

# Smoke & Blazes

Volume 78, Number 1

Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

Spring 2025

## A Good Day's Work



Our 2024 "Put the Trail to Bed" work day in November drew a sizeable crew, including this hardy bunch who tackled the Bucklin Trail. The Killington Section has a long history of maintaining the Long/Appalachian Trail -- see "Backtracking" on page 7 for some photos from years past, and find the dates of the spring work parties on the hike schedule.



**KILLINGTON SECTION**



*Spring 2025*

**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 2025:*

Bill Cooke  
Dave Coppock  
Herb Ogden

*Term expires 2026:*

Wayne Krevetski\*  
Melissa Reichert\*  
Allison Henry

*Term expires 2027:*

Sheamus Fagan  
Amy Peacock\*  
Maura Wildman\*

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

**Contact us:**

KillingtonSection@greenmountainclub.org

# Trail Mix

After several years of hard work and a great deal of patience, the **History Committee** reports that the historical marker to be placed at the location of the old Long Trail Lodge at the top of Sherburne Pass is ready to be installed! Now we just have to wait for the ground to thaw, and plans are in the works for a dedication ceremony at the site in the spring.



The Killington Section mourns the loss of our most dedicated member, **Burdock**, who left us in December at the incredible age of 18. Our little buddy never met a hiker he didn't like, or a chipmunk he didn't want to chase. His eternally cheerful presence on Section hikes for most of those years was a lift to the spirit, and he will be missed.

The GMC is accepting applications for several paid positions for the summer/fall season. They are particularly looking for folks with some trail crew experience to serve in leadership roles. Live and work on the LT as a backcountry caretaker, ridgerunner, volunteer crew leader or trail crew technician. Or, spend a week on a volunteer crew, no experience necessary. This year they will also be hiring a land stewardship coordinator and a visitor center specialist. More information and applications can be found at [greenmountainclub.org](http://greenmountainclub.org).

The new **Visitor Center** at GMC headquarters in Waterbury is now open, and you are warmly invited to stop in for hiking advice from the knowledgeable staff, or to check out the new retail space and enjoy mountain views from the club room. It will be open Wed. – Fri. 10-2, and select Saturdays 10-3.

The 29<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Long Trail Guide** will be coming out in the spring, and can be preordered now at [www.store.greenmountainclub.org](http://www.store.greenmountainclub.org).

**Mud season** will be upon us soon, and the GMC reminds hikers that some trails will be closed to protect them from erosion. **Respect trail closures** and always have an alternate plan. **Avoid muddy trails**, especially above 2500', and **don't step around mud** as it tramples vegetation and widens the trail – walk through the mud if you can't turn back. **Hike on bike paths, mountain roads and other durable surfaces** – check out great alternative hiking destinations on the GMC website. And **don't underestimate the weather**, there may still be snow and ice.

## **Killington Section**

# **Annual Meeting**

**Saturday, March 29, 1:00 p.m.**

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



**Bring a dish to share for a potluck lunch at 1 p.m., followed by a short business meeting and election of officers**

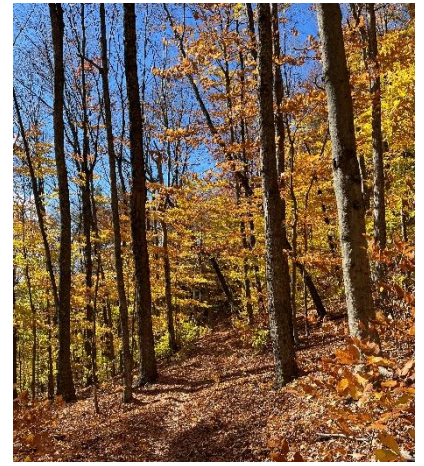


# Outing Reports

## **Beautiful Fall | Slate Valley Trails, Poultney,**

**October 26, 2024 by Diane Bargiel**

Slate Valley Trails has a nice parking lot right at the entrance to Lake St. Catherine Country Club, and the trail head for the Dogleg Trail is just behind the golf cart shed at the top of the driveway. From there, we took Grove's Way up to Maple all the way to the fabulous view at the top with two benches to sit and relax while looking out over Lake St. Catherine. We came down some other trails, of which there are several choices that are beautifully carved out of the hills, winding up on the Connector Trail and back over to Grove's Way, which meant that our total was about 5 miles for our efforts.



