

The Connecticut Section Of The Green Mountain Club

The Trail Talk

VOL. XXXVIII NO. IV

July 2008



New Members

James Adams
Farmington, CT

Sally A. Roberts
Hartford, CT

Ted O'Neill
Rowayton, CT

Susan D. Rame
Middletown, CT

Kevin Vann
Northford, CT



(Almost) Story Spring Snowshoe Backpacking March 1-2, 2008

We had a character-building adventure and loads of fun in the snow on this Long Trail weekend in Vermont. Two storms in southern Vermont during the previous week, including one Friday night, had dropped two feet of new powder on top of an earlier base of 1.5-2 feet. To allow everyone time to drive from Connecticut and Massachusetts, we agreed to meet at the LT/AT crossing on the Arlington-Stratton Road by 1 pm. Several snowmobiles and a mobile lunch van were at the crossing, a popular stopping point for the snow machines, but we had no trouble parking our vehicles and getting prepared for our planned snowshoe to Story Spring Shelter for the night.

Well, breaking trail south from the road was no picnic. The powder was so deep that the lead person's snowshoes sank at least 18 inches with each step. The intrepid leader was the first to "do a turtle" sliding off a narrow plank bridge and landing on his backpack in the ditch below. Several other falls would occur, but I won't reveal names. We also found the

trail difficult to follow in places. In winter, the footpath is not visible, the forest offers several possible directions, and the white blazes were difficult to see (and only two feet off the top of the snow). Peter, Allen, and Dave took turns breaking trail, frequently switching to conserve energy. The Black Brook Bridge, a major GMC/ Connecticut Section construction project in 2002, was covered almost up to the top handrails with snow. The crown of snow along the bridge centerline made the crossing a bit tricky. The midday sun gave way to clouds, as more flurries were forecast.

We advanced only to USFS Road 71 by 4 pm (3 hours, 2 miles) and elected to camp in a sheltered spot in the woods to the west, rather than push on to Story Spring, which would have meant arrival in the dark (if we could even have stayed on the trail and found the shelter in the dark). We set up camp, Dave dug out a pit in the snow for cooking, and we settled in for dinner and a small campfire. Cold and windy at night, with clumps of snow falling from the trees, but the evergreen grove did a decent job keeping the wind at bay. Those of us in tents wondered how Dave, out in his sleeping bag covered only by a crinkly mylar blanket, and Allen in his bivy sack, were faring in the weather. Despite another 1 to 2 inches of fresh powder overnight, we were pleased that everyone survived the night. About 10 degrees F at sunrise, which is considered balmy by the standards of some of our members who are Vermont snowshoe veterans. Made breakfast, broke camp,

The Sunday morning return trip to the road was nearly perfect, with bright blue sunny skies and our trail nicely packed down, although we took a few more slips and falls off the side of the trail. It was good to get back to the cars at the road, knowing that despite not reaching our intended destination, the journey was worth more than anything. Photos are on the GMC CT Yahoo Groups site: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CT_Green_Mountain_Club/

*Mandy Brink, Dave Chatel, Peter Finch, Allen Freeman,
Dick Hart.
Leader: Jim Robertson*



The Trail Talk

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<http://www.conngmc.com>

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The Trail Talk is published four times a year in January, April, July and October. Activity schedules are included in each issue. Reports of activities and articles must be sent to the editor no later than the tenth day of the month of the publication. Send articles to:

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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

Family \$ 45.00

Senior (70 or older) or Limited Income \$ 20.00

Nonprofit or Youth Group \$ 50.00

Business or Corporation \$125.00

Send annual dues to:

The Green Mountain Club

4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road

Waterbury Center, VT 05677-9904

(802) 244-7037, <http://www.greenmountainclub.org>

Connecticut Section Of The GMC

Post & Receive Messages, Photos, Other Activities

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ct_green_mountain_club/

Backpacking Trip Section One in PA Wind Gap to the Delaware Water Gap April 11-13, 2008

Once again the weather forecast was rain. I dreaded opening my email because I was sure everyone would read the forecast and cancel. To my surprise, everyone just packed good rain gear and off we headed for PA. We went to Mandy's family cabin Friday night where we roughed it with hot water, a warm fire, cozy beds and lots of good snacks. We watched a movie, repacked the packs and enjoyed a relaxing evening. The PA contingency arrived to join us about 10:30 pm. It poured down rain on Friday night but we were high and dry.

