

# Smoke & Blazes

Volume 77, Number 1

Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

Spring 2024

## One Cool Dude



*A male American Goldfinch is shedding his winter olive drab coloring and beginning to don his bright yellow garb, in hopes of attracting fair lady. Spring hikes before the trees leaf out are great for bird watching.*



**KILLINGTON SECTION**



*Spring-2024*

**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: gmckillington.org**

Andrew & Isaac Jones,  
*Web Masters*

**Smoke & Blazes**

Sue Thomas, *Editor*

**Killington Section Directors**

*Term expires 2024:*  
Ruth Hare\*  
Amy Peacock  
Maura Wildman

*Term expires 2025:*  
Bill Cooke  
Dave Coppock  
Herb Ogden

*Term expires 2026:*  
Wayne Krevetski\*  
Melissa Reichert\*  
Allison Henry

*\*Second consecutive 3-year term, not eligible for re-election.*

**Contact us:**

KillingtonSection@greenmountainclub.org

# Board of Directors Report

*Dec. 16, 2023 Submitted by Killington Section Rep. Bruce Peacock*

The GMC received a \$900,000 gift from the estate of Joan Wissman. Historically 90% of estate gifts are placed with the endowments, with the balance used for special projects or resolving budget shortfalls. GMC staff will propose suggestions for the use of the money at the next meeting, although they expect a \$30,000 shortfall in the current budget.

Long Trail Day was a tremendous success with the raising of \$69,000.

The new visitor center has been delayed by the unavailability of the concrete contractor to pour the foundation. Construction is expected to restart in March.

GMC is on the periphery of a dispute lodged by the Odanak First Nations in Canada concerning the legitimacy of the Abenaki Tribes recognized by the State of Vermont. The Odanak have asked all conservation and environmental groups in Vermont to stop collaboration with the Vermont tribes. GMC has adopted a listening approach since it does not have any active cooperation agreements in place with the Vermont tribes. The controversy is being covered by several media outlets. To learn more, there is comprehensive story in VT Digger: [‘A false narrative’: Abenaki leaders dispute the legitimacy of Vermont’s state-recognized tribes - VTDigger](#) and a three-part podcast on VT Public: [Odanak, Wôlinak Abenaki First Nations are asking for an investigation of Vermont’s state recognition process | Vermont Public](#)

GMC field staff is having difficulty filling seasonal field slots, especially supervision, as a result of the competitive market for wages and seasonal housing.

GMC membership has declined several percent in the last year. The Development group is investigating.

The Jean Haigh Cabin on Wheeler Pond was completed just prior to Thanksgiving and is now available for rental.

Don Taylor was elected as GMC Vice President.

The Board spent 20 minutes discussing DEI issues centering around a post from a hiker in Colorado. [Diversity on the Colorado Trail: Empowerment and Setback While Thru-Hiking - The Trek](#)

## Killington Section

# Annual Meeting

**Saturday, April 13, 2:30 p.m.**

**In the Fox Room at Rutland Free Library**



**Meet the Board and learn about our work protecting and maintaining Vermont’s Long Trail**

# Trail Mix

Our **History Committee** has completed and submitted a draft for the proposed historical marker to be placed at the site of the Long Trail Lodge at the top of Sherburne Pass. The state will now be reviewing the wording and source materials for accuracy before giving final approval. In the meantime, GMC's Director of Field Programs Keegan Tierney has approached Killington Ski Resort for permission to place the sign on their property away from the highway, as the state-owned roadside was deemed too dangerous. Stay tuned for updates, and many thanks to the committee for all their work on this important project.

I'm happy to report that participation in hikes has been steadily increasing to pre-covid levels, hampered a bit by last year's dismal weather which cancelled many trips. What we need now are more hike leaders so that we can get our schedule back up to normal, offering an outing most weekends as we used to. Several of our longtime leaders have retired from the job after many years and many wonderful outings, and our thanks go to all! If you have a favorite hike or paddle you'd like to share, or have questions about what it involves, contact outings chair **Sue Thomas, 802-773-2185**. Our next schedule will cover June, July and August.

Recent storms have likely caused more damage to the trails, already impacted by last year's flooding. Trails and Shelters co-chairs **Larry Walter** and **Dave Coppock** are reminding sector checkers to walk their sections of trail before the spring work days, and report any damage or conditions that need attention so that the proper tools and workers can be assigned. The lower-elevation work day will be Saturday, May 4, higher terrain will be done on Saturday, June 1. Keeping our trails in good shape is a big job, and even if you aren't able to wield a saw, you can still lend a hand by ferrying crews to trailheads. Contact Larry at **802-775-3855** or Dave at **802-683-1614** for information.

