

October 1999

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We had another successful year of Long Trail maintenance, concluding with work parties around Story Spring Shelter in September, and Kid Gore & Caughnawaga Shelters in October. Thanks to Dick Krompegal for directing the FIVE weekend trips to Vermont this year. The trail is truly in great shape.

Our ranks continue to grow. As of early October, Allen Freeman reported we have over 150 members in the Connecticut Section, the highest number I can recall in the past ten years, and perhaps the highest ever. Welcome to our many new members, whether you are just joining the GMC, or have joined us from the New York Section. We're glad to have you! (As a note, a recent Long Trail News listed our Section membership at 199. We discovered that the GMC office has not been removing non-renewing members from their records for some time, so they had an artificially high member count.)

If you own or manage land, you may be interested in this information we received from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The statewide low level aerial survey is expected to take place in March and April of 2000. Photos from these flights are used for land monitoring, assessment, and planning by the state and most of our towns. The flights carry a global positioning system, but landowners may also set up landmarks on their property for later reference. For more information, contact DEP Supervising Environmental Analyst (and CT GMC member) Allan Williams at 860-424-3644.

Eastern Mountain Sports Club Day Sale is Thursday, October 28, 1999 at all EMS stores. Members of the GMC and other outdoor clubs get 20 percent off everything in the store. In Connecticut, EMS has stores in Manchester, Waterford, and West Hartford.

Deer hunting season for rifle and shotgun starts in Connecticut on November 17 and runs through December 7. Landowners may start hunting November 1. Use caution in the woods during these time periods! For more information, see the DEP Web Site at <http://dep.state.ct.us> and follow the pages through permits to the hunting and trapping guide.

See you on the trail,
Jim Robertson

Alander Mt. Backpack July 10-11

Dick Krompegal, Jim Robertson, and Ken Williamson joined me for this weekend adventure. Topographic high-points included Round Mtn., Mt. Frissell, the highest point in CT, Alander Mtn., and Brace Mtn. States visited included Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York. Flora and fauna ranged from rattlesnakes to blueberries. Weather went from hot and humid, to light showers, to cool, dry, and breezy. Conversations ranged from the mundane to the sublime.

Leader: Allen Freeman

Ten Mile River Backpacking Trip July 31- August 1

Despite humid conditions and the threat of thunderstorms, we had a good turnout for the 5th annual family backpacking trip at Ten Mile River on the Appalachian Trail in Kent. Three GMC families were joined by long-time former GMCers Henry Smith and Carol Langley, with her granddaughter. Carol and Allen Freeman initiated this outing in 1995 and we've been doing it every year since.

There were plenty of people in the Bulls Bridge area, heading for swimming holes in the Housatonic River, as we walked south along the AT to the Ten Mile River Campsite. Sarah and Tom arrived first, and dispatched a wasp nest in the outhouse. After establishing our campsite in the freshly mown field (thanks again to Bob Schoff and the AMC crew), we headed up Ten Mile River for a swim in one of the pools. We found the water level down considerably from previous years. Crawfish scared the kids out of the water, but Henry was quick enough to catch one of the little critters (crawfish, that is).

After swimming, we let the kids perform the annual rituals: pumping the water pump, eating snacks, visiting the Ten Mile River Shelter, eating more snacks, walking on rocks under the Ned Anderson Bridge, skipping stones in the river, eating more snacks, playing with Game Boys (yikes - the kids are getting older!), and complaining about the outhouse smell. Tom, who is 14, did well to put up with the noise and occasional teasing of the four little girls. He and Sarah tossed a football and Frisbee in the field, despite periodic interruptions from the kids. After dinner, we visited the shelter again, finding the weekend AMC ridge runner and four

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other campers there. The haze and humidity unfortunately obscured any view of the stars and moon.

Sunday morning brought more sticky weather, so we packed up early. The kids took another tour of the rocks along the banks of the Housatonic, obtaining a few scrapes and wet shoes in the process. Sarah and Tom hit the trail first and headed home, Henry headed into the woods to explore some caves, and the rest of us walked slowly back up the AT to our vehicles. We drove to Kent for ice cream at Stosh' s, that conveniently opened at 11 a.m., five minutes before our arrival, and then headed home.

Backpackers: Jim, Kerry and Brenna Robertson, Allen and Anju Freeman, Sarah and Tom O'Hare, Carol Langley, Kassidee Drivdahl, Henry Smith

Long Trail Maintenance August 13 - 15

Seth Coffey, Southern Field Assistant for the GMC, called me about August 1 to inform me that VT had several severe thunderstorms and there were reports that our section had some blowdowns in the hiking trail. We didn't feel that it was urgent to clear them but if we could, that would be good. Since there was a tripscheduled in September for the north end I decided to work the southern end of our section. A few e-mails and phone conversations later there were enough volunteers to go.