We were up and on the go early Saturday morning. We staged our cars and then headed to the southern trailhead to start hiking. Nothing like a good uphill to get started. We did a stout climb up to the ridge and from there it was a flat walk. Now I know this group had been secretly hoping that this would be a hike with good quality rocks. I read their minds

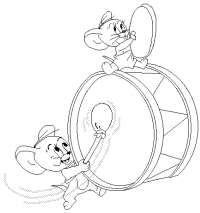


and was happy to accommodate with a trail that had thousands of rocks in all shapes and sizes. One did have to watch his step and tread carefully. We came to a blue blazed trail with signs saying, "To Pen Argyl". Not being sure what that was, we decided to investigate. We were hoping it was a view. We never did find out because after hiking about 15 minutes on a trail that looked endless, we decided to turn around and get back on track on the AT. Later Don, who was scouting for a water supply listed at 5.3 miles, thought that might have been where there was water. Either way, we found neither a view nor water and continued on north. Guess what everyone? NO RAIN. The day that was suppose to be rain got more and more beautiful as the day went on. It was warm, sunny and perfect backpacking weather. We were delighted. After a nice lunch we headed towards Wolf Rocks which is the southern limit of glaciations on the AT route during the last ice age. It was a challenging rock rim ridge with a pretty view about 7 miles into our day. With much sadness to all, we left all those rocks behind us and the trail settled out to a nice dirt path.

We pulled into Kirkridge Shelter at about 4:30. We had run across no water supplies and were praying the spigot would be on. It was a lot hotter than we had anticipated so we had gone through a lot of water. Lucky for us the spigot was on. We didn't realize how lucky we were until we read the log at the shelter and learned that on April 10th, the hikers made an entry saying how disappointed they were to have no water at the spigot. On Sunday we learned from a trail maintenance guy that they don't usually turn the spigot on until mid May. We got lucky because someone turned it on the day we arrived. Going in search of water might have been a challenge. Kirkridge Shelter is set on the side of the mountain

The Trail Talk

with a beautiful view of the valley. It has a nice porch area that housed a picnic table, a counter for cooking and some benches for sitting, all real luxuries in the life of a backpacker. We shared the shelter with only one other hiker after Don did a real good job of convincing the Boy Scout troop that staying at Nelson's View would be the cat's meow. We set up a couple of tents and then went over to enjoy the view, just a short walk from the shelter. After cooking dinner, we had a nice fire and S'mores, thanks to Dave.



The ones who had decided to sleep in the shelter were nicely settled in when there was the scurrying of mice in one corner. They were quite active little mice which didn't settle too well with those trying to sleep. In the end, we ended up setting up another tent for Laura and Mike, and Jenny joined Mandy in the nice mouse free tent. It

was Mike's first backpacking trip and we reminded him that instead of focusing on how stiff and sore he was, that he should be saying "Yes Sir, May I have another hike please".

Sunday we woke up to a more overcast day. We packed up and headed to Lunch Rocks for another view although it was way too early for lunch. It was an easy 6 mile hike out to the Delaware Water Gap with plenty of water supplies now that we didn't need water. The hike out on Sunday had several good viewpoints on both sides of the mountain. We stopped at Mt Minsi to enjoy the view. A light misty rain started but didn't last too long. We headed down the mountain, passed the last AT marker in PA and headed across the bridge over I-80 into New Jersey. We loaded up the cars at the Delaware Water Gap Recreation area and headed off for pizza and home. It had been a great weekend!!!!

For those of you who LOVED the rocks, please feel free to join me for Section 2. I'm sure there are plenty more in all sizes and shapes. Thanks all for coming and making the weekend so much fun. 16 miles of hiking for the weekend.

*Backpackers: Laura Brink, Mike Marcinczyk, Dan Zelterman, Dave Chatel, Don Hagstrom, Sarah Stone, Jenny Stone, Jon Conville and the hiking hounds, Morgan, Shale and Cyrus.
Leader: Mandy Brink.*



Sleeping Giant Park, Hamden, CT May 3, 2008

There was fear that the weather would turn nasty but it turned out to be a great day in the woods. We began at the leader's home, near the Giant, and then drove to the trailhead.

