

Smoke & Blazes

Volume 76, Number 3

Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

Fall, 2023

Rain Forest



John Danyew, Dave Coppock and Larry Walter spent a very wet day clearing blowdowns off the Long Trail in Killington in June. Our fall "Put the Trail to Bed" work day will be Saturday, November 4.

Killington Section Directors:

Term expiration 2024
Ruth Hare*
Amy Peacock
Maura Wildman

Term expiration 2025
Bill Cooke
Dave Coppock
Herb Ogden

Term expiration 2026
Wayne Krevetski*
Melissa Reichert*
Allison Henry

*Second consecutive 3-year term.
Not eligible for re-election.

Smoke & Blazes:

Sue Thomas *Editor*

Killington Section Officers:

Wayne Krevetski *President*
Herb Ogden *Vice President*
Melissa Reichert *Secretary*
Maura Wildman *Treasurer*

Committee Chairs:

Amy Peacock *History & Archives*
Sue Thomas *Outings*
Larry Walter *Trails & Shelters*
Dave Coppock *Trails & Shelters*

Delegates to GMC Board:

Bruce Peacock *Director*
Ruth Hare *Alternate*

Web Site: www.gmckillington.org

Andrew & Isaac Jones *Web Masters*

Contact us at: KillingtonSection@greenmountainclub.org

The Extra Mile

Who you gonna call? Trails & shelters co-chair **Dave Coppock**, a long-time member of Killington Search & Rescue, will now be on call with Brattleboro's Rescue Inc., ready to assist lost and injured hikers, skiers and mountain bikers in our local area. With the increasing numbers now using the trails, many of whom are inexperienced, this is a vital service. Many thanks Dave, it's great to know you have our back!

Herb Ogden coordinates the Killington Section Sector Checker program. What the heck is a Sector Checker? Answer: a dedicated volunteer who keeps watch over a designated portion of the LT/AT or side trail. All that's required is that you walk your sector periodically, especially before scheduled work days, and report any issues that need attention, such as trees down across the trail, or damage to a shelter or bridge. This information helps Trails & Shelters co-chairs **Larry Walter** and **Dave Coppock** to know how many people and what tools to send out with the work crews. If you'd like to sign on as a Sector Checker, contact Herb to see what's available.

Want to see Smoke & Blazes in full color? Co-Web Master **Isaac Jones** posts each issue on the Killington Section website, usually shortly after the print version is mailed. Check it out at www.gmckillington.org





Remembering Roma

The Killington Section is mourning the loss of one of our longest-standing members, **Roma Pulling**, who passed away in May at the age of 95. Roma was a dedicated member for more than 50 years, serving many terms on the board, was vice president, outings chair, headed publicity, and was treasurer for many years. She was an enthusiastic participant in work parties and led countless hikes, including our annual winter hot dog roast, organized winter weekends at Merck Forest, and in later years instituted the popular “senior shuffle” hikes for our older members.

Roma was an “end-to-ender,” completing the Long Trail with her husband Al, and not content with that accomplishment, went on to hike the side trails as well, and then returned to photograph all the shelters. She loved canoeing, camping in the Green Mountains and Adirondacks, and had a keen interest in local and Green Mountain Club history. She will be greatly missed but fondly remembered as we hike the trails she loved so well.

Trail Mix

Due to the heavy rains and flooding in July which damaged trails and made some trailheads inaccessible, **Long Trail Day** has been postponed until Saturday, October 7. If you would like to participate in the Killington Section activities on that day, contact **Wayne Krevetski**, 802-282-2237.

The Killington Section of the AT/LT, which runs from Route 140 in Wallingford to Maine Junction, fared pretty well in the storms. The Green Mountain Club crews wasted no time in getting out to assess the damage, reporting that the bridges on 140 and the Bucklin Trail were undamaged, as well as the boardwalk at Thundering Brook Falls (not within our section, but of concern). The Clarendon Gorge suspension bridge suffered some scouring but was deemed completely safe. Due to a road washout they were not able to reach Governor Clement shelter, but as the bridge there had already fallen victim to a previous storm, there was not much worry. As of this writing the field crews, which had been recalled before the storms for their safety, are back on the job and will be assessing the further reaches. There will likely be some cleanup needed, so if you’d like to lend a hand, contact our Trails & Shelters co-chairs **Larry Walter** and **Dave Coppock**, 802-775-3855 or 802-683-1614.