I arrived at Kid Gore Shelter early Friday afternoon on August 13 after flagging the unmarked side trail for the others who would arrive later. At the shelter was a long distance hiker who was very excited about seeing his first moose and bear that morning. Bill Brodnitzki and Matt Funchion arrived a short time later. Bill, Matt and I walked north about 1 mile to clear the trail. We did encounter one blowdown which we cleared with a hand saw and muscle. We made our way back to the shelter in a light rain. All afternoon and evening the rest of the crew arrived - Bill Healey, Jack Sanga, Steve Stevenson, Ken Williamson and Jim Roberston. That evening, while it showered occasionally, we chatted with an AT through hiker going North - South and several other long distance hikers.

Saturday we all set out for the top of Glastenbury Mountain, brushing the trail and looking for the many (?) blowdowns. Jack volunteered to carry a hazel hoe to clean water-bars, the rest of us had swizzle sticks, hand saws and loppers. We brushed the trail, muscled off several small trees then arrived at the top at about 11:00. Not complaining you understand, but we did not encounter any significant downed trees blocking the trail. Working our way back to the shelter we took turns cleaning out the waterbars - a tough job - but that will cut down on erosion. We completed the 8 mile hike/work trip by 3:00 p.m. Again we spent the evening talking with other hikers and another North - South AT through hiker.

During the night there were a few showers. Sunday morning it rained - "No Work Today". Slowly everybody started the 3 mile walk out. Jack, Ken and I waited until late morning to leave, pulling down the flags as we walked along obscuring the trail again.

Thanks for the work!

*Workers: Bill Brodnitzki, Matt Funchion, Jack Sanga, Ken Williamson, Steve Stevenson, Bill Healey, Jim Robertson
Leader: Dick Krompegal*

Long Trail Maintenance Sept. 10 - 12

Despite a soaking from tropical storm Dennis, 8 stalwart trail crew made it to the shelter where two of us shared the place with some other talkative hikers. The through hikers on Saturday night were much quieter. The smart people pitched tents and the only noise was the distant call of owls. Chairman Dick Krompegal did some surveying of the trail Friday as there were reports of blowdowns since the August work party.

Saturday morning everyone -- Bill Brodnitzki, Marge Hackbarth, Sarah O'Hare, Brad and Steve Stevenson, Drew and Jack Sanga hit the trail going south. The blowdowns were eliminated and the weed-whackers cleared a wide swath. Marge cleaned waterbars and three year old Drew, our youngest member, proudly carried the saw for his dad. Back at the camp Drew helped his father gather firewood and later helped Marge clean the privy. Jack built his customary fire and Marge and Brad kept moving around to avoid the smoke.

However, he produced some fine coals for Sarah to bake us a corn bread in her Dutch oven and for the Stevensons to cook their usual corn and hamburgers. All generously shared their excess food and beverages with two through hikers, a Canadian from Calgary and a professional photographer from North Carolina. When they left Sunday morning they had a fine opinion of Connecticut hospitality.

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The dampness seemed to give Brad and Marge a runny nose and we couldn't figure out whether it was allergies or a cold. When she got home Marge found out it wasn't allergies. How about you Brad? Sunday, due to some glitches, the work party was reduced to Marge, Sarah, and Dick who inspected part of the trail going north of Forest Service Road # 71. Marge had the pleasant experience of meeting a day hiker on the trail, now a resident of NY, with whom she had hiked the AT in Maine years ago. Thus our fourth work party of the 1999 season with one more to go basing at Kid Gore in October.

Thanks!

*Workers: Drew and Jack Sanga, Sarah O'Hare, Brad and Steve Stevenson, Bill Brodnitzki,
Written By: Marge Hackbarth
Leader: Dick Krompegal*

Mattabesett Trail Maintenance September 19

Trails and Shelter Chairman Dick Krompegal met members Marge Hackbarth and Jason Smith and guest Sue Prahash for breakfast at Guida's at 9:30 a.m. Afterward, all cars were moved to Black Pond. The crew made their way up Beseck Mtn. by the new road to the pass where our trail begins. Dick and Jason blazed back and forth to Route 66 while Sue clipped, Marge plodded along on her two sticks and gave Sue pointers on trail maintenance.

Dick conceived the brilliant idea of Marge going back to her car and driving a car to the trail crossing on Route 68. While she sat there for three hours and read several magazines, the three fast ones blazed and clipped to Route 68. However, more blazing going north will have to be done on the next work party.

This means that in 1999 our club has personally inspected all of our 12 miles of the Mattabesett Trail except Paug Gap to Route 17 - a short section, which we can easily do on our work party scheduled October 31.

Written by: Marge Hackbarth

NEW MEMBERS

Kurt Anderson & Family, Roxbury
Alan Baker & Family, East Windsor
Lila M. Bakutis, Thomaston
Chuck Brock, Port Jefferson Sta., NY
Ellen S. Diamon, West Simsbury
John Dwyer, East Hartford
Cami L. Engler, Suffield
John F. Ficke, Torrington
John W. Jochum, Gales Ferry
Renee Jones & Family, Trumbull
David Makowicki, Stratford
Akiko Nishiyama, Mansfield Center

Silver Hill Backpacking Trip October 9 – 10

Silver Hill on the Appalachian Trail in Cornwall is a great place for camping with kids. Although the cabin burned down years ago, there is still the bench swing, a water pump, a covered kitchen pavilion with picnic tables, a deck, and lots of open space. Throw in a few books and a few decks of playing cards, and kids can find plenty to do there.

