

The Connecticut Section Of The Green Mountain Club

The Trail Talk

VOL. XXXVIII NO. IV

April 2008



In Memory Of

MARJORIE J. HACKBARTH
August 27, 1917 - February 7, 2008

The CT Section has lost a very special lady who was a dear friend to many. Marge passed away on Feb. 7, 2008 at Mid-State Hospital in Meriden, CT. She had been a member since 1973 and during these years served as our section Secretary from 1982 - 1985 and our Long Trail Reporter from 2005 - 2007.

Marge taught History for 39 years in the Meriden Public Schools. Upon her retirement she embarked on a world-wide travel adventure for a year, hiking and birding as she traveled.

During the 1970's and 1980's Marge led many biking trips for our section and was also an avid canoeist. Marge attended several work parties to Kid Gore and Story Spring Shelters until the age of 88 years. She also worked on our section of the Mattabesett Trail with blazing and general maintenance.

Marge was also a member of AYH, New Haven Birding Club, New Haven Hiking Club and the Audubon. Her enthusiasm for nature was contagious and many of us learned to identify birds and wildflowers on GMC outings.

All of us who hiked, biked, canoed and backpacked with Marge will miss her dearly.

Carol A. Langley



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AT/LT Oct. 8-11, 2007
Division 5 - U.S. 4 - Vt. 140

A dismal, cloudy day greeted us as we drove north. The rain and drizzle started in Massachusetts and continued into Vermont. By the time we reached the junction of Rts. 7 & 4 it was a driving rain with poor visibility. Don Hagstrom's wife, Linda, was driving us to the start of the trail so once she departed there was no way to go, except up the trail and get to Pico Camp. When we reached the trail parking it was only a light mist, so with rain gear and smiles

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Membership

When filling out the form to join or renew, circle the Connecticut Section on the application to receive, at no extra charge, the Connecticut Section's newsletter and activity schedule.

Dues:

Individual Adult \$ 35.00

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on our faces we set off to conquer Killington and the trail as it led up, up, up. Henry Smith, the young man of the group, took off like a rocket up the trail. Don and I moved at a slow and steady pace taking breaks. The air was saturated and left us little oxygen. We started out from Rt. 4 at 12:15 and reached Jungle Junction at 3:30. A decision had to be made. Do we go to Pico Camp or continue on another 3 miles to Cooper Lodge? Knowing that the windows were out at Cooper, and Pico was just another ½ mile, it was an easy decision. Wet, cold and tired, we were happy to arrive and get our packs off. Our small group had been there just minutes when in walked one of the Long Trail Patrol. Within minutes we were saying, "don't I know you?" The young man turned out to be John, whom I had met at the appreciation picnic at the Main Club just a couple of weeks before. He advised us that Cooper was wet and Pico had been a good decision. Then he was off to the Long Trail Inn for some brew. As it turned out, he had also met Don earlier this summer along the trail.

It was time to get the stoves going and cook before it got too dark. Not thinking, we had the place closed up and soon the fumes from Henry's stove were starting to make us light headed. Don was standing, holding open the door for some fresh air. The next morning we realized that the windows opened, which would have been easier. OH WELL!! What do you do after you have eaten, pumped water for the next day and it is getting dark? Yep, you climb into that sleeping bag and hope for a warm night's rest. Since the sky had cleared and the stars were visible, Henry and I went outside to take in the viewing. Henry thought the viewing would be better down the ski trail and off he went. I climbed back into my bag and dozed off. The next thing heard was paper rustling. Don thought that it must have been a huge mouse, one that was 5'8" and wearing a blue jacket! Henry had come back from his star gazing and had worked up an appetite. Let's get some sleep, guys, we need to be up early for a long day tomorrow.

A weak sunrise greeted us around 6:30.

The decision was made to get going quickly before bad weather moved in again. Don and I hit the trail and Henry lagged behind, meeting us at Cooper Lodge. Henry had never been on Mt.



