time, the visibility was ZERO; we could not see the trail in front of us. We had reached a dangerous situation. I had seen what looked like a spot where someone had tented a short distance back so we turned around and were able to find the spot. We were in a grove of pine trees but the wind still made it a struggle to set up the tents. There had not been any water to pump on the trail. At this time Sarah and I each had about 2 ounces of water. We chose to eat a small snack and call it a day. Shortly after we were in our tents, we heard a couple and the woman was crying. We tried to convince the young man to stay with us but he wanted to move on. I sent up a silent prayer for them.

The night was long and scary. Around 7:00 am I looked out and could see the ridges in the west painted red from the morning sunrise. Time to pack up and move on. It was a smart move because climbing down the wet rocks of the Webster Cliffs was not fun. When we reached the base of Mt. Jackson, we let a young man come down and he told us there would be a ceremony for 9/11 on top of Mt. Jackson at 12:00. So we started our climb and scrambled up to Mt. Jackson. Upon reaching the top, we saw many people. There was a cairn where everyone gathered with their flags at 12:00. A Blackhawk Medevac helicopter flew over and everyone sang patriotic songs. Sarah then played her Indian flute. It was a very moving moment. Every year since 9/11 the Army flies over all 48 of the 4,000 foot mountains in New Hampshire. Then a group of men from the Army National Guard carried up a huge American Flag with metal rods to stake the flag in the cairn and four men stood around with ropes to anchor the flag for 1½ hours. Sarah and I were very thankful that we had the opportunity to experience this 9/11 ceremony.

Our destination, Mizpah Hut, was 1 1/2 miles further. The trail was very muddy and your poles would go in about half way up if you tried to use them. Another a slow go. We reached the hut about 1:30, and I approached the young lady asking if there was room for two grandmothers. She said that they did not take people in after 1:00 who did not have reservations. Okay turn on your charm "Great-Grandmother." That I did and soon we were told we could

have Bunk Room 5 all to ourselves at the end of the hall. We moved in and set up our bags for the night. After a snack we took our heavy wet tents outside and spread them on the rocks to dry. There were other hikers drying out gear. We had a very nice dinner with other hikers. For some reason the young men hikers sat at our table not with the young women. Looks like they felt safe with us! If you have stayed in an AMC hut you know the morning ritual is for the crew to sing to wake you up. After breakfast we did not get a good weather forecast. More storms were predicted by mid-day meaning the Cog Railroad would not be running. This can't be because we are only six miles from Mt. Washington. There were many sighs but we were warned to be smart and be safe. Shortly after the hut you are at tree line and there is no protection. Well, we put our packs on and headed for the Crawford Path which would take us out to Rte. 302 and the Highland Center. The Crawford Path is the oldest hiking trail in the United States. In 1819 Abel Crawford and his son Ethan Allen Crawford cleared this path to treeline near the top of Mt. Clinton. In 1840 Abel, who then was 75 years old, made the first ascent to Mt. Washington on horseback.

Reaching Rte. 302 at noon, we took a break at the train station. We then started walking on the roadway. After a couple of miles, I spotted a pull off that was in the shade so we took off our packs and I asked Sarah to stay with them while I continued on to find my car. I reached the Willey House, which is an historic site where in August of 1826 a landslide claimed nine lives. Here in the parking lot was a young man taking a break so I walked over and asked him if he would like to make a fast \$10. He looked at me and said what do you need? I replied, a ride to my car which is still a bit down the road. He said, get in. My car was another two miles down the road. I picked up Sarah then we retrieved her car from the Cog Railroad parking and started our trip home, stopping for lunch in a little town on our way to I-91. Lunch was Sarah's treat for which I am very thankful – also for her company and patience.

Looks like I will need to make another trip next year and make another attempt to climb Mt. Washington.

