

Northern Frontier Section of the Green Mountain Club
Winter 2023/2024 Newsletter

Season's Greetings!

Winter is off to a start this year with intermittent snow and cold followed by spring-like weather. The Northern Frontier Section is leading group hikes and outings this season and we'll hope for good snow as the winter progresses. We're looking forward to snowshoeing and skiing; the challenge and beauty of being outdoors in the winter!

We had a fun and productive hiking and trail work season in 2023, in spite of very rainy weather. Our section scheduled 6 hikes, one paddle trip and one bike ride between early July and late October. The bike ride and one of the hikes were canceled because of rain, but the other events were mostly well attended. The Whiteheads hosted a potluck in their home and a hike on the Enosburgh Town Forest Trail with 10 hikers. Brooks Sturtevant led a hike up Mt. Elmore with 4 hikers. Seven of us went for a paddle on Green River Reservoir on a sunny August day. Jeff and Cathy Miller led a hike from Rt. 105 to Journey's End with 3 hikers. In early September, 4 of us got together with 11 NEK Section members and hiked the Jay Rec Area Trails. Afterward we enjoyed a great potluck lunch and visit in the sunny afternoon. In late September, Byron Dolan led a hike up Mt. Pisgah (on Lake Willoughby) with 4 hikers. Our section hikes and events are a great way to share time outdoors and I think those of us who attend them form closer bonds with the landscape and each other.



Long Trail Day this year was originally scheduled for August 19th. However, due to the bad flooding throughout the state, the date was pushed ahead to October 7th. The GMC Long Trail staff and work crews assisted with flood cleanup in communities for weeks and were delayed attending to GMC trail work. The Northern Frontier Section stayed with our original plan of staffing a table at Jay Pass (Rt. 242) from 9:00 AM to 3:00PM with 7 members, in 2 hour shifts. It was a cold, windy and rainy day (which we thought would improve) and the canopy even blew over once or twice! We were surprised that day hikers and LT hikers

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(about 15 total) were hiking in that weather, so we spoke with them and gave them GMC stickers, snacks and info. In spite of the weather, we enjoyed our visit as we conversed in the wind and rain.

As he did last year, Walter Pomroy established a “Northern Frontier” fundraising team for Long Trail Day on the GMC website. He gave a generous contribution and others joined the “NFS team” and donated money to the GMC. These efforts helped make the 2023 Long Trail Day fundraising for the GMC very successful. Many many thanks to Walter and all the rest who donated to the GMC!



In the summer newsletter, I mentioned that there was a ski area chairlift proposed to be built between Smugglers’ Notch Resort’s Sterling Mt. and Stowe Mt. Resort’s Spruce Peak. The chairlift would have definitely impacted the Long Trail, however the proposal has been dropped due to concerns raised by hikers and other groups. For the preservation of the Long Trail this decision is greatly appreciated! Thanks to all of you who contacted the GMC or the resorts to weigh in on this issue.

Last October, I received an invitation to volunteer in a GMC work day on Laraway Mountain, helping install puncheon. The Long Trail Patrol had previously cut puncheon planks and cross pieces from the nearby woods, so our volunteer group had to carry them out to the trail and install them. My son, Jamin and I joined about 10 other volunteers from the Laraway Section (including Bruce Bushey) and the Burlington Section. We hiked up to Laraway Lookout (2.3 mi.) and then installed the puncheon between there and Laraway Summit. Kate Songer from the GMC staff led the effort and Lily Laregina assisted. It was a tough and rewarding work day and the volunteers worked well together. In 2024, the NFS section plans to install puncheon near Laura Woodward Shelter and hopefully other areas

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between Rt. 242 and Hazen's Notch. Those projects will provide a great opportunity to volunteer if you are interested!

The James P. Taylor Series will host in-person and zoom presentations this winter from January to March. It begins on Jan. 11th with a talk about the Civilian Conservation Corps in VT during the great depression. The series is free and open to the public and you can look it up on greenmountainclub.org. Click "Education and Events" and then register for the next upcoming presentation if you're interested.

Just a reminder for all volunteers who work on the trail and shelters: After you do your work, submit a volunteer work report by going to greenmountainclub.org and click on "volunteer", then "volunteer report" and type in your information. Share your report with the NFS Trails and Shelters officers; it's important that we all know what's being done on the trail. Many many thanks for all the hard work of the volunteers who work on the NFS trails and shelters; you are each greatly appreciated!

I wish you good hiking and good health this season and hope to share time with you on our outings.

Happy Holidays and All the Best,

Ken Whitehead – President Northern Frontier Section





2023 End-of-Year Trail Report

Looking back over the 2023 hiking season in the Northern Frontier Section two words come to mind: rain and refurbishing.