The hike followed the yellow-marked trail beginning at two new composting outhouses. These proved to be a useful and important feature of the day's activities. Despite rain on the two previous days, the ground was dry and a few stream crossings were easily managed. Lunch took place along a stone wall at the Giant's feet.

The orange trail was chosen for our return route. When the conversation turned to heated politics, Don and Dan decided to walk at a faster pace so that arguments would become more breathless than partisan. This strategy succeeded until even the most politically conservative among us had to admit to listening to the news on embarrassingly liberal NPR. Ultimately, it was agreed that the most popular candidate will win in November's election. Beth and Don had afternoon appointments so we quit early. Hiked 4.6 miles.

*Don Hagstrom, Dick Krompegal, and guest Beth Schwartz
Leader: Dan Zelterman*



Hiking Trail Maintenance Trip Vermont May 16 - 18, 2008

The original plan was to work the southern end of the Connecticut section of the Long Trail / Appalachian Trail which is accessed by driving down a forest service dirt road for about 7 miles then hiking in on an unmarked side trail for about 3 miles. For the second year in a row a forest service gate was closed prohibiting us from driving all the way. Plan Two - Again. Prearranged in case the gate was closed, we drove around to work on the northern end of our section.

About mid-day Friday, Dick Hart, Andy Gagner and I met Frank Maine and Mario Sartori at the Story Spring shelter, our base camp for the weekend. After setting up our tents and having a snack, four of us blazed and cleared the trail from the West Wardsboro Road to the Story Spring Shelter. After working a half day then driving to Vermont, Jack Sanga joined us later in the afternoon.

Saturday we all hiked south clearing the trail and removing some minor blow downs. We also refreshed the blazes to a point where it was blazed from the other direction last year. All new blazes now from the Kid Gore Shelter to The Storey Spring Shelter.



The Trail Talk

Sunday we cleaned up around the shelter, took all ropes down, swept the shelter and outhouse and cleaned out the fire ring, leaving the area very clean. We packed up then headed back to CT.

*Frank Maine, Mario Sartori, Andy Gagner,
Jack Sanga, Dick Hart
Leader Dick Krompegal*



Even though he was not a member of our club, over the years Mario Sartori occasionally assisted our club doing trail maintenance. Unfortunately and unexpectedly, several weeks after the above trip, Mario passed away at a young age. Our sympathy to his family and friends.



Off Schedule Work.

After an experience at Camels Hump in Vermont, on their way back to CT Henry Smith and Carol Langley visited a part of our section of the LT. They clipped brush and briars between the Wardsboro Road and FS Rt. 71.

I quote Carol here about the above trip -
“The black flies ate us alive even with black fly nets and bug repellent. There has to be several fat happy flies in Vermont at this time, we have the evidence.”

Dick Krompegal



Laurel Ridge and the Mattatuck Trail April 20, 2008

A visit to Laurel Ridge was to begin our day of exploring trails for signs of spring. The acres of daffodils amid the old stone walls and grand old trees was a lovely sight. Karen pointed out the differences between the more than a dozen varieties of daffodils and jonquils. Walking down by the pond we discovered a goose setting on her nest on the flower-covered island. Two women artists had set up their easels and were enjoying the views in their own creative ways.



After a short drive over to nearby White Memorial Foundation, we stepped onto the Mattatuck Trail. This section of the blue-blazed trail is unlike much of the more than 30 miles of trail. The terrain was quite gentle and the path was wide. Upon arrival at Duck Pond we paused, scanning the scene for signs of wildlife. A splash was noticed. A beaver perhaps? Fish? With binoculars in place it was observed that the disturbance was two gigantic snapping turtles engaging in their springtime mating ritual. Much discussion ensued including whether our watching bordered on voyeurism. Leaving them be, we continued on, spotting wildflowers everywhere. This hike became a treasure hunt of sorts, looking for and listing as many varieties as we could find. Some flora included: Coltsfoot, Trout Lily, False Hellebore, Scilla, Marsh Marigold, Bluets, Horsetail Bamboo, Maidenhair Fern and lily pads. Many birds were heard, yet only a few identified. Even a few butterflies were seen. Vernal pools held masses of frogs' eggs. A stop for lunch along the trail revealed another sighting. Two horses, with their riders, were passing by. We learned that one was a Rocky Mountain Gaited horse and the other, a Heflinger.