**Continental Divide Trail
Wind River Range, Wyoming
September 8-17, 2021
by Mandy Brink**

We all gathered at Pinedale, Wyoming. **Michael T. Shaw**, Mike Shaw's son, and **Emily Black**, my niece, came from Montana. **Mark Stone** and **Scott Black** joined us from PA. **Fred Worstell** hopped aboard from New Jersey. **Marianne** and **Rob Valley**, **Barb Kelly**, **Mike Shaw**, **Sven Englund** and I represented the CT contingency. Lastly, we had **Larry and Debbie Rother** from Washington State. We compared packs and were a bit envious of Michael T's smaller pack. We were not at all jealous of Scott's pack, which was huge.

It took a full day to stage cars at the Big Sandy Trailhead. It was a long drive on a dirt road for staging the cars at both Green River Lake and Big Sandy. Signs of Fall were in the air. The colors were beautiful, especially the stands of bright yellow aspen. The drivers met up at the Green River Lake Campground in the Bridger-Teton National Forest after six hours of driving. We had a lovely campfire before heading to our tents.

Larry and Debbie headed to the Scab Creek area while the rest of us began our 74-mile trek. We had a big badger give us a sendoff. He was busy digging a home. He had dirt spewing everywhere and would occasionally pop his head up to check his progress. Our first day was a 9.5-mile fairly flat hike into the beautiful Bridger Wilderness. Our first night was along the Green River, across from Squaretop Mountain.

We initially thought that **Day 2** would be our hardest day. We would quickly learn that each day was a hard day of hiking that presented its own challenges. The area was so beautiful and around every bend was another postcard of beauty. There was water everywhere. Rivers, streams and lakes of all sizes and colors. Some of the lakes were the beautiful turquoise blue that comes from glacier runoffs. We started at 8,100 feet and ended on a plateau at 10,500 feet. We camped near the shore of Summit Lake. We had a heavy rainstorm that stopped long enough to give us a double rainbow. After dinner it was off to bed, but it was hard to sleep due to a fierce windy rainstorm. There were times that we wondered if our tents, with us in them, would blow right into the lake.

Day 3 started with packing up in the rain. The rain stopped around noon. After drying out our tents at lunch, we headed over Shannon Pass, the second highest pass, and then Gunsight Pass. We passed beneath the rugged peaks at 13,000 feet that hid some of the largest glaciers in the contiguous United States. We stopped at an unnamed pond for the night. This was the one night we were able to have a campfire. Evenings were getting cooler so, once the campfire was low, we were off to our tents. But we were kept up with a fierce thunder and lightning storm for part of the night, bringing with it lots of rain.

Day 4 was the day we left Scott at the Elkhart junction. His pack being heavy among other things, he decided to hike the 10 miles out to the Elkhart Campground to find a ride back into Pinedale. The rest of us continued our quest to complete another 40 miles. We did Lester Pass at 11,120 feet, the highest point we would hike. We ran into a long-distance hiker, "Sandman." He had already hiked over 5,000 miles and was heading to Colorado. He informed us that the Wind River Range was the prettiest of all the areas that he had hiked thus far. Today Marianne swallowed a small fish. It was in her water but, by the time she spotted it, it was already in her mouth and down the hatch. We camped at Tommy Lake.

Day 5 was up early and packing up our wet, frozen gear. We had 3 passes to hike over. It was really good weather, sunny and warm during the day. We waded across a shallow river before heading part way up Hat Pass. We camped at 10,400 feet. There was a half moon and a beautiful sunset. We had seen lots of bear scat but so far, no bears.

Day 6 started with us up and on the trail by 7:30 am. The day started with Hat Pass at 10,848 feet. This was our last big pass for the trip. The day was ups and downs with the elevation being between 9,800 and 10,300 feet. There were some areas that had a forest fire and blow downs. The trail could be tricky to find. Our campsite was at the beautiful Sandpoint Beach.