Killington before and he took the side

trail to the summit. Don and I started our descent off Little Killington and it was a "KILLER." We had to hold on to stumps and branches and inch our way along. Henry did not know this was ahead of him and was soon to find out when he tried to catch up to us. Reaching Governor Clement Shelter was a disappointment, for the place was full of litter, smelled of ashes and was most unappealing. We decided to scout around for a better place to spend the night. After 30-40 minutes, I returned to the shelter and there was Henry, he had just dragged in his sore, tired body. We began getting wood for the fireplace and cleaned up the place, hoping to burn the trash. Then who should appear with a big smile and news of finding a grand place to spend the night? I was thinking that this had better be good, Don, for this old gal is getting tired

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and cranky. Packs on, we trudged along down the trail. Soon we had in view our residence for the evening. Once again, it is near dark and the sky is getting ready to dump on us. With stoves on the table and water boiling, the sky opens up. Run with the stove and pots to the shelter! The rain gods were after us again! Sitting on the end of a shelter, we managed to eat and stay dry. Don always has a dessert as a treat after his meal and tonight's would be a real treat after a long, hard day. "Ah, this is going to taste so good!" Just as he opens the sweet treat it slides out the other end and onto the ground. Don insisted that the dirt was clean, dried it with a wipe on his shirt sleeve and devoured it. Camping at its best!

It was still misting in the morning as we continued on the trail. The trail was easy and we moved along until we reached Gould Brook. Neither of the men with me realized that this was a 'follow the leader' hike and did their crossing getting their feet wet. The leader removed her boots, put on Teva sandals and found a sandy bar with low water to cross with ease. This was our easy day so we picked apples and wild grapes along the trail. Don was on a sugar high from his treat last night but Henry and I, after climbing to Airport Lookout, seemed to be dragging. Don pulls out a chocolate bar and splits it in half for Henry and me. In two minutes Henry has disappeared up the trail but I still cannot get going. We finally make it into Minerva Hinchey Shelter. Just as we are claiming our floor space, an end to end hiker, who is doing the Long Trail from north to south, joins us. We learn that his name is Ben Small and lives in Wallingford, CT. We welcomed him into our group. I think we talked too much that night, so when we woke up in the morning he was already packed and ready to hit the trail. The sky was clear when we arose but the old bones said that rain was on the way. We made it to Rte. 140 in two hours and twenty minutes with two stops to take in the views.

The trail is in excellent condition, thanks to the Killington Section. Nice Job!!

The next adventure will be in the fall - from Rte. 4 North. Will you join us??

Hikers: Carol A. Langley, Don Hagstrom, Henry Smith



Long Trail Brandon Gap - Middlebury Gap Nov. 3 & 4, 2007

Some of our group left to go up to Vermont on Friday. Sarah treated herself to a night at the Long Trail Inn. Don, Henry and I spent the night at Grout Pond. Henry and I shared the cabin with a Boy Scout Troop from CT and Don bunked down in the back of his truck. Plans were to leave early and meet Sarah at the Wildlife Viewing Area at Dead Creek to view the Snow Geese. We arrived after a long drive

but the Snow Geese were nowhere to be found. Discouraged and cold, we got back into our cars and drove to our meeting place, Brandon Gap, where Don W. was patiently waiting. Starting at noon is not a prime time for a backpacking trip so let's just hit the trail and start our climb up - up - up! Most of the group took the side trail to the Great Cliff of Mt. Horrid but I just followed the white blazes and moved on.

As we hiked along, even though the temperatures were low and a breeze rustled the leaves, we found ourselves removing layers to keep from overheating. Anxious to reach Gillespie Peak at 3366 feet, we moved on but to our surprise there was not a grand view but an area treed in with dense evergreens. The wind stirred the limbs of the balsams and into the air they released a refreshing fragrance. This was supposed to be our lunch spot. There was no rock outcropping or a view so we settled for some fallen trees to sit upon. There was some grumbling over the chosen spot but soon everyone settled down and was eating. However, since it was after 2:00 p.m. the stop was necessary. After lunch, the trail went up and down, keeping us below 3000 feet. As we rustled along in the leaves we noticed that there was a work crew ahead of us cleaning water bars. They did such a good job that we started to follow one instead of the trail.