Applications are open for both paid positions and volunteer roles with the Green Mountain Club. Get paid to hike and spend time outdoors as a **backcountry caretaker**, **ridgerunner** or **professional trail crew member**. Or, join the **Volunteer Long Trail Patrol** this summer and spend a week or more working and living on the Long Trail.

No prior trail crew experience is necessary! Go out on a Thursday evening through Tuesday afternoon "hitch" and learn high-tech trail building and repair skills. Go to [greenmountainclub.org](http://greenmountainclub.org) for information and applications.

Relocation of **Minerva Hinchey Shelter** near Cuttingsville is scheduled for this summer, to move it off of Spring Lake Ranch property. A new moldering privy will be constructed along with the move. Many of us have not-so-fond memories of moving the old pit-style outhouse there periodically!

## The Extra Mile

Killington Section Historian **Amy Peacock** sat down with **Dave Wright** in December to record his memories of the old Long Trail Lodge, which was managed by his uncle, Grover Wright, for a time. Dave worked at the lodge as a teenager and remembers it well. He has amassed an extensive collection of materials, photos and postcards related to the property, and has presented a wonderful program to GMC groups. As a member of the KS History Committee, he has been instrumental in the effort to get state recognition for the site and place a historical marker there.



### **Mud Season Reminder**

Help us protect the trails from erosion this spring:

*Don't hike on muddy trails, especially above 2500', turn back if you encounter muddy conditions*

*Respect trail closures and have an alternate plan*

*Hike on bike paths, mountain roads and other durable surfaces*

*Don't step around mud, it tramples vegetation and widens the trail – walk through the mud if you can't turn back*

*Don't underestimate weather, you may still encounter snow and ice*

*Check out great alternative hiking destinations on the GMC website: [greenmountainclub.org](http://greenmountainclub.org)*

# Outing Reports

## **Put the Trail to Bed Work Day | Saturday, November 4, 2023 by Larry Walter**

We had a whopping nine volunteers show up for our final (official) work day of the season. After hearing of several blowdowns and clogged water bars, Dave C. and I decided to split into two crews which would head south from Minerva Hinchey and north from Route 140. That's pretty much what we did, managing to finish near the top of Bear Mountain from both sides. A couple of us managed to clear a bit more of the view rock on the south side of Bear Mountain. Hikers will have a lot better view to the south as a result. Many thanks to all who hoed, cut and snipped this section.

## **Right up our Alley | Mount Tom, Woodstock, Sunday, November 12, 2023 by Sue Thomas**

Vermont's only National Park proved the perfect setting for a safe hunting season hike, and nine of us plus Daisy the dog gathered on a chilly but sunny day to enjoy the carriage roads and fall scenery. Foolishly having left our carriages at home, we set off on foot, reaching the summit just in time for lunch. Below us the picturesque village of Woodstock looked like a well-crafted toy, though some damage from this year's flooding could be seen along the Ottauquechee River east of town. Rice Krispie treats restored our energy enough for a turn around the pond, mysteriously known as "The Pogue," before we descended via an alternate route passing by the family's private bowling alley. Once again our lack of foresight was exposed, as remarkably not one of us had thought to pack a bowling ball, silly us! So we continued on past the mansion to the visitors center, where hot chocolate and coffee awaited, and several opted to stay to watch an excellent film which tells the story of this historic property and the three families that lived there.



## **A Day at the Fair | Poultney Area Trek, Saturday, December 2, 2023 by Diane Bargiel**

We parked at the main parking lot for the Slate Valley Trails Fairgrounds trail system on Town Farm Road just off of Route 140 between Poultney and Middletown Springs. Certain trails on the Fairgrounds East set of trails were closed for hunting season, so we stayed far away from those and went onto the Fairgrounds West series of trails. Parts of that land