Day 7 was again up and on the trail at 7:30 am. Our tents were frozen every day, so it involved packing up wet gear. It was a beautiful morning as we tackled our 11-mile day. We hiked a decent pace today with continuing ups and downs. We saw some cattle, a baby calf nursing and some horses that were out for a walk. We would have loved to hop on one of those horses. We camped at an unnamed lake right above Marms Lake. While setting up camp, Mike and Michael T saw a young black bear come up into view across the trail. The bear seemed more surprised than they were and was gone running off into the underbrush before they could grab their cameras.

Day 8 was our last day, with 8.5 miles out to Big Sandy. The drivers beat foot while the rest of us took our time. There were a few ups and downs but mostly it was a gentle descent down to the cars. It felt good to be done. Larry and Debbie caught up with us on the road out from Big Sandy. We headed to our first stop for ice cream and cold beverages, which was still 90 minutes away. We reunited with Scott who we learned spent a couple of nights camping and headed to Pinedale a day before us. We found him in the hot tub. After enjoying a shower and hitting the hot tub, we all headed out to have a lovely dinner together. We spent the evening sharing all of our adventures.

The next morning, we scattered in all directions to make our way home. Michael T headed north back to Montana. So did Emily, Mark and Scott. Sven and Fred headed southwest to spend a day in Park City before flying home. Barb, Marianne, Rob, Mike and I drove to Salt Lake City for a day of sightseeing. We walked around downtown and saw the state capitol building and the Church of Latter Day Saints Temple undergoing extensive renovations. It seemed like a beautiful city and a great way to end the trip.

Peru Peak and Big Branch Wilderness Areas
October 1-3, 2021
by Sarah O'Hare

Intrigued by the tales from those who have camped at the Old Job Shelter in years past, it was time to make a visit. The route was an approximately 20-mile loop encompassing the Long Trail, Old Job Trail and the Griffith Lake

Trail. The Old Job Trail was new to **Jim Robertson** and me, while **Mark Blanchard**, a resident of Vermont, was familiar with the area. And thus, he became our tour guide, naturalist and historian. Beginning at Mad Tom Notch, we hiked north on the Long Trail through the Peru Peak Wilderness Area. Many of the trees were conifers, in particular, the balsam fir. Mark, in his naturalist hat, explained how the balsam is identified, by the needles and the smooth bark with blisters which, when broken, ooze an aromatic resin. He collected needle tips to make tea for us later. After arriving at and settling in at the Peru Peak Shelter and camping area, we hiked over to nearby Griffith Lake. The stillness of the lake revealed no loons; perhaps they had begun their migration south. Then, back at our campsite, we cooked our evening meals and sampled the balsam tea. Quite tasty for a hot back country beverage. The resident caretaker, Penguin, wandered into camp and chatted for a while.

Our morning's hike led us by the lake and into the Big Branch Wilderness Area. The ascent up the rock ledges of Baker Peak brought us to the summit where Mark donned his tour guide hat. He pointed out the distant peaks and, below, Emerald Lake and the quarry. Throughout the day we met day hikers, end-to-enders, thru-hikers and one who was hiking the Eastern Continental Trail, a more than 5,000 mile trail that began in the Nova Scotia area and would end in Key West, Florida. That is to be some long trek! At long last, we arrived at the junction with the Old Job Trail, continuing, however, along the LT to take a walk over the suspension bridge spanning the Big Branch Brook and to stop in at the Big Branch Shelter. Setting off on the Old Job Trail, and now wearing his historian's hat, Mark explained that, formerly the LT, the Old Job Trail, now a blue-blazed trail and actually an old woods road, is used mostly by snowmobilers. The Ten Kilns Brook flowed alongside. Portions of the roadway were lined with logs, known as corduroy. The term comes from the French for 'logs of the King' (Cords du Roi). In the 1700s, French peasants would line muddy roads with logs that had been pre-cut and stacked along roadsides. The cordwood log placement created a dry surface for the king to travel on. American settlers used this method as well. It is still used today by our trail volunteers on some of our trails in CT.

