



## Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club

Volume LIV, Issue III July to September 2022 Fred Clark, Editor

### President's Message

June 2022

#### *Connecticut Section Annual Dinner and Meeting:*

I'm pleased to report that we have a date for our first indoor in-person annual dinner and meeting in two and a half years! Dennis Himes has been working with the Cheshire Grange and has set the event for:

Saturday, September 24, 2022  
5:00 pm social hour / 6:00 pm dinner / 7:00 pm Annual Meeting and Speaker  
Cheshire Grange Hall  
44 Wallingford Road, Cheshire CT  
Menu will be the traditional roast beef or vegetarian lasagna  
Price: \$16.00 per person  
Guest Speaker: To be announced

Please watch for a separate correspondence with the dinner reservation form.

#### *Trails & Shelters Updates:*

Trails and Shelters VP Mike Shaw led two groups on work weekends on the Long Trail this Spring. On April 29 to May 1, Mike, Mandy Brink, Kevin Burke, Sven Englund, Dennis Himes, Barb Kelly, and Jim Moore worked the northern part of our trail section, basing out of Story Spring Shelter. On May 20-22, Mike and Sven worked the southern section based at Kid Gore Shelter. Mike reports that many areas are in need of re-blazing so additional work trips will be scheduled this year.

It appears that the major renovations of Kid Gore Shelter, including structural reinforcement to correct the lean and replacement of the roof, will move forward this year. The GMC field staff has not set specific dates for commencement of work but most likely it will occur in September. There will be a need for our volunteer support. Mike will communicate specifics when available.

We've had some beautiful days so far this year. Hope you've been able to get outside and enjoy them!

See you on the trail, *Jim Robertson*



*Spring camping at Big Meadow, Shenandoah National Park*

## Green Mountain Club Information

<http://www.greenmountainclub.org>

(802) 244-7037

## Connecticut Section Information

<http://www.conngmc.com>

## Officers and Executive Committee

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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:

**Patty Luxton**

**Elaine Pfeffer**

We look forward to meeting you at upcoming events.

**Publication Schedule:** *Trail Talk* is published four times a year in March, June, September, and December. Please e-mail your activity report as a Word document to the Editor at [fpclark1@comcast.net](mailto:fpclark1@comcast.net) no later than the fifth day of the publication month.

**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 and activity schedule.

### 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

### **Rail-Trails Southington March 9, 2022 by Carol A. Langley**

On a cold but sunny day, Carol Ann Cella, a prospective new member, joined me. There was little snow and ice on the trail so we were able to walk with ease. Few people were out because of the strong wind which made it feel colder than the temperature actually was. We stopped at Perkatory Coffee which has an inside lounge with tables and chairs, making our coffee break enjoyable. We then continued south on the trail. But the wind just was not giving up so we decided to head north. Now we had the sun on our backs and were not fighting the wind. There was a beautiful blue sky but off in the west visible signs of cirrus clouds moving in was telling us more bad weather would be arriving within 48-72 hours.

### **The Adirondacks trip March 18-20, 2022 by Mandy Brink**

I was sitting at my kitchen table, very disgruntled about the weather forecast for the weekend. Freezing rain all weekend with an 81% chance of it happening on Saturday, our big hiking day. Friday morning, we all gathered at Barb Kelly's house with many choices of rain gear and winter gear. The Pennsylvania crew consisting of **Mark Stone, Dan Stone and Gabby Stone**, had gotten up at 1 am to drive up and had already climbed Cascade Mt. (4098 feet) when we met them in Lake Placid at 4 pm. Besides myself, the CT contingency consisted of **Marianne and Rob Valley, Mike Shaw, Kevin Burke, Barb Kelly and Jim Robertson**. After a nice dinner in Lake Placid, we headed to the LOJ to settle in for the evening and discuss hike options. Several of the group did a partial or full hike around Heart Lake at the LOJ. **Joe Conaci** joined us around 8 pm from New Hampshire.

