

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our 30th Anniversary Annual Meeting and Dinner

Forty-six people attended our Connecticut Section Annual Dinner and Meeting at the Cheshire Grange on March 20. Thanks to everyone who attended, and to Ken Williamson for arranging to make the dinner a success. The Grange's roast beef and vegetarian lasagna were excellent once again.

During the annual meeting, Jack Sanga was elected as Treasurer, replacing John Bensenhaver, who performed admirably for 5 years. We thanked John, and outgoing director George Andrews, now living in Boynton Beach, Florida, for their service. Connecticut Section Service Awards, recognizing members who serve as activity leaders and officers, went to Arlene Rivard, Bob Schoff, and Ken Williamson.

After the meeting, Marjorie Nichols of Lebanon gave a great slide presentation of her trip to the Swiss and Italian Alps. Thanks to Marge Hackbarth for securing Marjorie's services on short notice.

Trail Maintenance

VP for Trails and Shelters Dick Krompegal has scheduled the first trip to Kid Gore Shelter on the Long Trail for the weekend of May 21-23. This is a great opportunity to hike into the heart of our Long Trail section and get the trail ready for the summer season. The first work trip to Story Spring Shelter, just 0.7 miles from the road, is planned for June 18-20.

Participating in a Long Trail work weekend has multiple benefits. In addition to the satisfaction of giving time and energy back to the trail system, and the camaraderie of other GMC members, every hour of volunteer labor on the Long/Appalachian Trail adds to the level of federal government funding for the A.T. (through the National Park Service's Appalachian Trail Project Office and the Appalachian Trail Conference.) The high level of volunteerism throughout the A.T. system is looked on favorably by congressional and administrative staffs during budgeting.

This and That

April 29 (Thursday) - Club Day at all Eastern Mountain Sports stores. 20% off everything in the stores. Just identify yourself as a member of the Green Mountain Club.

June 5 is National Trails Day - Our Section will be sponsoring one hike on the Metacomet Trail in Granby. Look for Connecticut Forest and Parks Association listings of other activities.

June 11-13 - GMC Annual Meeting at Stratton Mountain in southern Vermont. See the Spring Long Trail News for details, or the GMC web site at www.greenmountainclub.org

See you on the Trail,
Jim Robertson

Pre Super Bowl Hike Gay City State Park January 31

Well, I lost another Pop-Tart wager to Ken Williamson on the Super Bowl that evening, but we had a great afternoon hike in Gay City State Park. Under cold clear skies, we started from the winter parking area on Route 85 in Hebron, walked along the access road and down the icy Gay City Road Trail to the village ruins. Up past a beaver pond and north on the French Trail, we encountered many other hikers, several with dogs. Further along, Mike, Sarah and Jack decided to take a more ambitious route to the northernmost section of the park while Jim, Carol, Kerry and I cut across to the Possum Trail and returned to the main pond. The ice was thick enough for walking, so we ventured out on the frozen surface. We pondered a large raised ice chunk, perhaps 2 feet by 3 feet, for some time. Jim Covell determined that it must have been a piece from a previous ice floe that had broken loose, then refrozen in the middle of the pond. Overhead several hawks soared on the thermals. As we returned to the parking lot, we met up with the three power hikers, who did the northern loop and ended up on Route 85.

Leader: Jim Robertson
Hikers: Jim and Carol Covell, Jack Sanga, Michael and Sarah O'Hare, Kerry Robertson

WEATHER REPORT January 1

At 0001 (12:01 a.m.) on the 1st of January 1999 the weather at the summit of Bear Mountain, CT, was: Temperature +15 degrees (Fahrenheit) with wind out of the west at 20 knots. Skies were partly cloudy with a big moon to light the snow-covered trail.

Weather observers: Harry Miller, Nick Miller, Jack Sanga, Wade Stoner, Ken Williamson

Modified Natchaug Trail Hike March 7

We met at Goodwin State Forest parking lot at 10:00 a.m. and hiked the blue trail northerly. It was a nice blue skyed day, with a fresh 3 inches of snow on the ground, and cold and windy. On the trail we could see the tracks of many creatures which were on the move: mice, shrew, squirell, turkey, deer and others we were not sure of. We hiked steadily to the north side of Black Spruce Pond and then took a woods road east which intersects with Eleventh Section Road and the White Trail of Goodwin Forest. We hiked the White Trail which after a short distance turns southerly and follows the shore of Pine Acres Pond. Along this trail is evidence of beaver work and sightings of their houses. Two flocks of cold weather ducks were sighted on the open lake. We arrived back at the parking lot around 1:15 p.m. and went for pizza.

A great day to be out!