After a long uphill, the trail finally leveled as we entered into a large expanse of apple trees. A few trees still held onto their bounty. Just a taste, or two – what's the harm? No worm holes, just spotty. And oh so tart! This unexpected treat was worth the risk of tummy issues later. At long last, we arrived at the Old Job Shelter, built at the fringe of the apple orchard. What a nice setting it was – by a large brook, good tenting sites, two picnic tables and a fireplace. We gathered what little wood we could find and Jim had a fine fire burning in no time. The night passed undisturbed – no bears or serious tummy issues. Sunday's hike continued along the roadway that was the Old Job Trail. For 4.5 miles we trudged uphill, with Lake Brook

flowing alongside. Crossing back into the Peru Peak Wilderness Area, at the northern end of Griffith Lake, the lakeside rocks offered an opportunity for a rest. Only a short break, however, as it began to drizzle. We then turned on to the Griffith Lake Trail, which was also an old woods road. The light rain let up and the sun shone just as we reached our end at USFS 58. As lunchtime was upon us, Jim, Mark and I headed over to Peru and had lunch at the Hapgood Store and Eatery. Then it was on to Manchester for a maple cream and sweet, not too tart, apples from the Dutton Farm Stand. And now, with the Old Job adventure behind us, we headed for home.

Cranberry Bog Hike, Rockville Wildlife Management Oct 5, 2021 by Mandy Brink

Last year for this hike there was a drought. This year for this hike there was lots of rain the day before. Showing up to pick cranberries were **Don** and **Linda Hagstrom**, **Ellie Morano**, **Holly Hood** with her daughter-in-law, **Arlene**, and granddaughter, **Anna**, and I. We hiked the mile to the bog and immediately found cranberries right where the trail ended, and you entered the bog by Blue Pond. From there we all scattered around and spent the next two hours picking away. Ellie won the award for having the best boots which went all the way to her knees. It was quite muddy. Linda was picking near a small tree when something moved in the branches. It was a huge praying mantis. It's so impressive how Mother Nature camouflages insects and such. If the praying mantis hadn't moved, we would never have spotted it. After our backs were tired from bending and our bags were full of cranberries, we headed back out the trail and to the cars. Most of the discussion back was what we will be making with all our cranberries.

Full Moon (Sort of) Backpack on the Connecticut AT October 16-17 and October 18-19, 2021 by Jim Robertson

Part 1: Our plan was to hike into Riga Shelter via the Lion's Head Trail and AT in Salisbury and watch the almost-full moon rise in the beautiful open view in front of the shelter. For our group of **Kevin Breton**, **Eric Breton**, **Cathryn Dolan**, **Jennifer Sprague** and me, the hike in and tent setup was no problem; we even had enough daylight for an afternoon stroll to Brassie Brook Shelter and back. The moonrise part of the plan fell through when clouds then rain moved in. We all cooked and ate supper quickly then hung out in the shelter while steady-to-heavy rain came down from 6 pm. to 9 pm. Also staying in the shelter was a gentleman who was recently hired as the trail supervisor for the Connecticut Forests and Parks Association. Apparently, CFPA has started to hire seasonal trail crews to tackle some larger trail improvement projects, much like the GMC on the Long Trail.

During a letup, we made a mad dash for our tents, but rain showers continued for several more hours and the clouds

never broke overnight. By morning, fortunately, the sun broke through and we actually had a very nice morning for the walk back to our cars, stopping at Lion's Head again to enjoy the panorama. Cathryn, Jennifer and I stopped at Sweet William's Café in Salisbury for coffee and baked goods, while Kevin and Eric headed toward Canaan in search of pizza. Overall, a very enjoyable weekend despite some precipitation and no moon.