On Saturday morning Joe, Mike, Mandy, Barb, Dan, Mark, Gabby and I headed upward for the 3.7-mile trip to Algonquin, the second highest peak in NY at 5114 feet. Jim, Kevin, Marianne and Rob headed for a hike to Marcy Dam. Both trailheads were accessible right from the LOJ. It was raining in the morning but that had pretty much stopped by the time we headed out around 9:30 am. We needed our ice stabilizers almost immediately. It was a slow and steady climb over a packed but very icy trail with some challenging

ice spots. We carried our snowshoes but never really needed them. The sky was gray, but we were happy to not be hiking in freezing rain. We stopped for snacks along the way as well as to figure out how to maneuver up some of the ice-covered rocks. Once we got above tree line it was just a landscape of ice-covered rocks. There were about 50 mile an hour winds at the summit, so we didn't stay there long. Joe continued to try and conquer Iroquois Mt. while the rest of us started the slow task of descending. Gabby, however, with her young knees, practically ran down the mountain. Some of us did a lot of sliding on our butts but even that could be treacherous. Some of it was so straight down that you could get sliding out of control. Eventually we made it to the junction for Wright Mt. Dan and Mark still had enough energy to do the 0.4 miles required to bag that peak at 4587 feet. The rest of continued the long journey down. As we approached the end of our hike, the skies were blue, and we were happy to not have had rain for the day as predicted. Our round trip of 7.4 miles was a hard day's hike and those who did Wright Mt. plus Joe on his adventure did additional mileage.

The second group hiked to Marcy Dam which was supposed to be 5 miles round trip, but they couldn't find the loop trail, so they ended up going a half a mile beyond where it was supposed to be and doubled backed. They got a bonus and did 6 miles. They had lunch at a lean-to overlooking the river and marshy area where there used to be a pond formed by the dam. Rob was surprised to find the dam had been removed several years ago. He recalled camping nearby in the early 1980s with a friend. The sun was poking through the clouds when they arrived back at the LOJ around 3 pm. They sat outside for a while to dry their boots and to enjoy the wee bit of sun.

Happily, the other group arrived back around 5:30 pm, in plenty of time for a hot shower before the huge dinner was served in the dining area. Our bodies and muscles were tired, so we enjoyed relaxing and visiting with other outdoor folks staying at the LOJ that evening. We played a game I taught some of the crew called Five Crowns. Kevin Burke had an especially good time at getting a crappy round of cards on almost every turn.

On Sunday morning, Joe was up at 4 am to head back to New Hampshire. The rest of us enjoyed a nice breakfast. Dan got up early and did a jog up and down

Mt. Jo at 2877 feet. The Pennsylvania crew left for home while the rest of us did a nice slow hike up Mt. Jo. Again, there was enough ice for creepers and slow hiking. On the way up there were a lot of enormous ice falls that were very pretty hanging off the rocks. There wasn't a view at the summit, but it was surrounded by a nice grove of pines that was pretty against the white snow. It was a little over 2 miles for this loop hike, the perfect amount for a day when you have a long drive home. We changed into our traveling clothes and bought some patches before we loaded up the cars and headed back to Connecticut.

**Canfield Meadows Preserve**  
**April 2, 2022**  
**by Mandy Brink**

**Patty Adams, Don and Linda Hagstrom, Laura Mooney** and I started on the Canfield Trail in the Canfield-Meadow Woods Nature Preserve in Deep River and Essex, Connecticut. We were lucky enough to have Mike Shaw's grandson, Ben, and my grandson, Liam, along. Our four-legged friends included Bella and Arlo. Almost immediately we passed a massive tulip tree. Nothing like kids, through their carefree eyes, to see the beauty of the woods. We were in search of Castle Rock which we found and were not quite as impressed by as some of the other rock piles the boys enjoyed climbing and exploring. We took the Crossover Trail to the Long Trail and got to the viewing platform. There were good views of the forest and the water. We had a nice snack break of Brownies for Liam's 9<sup>th</sup> birthday, which was the next day. Liam and Ben were climbing up and over rocks, exploring caves and looking for treasures. Their energy level was catching, and it was fun to share their enthusiasm of being outdoors. Both boys collected sea glass and rocks. Ben had a big rock full of diamonds. His plans are to break the rock apart, get out the diamonds and make us all rich. Ben had a heavy backpack full of rocks by the time our hike was finished. We took the Link Trail to the Primitive Trail and onto a loop trail where we were able to locate the Town Line Boulder. We logged in 4 miles for the morning. Ben, with his heavy load, was happy to see the cars. Hopefully we will see both boys on future hikes.