## **On the Job | Old Job Trail to Griffith Lake, Mount Tabor, November 9, 2024 by Allison Henry**

This hike has been rescheduled at least once, maybe twice, due to road closures (thank you to our beavers, "nature's engineers") and rain. The trailhead for this particular route is a rather long drive up into the Green Mountain National Forest, at the end of 2.5 mile-long USFS 30 which is about 3 miles past the LT/AT trailhead on USFS 10 for Little Rock Pond. USFS 10 is gated for the winter season and I didn't want any travel complications. Being a good hike leader I drove up the weekend before to scope out the road and our starting point. The day of the hike was chilly but very sunny and I was so glad to finally have a good day for this adventure. Up until the day before the hike I had only one dedicated participant, but by the morning of the hike a few more had signed up and we had a pack of eight enthusiastic hikers. After



a warmer than average fall, this felt like the first truly cold day of the season and we marveled at the experience of once again bundling up in hats and scarves, with blaze orange accoutrements due to hunting (but not shotgun) season. Our route was from the Old Job Trailhead, which is about two miles from the northern junction of the Old Job Trail and the AT/LT, south to Griffith Lake. The trailhead for this trip is a nice dead-end spot with plenty of parking and some primitive campsites along Lake Brook. The trail south to Griffith Lake follows Lake Brook much of the way, and while it's not a steep climb there was plenty of uphill. As we got closer to the lake, we reached a junction with some snowmobile trails. Much work was being done in

the area, including some clearing, grading, and replacement of a huge bridge, resulting in several acres of mud along our route. Fortunately, we only lost one whole person and one additional boot. When we finally reached Griffith Lake, most of our group headed immediately to the visible northwest end of the lake. I helpfully suggested that we go along the LT/AT to the east side of the lake near the tenting area where there'd be room to sit down for our lunch break. We traveled the "Green Mountain Expressway" which is several tenths of a mile of bog bridging through a swampy area along the lakeshore to our lunch spot. The lunch spot turned out to be cold and shady which resulted in a mad scramble to get a seat on the one sunny rock. Only one person fell in the lake, but at least they were able to wash off the mud from the earlier part of the trip. On our return trip we went back the way we came, and it was a pleasant, downhill, and sunny trek out. When we reached the muddy patch we retrieved the hiker and the single boot we'd left behind and returned to the trailhead intact. Back at the parking lot, an exceptionally hardy member of our party decided to stay in the woods and explore the trail in the other direction. This was very impressive as I was too tired to even change out of my boots before getting in the car.





## Looking at Llamas | Middletown Springs Road Walk by Diane Bargiel

We decided to go next door to Middletown Springs to hike Coy Hill Rd. instead of walking one of our East Poultney dirt roads, and it did not disappoint. The wide road gave us lots of room to chat, with sunshine and views of farm fields, meadows, woods and, at times, the varied shapes of our mountain peaks. Climbing up is always a workout, giving permission for eating goodies because of the burnt calories, don't cha know. Instead of walking the whole horseshoe that is Coy Hill Rd., and then connecting back to the cars at the bottom via flat Buxton Rd., we walked up the west side and then turned around after stopping to say hello to the llamas on their historic farm at the top. We took a side road walk on our return trip up until it becomes private land. It was just what the doctor ordered for a hunting season hike.



## A Chill in the Air | Slate Valley Trails, Poultney, December 14, 2024 by Diane Bargiel



The day was a bit nippy, so some folks stayed home, but Larry, John, & I had a grand time tooling around the hills up behind Lake St. Catherine Country Club. We had seen some hunters (yes...we had some orange on to be safe), so we worked to not disturb them and avoided the trails near them, which guided us to climb a ridge we hadn't done before and enjoy a sunny day with a beautiful view. With the leaves down, we caught a few viewpoints we wouldn't normally have seen, which is always one of the treats of this time of the year. The feel of the temperature was much nicer in the woods than out of the woods, so we didn't have any problems from that end, even when we stopped for a snack. All-in-all, we did about 5 ½ miles with ups and downs and different woodlands.