There was however significant damage in other areas, and some trails may be closed for some time. Roads leading to trailheads may be impassable, and likely lower priority for road crews working to get major highways reopened. Before heading out on a hike, go to greenmountainclub.org/flood for an updated list of closures and trail conditions. And, as in early spring, the GMC reminds us to avoid muddy areas or walk through the center rather than around the mud, to avoid further damage to the trails.

Rifle season in Vermont runs from November 11 – 26 this year. If you venture into the woods during that time, be safe and remember to wear blaze orange. For a complete listing of Vermont’s fall hunting seasons, go to vtfishandwildlife.com>hunt. (continued on p.6)



Green Mountain Club Executive Director Mike DeBonis joined the KS Board and History Committee for a tour of the Long Trail Lodge site led by Dave Wright in May. This staircase, originally the Long Trail, led hikers through the lobby of the building.

Outing Reports

The weather gods smiled on us not, and most summer hikes were rained out. Beavers fuddled another by plugging a culvert and blocking access to a trailhead. Let's hope for a less dramatic fall!

Larry Gets Sued AT/LT from Rt. 4 to Tucker Johnson, April 29, 2023 by Larry Walter

The weather report looked pretty nasty, but said nastiness was supposed to hold off until around noon. Hence, all five of us, including three Sues, a Diane and a Larry, decided to give it a try. Not being able to help myself, I worked a more thorough trail check into the same outing and got Diane to record broken planks, rotten sills and blowdowns (3) on our way. Only Sue T. and I had been in there, so it was nice to listen to the observations of the others. None of the flowers were up yet, but there was lots of speculation as to what they were. All a mystery to me. They could have just been making up names? Upon reaching the shelter, there was much interest in our Taj Ma Privy, so several hikers found the camouflaged trail and inspected the premises. I think the last log sign-in was on 4/18 (at the shelter, not the privy).

We debated whether to take the fire ring apart, but felt it was best just to leave it. It was, at least, some distance from the shelter, unlike the fool who decided it would be a good idea to use the front of Churchill Scott as a portion of the fire closure. Sue and I were unable to figure out how to get into the bear box, so it must be bear-proof. (OK, Sue had to show me how.) These things are really big! It would be hard for anything to drag it off, save for the ground hog Viv and I have in our backyard. Said hog has a new tattoo every week and likes to strut back and forth on the lawn in apparent quest for lady hog. No action yet.

When we got back to Willard Gap, I bored everyone with the triple-white-blaze feature and then talked most of them into taking the AT around to the Inn at Long Trail. Sue T., being of sound mind and noticing it was starting to rain, decided to retreat back to her car. I had to cut a couple small things out of the way, but nothing big. The other three ladies pretended to show great interest in my accounts of previous sawing and rock-moving adventures.

We passed a young woman (Rebecca) and her two little girls (ages 5 and 7, as proudly proclaimed simultaneously). They hiked all the way to the lookout and back, no problem! It really was starting to come down by the time we got to the Inn parking lot, where Sue T., bless her heart, was waiting for us with her car. It sure was nice to skip the highway/condo walk down to the other two Subarus.

Diane, two out of three Sues and Larry at Tucker Johnson shelter in Killington, still dry but not for long.