With just a short distance to go to finish this section, we set out once again and in no time arrived at our cars on Rt. 63. Not wanting to depart just yet, we crossed the road and continued on along the Mattatuck Trail, still within the White Memorial Foundation. As the obligation of the leader had been fulfilled, the decision was made by the group as to which side trails off the Mattatuck to explore. Coming out onto the edge of Heron Pond, a coil of Northern Water snakes sunned themselves on an old, sun-bleached tree in the pond. Veering off the main blue-blazed path onto the Fawn Pond Trail, we observed recent beaver activity. Jared took it upon himself to give the beaver a little assistance in repositioning a tree that had been brought down. With much effort, Jared had its branches freed and ready to be pulled into the pond for whatever use the beaver needed it for. We then continued along through the Boulder Field and then became confused at a trail junction. Here it was decided to just head back to end our day. Our visit to the trails in Litchfield was a springtime delight!



*Hikers: Bill Falconer, Jared McQueen,
Dave Wells, Karen Foss
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*



The Trail Talk

MA/CT Appalachian Trail April 25-27, 2008

A spring backpacking trek just isn't complete without black flies, uphill and rain. This 17 mile hike from Jug End Road in MA south to Rt. 41 in Salisbury, CT included all these complaints and, of course, were directed at the leader. The black flies, however, were fierce only at the vista during the climb from Jug End Road. The sky was clear and through the cloud of black flies we had extensive views to the east and north, including Mt. Greylock. We left the annoying and biting bugs behind as the five of us proceeded on to Hemlock Shelter, our stop for the first night. This shelter is relatively new and more desirable to stay at than the nearby, older and smaller, Glenbrook Shelter. We arrived before dark and found our sixth adventurer, Don, who had arrived earlier, waiting for us.

After spending a quiet and uneventful night, with no critters disturbing us, we arose before the crack of dawn and was on the trail by 7:30. With many rugged miles ahead of us we passed up the opportunity to explore the Guilder Pond Trail, which circles Guilder Pond. Here we began our ascent of the northeastern slope of Mt. Everett. At the summit, at 2,602 feet, we found little remaining of the old, steel fire tower. Bearing left, we began our steep and rugged descent, reaching the junction with the Race Brook Falls Trail. We ascended Race Mountain, at 2,365 feet, and here we followed the ridge, with outstanding views, for nearly a mile. After a gradual descent through a hemlock grove, open areas and along an old woods road, we began our descent into beautiful Sages Ravine. Here we all met up for lunch, relaxing and enjoying the view of the swift running Sages Ravine Brook. Here, too, we met fellow GMCer, Jim Robertson, who was backpacking with his boy scout troop. Sages Ravine was the popular camping spot for scouts this day, for it was reported that more than 100 scouts camped here Saturday night. With lunch providing us with renewed energy, we were to begin our steep ascent up the north side of Bear Mountain. The vertical rock steps and slabs were anticipated to be a fun and challenging climb. The challenge, however, was in finding a break in the "traffic," for hordes of people were visiting Bear Mountain. Most of these hikers were scouts, many of whom were descending in a daredevil manner. Eventually reaching the summit at 2,316 feet, we took a long break, enjoying the view and the company of the many other hikers.

With only a mile or so to Brassie Brook Lean-to, we all met up at the shelter to make the all-important decision whether to stop here for the night, continue on to Riga Shelter or, to some, complete the rest of the section and pack out. After considerable weighing of the options we decided to stay where we were. Here, at Brassie Brook Lean-to, we had the shelter and close by tent sites to ourselves, a good water source and several hours to relax, share appetizers and libations, dine and enjoy quiet conversation into the evening. This night, the only creature to visit was the bird that was nesting in the shelter.

A light rain during the night had cleared out by morning. An owl hooted nearby as we tackled the morning routine of assembling stoves for coffee and packing up our gear. An early start once again took us on our final leg of the 4.6 miles remaining. As we were all somewhat anxious to be on our way home, we merely paused at the outlook that is Lions Head. Our final descent brought us down where the trees' leaves had emerged and the forest floor's undergrowth had greened up since just a few days earlier. Trillium and Wood Anemone dotted the trail. In no time at all we were back at our cars, then after a shuttle to the northern trailhead, we departed. A few of us stopped for brunch at Collins Diner before that final drive home.