Part 2: Determined to catch a full moonrise, I contacted some other willing suspects – **Mark Blanchard**, **Kevin Burke**, and **Don** and **Linda Hagstrom** – for a follow-up trip. On Monday the 18th we headed to Ten Mile River Shelter by multiple routes. Mark was trying to finish section-hiking the Connecticut AT so he started at Route 341 in Kent. Kevin, Don and Linda parked on Schaghticoke Road and hiked south. Jim parked at Route 55 near the New York state line and hiked north over Ten Mile Hill. The four of us with shorter walks reached the shelter around 2 pm, although not before getting caught in some un-forecast rain showers. Since Mark had the longest walk by far, he was the last to arrive at the shelter around 4 pm. His route included a brand-new relocation of the AT in the Schaghticoke Mountain area that has moved the trail completely off tribal lands. Mark reported that the relocation was nicely done and pleasant to hike. Fortunately, the rain and clouds cleared so we enjoyed a spectacular moon rise over the field in front of the shelter. After supper and much story-telling and joviality, we retired to our respective sleeping areas. Tuesday morning dawned clear and cool, good conditions for our hikes back to the cars. Don, Linda and Kevin headed north along the Housatonic River while Mark and I hiked south to Route 55. Since Mark wanted to complete the AT to the New York line, he dropped his pack in my car and proceeded south to Hoyt Road. He knocked off that short section as quickly as it took me to load up and drive around. Thanks to the crew for accompanying me on this second effort to watch the full moon rise.

Mattatuck Trail October 24, 2021 by Sarah O'Hare

An autumn hike in the hills of the western part of our state is always an adventure to look forward to. **Don Hagstrom** and **Jim Robertson** joined me on a hike of the last seven miles of the Mattatuck Trail in Cornwall. Some years ago the trail had been rerouted, resulting in less road walking. Taking along the old *Walk Book*, as well as the new one, was to our advantage for comparison. As we hiked along, we recalled a few of the trail's highlights from years ago. The large stone wall with inscribed dates stirred some vague memories, as did Mohawk Pond, Cunningham Tower and Mohawk Mountain, with its views of Bear Mountain, Mt. Everett and other hills to the northwest. The old fire tower, however, is long gone. There was one highlight from today's hike that will never fade. As we

ascended to the summit of Mohawk Mountain, there was the familiar face of **Kevin Burke** as he stood by his motorcycle. Apparently, it was as glorious day for a bike tour as it was for a hike. Conversation and laughter made for a renewed spring in our tired steps as we hiked the last mile to the northern terminus of the Mattatuck. And as for Kevin, it remains unknown where he rode off to, following his own adventure on this fine day.

**Heublein Tower Halloween Hike
October 31, 2021
by Jim Robertson**

We had another great turnout for this year's hike, continuing a tradition of an autumn walk up to the Heublein Tower that Dick Krompegal started in the 1990s. Steady rain the day before had postponed the scheduled event from Saturday to Sunday the 31st. At the start we had ten human hikers: **me, Dave Wells, Tom Adams, Don Hagstrom, Linda Hagstrom, Kevin Burke and his grandson Liam, Jocelyn Linnekin, Jennifer Sprague** and her friend **Harmony** from the Meriden Land Trust. My trusty sidekick Molson and Jenn's dog Clark rounded out the crew.

We were able to meet and start at the MDC pumping station again this year, after finding the reservoir road gated closed in 2020 due to COVID restrictions. Once off the gravel road we found that the Metacomet Connector Trail was extremely wet, probably the wettest I ever recall. This would be the theme for the day, as we found saturated trails almost everywhere except on the ridgeline.

Once on the ridgeline the trails were better drained, and the clear skies provided good views to the west. We only saw a few other people until we intersected with the crowds on the trail coming up from the parking lot on Route 185.