A Walk on the Wild Side Wildflower Hike, Killington, May 13, 2023 by Sue Thomas

Red trilliums, painted trilliums, trout lilies, baneberries, Dutchman's breeches, Canada violets, foam flowers, wild oats, fiddleheads, hobble bushes, toothwort, Canada Mayflowers, spring beauties, Jack-in-the-pulpits...oh, and seven hikers and a tiny toad, all made a beautiful sunny day on the Sherburne Trails a lot of fun. I had worried that our lingering over flowers mid-trail might cause some grumbling from bikers, but we met very few and all were pleasant and accommodating. The same cannot be said for the season's first black flies, which settled in to share a hearty lunch with us by the shore of Kent Pond. Our youngest hiker Raymond had the right idea and kept moving, while the rest of us ate and swatted. But the flowers were abundant, the weather perfect, lunch spot scenic and the company great.



Trout lily



Painted trillium



Jack-in-the-pulpit



Dutchman's breeches

Holes of History

Wallingford Pond From the East, May 20, 2023

by Herb Ogden

Despite uncertain weather, five of us showed up for this four-mile outing. We parked at the end of the maintained Beaver Meadow Road near the Mt. Holly - Wallingford town line and headed east on the unmaintained part into the National Forest. Passing cellar holes on both sides of the road, we soon came to a junction where an abandoned road leads south into Mt. Tabor. Continuing on Beaver Meadow Road, we passed where the 1869 Beers Atlas said a school once stood and then continued east where the main road turns southwest. The Beers Atlas does not show this continuation, but it does show a farm out there. We passed just north of a small cellar hole, crossed a small wet area, and climbed to the remains of that farm: stone walls, the foundations of a big barn and other outbuildings, and finally a big cellar hole. From there, we followed a snowmobile track to the east shore of the east lobe of Wallingford Pond and had lunch while trying to avoid providing the local black flies a big lunch of their own. On the beautiful and peaceful pond, we spotted waterfowl including a loon. On the way back, we inspected the impressive abutments of a bridge on what appears to be the original route of the road into Mt. Tabor. From it, we saw the remains of one of the two factories shown in the old atlas. It was good to get out in the spring greenery.

Lisa, Daniel, John and Herb stand at the edge of a cellar hole deep in the woods, where once a farmhouse stood. Bug nets were the fashion statement of the day.



GMC Annual Meeting *Submitted by Killington Section Rep. Bruce Peacock*

The 113th Annual Meeting of the Green Mountain Club was held June 17, 2023 at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center. It was announced that Howard VanBenthuyzen had stepped down as the President of the Club so the meeting was run by VP Nancy McClellan. The Club ran a deficit of \$129,281 in the fiscal year that ended April 30th, the first deficit in 9 years. Consequently, staff recommended a revised and reduced 2024 budget that was later approved by the Board. A report on land conservation efforts stated only 6 miles of the LT remained unprotected. Retired Senator Patrick Leahy was awarded a GMC lifetime membership for his many legislative contributions to trail and land conservation over 48 years in the Senate. Senator Leahy spoke of the importance of the Club as he accepted the award.

A GMC Board meeting was held immediately after the Annual Meeting. Nancy McClellan was elected President. The election of a VP was deferred until the Nominating Committee has time to act. Mike DeBonis reported two issues: 1) The squatter in the Pico Camp had been served with a No Trespassing Order and the Club is waiting for evidence that the squatter has returned to the camp. 2) The Club is very concerned about a proposal to connect Stowe and Smuggler's Notch with a gondola that would require a mile of LT relocation. The Club will oppose this action and may request membership's help since this decision is up to the State FPR. A revised Strategic Plan as well as a new Code of Conduct will be presented to the Board in September.

Mollie Flanagan mentioned in a side discussion that Killington is planning on removing the section of snowmaking pipe in the woods that crosses the Sherburne Pass Trail in July and rerouting it alongside the Pico Killington Interconnector.

Trail Mix *(continued from p.3)*

Pico Camp remains closed as of this writing due to the ongoing issue with a squatter who has taken up residence there. Hikers are advised to use Churchill Scott and Tucker Johnson shelters until the matter is resolved.

A Killington Section tradition which fell victim to covid is returning this fall! Mark your calendars and join us for a **Potluck Supper** on Sunday, November 19 at 1:00 at the Godnick Adult Center on Deer Street in Rutland. Bring a plate, utensils and a dish to share. Hopefully there will be photos and a talk after the meal. We don't schedule hikes during hunting season, but we sure can eat!