Suddenly there was a shout, "I see a blue blaze - I see a sign," Yes, we have arrived, finally, at the Sucker Brook Shelter. It was around 5:00 and knowing daylight was fading fast as we watched a golden glow on Worth Mountain, we needed to claim our space in the shelter. Now, who is sleeping near whom and who snores? Just find a space for after hiking these mountains we were all going to sleep well! As the sun slid behind the mountain the chill moved in. It was 7:00 and we were in our sleeping bags, even though the



Fireman, aka Henry, had a nice fire going. We all put on our hats, gloves and other warm articles for it was getting coooooold. Don W. decided to read us a bed time story to pass the time. All of my fearless hiking partners had their headlamps and hiking sticks close at hand in case we had some creatures visit us during the night. As I lay in my bag, the night sounds began - a snore and a branch snapping, then it was so quiet. Oh dear! What is this creeping on my feet? After some fancy footwork the creature disappeared. Minutes later it was back. Okay, this is it! I kicked my bag furiously and knocked the poor thing silly, telling him to get out of the shelter. Much to my surprise, it didn't return and I didn't even use my hiking stick on him.

As I dozed off, the wind picked up and it sounded like a blizzard had moved in. Some of us who had made a visit to the nearest tree got such a chill we couldn't warm up again. At daybreak the temperature was around 17 degrees. The water we had pumped was frozen. My water bag was an old nylon one and the water didn't freeze in the bag but as soon as it was poured into my stainless pot, ice chunks formed. We ate breakfast as fast as we could. Looking at Worth Mt. we

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could see snow and ice. It was time for a group picture and then move on. My camera had frozen as I tried to take a picture. Another photographer stepped forward, and this is when you know that you had a bad night, when I was told to put my hat on for the photo. After a gear check to see that all of our gear had been collected, we started out.

Worth Mt. was like a fairy land. When we reached the summit it was snowing. As we started down the other side we had a breathtaking picture as the sun danced on the trees for they were dressed in hoar frost making the valley look like a Christmas card. Upon reaching the Middlebury Snow Bowl, a snack break was taken as the group enjoyed the sunshine. We then took a short spur trail to see Lake Pleiad. There were thoughts to test the water but it would probably be a lot nicer in August. Soon we reached our cars and had another 9.9 miles of the Long Trail finished. Would we hike this late in the season again? Yes, but with a zero degree sleeping bag! Hope you all can join me again next fall for the next section.

Thanks for joining me!
*Don Hagstrom, Sarah O'Hare, Henry Smith,
Don Woodbridge
Leader: Carol A. Langley*



Pachaug Day Hike Jan 27, 2008

We started out on a gray overcast day from the Youth area parking lot at Pachaug. We hit the Pachaug Trail and headed north. It was trickier walking than expected with just enough snow and ice on the trail to make it slick. It was especially pretty walking by Lowden Brook, with partial ice and snow cover at the edges and waters flowing happily along. Hell Hollow Pond was frozen over and we hoped to join the Quinebeag Crossover towards Flat Rock but somehow missed that trail. We passed into Windham County on the Pachaug Trail and came out on Stone Hill Rd. Somehow it sounds like you've hiked really far when you've passed into another county. We walked to Econk Rd before considering ourselves kind of lost in typical GMC fashion.

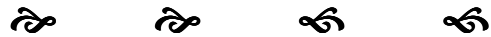
We backtracked to what I believed was the Quinebeag Crossover, crossed some farm fields with freshly applied manure that was delightful to the nose and then somehow or another got ourselves back to Hell Hollow Pond. We could debate the exact route because we never were really sure where we were at this point. My hope was to take the



Quinebeag Trail back but we ended up back on the Pachaug Trail and took that trail back to the cars. Even though we took this trail earlier, we still managed to be lost for a brief period when we got deep in conversation and stopped paying attention to the blue blazes. Of course we, discovered this mistake after we climbed up a nice big hill. We had one period of the day where it snowed for awhile making it delightful to be out in the woods.

Because it was a small group, Mandy brought the pups and they had a delightful time. And while Jack claimed to not like the dogs, he scooped Scrappy up and carried him across a brook, a tenderhearted moment indeed. After getting back to the cars, it was off with the cold, wet boots and off for pizza. The day certainly had all the expected elements of a fine GMC hike, being lost, bushwhacking and good company. I think our total for the day was somewhere around 10 miles.

*Hikers: Jack Sanga, Ron Sanga
and the three pups, Cooper, Asha and Scrappy.
Leader: Mandy Brink.*



Mattatuck Trail, Mt. Tobe section Sunday, February 24. 7.1 miles

We met at Reynolds Rd. in Thomaston for our hike and promptly discovered that the parking areas had not been plowed from the recent snowfall. We found enough room to leave 2 cars and took the third to the starting point at South Main Street in Terryville. The sky was a beautiful deep dark blue with scarcely a cloud in sight as we turned off of the road and into the woods.