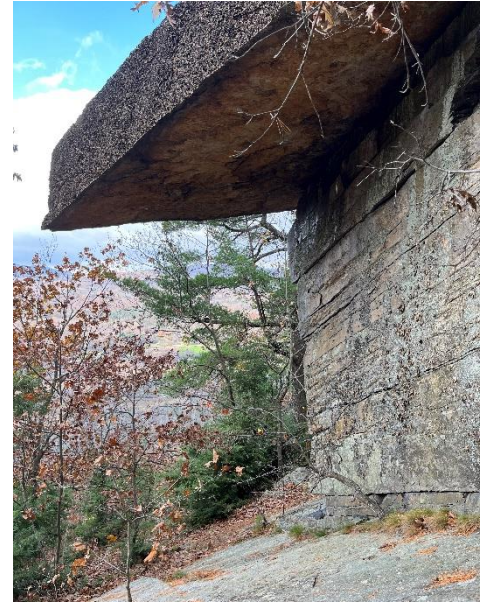
do, at certain points, abut some private land where hunting is allowed, so we were careful about where we went. Sue, Sunghee, Carrie, John and I started on the Ringmaster Trail and then went up Scrambler until the intersection with Big Top, where we contemplated completing the whole c. 5.1 mile loop, but, due to the shortened daylight hours and our later start, we decided to turn around and retrace our footsteps, so we ended up doing a little over 4 miles. The trails pass through both hardwood and hemlock forests in this part of the Taconic range. They are dual-use hiking and mountain biking trails, so even when we climb, the grade is not too steep. There are lovely switchbacks in this set of trails that are mostly not annoying to this hiker. (I define annoying switchbacks as a stretch of trail, then a turn, and then if I can spit and hit the trail I was just on and am heading back in the same general direction I just came from without much of an elevation gain.) Ringmaster, is a wonderful trail to just get the blood flowing as it is fairly flat and wide, which is great for encouraging wonderful conversations. It's good to get out of one's own head sometimes. It had been ages since I had seen Sunghee and John, so it was so lovely to catch up with them. It's reminding me that I need to carve out more time in my schedule to be with the club members again. Here's to the Killington Section!

### *Clowning around on the Clown Shoes Trail.*

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## A Rock and a Hard Place | Mount Tabor Scramble, December 9, 2023 by Larry Walter

I take full credit for the excellent weather we enjoyed, with temperatures in the 40s and 50s, and hardly a breeze. After a disastrous summer season of water-logged hiking dates, it's about time. This outcrop has long interested me, but I always shied away from it, figuring it involved a chilly wade across Otter Krik. On a whim, Dave C. and I pulled over a couple months ago to scope out its basaltic inclines. To get a better view, we walked down the dirt access road and found ourselves gazing down at a really nice snowmobile bridge, complete with professionally installed stone steps, allowing for an easy canoe put-in. Something to keep in mind for a future catastrophe, er outing. The field on the east side of the creek is routinely mowed to maintain turkey habitat, thanks to contributions from the State of VT, a wild turkey fund and some other org's. It can be a little soggy in the field so I decided to test for hostile critters and tossed an abandoned beer cooler into the deepest channel. It was immediately pulled under by something big with a spined back. Perhaps due to the injection-molded-meal, Mt. Tabor Tessy decided to leave us alone. After crossing said natural moat, the road swings to the north to a fork, one branch staying on the edge of the wetland and the other heading uphill to the northeast. According to Herb, the left fork continues on up to Wallingford. We took the right fork. It climbs evermore steeply, to where a secondary, much older skid trail takes off to the south (Dave and I built a small cairn at this intersection), and climbs slowly for another ¼ mile or so, to where it runs into a rock garden. We continued overland, above the rock outcrop, contouring upward to intersect a well-defined skid trail that climbs steeply, to a where I'd left some flagging. Then it's cross country for the final 80' ascending a steep, but tractable spur though a nice stand of hemlocks and then side-hilling to the north and the view point. The view is really nice, with Dorset Peak front and center and several bends of Otter Creek visible. After lunch we separated into two parties, one returning along the original route and the other, led by Dave, along a more tricky descent along the perimeter of the outcrop where I had previously discovered a really amazing stone wall, capped off with a large stone cantilever hanging about 12 feet off of the top. Group two decided to take a more direct route to the bottom, while group one took the road back. All hands were accounted for and we headed home in Margaret's really comfy van.



## Stockbridge Adventure | Saturday, January 6, 2024 by Herb Ogden

This was supposed to be a loop hike on Class 4 roads between the South Hill Cemetery and Fletcher Brook in



Stockbridge. When I checked out the trailhead a couple days before the hike, however, I found the road had thawed, heavy vehicles had driven on it, and then the road had frozen, so we would have been hiking on frozen ruts. Instead, our group of a half dozen drove — through a mini-dust storm! — to the plowed end of Davis Hill Road and hiked up it to the Barnard town line, where an unmaintained town highway leads north to a fallen-down camp with a still-standing outhouse, next to a farm cellar hole. In the fresh snow, we saw tracks of coyotes, deer, squirrels and a few others. Continuing north, we reached the remains of another farm, a small cellar hole to the west of the road and a good-sized barn foundation to the east. Neither of these farms shows on any map, so presumably

they were abandoned before the survey for the 1869 Beers Atlas. Unfortunately, just before we reached the second farm, we entered an area of recent log skidding. So much for avoiding frozen ruts; the skidder ruts were gigantic. Also, the leader was so intent on avoiding them that he missed a turn that would have taken us over a ridge to an area of Abenaki graves. We wound up in our own tracks sooner than expected. At least there was an alternative route toward the end of the hike that gave us far views over large fields.