Fresh veggies on the trail? Sourdough bread straight from the oven? It's safe to say every backpacker dreams of such things as they down yet another dehydrated meal. Now LT/AT hikers passing through the K-Section can find these treats and more just a short walk from the Cold River Rd. trailhead, at **Stone's Throw Farm**. Connor Self and Jess Purks purchased the farm on Wilmouth Hill Rd. in Shrewsbury last summer, and opened the farmstand this June, offering a variety of sustainably grown produce as well as other local items. Their location just .3 miles from the trail made catering to hikers a natural fit. They offer Wi-Fi, charging of devices, bug spray, fuel cannisters, dehydrated meals and mail drop service. High-calorie items have proven most popular with hikers – chocolate milk, ice cream and the sourdough loaves. “We can't keep them on the shelf!” Future plans include adding campsites and maybe a hostel. The farmstand is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.



“Captain BG” takes a break from his AT trek at the farm on a hot day in July.

Backtracking

Smoke & Blazes, December, 1948:

Beechwood Party

“As usual the Covered Dish Supper brought out a big crowd....Short hikes were taken by some in the woods nearby in order to work up an appetite for supper. Others sat by the fire, chatted, knitted, or just loafed....The lights were lit and the clock’s hands moved toward the supper hour.

We were beginning to get hungry but as so often happens, the coffee wasn’t ready. This time it wasn’t the fault of the fire... Ray hadn’t arrived with a necessary ingredient; the coffee.”



A K-Section gathering celebrating Washington’s Birthday at Beechwood in 1943. Photo from the Rutland Historical Society, Killington Section collection.

I’ve had a wonderful time reading back issues of Smoke & Blazes and have uncovered many things I didn’t know and quite a few intriguing mysteries. For instance, in the very first issues from 1948, I found several references to events being held at “Beechwood.” What and where was Beechwood? I hit pay dirt (an expression that has great relevance here, as you will see!) with my first try, an email to Bob Perkins. Bob was a college student at UVM in 1948, and a member of the Killington Section along with his parents, Craigue and Mary Perkins, who created the newsletter that year. And yes, he did know something about Beechwood – the house was built by his grandfather in the early 1880s at the end of Perkins Lane, adjacent to the headquarters of the family business, Rutland Fire Clay. Bob remembers walking there for Thanksgiving dinner from his home on the other side of Rutland.

Rutland Fire Clay came about when Bob’s great-grandfather, Rufus Lyman Perkins, began digging in Mendon and in the area surrounding Paint Mine Brook looking for iron. The iron content proved disappointing, but by a happy accident he discovered that when heated, the minerals in the soil became hardened and could be used as a lining for stoves.

Several quarries were dug and the company grew. A rail line was built to transport the raw materials from the pits, and Rufus’ wife and daughter-in-law fed 15 - 20 laborers at the house every day. Rufus’s son Arthur took over the business, also serving as Mayor of Rutland from 1922 – 34. Arthur’s son Craigue was the company chemist, and a devoted member of the Killington Section, as were many members of the family, notably, Vera and Mary who edited the newsletter, and Janet & John Martin, who both served terms as section President.

Bob was curious about whether the house was still standing, so one day last fall I picked him up and we went exploring. It is indeed still intact, and the Rutland Fire Clay sign is there where the company office once stood. Operations shifted to Curtis Avenue after the factory burned in 1902, and the train tracks were torn up for scrap metal during WWII, but some outbuildings remain. It was so much fun to walk around the grounds with Bob as a guide and hear what he remembers about it. We were also lucky to meet his cousin Tom Martin, who told us more about the history of this fascinating place with a Killington Section connection.



Beechwood today. Join us for a short hike on the grounds and woods in October; Tom and Bob may be on hand to talk about the Rutland Fire Clay Company. See the Fall hike schedule for details.