We met on River Road in Cornwall Bridge around noon on Saturday, surprised to find BUGS buzzing around us. The rain and unseasonably warm weather must have stirred them up. The hike up the AT from River Road to Silver Hill went quickly, with only one short rest stop. After reaching the camping area, we settled in, and Allen broke out a box of Nabisco Triscuits and "cheese-in-a-can" – Real Cheese (that doesn't need refrigeration). The kids made short work of the snacks.

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While the kids spent Saturday afternoon playing games, swinging, walking Cody the dog (although there was some question of who was walking whom), the parents took it easy. We watched small planes do maneuvers over the Housatonic River valley, and got a big surprise when one appeared directly overhead, coming east over Silver Hill, probably no more than 200 feet above the ground. Had the pilot been much lower, he would have topped a few of the large pines in front of the camping area (which, admittedly, would have improved the vista.) Kevin, Allen, and I tried to stabilize the makeshift pipe that supports the swing, with some success. Later we were joined by Alan, a GMC at-large member, and his son Tim, from Huntington, Long Island. After dinner, we lit the Coleman lantern on a picnic table and Kathy taught our guests a new version of the card game War. As the lantern fuel neared the end, we retired to our tents.

The onset of rain at 5:00 a.m. woke some of us, and by 7:00 a.m. everyone was up and around. We cooked hot breakfasts, then packed our soggy things. The kids were undeterred by the wet weather, singing songs as they marched back down the hill to the cars.

Backpackers: Jim, Kerry and Brenna Robertson, Allen and Anju Freeman, Kathy Steffens, Kevin and Allison Karl, and Cody

Wadsworth Park October 18

CT Section GMCers were a no-show on a beautiful Fall day. Thank's to Allen's website, two guests made a long drive to Middletown to join the leader and a hiker from A.Y.H. Jan Lung came from Enfield on the Massachusetts border and Maura Barbino from Bethlehem. Besides the colorful Fall foliage we saw the massive construction work on Cherry Hill Road to replace the 1878 bridge and the tremendous flow of water over the Great Falls. An added treat was a visit to the Wadsworth Mansion not yet open to the public.

The leader will try one more non-macho hike in November before deciding to quit for lack of interest.

Leader : Marge Hackbarth

DEP Bookstore

Looking for a source of books, etc. on a number of outdoor topics related to Connecticut? Try the Department of Environmental Protection bookstore. They feature books on hiking, biking, canoeing, wildlife and geography. They also have a number of maps including topo maps in an atlas or on CD-ROM. They are located at 79 Elm Street (across from Bushnell Park) in Hartford. They are open Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Call them at (860) 424-3555 for a catalog or visit their website at:

<http://dep.state.ct.us>

and click on "DEP Store".

SAVE THE DATE !!

Connecticut Section GMC
Annual Meeting
Saturday, March 18, 2000
Cheshire Grange
More Info in the Next Issue

ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

November - December 1999

Sunday, November 7 - Day Hike, Penwood State Park Hike. Start at entrance on Route 185 near Bloomfield/Simsbury town line. Call for time.

Leader: Jim Robertson (860) 633-7279 or jrobert685@aol.com (H), (860) 285-4688 or james.e.robertson@us.abb.com (W)

Saturday, November 13 - Day Hike, Devil's Den Nature Preserve. In Weston. 9:30 a.m. start. Hike in the state's largest

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nature preserve.

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

Mattabasset Trail Hike Series. Maybe you chopped some brush or picked up some trash on this trail. Now for a new concept, hike it for recreation!! Jack Sanga will be leading a series of 3 hikes on the Mattabasset trail. I am told the blazes on this trail are true works of art.

Saturday, November 20 - Day Hike, Mattabasset Trail Hike #1. Contact the leader for start time, miles, and directions.

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

Sunday, November 28 - Day Hike, Pachaug Trail Hike #1. 9:30 a.m. start, 10 to 12 miles. Contact the leader for directions.

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

Saturday, December 4 - Day Hike, Mattabasset Trail Hike #2. Contact the leader for start time, miles, and directions.

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

Saturday, December 11 - Day Hike, Chatfield Trail. In Killingworth. 9:30 a.m. start. 4.5 miles.

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

Saturday, December 18 - Day Hike, Mattabasset Trail Hike #3. Contact the leader for start time, miles, and directions.

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

Sunday, December 26 - Day Hike, Pachaug Trail Hike #2. 9:30 a.m. start, 10 to 12 miles. Contact the leader for directions.

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

Friday/Saturday, December 31/ January 1 - Backpacking, Y2K on BM. Celebrate the New Year on top of Connecticut' s highest peak Bear Mountain.

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