The 2 day old snow (with frozen top crust) proved somewhat challenging, especially as much of the early part of the hike (and the middle...and the end) was uphill and we were on a virgin trail...the first to try it since the storm! Jim got to try out his new poles and seemed to do quite well with them. We went up steep hills, over brooks, and downhill again to Hancock Brook Park, enjoying the scenery and the many tracks (deer, turkey, rabbit, and other assorted critters), though we managed to miss Ed's Big Pebble. After two and a half hours of what seemed like mostly uphill slipping and climbing, we reached a high point overlooking Brophy Pond and settled in for lunch on Jim's space blanket. Healthy cookies (banana/chocolate/walnut with spelt flour) were shared and enjoyed.

Feeling fortified, we embarked on the second half of the hike. This involved some road walking and a detour around the base of Mt. Tobe (despite the name, this section of trail does not actually reach the crest of the mountain) before finally reaching the last climb, up Cedar Mountain. The trail here

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was very steeply uphill and hard to navigate with all the snow. Once we reached the crest (with good views of the Naugatuck Valley and Route 8) we knew we had only about a mile and a half to go.

We slipped and slid downhill to Waterbury Road about 1/2 mile from the car. Here again there was about 1/10 of a mile of road walking before the trail turned and went straight uphill into the woods again. Once again we worked our way up the steep slopes before reaching a ridge of sorts that paralleled the road. By 3 o'clock we went down the final hill to a short road walk, where we found a number of ice climbers hard at work scaling the steep rocky, ice-covered cliffs.

Thanks to all for coming!

*Hikers: Dick Hart, Jim Robertson, Ken Williamson
Leader: Lora Miller*



Valley Falls Park February 26, 2008

A wintry mix was the forecast for this day. However, the thought of exploring 6.5 miles of unfamiliar trails lured the three of us to take our chances on the weather. With three loop options it would be easy enough to shorten the day if we were to get caught in the expected sleet and snow. We began by following the blue-blazed Shenipsit Trail along the western edge of Valley Falls Pond. Here we picked up the Valley Falls Loop Trail which followed and crossed the Shenipsit Trail. This segment of the blue-blazed trail runs concurrently with the Hop River Rail Trail. These two loops wound gently through the woods, passing stone walls, taking us through old Mountain Laurel arbors and crossing several brooks. Nearing the end of the Valley Falls Loop Trail, distant church bells rang, signifying that it was noontime. We headed to the pavilion by the pond to have lunch. Happy Birthday, Jim! Jim had taken the day off today to spend his special day on the trail. We celebrated it with cake, cocoa and special 50th birthday candies.

Although the skies were darkening we took a chance and set off on the last loop. We picked up the Shenipsit Trail north and headed into the Belding Wildlife Management Area. As



we approached the yellow-blazed Belding Path, we stopped in our tracks. Just ahead and perched low on a branch, a Red-Tailed Hawk was eyeing us intently. The stare was returned and after a few minutes observation, it turned and flew off, seeking undisturbed quiet elsewhere. This wildlife sighting was a prelude to the delightful walk through the preserve. There were interpretive signs, providing helpful nature notes. And

along with Bill's vast knowledge of tree identification, the afternoon's walk became an informative one. The 0.5 mile Belding Path ended at a short connector trail that crossed the Tankerhoosen River and brought us out onto the Shenipsit Trail. Turning south, the Shenipsit closely followed the meandering and picturesque stream for quite a distance before turning east, then south again, to where we retraced our steps the half mile to our cars. Just in time, too, for it was beginning to rain.

The Belding Wildlife Management Area is a delightful place to visit. The terrain is very gentle and the distance is approximately 2.3 miles. It would be an excellent amble for a beginner hiker, a family, or for anyone wishing a particularly lovely area to visit.