As we reached the Heublein Tower we were pleasantly surprised to meet **Mike Shaw** and his grandson, who had taken the path from 185. Mike was ready to leave the tower and start down so, had we arrived five minutes later, we probably would have missed him. Some of the group climbed the tower stairs to the observation deck for the spectacular 360-degree view. Don was kind enough to hold Molson's leash while I went up to take a look but I could hear Molson barking for almost the whole time that I had "abandoned" him below.

We all continued over to the pavilion to set up lunch, which included many Halloween goodies that people had brought. Liam fashioned the Great Pumpkin costume that I'd carried along and both of the little guys took turns petting our canine companions. After feasting on more than our share of sugary delights, we started down the Metacomet Trail back to the reservoir, again finding an extremely wet trail.

But it was a beautiful day with a great group, and the tradition will continue next year.

**Tunxis Trail
November 3, 2021
by Carol A. Langley**

Forty degrees, bright sunshine and a clear blue sky – the perfect day for a hike. Shortly before 10:00, **Dave Amidon** and I started our hike on the Blue Trail and had a steady climb, passing over the Blue/Yellow Trail. We continued onto Old Satan's Kingdom Rd. We chose to follow the road until we would connect with the Blue/Yellow Tipping Rock Trail. When we saw the gate, the markings were two double blazes. The trail maintainer had recently nailed on the plastic blue strips the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association is presently using for blazing the trees. First, the blazes were in the wrong direction and there was no yellow, just blue. Good thing it was two OLD WISE hikers on the trail. The Tipping Rock Trail was a steep and steady climb. We chose the right way to hike it with all the leaves and roots. We found what I thought was the Tipping Rock but it was not moving. We were now at the intersection of the Blue Tunxis Trail, thinking this was a wise choice to follow and we continued on. Suddenly, there were no more blazes but an intersection of trails from bikes, dog walkers and others. We decided to check my compass which showed us going in a southerly direction and the sun was in front of us. Sounds like a plan to get back to our cars. We found two nice rocks in the sun and had lunch. Continuing on the road, suddenly we connected with the Blue Yellow Tipping Rock Trail. We decided to follow the it, back to Satan's Kingdom Road, which goes to Rte. 44. Soon we found the dirt road and chose to just stay on it to our cars. I plan to do a snowshoe trip here sometime this winter.



**Shenipsit Trail
November 10, 2021
by Sarah O'Hare**

After a long break from hiking the Shenipsit Trail, we were back for our 6th hike of the series of hiking the entire trail. Today's five-mile hike was well attended: **George Jackson, Mandy Brink, Dave Amidon, Tom and Patty Adams, Jim Robertson, Marianne and Rob Valley, Naomi Davidson**, and our trail pups Molson, Arlo and sweet little Bella. For the first time since COVID kept us from sharing car rides, we were able to shuttle cars, rather than doing an out-and-back hike. Beginning at the southern trailhead at Birch Mountain Road in Glastonbury, we hiked north, passing glacial boulders and following a ridgeline with a view to the west of the Hartford city skyline and the hills beyond. The trail led us over Case Mountain where we veered off course to our lunch stop on Lookout Mountain. Alas, the breezes were too strong so we opted for a more protected area. It was then a mere mile down Case Mountain to our end at the northern trailhead on Birch Mountain Road in Manchester.

Devils Hopyard State Park Hike
November 13, 2021
by Mandy Brink

It had poured the day before, which worked well for us. **Tom and Patty Adams, Don Hagstrom, Jim Robertson** and I with the faithful four-legged friends, Molson, Arlo and Bella headed first to see the Chapman Falls. They were spectacular and flowing so well that we couldn't even hear each other talk. We crossed the covered bridge and from there we headed up the orange trail. This trail is up and more up which was good to do in the morning while we still had lots of energy. We hit the vista, had a snack and enjoyed the views. Despite a storm coming in, we had beautiful blue skies and a clear view of Hartford. From there we headed to connect with the red trail. We hit the vista on the yellow trail, known as the Witch Hazel trail, to stop for lunch. One interesting thing we saw was a large tree root sitting up like a piece of art, surrounded by small stone cairns. Jim said that the last time he was there, there was a group doing a ceremonial ceremony at that spot so perhaps it had some spiritual meaning. Despite the rainfall and wind the day before, the woods were still beautiful. The trees were still full of colorful leaves and it was autumn at its best. We clocked in about six miles. When we left the parking lot to go home, it was still sunny and blue. Hard to believe that a few hours later a storm blew in that created tornados in some areas. We were glad to be safely home by the time that happened.