## To Shoe or Not to Shoe | Cook Mountain, Ticonderoga, January 20, 2024 by Allison Henry

The Cook Mountain Preserve and its trails, a few minutes south of Ticonderoga, are part of the Lake George Land Conservancy. I had a few calls from interested parties the day before, with each caller mentioning the forecast of single-digit temperatures and asking, “Are you still going?” My response was “If anyone wants to go, I’m going!” One person changed their mind Saturday morning after waking up to their nostrils frozen shut so we ended up with a group of three including yours truly. At the trailhead we had the familiar discussion of “Snowshoes or Spikes?” One member of our party encouraged snowshoes to prevent post-holing and ruining the trail for other travelers, while I leaned toward spikes due to the rocky trail higher up. I took out my snowshoes (which admittedly haven’t been out of their bag since last winter) and found that both had broken heel straps. On went the microspikes instead, while I kicked myself (which was painful in spikes) and reminded myself of the importance of being prepared and respecting the trail.

This hike goes through a field and along a woods road for the first few tenths of a mile, then turns and goes straight up (about 700 feet of elevation gain in three quarters of a mile). After climbing into a saddle between Cook and a neighboring hill, the trail turns directly onto the ledges leading to the summit. John had gone on ahead rather than get chilled waiting for us slackers and his snowshoe prints were barely visible in the deepening snow. At the summit, there is a sign pointing to two lookout options -- Vermont and New York. We chose the New York option since we know what Vermont looks like, and that’s the way John’s footprints led. Larry and I followed the summit trail for another few tenths of a mile while I occasionally poked piles of snow with my pole to make sure it wasn’t John buried under there. We eventually encountered John seated on the stone bench at the end of the trail spur, wrapped in his down accessories and enjoying his lunch while snow slowly piled on his head. Over lunch we discussed the legend of Rogers Rock (did he really slide down that rock face? Or did he put on his snowshoes backwards and backtrack, as some say?). The hike down was much faster, and John and Larry engaged in a very detailed conversation about tree identification. I learned a few new tips such as counting the number of needles on an evergreen branch or the number of serrations on a broadleaf. I also learned a few more tree names, including the Pickle Barked Drama King and the Leftward Leaning Berniewood. We made it back to the trailhead without major incident. One of the highlights of this trip was on the way home, when Larry and I saw a bobcat pouncing in the snow on the median of route 4 near Castleton!

## An Old Friend | Rutland Country Club, Sunday, January 28, 2024 by Sue Thomas



The conditions for hiking hovered somewhere between unfortunate and downright awful when I did a trial run the day before Sunday’s hike – what snow remained on the golf course after the deluge of rain was gloppy and slippery, and my hopes that it might be somewhat better in the woods at Pine Hill were quickly dashed, the trails were more glop interspersed with large mud holes. Sigh. I really didn’t expect anyone to turn up, especially with another round of freezing rain looming in early afternoon, but, yay for the intrepid Killington Section, three arrived ready to face down the glop (hopefully, not literally!) and to our delight, Burdock joined us briefly, so great to see the little guy! At 17, he must surely be the section’s senior member when converted from dog years, and is indisputably its

most beloved. A bit gimpy these days but cheerful as always, he started out with us until Jerry got tired and Burdock had to take him home. The rest of us crossed over a bridge and slogged up to the high point, where we lamented the cloud-obscured view which on a clear day is well worth the climb, then traversed the ridge. Knowing what we do about trail maintenance, we decided to skip the muddy Pine Hill trails so as not to damage them, instead making two circuits around the course with varied routes, crossing over bridges and through woods, with great conversation, and made it home before the storm...and more importantly for the guys, in time for the football game!