Rain because Vermont suffered torrential rains this spring and summer that caused massive flooding in many parts of the state. The rain and flooding caused the Long Trail to be closed for a short period of time to ensure the safety of everyone who hikes or works on the trail. After a survey of the entire trail by GMC staff, trail adopters and others, it was determined that the trail could be reopened safely. Luckily, the Northern Frontier Section of the trail did not experience any significant wash outs or structural damage. Our section was wetter and muddier than usual and the vegetation seemed to grow in leaps and bounds but otherwise the trail survived the storms. To say the least, it was a very rainy season.

Refurbishing comes to mind because there were a number of projects undertaken this season to repair or replace existing infrastructure. Here is a list of some of the major projects undertaken by the section beyond just the normal trail maintenance that is done every year:

1. Rebuild the privy crib at the Laura Woodward Shelter: This project deserves to be discussed in some detail because of the journey the lumber (10 four-foot 6x6's) took to get to the shelter. The lumber was cut in the barn at GMC Headquarters in Waterbury. In March, Lorne Currier of the GMC and Cathy Miller loaded Cathy's pickup with the lumber and she drove it to North Troy where it was stored for a few weeks. Then it was driven up to Jay

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Peak where Russ Ford (who is an Assistant Patrol director at Jay) arranged for us to load the wood on the Tram and store it underneath the Sky House at the top of Jay Peak. When the snow conditions were favorable, Russ and a group of patrollers loaded the lumber onto two rescue sleds and skied the lumber as far along the Long Trail towards the Laura Woodward Shelter as mother nature and gravity would allow. The lumber was then stashed and covered just off the trail. In May, once the snow had melted and the trail was hikeable, Ken Whitehead, Russ and Jeff Miller lugged the lumber the rest of the way to the shelter. On June 30th, the privy crib was rebuilt by Lorne Currier, Ken Whitehead, Danny Richardson, Cathy Miller and Jeff Miller. That means that in order to rebuild the crib, the lumber had to go by truck, tram sled and foot to reach the shelter. Anyone else thinking about the movie “Planes, Trains and Automobiles” ?

2. The Jay Camp tent platform is being replaced by Bill Haynie (owner of the Woodshed Lodge) and Christian Lakos (owner of Sessions Food Trailers and Axiom Adventures). They began repairing the platform this fall, but soon realized that it was rotten and needed to be replaced. They removed the platform and prepared the site for a new one. Next spring they’ll build the new one and will need help from volunteers to carry in the lumber and tools. If you’re interested in helping please let us know! Many thanks to Bill and Christian.

3. The blazes between Rt. 242 and the top of Jay Peak were repainted in July by Kip Potter, Jane Williams, Byron Dolan and Ken Whitehead.

4. While not completed during 2023, planning has started to build puncheon on the trail near Laura Woodward Shelter to alleviate some of the wetter spots. In addition, Keegan Tierney of the GMC and Ken Whitehead have been discussing building puncheon between Hazen’s Notch and Rt. 242. Keegan and Ken plan to scope out that project in the spring. Needless to say, volunteers for both of those projects will be needed.

5. One final note, Marilyn and David Magnus have been the long-time adopters of the Journey’s End Trail and Camp. This year they decided to pass the torch to some else. Danny Richardson has agreed to become the new adopter for the Journey’s End Trail and Camp. We thank Marilyn and David for their years of dedicated service to the GMC and especially to the Northern Frontier Section. We welcome Danny and look forward to working with him.

Jeff Miller - NFS Trails Officer

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2024 Winter Events

Sunday, January 14th	Snowshoe and Potluck at the Whitehead's home. Enjoy a hike in the nearby woods and bring food to share in a potluck lunch. Contact Ken at kenwhitehead.vthiking@gmail.com Or (802) 933-5352
Sunday, January 28th	Hike to Laraway Lookout, 3.6 mi. round trip, 1390' ascent, moderately challenging hike Contact Ken at kenwhitehead.vthiking@gmail.com Or (802)933-5352
Saturday, February 10th	Hike the Jay Peak Resort snowshoe trails. Easy to moderate hike Contact Jeff at mill48@comcast.com or (802) 528-6785
Saturday, February 24th	Hike to Moose Mt. and Willoughby Vista in the NEK 1150' ascent, moderate hike, 4.8 mi. round trip. Contact Ken at kenwhitehead.vthiking@gmail.com Or (802) 933-5352
Saturday, March 9th	Hike Canyon Road Trails near Jeffersonville. Easy hike and lunch afterward at Martell's (at the Red Fox). Contact Ken at kenwhitehead.vthiking@gmail.com or (802) 933-5352
Saturday, March 23rd	Hike the L.T. and Babcock Trail Loop to Devil's Gulch and back. 180' ascent, easy to moderate hike, 4.1 mi. round trip Contact Ken at kenwhitehead.vthiking@gmail.com or (802) 933-5352