*Backpackers: Jack Sanga, Allen Freeman, Laurene Sorensen,
Don Hagstrom, Donald "Woody" Woodbridge
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*



Chatfield Trail May 6, 2008

The Chatfield Trail is often confused with the trails of Chatfield Hollow State Park. This five mile trail is located on the south side of Rt. 80, west of the state park. From here our group shuttled to the southern end of the trail on River Road. Stepping onto the trail, we were immediately immersed in the wonders of nature. The picturesque Chatfield Hollow Brook was running fast as we followed it upstream. This relatively gentle trail had its challenging sections. Every so often we would approach the base of rock jumbles and cliffs, then find the trail going up and over rock outcroppings and through ledges and crevices. One particularly narrow vertical crack in a cliff was called Fat Man Squeeze. Several varieties of spring flora were in abundance. Sally used these sightings to add to her collection of photographs of wild flowers, mosses, lichens and fungi. She was not, however, quick enough with her camera to focus in on a turkey vulture that we flushed out from under a ledge. The huge bird startled us as much as we startled him.

The northern end of the Chatfield Trail was undergoing a rerouting of sorts. A sign offered us a choice of the "old way" or the "new way," which was a longer return walk to our cars. After considerable discussion we chose the "new way." The trail brought us over a footbridge and then led out onto Rt. 80, across from Chatfield Hollow State Park. It was thought that this was done to alleviate any dangerous road walking along Rt. 80 to the small parking area. Hikers may now park in the state park's lot. Fine weather, companionship and a fun trail - a pleasant way to spend a Tuesday morning!

*Hikers: George Jackson, Don Hagstrom, Sally Roberts,
Dick Hart, Bill Falconer
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*

The Trail Talk

Metacomet-Monadnock Trail Sections 15 and 16 May 24-25, 2008

With 79 miles behind us and with a mere 35 to go, the end is in sight! Bill Falconer, the organizer and leader of this undertaking of hiking the entire M & M Trail, was feeling unwell and opted out of the first overnighter of the M & M adventure. All miles thus far have been done in day hikes. Determined to keep from disappointing the group by cancelling the trip, he turned the responsibilities over to another. We stepped onto the trail at the Village Co-op Store in Moores Corner. Traveling north, we followed a gentle trail along Diamond Match Ridge and into Wendell State Forest, crossing many streams along the way. A lean-to was available at 6.4 miles, however, it sheltered us only for a snack break for it was way too early in the day to make camp. We followed Lyons Brook for a time. Here we noticed the first of many sculptures, built from stones and other natural materials. The white trillium was in bloom, while the red had already faded. At 9.5 miles and crossing Mormon Hollow Brook, we began looking for a suitable place to camp for the night. A brook side spot was chosen and we passed the evening leisurely setting up our tents and cooking supper. Don treated us by baking a delicious blueberry cake in his backpacking baker oven. We retired early to our tents for the mosquitoes were fierce.

The night passed to the serenade of the babbling of the brook. Too loud it was, we all agreed, for it masked the natural sounds of the woods. The morning was chilly and while warming ourselves with coffee, a large owl suddenly flew low and silently through our campsite. Getting an early start, we followed Mormon Hollow Brook, with its cascades and pools, through some old dam structures. Then crossing the brook we found that we had to cross it yet again. A high water trail was an option but stepping from rock to rock was perceived as a lot more fun. The trail turned and we proceeded down to the beautiful Millers River, passing under a railroad bridge in the process. While walking along the river's edge, Bill called on his cell phone to tell us that he would be joining us for the remainder of the day at the Farley Rd. trail crossing. After the river bank walk we ascended the railroad embankment and followed the tracks for some distance. As we approached Farley Rd. and the end of Section 15, we passed through a former industrial revolution environment where the foundations remained of a nineteenth century knitting factory and piano works.

Arriving at Farley Rd., Bill was there, anxiously waiting to join us. While one of us lightened her pack by leaving gear in Bill's truck, the others preferred to continue on with full packs. Crossing Millers River by way of Farley Bridge, a fly caster below proved the river to be fishable by catching and releasing a sixteen inch rainbow trout. A GMC hike is not fun unless it typically starts with a serious climb. So, after crossing Rt. 2, we steeply ascended, passing alongside the cliffs of Rattlesnake Mt., a popular rock climbing destination.