Annual Turkey Trot
McLean Refuge
November 27, 2021
by Carol A. Langley

Checking back in old *Trail Talks*, it seems that the First Turkey Trot was in November of 2012 – nine years ago. The hike acquired the name Turkey Trot because the first time the hike was held at McLean we were hiking in on the Horse Trail when, suddenly reaching the field where there is now a housing development, a gaggle of turkeys (around 8-10 if I remember correctly) walked across the trail in front of us. The turkeys have moved on since the field has been taken from them. On this year's Turkey Trot, I had the company of three gentlemen from our section: **Dave Amidon, George Papagelis** (Dave's son-in-law) and **Dave Wells**. The steady wind had us quickly move along the road leading into the refuge and trails. We started our hike on the Blue Trail which meanders along and then has some ascents and descents. At its end we picked up the Purple North Trail. The trail took us up an incline where we were on a ridge for a short time. Before we knew it Kettle Pond was in view where we stopped for a few minutes to chat

and get a breath break. Moving along on a mostly smooth and level trail we saw many nurseries of baby Pine Trees that had sprouted up during the year. Along this stretch we came upon the Old Tractor from years gone by. Someone has taken the time to clear around the tractor. A few years back when Don Hagstrom and George Jackson were on this hike, they could identify the tractor and approximate year. I believe it is in the range of 75 years. The Purple North Trail led us to an old dirt fire road which we followed until we saw the signage for Spring Pond Trail which we followed to the pond. Just as we reached the bottom we saw a little cove out of the wind with bright sunshine and two good size downed trees, which became our lunch spot. Following the Spring Pond Trail until we were on the north side, there was evidence of quite a bit of clearing of branches and leaves from the Spring Pond. We followed the old dirt road as it crossed the brook a couple times and finally led us to McLean's Cabin. Today's total miles were about six.

Shenipsit Trail
December 4, 2021
by Sarah O'Hare

This sunny and brisk Saturday brought together a rather large gathering for the 7th hike of the Shenipsit Trail series. Our group included **Patty and Tom Adams, Joe Conaci, Dave Wells, Don Hagstrom, Kevin Burke, Mandy Brink, Jim Robertson**, and me, as well as trail dogs Bella and Arlo. **George Jackson**, one of the regular hikers committed to this series goal, was unable to come, as was Jim's pup, Molson. To keep up with the group, George hiked this a few days later. Beginning at the Rte. 44/6 commuter lot in Bolton, we hiked north through Freja Park, then along the combined Hop River Rail and Shenipsit Trails. Upon reaching our half-way point at Valley Falls Park, we stopped in at the pavilion for a rest.

The Shenipsit continued on through the Belding Wildlife Management Area. Forest management had been at work through here, as evidenced by the unsightly deforestation. Informative signs offered details regarding the importance of creating and maintaining various wildlife habitats. The trail then led us along the picturesque Tankerhoosen River. A new white-blazed trail was worth the short walk off course, as it led to the site of a cabin that had burned two decades ago. All that remained was an intact fireplace, adorned with a festive wreath and Christmas stockings. Don offered his own holiday touch by hanging a red ornament on the wreath. The last mile paralleled I-84, not especially pleasant due to the traffic. Before long, we arrived at Walker Reservoir in Vernon, the end of our 6.5-mile section.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming events are listed here: <http://www.conngmc.com/newwiki/doku.php?id=start>.