## Snowy Stone Sleuthing | Stockbridge, January 4, 2025 by Herb Ogden

Now try saying the title of this article three times, fast. I didn't ask anyone on the hike to do that. They had enough to cope with, trudging a couple miles up old wood roads with about 2-4" of snow and 1100' elevation gain, then bushwhacking along a side hill to inspect the stone mysteries, and finally descending other old roads to finish a loop hike. This was accomplished by four hardy folks in their 70s, one in her 60s, one in his 20s, and a small dog. The youngest (except for the dog) hiker deserves two service medals: One is for fetching two hikers who stayed near the first stone structure, wrongly thinking I intended to return that way. The other is for carrying the dog about half a mile down a wood road with somewhat treacherous footing after his paws turned into large balls of snow and ice. The dog had done fine for most of the hike, but then encountered some water that was hard to avoid, and very frosty paws resulted.

Most of us reached a half dozen laid-up piles of stone, often with one or two quartz rocks worked in. Since discovering the piles by chance some 25 years ago, I have found about fifty of various sizes. Some are as much as 6' high on the downhill side, 9' wide, and 18' long, all laid up quite carefully. They lie in a sidehill area about half a mile long and about 700' wide. At one edge is a cellar hole 23 x 30 x 1-3' deep, with a probable 24 x 15' wing, on a terrace. Nearby are foundations of what probably were outbuildings. The earliest detailed map of the area, the Beers Atlas of Windsor County (1869), shows no buildings there, so I assume whatever once stood there was gone by 1869. The whole area has been logged more than once, but most of it appears to have been too rocky and steep to be arable.

What the heck are these things? GMC member Dick Andrews inspected them and thinks they are Abenaki graves, based on information from a part Abenaki man who once served on the Andover Cemetery Commission with him, caring for a cemetery that he said included some Abenaki graves. But Don Stevens, Chief of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation, as well as a professional anthropologist from Massachusetts, say the Abenaki generally did not place stones over graves, except perhaps a few to deter animals from digging. They also say the graves were usually near areas

where the Abenaki wintered, and this area, at elevations ranging from 1500 to 1800', would not have been one of them. I have researched the issue and have found nothing saying the Abenaki built stone piles over their dead. Just possibly, after contact with Europeans, some Abenaki may have built grave piles. But why would there be around fifty spread over a remote area about half a mile long? Chief

Stevens has not seen the piles, but he wonders whether they might have been built as workbenches to hold ash tree trunks while the Abenaki stripped the inner bark, which they used to make baskets. The trouble with this theory is that many of the piles are not at a comfortable height, are much longer or broader than necessary for a workbench, and doubtless took much more time to build than if made of wood. Others have speculated that the piles are landings from which logs could be rolled down onto sleds or wagons. But several of them are higher than all the surrounding ground, so logs could not have been rolled onto them. Besides, why go the fuss of building many stone landings when it would have been easy to make them out of logs? Then there's the Mad Uncle Theory: the farmer who lived up there had a nutty uncle who hung around making a nuisance of himself, so the farmer told him to go pile stones.



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Pondering all this, we followed an old road that eventually led to the very well preserved cellar hole of what the 1869 atlas shows as the house of G. W. Bradstreet. The U. S. G. S. quadrangle maps between 1924 and 1957 also show a house at that location. The 1980 map no longer does. It's hard to believe anyone lived there even as late as 1924, because the old road is very steep. But stone walls and the foundation of a big barn show a sizeable farm was once up there.