Our footpath continued to climb steeply, a drastic contrast to yesterday's gentle terrain, giving Bill a new trail name, "Uphill Bill." Through the forest of hardwoods, a manmade mountain could be seen which housed the pumped storage reservoir at Northfield Mt. Soon we turned onto a side trail that took us 0.4 mile to the "Erving Castle" site. John Smith, "the hermit," lived here from 1867-1906. All that remains of his homestead are stone cellar foundations and the natural caves and crevices in the massive cliff side. Legend states that he lived there all those years on the donations and goodwill from those who came to visit. Then it was back to the ridgeline of Hermit Mt. where the view was of the Millers River snaking through the countryside. The trail then turned left on Mountain Rd. The sunny morning had everyone basking in the sweet fragrance of lilacs without concern for blazes, hence, an extra quarter mile was spent locating our trail. At the next road crossing maps and directions were heavily scrutinized. No more detours. The trail led up a very long gravel driveway before reentering the woods. A steep scramble up a rocky trail took us to the summit of Crag Mt. Here we stopped for lunch, enjoying the views of the Northfield Reservoir, Mt. Grace, Mt. Wachusett, and on the NE horizon, our ultimate destination, Mt. Monadnock. At long last, a descent! For one last mile, the trail was a gentle one. A quiet rustling of leaves just off the trail brought to our attention a porcupine climbing a tree. It was a fine wildlife sighting to close the day as we approached our cars at Gulf Rd.

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



Big Branch Wilderness Vermont May 30 –June 1

Despite warnings of bad weather, we ventured out for what turned out to be a very nice three-day weekend. Threats of rain and cold had us on our best prepared behaviors but these were really unnecessary.

We arrived Friday afternoon and hiked the short 1 mile from the parking area to the lean-to. After dinner, Don made a blueberry cake for dessert. It was great! (We are still waiting for the recipe and how he managed to do this.) In the morning, we started out our day-hike by crossing the bridge at the Old Job shelter that was badly damaged by ice the year before. Warnings aside, we may have been the last brave souls to cross this bridge because GMC has plans to tear it down soon. We followed the trail along the



The Trail Talk

Waterbury Reservoirs June 15, 2008 5 miles

river until it joined the AT. We turned south and climbed Baker Peak. It was cloudy and windy but the view at lunchtime was well worth it. We climbed down through rocky terrain that was familiar to those who have hiked the AT in Pennsylvania. Allen, Don, and Ed took the scenic tour to visit the Peru Peak Shelter. At the bottom we were able to see Griffin Lake but huge clouds of black-flies cut our sightseeing short. We followed the woods road back to the parking lot where Ed managed to get into his car just as the rain started. Allen sprinted ahead and missed the rain completely. Back in the woods, Don, Beth, and Dan put on ponchos, figuring that doing so would immediately cause the rain to stop. Not! We discussed the various fashion statements made by ponchos along the way. By the time we reached camp the rain had stopped. We were lazy the rest of the day. Allen had a reminiscence of hiking days gone by and spent the night at the Big Branch Shelter, about 2 miles to the north.

In the morning, Beth made blueberry pancakes with syrup from Montana for everybody. Yum! Isn't it great to be camping so close to the car?!

*Allen Freeman, Don Hagstrom, Ed Myers, Beth Schwartz
Leader: Dan Zelterman*



May 31st Bike Ride

We met at the Eastford library and decided on a 22 mile loop through Eastford, Westford Center, Ashford, touched into Chaplin and back to Eastford. Rolling hills – some not so rolling – Mary was good to us and didn't drop us on the bigger hills. We saw some interesting field stone houses. There was one beautiful older home with curved arches for window lintels – all field stone. On Rt. 89 there was a new house under construction.

It was a field stone veneer – we stopped to look. The mason doing it was there and we spoke with him briefly. He was from Ireland, was working by himself, had been working on the house since Christmas – was about $\frac{3}{4}$ done. About the only cutting he was doing were the angled stone lintels over the doors and windows – very nice work. But we didn't help and rode on. We almost made it back to Eastford when the rain caught us – we all had raincoats.