Leader: Art Runnels
Hikers: Jack Sanga and Bob Schoff

Goodwin State Forest Trail Maintenance March 14

The day started with some blazing on the RED Trail. We split into two groups and blazed a portion in both directions. A short hike followed up to Brown Hill Pond on the YELLOW Trail. This was our lunch spot. After lunch we hiked and brushed out the YELLOW Trail loop around the pond and then back to the parking lot on the RED and YELLOW Trails.

Thanks to all. There were 11 people in attendance. GMC members were:

Sarah O' Hare, Bob Rivard, Fred Rivard, Norma Sandowski
Leader: Bob Schoff
Co-Leader: Art Runnels

Metacomet Trail

Initially I had planned on starting at the beginning of the Metacomet Trail and hike north about 12 miles. I was all set to do it until, on closer inspection of the map, we 1.) Couldn't get out of a place called West Peak Park as a 3 mile section of the trail has been closed since 1993 and 2.) By starting at the beginning you walk on city streets for 3 miles. Having found this out I opted for us to start further north, where the trail crosses Route 6, and hike south to a trail head at Ragged Mountain Preserve. I should have paid better attention to this ominous beginning.

We piled into Steve's Volvo for a 15 mile ride to the trailhead. We did have some fun riding through New Britain describing to Steve how he should turn the Volvo into a low rider, and if he could please turn up the bass on the radio. Then the trailhead. There is a place in Rhode Island, along the beach, that has almost as many No Parking signs (1 every 15 feet) as the trailhead area. We ended up parking a mile down the hill and had to walk back up along side the Route 6 speedway. The view from the summit however was amazing. Along with the majestic WVIT channel 30 tower we were able to see urban sprawl in all directions. The only neat part of the

first 5 miles (6 if you include the Route 6 stroll) was a 30 yard section of the trail that had an interesting rock formation. We were then treated to a 3+ mile walk through either Plainville or New Britain. On the map it looked like just a couple of blocks or I would have opted to go even further north. After pounding the pavement we finally got back into the woods. The trail after a few miles did in fact get pretty but soon we were hiking around some reservoir on a paved road. I could go on but I won' t. We did however eat some excellent pizza with good beer someplace in Kensington. We ended up at around 13-14 miles on the day.

This hike was to be the beginning of a Metacomet series in which we would have hiked the entire trail. After being burned on this hike I will really have to think about setting foot on anything named Metacomet for awhile.

Leader: Ken Williamson

Hikers: Allen Freeman, Jack Sanga, Steve Stephenson

Pachaug Forest/Acadia Management Area Hike March 27th

We hiked a loop on a combination of trails in the Pachaug State Forest (CT) and Acadia Management Area (RI). We headed north from Green Falls Pond on the Pachaug Trail into RI and the Tippecansett Trail. We continued north until we came to the Deep Pond Trail for our trip back south. We met up with the Tippecansett and followed it back into CT to the Narragansett Trail, which we took back to Green Falls Pond. The weather was excellent as were the CT section of trails. We were a little disappointed on the RI side, as the trails were actually forest roads.

We did hike a few extra furlongs or so on this hike, but regardless of what the other 2 hikers on this trip may tell you, this is my story and I' m sticking to it.

Leader: Ken Williamson

Hikers: Jack Sanga, Norma Sandowski

Success At Last! March 28

After three attempts I was able to run a short hike as scheduled. Seven people braved what seemed a doubtful day to walk the boardwalk at Hammonasset from the river at the western edge of the park to Meigs Point. We were fortunate to see two ospreys that had just returned to the nesting platform on the west end of the park.

Leader: Marge Hackbarth

Hikers: Sara O'Hare, Olivia and Drew (tiny tots) and father Jack Sanga, Mandy Brink and Ken Williamson

Shenipsit Trail April 3

The morning was overcast but didn' t put a damper on the group' s enthusiasm to begin the hike. It was intended to be a short, easy hike but the leader wandered off the trail, got us lost briefly which took us up rocks and through mountain laurel to get back on track.

A brief water break at a pine grove overlooking the Connecticut River Valley included a view of Hartford' s skyline with the State Capitol' s dome brightly shining. On towards Garnet Ledge where Ken was most anxious to find garnets which he had been assured would be in abundance. Much to his dismay, a stream, too deep to cross, made us turn back. So much for his treasure trove of garnets!

Taking a side trail, which was a loop back to the Shenipsit, Marge pointed out a few early spring flowers. Then we hiked across rocks studded with garnets! The mother lode! Ken was delighted, gathered a handful, and we were on our way again.

Having passed just a few hikers, we sidestepped many bikers, hence, much conversation revolved around bikers and their trail erosion problems and trail maintenance. All in all we walked about 4.5 miles.