*Hikers: Jim Robertson, Bill Falconer
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*



Devil's Hopyard State Park January 19, 2008

The highlight of Devil's Hopyard is Chapman Falls on the Eight Mile River. Our visit to the park began here, pausing for photos of the picturesque cascade, which once powered both a sawmill and a gristmill in the 1800's. Turning away from the falls we stepped onto the red-blazed Millington Trail. This trail followed a stone embankment, crossed Hopyard Road and entered the woods on the western side of the park. This trail was sporadically blazed yet relatively easy to follow. After crossing a plank bridge over Muddy Brook, just below a waterfall, we turned right onto the yellow-blazed Witch Hazel Trail. Ascending steeply, the trail brought us to a spur trail to what had probably been a vista at one time. But now the mature trees blocked any view. Returning to our main trail, we gradually descended, at one point through old Mountain Laurel arbors. We arrived at Hopyard Road, crossed and picked up the Millington Trail once again. This section followed the Eight Mile River and brought us to the picnic area at noon, just in time for lunch. After finding a dry picnic table we ravenously dug into our lunches and warm beverages. We were now to lose Jim, for he had been attending a nearby boy scout winter camping weekend outing with his son. Needing a break, he slipped away to join us for our morning's hike. And now he needed to return. But as he was preparing to leave us we gained another hiker. Mary appeared, for she had arrived at the meeting spot just after the usual grace period and had set out on her own with hopes of meeting up with us. We were a full complement once again.

Crossing the Eight Mile River on the small covered bridge, we turned onto the short blue-blazed loop trail. When it joined the orange-blazed Vista Trail we followed it over icy ledges along

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the river. Then turning away from the river, the trail became difficult to follow, for trees were down, splayed everywhere, looking like a giant's game of pick-up-sticks. We eventually made our way through this area and on to the vista, for which this trail was named. The view here was of the Eight Mile River Valley with steep hillsides and a pond. We warmed ourselves by a small campfire two young men were tending on the rock outcropping. After a photo opportunity, we stepped onto what we thought was the Vista Trail. After some confusion we eventually located it but lost it once again. The trails in this park were in dire need of maintenance.

There are two newer trails at Devil's Hopyard. The one we chose to explore was a short and steep climb up to what was called Devil's Oven. It appeared to be a deep cave-like hole in a rock cliff. Some time was spent exploring the giant nooks and crannies and the well worn foot paths that wound up and around the rock cliffs. A few blazes along one path leading away from this area made us believe there was another way back down to the Vista Trail. However, the blazes and trail disappeared leaving us to bushwack our way back to the familiar orange-blazed trail. Then it was back to our cars. We left feeling the need to return sometime to figure out where the Vista Trail should have taken us and to explore the other new trail.

*Hikers: Jack Sanga, Sharon Hutchins, Jim Robertson, Don Hagstrom, Mary O'Neill, Dick Hart
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*



Tunxis Trail March 9, 2008

There are many options for hiking the 10.7 mile section of the Tunxis Trail in the Burlington Region. Many color-coded trails intersect with the main blue-blazed Tunxis Trail, providing loops for exploring without staging cars. Our choice today was the Orange Dot Trail. It formed a 6.5 mile figure eight with the Tunxis Mainline Trail, beginning and ending at the Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area. The hike was often a slippery one, for there were long stretches of icy patches. The climbs and descents were treacherous at times. Fortunately, there were no injuries from our falls, other than from our pride. After the morning of careful footing we welcomed our lunch break at Devil's Kitchen, a picturesque rocky ravine. Nearing the end of our outing we were greeted by ATVs, motor bikes and a snowmobile. However, neither their noise nor fumes marred this fine day's walk in the woods.

*Hikers: Don Hagstrom, Bill Falconer
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*

Cockaponset Trail Feb 9, 2008

I (Mandy) was quite excited when I woke up on Saturday morning and it was sunny. The forecast was rain and of course my reputation is to bring the rain along, so I thought my luck had changed. I met Don and Mary at the trail head and off we went down the trail. We chatted and hiked as, slowly, the gray clouds moved in. Once or twice we lost the trail briefly and figured, since Jack wasn't there, we'd blame him for getting us lost. We stopped at a site that had a small side trail to check out the remains of a former collier's cabin and charcoal burning area. Only a rock formation remained. Don was a bit disappointed but I quickly reminded him that at least we hadn't hiked miles up a hill to see the remains. We decided to stop here for lunch. Afterwards the rain started and we finished up the hike looking like three drowned rats. I guess my luck hadn't changed after all but it was still fun, we were all glad to have been out in the woods. Total mileage was 7.4 miles

*Hikers Don Hagstrom and Mary O'Neill
Leader: Mandy Brink*



Mattabesett Trail Hike April 6, 2008

A good turnout for a 6.5 mile hike on the Mattabesett Trail from Route 79 in Durham to Route 77 in Guildford. No sooner had we started up the trail to climb Mt. Pisgah did comments about the steepness begin. The leader, despite having never hiked on this section, confidently assured the group that this would be the one, only, and last big climb for the day (more on that later.)