Riders – Mary O'Neil, Ken Williamson, Dave Chatel

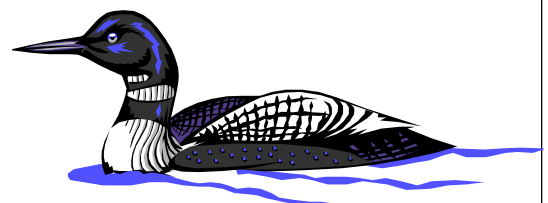
We met at the Slab Meadow Road parking area at 9:30. The previous night's heavy rain had ended, and the day promised to be humid but (we hoped) dry. We drove to the start at Northfield Road and started off. Almost immediately we began to cross small brooks that were swollen considerably by the rain. The mosquitoes were out in full force and sampled small bites of hikers as we moved up muddy hills. Shortly after crossing below a lovely waterfall at French Brook we came to a section in need of trail maintenance; the underbrush had grown up and we had to more or less bushwhack for about 100 feet until we came to a clearer area.

We planned on a lunch stop at about mile 3 at the Morris Brook crossing, not realizing until we got there just how high the water would be. Dick and Don managed to get across and stay dry, but Ken, Mary and Lora took off their shoes and waded across the rushing, knee-deep water. The mosquitoes weren't too bad right next to the brook, so we had our lunches and then tried to befriend a small squirrel that seemed to be a little too young to be on his own.



Finally, we crossed route 109 and got to the last 2 miles. The trail description promised only one more water crossing, at Slab Meadow Brook, and the road ran right over the bridge so we stayed dry. However, the final 2 miles of trail were frequently soggy, and we continued to encounter small brooks that had to be stepped over or through. A couple of small red newts were the only other wildlife we encountered, although we could hear bird songs (Dick identified a wood thrush). We finished around 1:30 pm, having dodged the rain but not the bugs!

*Hikers: Don Hagstrom, Dick Krompegal, Mary O'Neill,
Ken Williamson
Leader: Lora Miller*



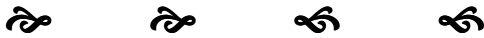
The Trail Talk

CT Trails Day June 8, 2008

What better way to promote CT Trails Day and the Green Mountain Club than to hike a portion of our own Mattabesett Trail. This 5.5 mile section, from Rt. 68 in Reed Gap to Black Pond, is maintained by our CT section of the GMC. The Trails Day event was well attended, including David Sullivan from Connecticut Forest and Park Association. Seventeen hikers began at Reed Gap, with Don bringing up the rear as official sweeper. We gradually ascended Beseck Ridge, then followed the ridge north, passing many cliffs with vistas. Our stops to enjoy the views were brief due to the bright sun's warming rays. And with the anticipation of ice cream at nearby Guida's Restaurant, our pace quickened as our terminus at Black Pond came into view.

Thanks to all for sharing CT Trails Day with the CT GMC!

*Hikers: Don Hagstrom, Bill Falconer, Ann Gurske, John Garvan, Lynn and Dan Tinter, Jesse Chuc Reyes, Becky and Martin Anderson, Carol Magner Mitchell, Scott Mitchell, Chris Donnelly, Karen Cassidy, Dave Sullivan and sons Kyle and Carter.
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*

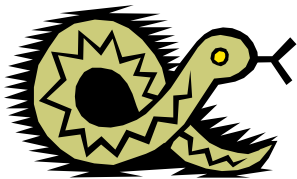


Backpacking Section 1 and 2 of The AT in New Jersey May 12-14, 2008

The hardest part of this trip was finding the trailheads on both ends of our trip. We spent a lot of time driving in circles but were finally successful. We started at Route 284 and had a short hike into Pochuck Mt Shelter. There was a gentleman already in the shelter so we decided to set up our tents. There was a stray dog hanging out at the shelter and, fortunately, the man there took him down the mountain to the ranger.

On Tuesday we hiked through the Wallkill Wildlife Refuge and sighted some water fowl along with three big black snakes resting in the sun. We crossed a nice bridge across the Wallkill River and headed to Pinwheel Vista for a beautiful view for lunch. After resting there, it was an easy flat walk to the Wawayanda Shelter. On the section of trail leading up to

the Vista, Sarah spied a Yearling Northern Copperhead sunning himself on the trail. We got a great picture that matched exactly the picture at the Wawayanda State Park Rangers station. We also saw a Scarlet



Tanager. We had the shelter all to ourselves but still set up the tents to escape the bugs. It was an early night to bed.