**Bigelow Hollow State Park**  
**May 1, 2022**  
**by Sarah O'Hare**

With more than 20 miles of trails in Bigelow Hollow State Park, our hike this morning was a six-mile loop around Breakneck Pond. **Carol Langley, Dave Wells, Jim Fritz, Tracey McDougall**, with her pup Storm, and I accessed the pond by way of the East Ridge Trail. This one-mile trail leads to the southern shore of the pond at the junction with the Breakneck Pond View Trail. The scent of a wood fire alerted us to campers at the shelter overlooking the pond. We passed the campsite and turned onto the Breakneck Pond View Trail, hiking north along the western shore. It was quite apparent that the beavers are attempting to take over the pond, as evidenced by the many, many gnawed trees and a few dams which were in various stages of construction. Carol spied one beaver that, in a flash, disappeared beneath the water's surface. Many pairs of noisy geese guarded their territories. Sunning itself on a log, a large painted turtle appeared aware of our presence, as its long neck was strained upward, as if watching our every move.

At the northern end of the lake, and now in Massachusetts, we carefully and successfully crossed the pond's outflow on slippery rocks. It wasn't until we had all crossed that we discovered a rope above a log spanning the outflow. Had we noticed it earlier, it might have made our crossing a little more secure. Turning south onto the Nipmuck Trail, we followed the shoreline back into Connecticut and on to another camping shelter. As this shelter was unoccupied, we unloaded our packs and had lunch at the picnic table. Once back on the trail, we discovered that wildflowers were blooming on this side of the pond. To our delight, trilliums were seen. Marsh marigolds added a splash of brilliant yellow in the marsh areas. And the frog population will soon be growing, as a white, softball-sized mass of eggs was nestled within the marsh vegetation.

Arriving at the junction with the East Ridge Trail, we retraced our steps back to the parking lot. As Carol and I had commitments waiting for us back home, Jim, Dave and Tracey headed out for ice cream, a fine ending to a delightful spring hike.

**Shenipsit Trail**  
**May 11, 2022**  
by Sarah O'Hare

Hike #9 in the series of hiking the Shenipsit Trail brought together **Jim Robertson, Tom and Patty Adams** with their dog Arlo and his canine friend Albus, and **Mandy Brink** with little Bella. Absent were two regulars, George Jackson, who will make up this section before we're finished with our trail adventure, and Molson, Jim's dog. He preferred to stay home as age, mileage and warm weather are getting too much for him. We began where we left off last time, at Hopkins Road / Rte. 140. Hiking north, the path soon became a woods road with many intersecting tote roads and unblazed paths. At an especially large junction of woods roads, an enormous fire ring, complete with empty beer cans, appeared to have recently held a bonfire. A little further along, a stone foundation with a fireplace piqued our interest.

We gradually ascended the south side of Soapstone Mountain. According to the *CT Walk Book*, the mountain was named for the stone quarried on the eastern side of the mountain in the 1880s. At the summit, we all climbed the stairs of the recently rebuilt (2019) observation tower. The commanding view was of western CT and north into MA where we could see Springfield. And as it was a fairly clear day, Jim thought that he could spot Mt. Tom and Mt. Greylock in MA and Mt. Monadnock in NH. As the lunch hour was upon us and picnic tables awaited by the parking lot, our descent was a quick one. Another 5.3 miles completed and we now have but one last section to complete towards our goal.