Atop Mica ledges we took a rest, and Don found a nice heavy rock with impressive mica sheets for Bill, which he loaded



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into Bill's pack. Continuing on, we found the Selectmen's Stones that mark the corner of Madison, Durham, and Guilford, in a bit of a jumble. Dick and Sarah did some cleanup so the carved inscriptions could be more easily seen, prompting Paul to joke that they may have just re-drawn town boundary lines. We met two trail maintainers, thanked them for their work, especially the bright well-blazed trail, but endured several more ups and downs (which the hikers were kind enough to point out to the leader.)

Lunch stop was at a preserved charcoal ring in the Madison Preserve. We then trekked through an area of selective logging, noting that someone had left a nice wool sweater on a blazed post. A short discussion ensued on whether to leave it or take/donate it, with the "leave" option winning out.

Heading toward Broomstick Ledges, we met Paul Mei of the Guilford Land Conservation Trust, the local CFPA trail maintainer, who was marking the boundary of a newly acquired parcel. He was a good friend of Marge Hackbarth, so we had an enjoyable conversation of Marge and trail topics. Several more ups and downs over the ledges completed our hike to the road.

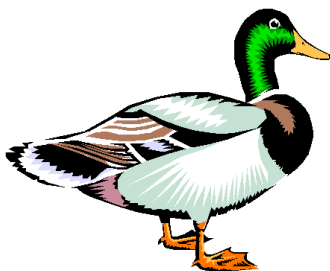
*Hikers: Sarah O'Hare, Dick Krompegal, Don Hagstrom,
Bill Falconer, Mary O'Neill, Paul Sullivan.
Leader: Jim Robertson*



Mattabesett Trail Maintenance March 30, 2008

After meeting and snacking at Guida's restaurant we drove to Rt. 68. We spotted several cars at Paug Gap then started to blaze and work our way south. On a break we walked west on an old road to view the plaque indicating that George Washington used this road. The plaque, I think brass, was gone. The high price of recycled metal right now is high so that may have something to do with the plaque being removed. Other than that this bright and sunny day was made even better because there was very little trash to pick up.

*Workers: Tedd Platt, Don and Linda Hagstrom,
Peter & Nancy Finch, Dick Hart
Leader: Dick Krompegal*



Unscheduled Mattabesett Trail Adjustment April 09, 2008

On our section of the Mattabesett Trail in Paug Gap, Howd Road, there has always been a short but very steep, annoying climb out of the gap. It also becomes dangerous when the ground is frozen. After several phone conversations with the CFPA it was decided that a slight relocation, a trail adjustment, would impact the area little.

So on this day four of us made an unscheduled, mid-week trip and did a slight trail relocation to make the climb more gradual and safer. It only took some clipping, blazing, hiding the old blazes and blocking off the old trail. The climb is now a lot easier.

*Workers: Don & Linda Hagstrom, Dick Hart,
Leader: Dick Krompegal*



Pequot Trail Hike March 22, 2008

We headed out on a crisp, sunny morning, leaving from the Shewville Road trailhead. We only hiked a little way when we came upon the Mashantucket Pequot burial grounds. We spent some time walking through there, looking at the different memorials. We climbed a small hill called Rose Hill that gave us a pretty view of the countryside but otherwise this trail was flat and gentle. We continued chatting and hiking until early afternoon when we stopped at the Lincoln Park area in Preston and had lunch. They had nice picnic pavilions there and port-a-potties, a real luxury from our usual hikes.

Afterwards we crossed Route 2 and headed back into the woods. We hiked along some neat stone ledges and had a brook that was fun to cross before we were back out to our cars at the other end of the trail in Norwich. Total miles were 7.6

*Hikers: Don Hagstrom, Sarah O'Hare, Ron Sanga,
Charlie Sanga, Thomas Minutelli
and Teri Reynolds.
Hike Leader: Mandy Brink.*





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