## **Murray's Ridge | Killington, January 18, 2025 by Larry Walter**

The weather report was calling for a mix of rain and snow in the valley, so I was a little surprised when I got three calls to brave the perils of a Larry-led hike. John, plus Chuck and Gail were all game. We met at the Route 4 parking lot and snowshoed up a pretty well-trodden track up to Willard Gap. The snow was around a foot deep but still pretty light. I opted to take my previous short cut, instead, wrapping around toward Tucker Johnson Shelter a couple hundred feet from Maine Junction (Willard Gap) and then heading cross-country, off to the west. As far as I know, this does not have an official name, so Dave C. and I have taken to calling it Murray's Ridge, after Murray McGrath of The Inn at Long Trail fame. He's probably been up there more than most. After about 15 minutes of climbing, we crossed a skier's track from a couple weeks back. He (she?) had established a nice route, so



we decided to follow the same. Winter is a great time to climb this ridge (easily visible from the parking lot) since you catch several filtered views of Pico and other parts to the south. After about an hour of climbing we peaked out where John, nursing a sore toe, decided to turn back. Chuck and Gail and I continued up the ski track to where our skier had bailed off the south side through a shallow draw. It was scary just to look at those carved turns. Someone is a really good backcountry skier. Previously, I had eaten lunch at the western end of the ridge, but since we were only looking at 11 a.m., decided to turn northeasterly and descend a wide spur in the direction of Tucker Johnson Shelter. It's pretty open in this section, with natural glades and some nice views off to the north. About an hour later, we dumped out at the shelter and had lunch there. Not a sign of anyone visiting, except me. Everyone hiking in from Maine Junction had opted to stop at the nasty little rock/drop, just to the south of the shelter. I'm looking forward to getting help from the Main Club next summer (?) to realign and/or fix this nasty little ditch-fest section into something a lot easier to hike and maintain.

Keegan's talking about getting a small excavator in there to make things easier. That will be fun to watch. He, of course, knows how to operate one. Pretty amazing bloke. We took the Not-A-Trail out to the housing development and walked out through the second homes. It's always fun dancing across Route 4 amid 70 mph Jersey-plated, ski-adorned Audis. Yee Ha.



## You Otter've Been There | Cadwell Loop, Pittsford, January 25, 2025 by Sue Thomas

The thermometer said “no, no, no,” but the sunshine said “yes, yes, yes,” and there was just enough snow on the ground for a great hike along Otter Creek’s twists and turns. The previous day’s high winds had happily died down, so we wended



our way along the banks without fear of being swept into the drink, and enjoyed a leisurely lunch at a bench overlooking the water, where a muskrat popped its head up to marvel at the sight, then quickly and wisely disappeared. Nearby we spotted a slide in the snow where an otter had tobogganed on its belly down the creek bank. I could tell Larry was itching to give it a try himself, but not wanting to fish him back out of the water, we distracted him with shiny objects and treats, and went on our way. We puzzled over many other tracks in the snow – mice, voles, foxes and bunnies going about their various errands and chores. No doubt they were puzzled as well to see John and Sunghee waltz across the field-turned-ballroom. Not an easy feat in parkas and snow boots! On the last stretch of trail we surprised two varmints

we assume were minks on the frozen creek, one immediately dove through a hole in the ice while the other scampered madly along the surface before disappearing around a bend – the high point of our day, but probably not of the mink’s.

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## Board of Directors Report | December 14, 2024 – submitted by KS rep. Bruce Peacock

Mike Debonis highlighted the many projects and actions that have made 2024 a very productive year for the GMC. Among them:

- Middlebury College granted GMC a trail right of way that permanently protects 1.5 miles of the Long Trail across the Snow Bowl in Hancock, something the club has been working on for years.
- Replacement of the last pit privy
- Completion of the 3-year rehabilitation of the Burrows Trail
- Official Opening of the Bromley Observation Tower in September.
- Completion of the Rothberg-Birdwhistell Visitor Center. Assuming the certificate of occupancy is received this month, the visitor center, education center, historical archive, staff offices and the base of operations for the field programs will all move in. The grand opening celebration will probably be held in June.

Brett Hodgdon of Davis & Hodgdon presented the audit report for the fiscal year ending in April, which resulted in an unmodified opinion.

Keegan Tierney gave a presentation on accessible trails. The club has no trails that meet the Americans with Disability Act and the cost to convert trails where terrain allows is \$700,000 per mile. There are people who use adaptive equipment to utilize some parts of the trail network, however, and the club will look for ways to increase these opportunities following the Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines as funding allows. [It was later pointed out that the boardwalk at Thundering Brook Falls is in compliance.]