**Mansfield Hollow**  
**May 13, 2022**  
by Sarah O'Hare

The yellow-blazed trail around Mansfield Hollow Lake is 5.5 miles in length. **Jim Robertson, Bob and Mel Michaud, Mandy Brink, Tom Adams** and I met at the parking area by the ball fields on Rte. 89. With pups Arlo and Bella leading the way, we began our hike on the combined yellow-blazed trail and the blue-blazed Nipmuck Trail. A sign alerted us that Iron Bridge North was washed out. Fortunately, our route took us over Iron Bridge South, where the two trails divided. It wasn't long before we were following the shoreline of Mansfield Hollow Lake. The lake was calm and a lone fishing boat drew our attention. From above, an unusual bird song averted our attention

from the lake to the trees. A Baltimore Oriole, seemingly aware of our presence, flew out of sight.

After making our way around the lake, we passed by the boat launch. We soon found ourselves at a picnic area where we settled in for lunch. The last stretch of the yellow-blazed trail paralleled the blue-blazed Nipmuck Trail. As we could have followed either trail, we stayed the course on the yellow. A small pond, rather hidden through the trees, sported a log with many sunning turtles. Then it wasn't long before we found ourselves back at the parking area, a fine hike ending all too soon.

**Shenandoah National Park**  
**Hiking, Camping and Backpacking**  
**April 20-27, 2022**  
by Jim Robertson

We traveled south to Shenandoah National Park to hike, camp and backpack in late April again this year. **Mandy Brink, Tom and Patty Adams, Don and Linda Hagstrom, and Rob and Marianne Valley** joined the trip. Patty and Tom had driven down to Virginia early to visit their daughter's family in Fredericksburg and to celebrate their grandson's birthday. Initially they planned to drive to the park on Tuesday April 19 but a late season snow storm blanketed the higher Shenandoahs with about six inches of snow and sleet, temporarily closing most of Skyline Drive, the main road through the park. Linda and Don checked into a hotel in Luray for Tuesday night to await better weather as well. On the 20<sup>th</sup> the Hagstroms and Adamses arrived early and secured sites at Big Meadows Campground, still covered with some snow but melting in the spring sun. At the campground elevation of 3600 feet there were very few trees budding yet. The rest of us arrived later in the day, clearing spots for tents. Marianne and Rob literally did car camping, sleeping in the back of their Honda Fit.

This year's target was the northern one-third of the Appalachian Trail through SNP from Pinnacles Picnic Area to Front Royal, VA. Our initial plan was for a two-day backpack on Thursday-Friday, a return to Big Meadows to meet up with any of Mandy's Pennsylvania relatives who might join us, then to head out for a three-day backpack Saturday morning. Unfortunately, none of the PA folks were able to break free for the weekend but we decided to stick with the original plan in order to pack lighter on the trail and enjoy a night of base-camping between the



two segments. Patty accompanied us to drop off Mandy, Don, Tom and Marianne at the Pinnacles Picnic Area then to help spot Rob's and my cars at Elkwallow Gap. Starting about an hour after the group of four, Rob and I never caught up with the group until we reached our Day 1 destination, Pass Mountain Hut, where we set up in a nice grassy tenting area near the shelter.



*Rob Valley, Don Hagstrom, Marianne Valley, and Mandy Brink relax at Pass Mountain Hut campsite*

Day 2 included about 7.5 miles of easy ups and downs to Elkwallow Gap which has a small but well-stocked store including ice cream and chocolate milk, which really hit the spot after a couple of days on the trail.