On Wednesday we were up early and on the trail by 7:30 am. It was an easy hike out to the New York State Line where we took the State Line Trail back to our cars. These two sections were easy and pretty if you are looking for a relaxing few days out. Total miles for the hike was about 22 miles.

Hikers: Mandy Brink, Sarah O'Hare and Asha



Long Trail / Appalachian Trail Maintenance Vermont June 26 - 29

The changed plans for this trip was to work the southern end of the Connecticut Section of The Long Trail / Appalachian Trail because of not being able to in May. Needing a long break Dan Zelterman and I left Thursday afternoon. We drove to Vermont then camped out in the forest near a brook.

Friday morning, after a slow start, Dan and I drove the short distance to the trail head where Andy Gagner joined us. The three of us walked the 3 miles to the Kid Gore Shelter, our base camp for the weekend. After setting up we walked north, clipping brush, then looked over an area where a short trail adjustment was needed to get it off of a boggy area. We put up a few flags on a proposed section then walked back to the shelter. Later we were joined by Jack Sanga, Jim Moore and Frank Maine. Most of us set up tents rather than using the shelter, leaving it free for thru hikers.

Saturday morning we all picked our weapons then headed south. Using loppers and swizzle sticks we cleared the trail for the four miles to the top of Glastenbury mountain. We also refreshed the blazes. Dan tried his hand at painting and I think we now have a blazing expert. After climbing the fire tower we started to clip and blaze our way back to the shelter. We didn't finish the blazing of the 4 miles south to north since we were all tired and it was threatening rain. We will need to finish about 2 miles in the fall. Just before reaching the shelter it started to rain. That's good news and bad news. The bad news is, it's raining. The good news is, it gets rid of the Dreaded Black Flies.

During the day Bill Brodnitzki, with a gimpy and weak arm after an operation, and his son Bill arrived. Bill, Bill and Frank went north to work on the trail adjustment. They did side-hilling, clearing of saplings and clipped brush away in the new location. The trail adjustment is nearly finished. We discussed going back the next morning to blaze the new section of only about 30 yards. Frank moved over to the

The Trail Talk

Caughnawaga shelter with 4 - 5 friends of his, I never saw them. I would like to say it just rained during the night but it poured during the night - inches of rain. The quiet forest was now noisy with rushing water, spontaneous brooks and runoff water everywhere. This included in most tents.



Sunday morning was sunny and dry, well, ... drying. Too wet to paint blazes. We cleaned around the shelter, took inventory of the tools we pre-position under the shelter, then started out the 3 mile walk back to the cars. On Friday we could rock hop across a brook. After the deluge we now had to wade across.

After washing and changing wet clothes for dry clean clothes, several of us stopped in Willington, VT for a lunch before starting our drive back to CT.

Very, Very productive work trip. No shirkers on this weekend.

*Workers: Dan Zelterman, Bill Brodnitzki & his son Bill,
Andy Gagner, Jack Sanga, Jim Moore,
Frank Maine and his four never seen friends.
Leader: Dick Krompegal*



L-R Andy, Jim, Jack, Dan



M&M Trail Section 17

This section runs from Gulf Rd, in Northfield, MA to Mt Grace State Forest in Warwick, MA. A good day for hiking with temps in the 70's and very little cloud cover. Keeping up tradition with "Up Hill Bill" it was just that for the first mile of the relocated trail. The sharp eyes of Sarah spotted deer bounding along with us. The Bald Hills of Northfield had occasional revealing vistas. The last hill had a view of Mt Grace across a wide valley from Stratton Mt. The objective was for lunch on Little Mt Grace in the distance. Instead it happened somewhere along the "5th Mass. Turnpike" established in 1775, short of the destination. An unseen farm dog barked until we consumed the now famous M&M peanut butter cookies.

A ridge along Little Grace gave views of where we had come from. The climb up Mt Grace is on a tote road recently used to install utility poles supplying service to the fire tower and repeater station at the summit. On the way up, Bill remarked how the ascent is similar to MT Monadnock at trail's end. Sarah and Bill were rewarded with a grand view of Monadnock and the surrounding mountains from atop the fire tower.

The way down is as steep as the climb. A renovated Adirondack shelter built in 1970 was in good clean condition with a stream nearby. The trail winds along a ravine, ending at the trailhead on RT 78 in Warwick, MA.

All in all, an interesting and pleasant ramble in the woods.

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





The Trail Talk

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