*Seamus, dressed for the tropical weather, Larry and Sue.*

# Backtracking

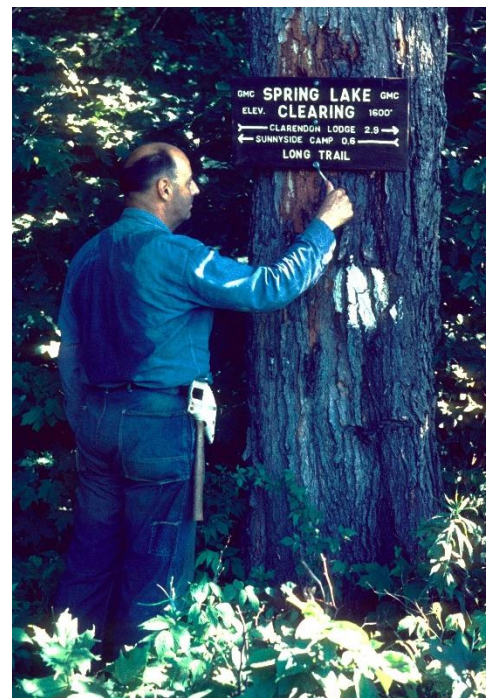
## Signs of the Times

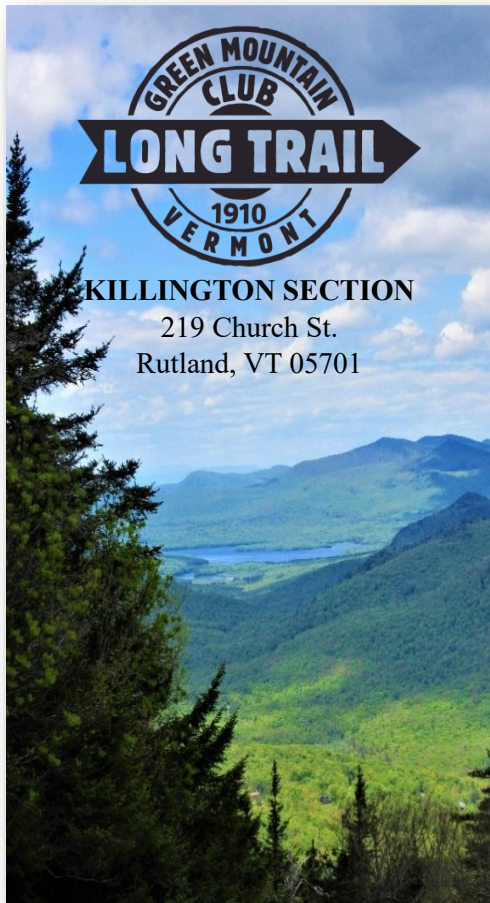


by Herb Ogden, Jr.

In 1964, I became Long Trail End to Ender number 156. My hiking partner and I planned to start giving back the next year by doing trail work, but he wound up having to get a regular job instead. So my father, Herbert G. Ogden, decided he'd join me instead. We asked the Killington Section's Secretary, W. Churchill Scott, what trails most needed work. He identified the Juggernaut Trail, which used to ascend to Cooper Lodge from W. Bridgewater along Falls Brook. It was poorly marked, it was grown-in, and it had little or no signage. Once we cleared it and blazed it, we hand-routed signs for the top and the bottom. Next we tackled the Bucklin Trail. It was barely marked and had no sign at the top, so we mistakenly hiked the old carriage road by mistake. In 1965, the old road was used at least as much as the trail. Once we found the actual trail, we cleared it, blazed it, routed signs for the top and bottom, and installed small footbridges at the Brewers Brook crossings. They were made of old hay wagon girders and lasted a couple seasons before disappearing downstream. Around the fall of 1965, it occurred to my father that an electric router would let him make signs much faster, and he wound up making signs for the entire Killington Section and then for the old New York Section, which maintained the Monroe Skyline part of the LT.

*Herb Ogden, Sr. installing one of his creations.*





**Your invitation to join  
Killington Section, Green Mountain Club**

The Killington Section, based in Rutland, VT, is a chapter of the statewide Green Mountain Club. Membership in the Section includes membership in the Club. Members receive a membership card, the Club quarterly *Long Trail News*, and the Section quarterly *Smoke & Blazes* including a schedule of outings, trail work parties and social events. Members also receive reduced rates on items from the Club store and at most overnight sites served by caretakers. Membership dues help to maintain trails and shelters in the Killington Section (Route 140 to Route 4) and the Long Trail system throughout Vermont.

**ANNUAL DUES:**

- Individual.....\$45
- Family.....\$60
- Senior/Student/Friend.....\$25

Contact us for information on life memberships and categories for giving at a higher level.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Kirk Trails and Shelters fund supporting the Killington Section's maintenance and preservation of trails and shelters.

I would like information on volunteering for:

trail work,  shelter work,  sign making,  publications,  leading outings,  publicity,  education,  tech support

Make check payable to "GMC" and mail with this application to:  
Green Mountain Club, 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677