Back at Big Meadows we cleaned up, had a group dinner, and packed up again for the second part. Don elected to stay with Linda and Patty to explore some side trails on day hikes while the other five of us headed north to Elkwallow Gap again and hit the AT towards Front Royal. Our first night's destination, Gravel Springs Hut, was a popular place. In addition to hikers in the shelter every decent tent site was occupied. A large contingent of Boy Scouts showed up late in the day but decided to get water and move on when they saw the large crowd already at the site. One of the groups camping with us were three gents in their late 50s who had grown up together in Pennsylvania, then moved to other states, but still got together for backpacking adventures. We hiked at a similar pace with them for our remaining two days. One of the fellows was a real talker, who shared just

about every aspect of his life, his equipment, his medical conditions, etc. Our second day of this segment was about 11 miles over Hogback and Marshall mountains. Temperatures pushed into the upper 70s and without leaf cover, the hike was warm and sunny. Great views from multiple open summits of Hogback Mountain, especially to the west over the Shenandoah Valley. As we exited the SNP boundary and began a rocky descent we overtook "the talker" who let Tom, Rob and me pass but oddly kept Mandy and Marianne behind him. Mandy reported later that they got to hear his whole medical history again as he plodded along.

We pulled into the Tom Floyd Wayside around 3 pm. The shelter was small but nice, but the site was located on a rocky side hill. The tent sites were down the hill and the water source even further (based on my walking time, I estimated the spring to be about 1/3 mile from the shelter). The pit privy reeked and animals had chewed some of the supports under the toilet seat, creating a reasonable concern that a

user might be the unlucky one who finally broke through and fell into the abyss. Luck was with us; no one was lost into the muck below ... at least on that night. Tom, Mandy, Rob and Marianne took the three tent sites closest to the shelter; I opted to sleep out on the expansive shelter deck which turned out to be an excellent choice as the clear sky directly above provided an extravaganza of stars that evening.

On Monday morning the 25<sup>th</sup> we had only three miles downhill to Front Royal where Don, Linda and Patty were waiting to meet us at a road crossing. They took us back to the parked cars at Elkwallow Gap (where we again partook of the store's high-calorie offerings) and we all returned to Big Meadows Campground for an evening feast of hamburgers, salads, and desserts. The weather forecast for the following day had a potential for rain but some of the group hiked down to Rapidan Camp, the national historic site of President Herbert Hoover's fishing retreat.

With another section of the AT in Shenandoah National Park complete, we're looking at completing the southernmost one-third next Spring.

**Shenipsit Trail**  
**May 18, 2022**  
by Sarah O'Hare

It was a spectacular day for our tenth and final hike of the Shenipsit Trail series. We began this 50-mile adventure in October 2020 at the southern trailhead in East Hampton. The idea of hiking the entire Shenipsit Trail was **George Jackson's** and together we collaborated in planning the logistics for each section. **Jim Robertson, Tom and Patty Adams** with pup Arlo, **Mandy Brink** with sweet Bella, and Mandy's friends **Debbie** and **Larry Rother** were enthusiastic about exploring the newest extension of the northern section. George was unable to join us on this day but did hike this section earlier in the week. Alas, Molson the Alpha Dog, was once again unable to come along.

We began today's hike at the northern end of Soapstone Mountain. The sun was shining and with the leaves finally out, we were shaded and kept comfortable by the breeze. The woodlands were alive with flora and fauna. We were able to identify many of the wildflowers, which included the May apple,

pink lady slipper, eastern star flower, Canada mayflower, Jack-in-the-pulpit, gay wings, columbine and the fragrant white baneberry. Along a section of a woods road, a red fox emerged and trotted along briefly before turning into the underbrush. The 'Whistling Tree' was a mystery to us. Clearly it was, at one time, a grand old tree but time had taken its toll. All that was left was a tall stump with its 'Whistling Tree' sign and the decaying tree lying alongside.

While our journey skirted the summit of Bold Mountain, there was still an ascent, at times through rock outcroppings. At the highpoint, we stopped for lunch and celebratory baked goodies were shared. The trail then descended to our end at Greaves Road. While happy to have accomplished our goal, it was bittersweet to see it end. Many thanks to George for initiating this adventure, to all our trail companions who joined us for the entire series and to the others who came along on one hike or many.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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



*Hogback Mountain: Tom Adams, Mandy Brink, Rob Valley, Jim Robertson, and Marianne Valley on the Appalachian Trail in Shenandoah National Park. .*