Leader: Sarah O' Hare

Hikers: Marge Hackbarth, Ken Williamson

ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

May - June 1999

May

Saturday, May 1 - Day hike, Second leg of the Natchaug Trail. Start at 9:30 a.m. 6 - 8 miles.

Leader: Jack Sanga (860) 648-9614, e-mail: jsanga@aol.com

Saturday, May 8 - Give a Day to Trails Day. Bigelow Hollow State Forest in Union. Clipping and blazing of Nipmuck Trail beside Breakneck Pond. Bring loppers and/or hand clippers. Meet 8:00 a.m. at hikers parking lot, Bigelow Hollow State Park, .7 mi. in from Rte. 171.

Leaders: Bob Schoff & Art Runnels (860) 429-1043, e-mail: rschoff@snet.net

Sunday, May 9 - Orienteering with the Western CT Orienteering Club. The GMC will form a team to compete in the beginners class in a scheduled meet. Start at 10:00 a.m. at Paugussett State Park, Newtown, CT. Directions: I-84 exit 10 to US 6 west. In .6 miles, turn right at The Boulevard Road (Not easy to spot - it is on a slight right hand curve and it is not a very big road. If you pass Hawley Elementary School on the right, you have gone 50 yards too far.) In 1.3 miles, the road joins Hanover Rd. Continue 2 miles to parking. Contact leader for any questions and to pre-register. Bring a compass if you have one.

Leader: Steve Stevenson (203) 270-6131

Saturday, May 15 - Lebanon Green. 10:00 a.m. - 2 mile loop walk around historic Lebanon Green in Lebanon, CT. See famous War Office where George Washington planned Revolutionary War & Trumbull houses. Dogs on leash O.K. Meet at east end of Green in parking area behind Cong. Church & library at intersection of Rtes. 207 & 87. Call leader for weather report.

Leader: Arlene Rivard (860) 537-1114, e-mail: rwrivard@neca.com

Saturday, May 15 - Day Hike. 10-mile day hike, leader's choice.

Leader: Stephanie Buhl (860) 635-4486, e-mail: buhlsm@pweh.com

Sunday, May 16 - Open Bike Ride. Loop ride along the Connecticut shoreline from Harkness State Park in Waterford to Stonington Borough via New London, Groton, Noank and Mystic. 45 miles, friendly pace. Please pre-register, bad weather cancels. Shorter route option available.

Leader: Ken Williamson (860) 535-2622, email: Ksub@aol.com

Friday-Sunday, May 21 - 23 - Trail Maintenance in VT. We will work the southern 5 - 6 miles of our section of the Long Trail using the Kid Gore Shelter as a base. Some will leave Friday morning. Call by May 19th.

Leader: Dick Krompegal (860) 667-4205, e-mail: rkrompy@aol.com

Saturday, May 29 - Day Hike. Leader's choice.

Leader: Jack Sanga (860) 648-9614, e-mail: Jsanga@aol.com

June

Saturday, June 5 - Day Hike, Metacomet Trail. From Granby to Suffield, Route 20 to Route 168. Held in conjunction with Granby Hiking and Environmental Festival, where the GMC will have a display. Call for time and meeting place.

Leader: Jim Robertson (860) 633-7279 or (860) 285-4688 (work), e-mail: jrobert685@aol.com.

Sunday, June 6 - Day Hike, Chatfield Trail. In Killingworth. 9:00 a.m. start. 4-5 miles.

Leader: Sarah O' Hare (860) 5637018, e-mail: SEOHARE@aol.com

Friday - Sunday, June 11 -13. GMC Annual Meeting, Stratton Mountain Resort. See the Long Trail News for details, or the GMC web site: www.greenmountainclub.org

Sunday, June 13 - Mattabesett Trail Maintenance. Meet at Guida' s Restaurant on Rte. 66 east of Meriden at 9:30 a.m. Call leader for details.

Leader: Dick Krompegal (860) 667-4205, e-mail: rkrompy@aol.com

Friday-Sunday, June 18 - 20 - Trail Maintenance in VT. We will work the northern 5 - 6 miles of our section. We will base out of the Story Spring Shelter which is only ½ mile from where we park. The main task will be to blaze from the shelter south for about 4 miles. Some will leave Friday morning.

Leader: Dick Krompegal (860) 667-4205, e-mail: rkrompy@aol.com

Sunday, June 27 - Day Hike, Mattatuck Trail. 9:30 a.m. start. Climb Black Rock. About 8 miles.

Leader: Sarah O' Hare (860) 5637018, e-mail: SEOHARE@aol.com