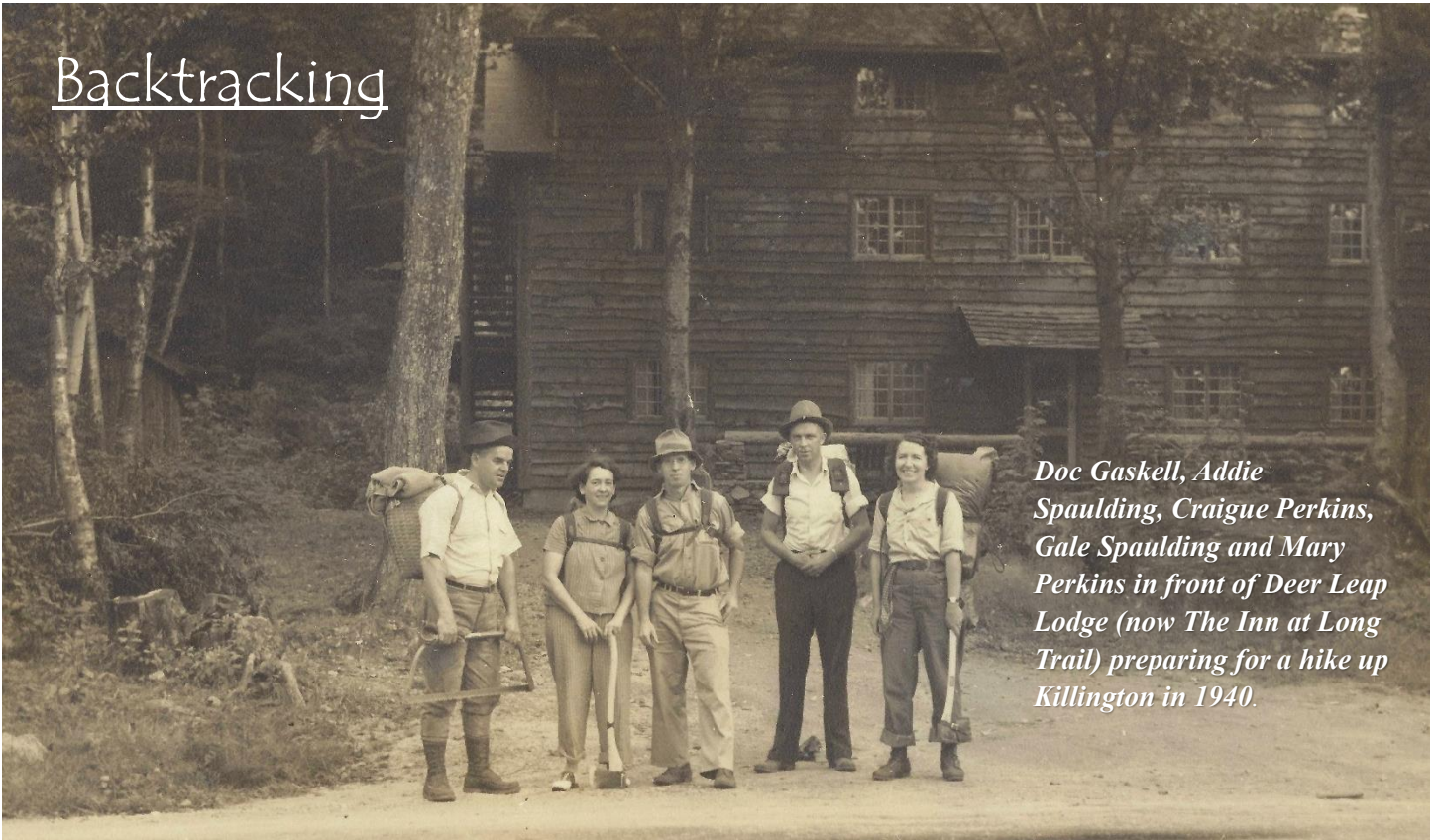
Mollie Flanagan reported GMC was awarded a \$250,000 grant from an anonymous foundation to support the implementation of the Strategic Conservation Plan over the next 3 years. The grant requires a match by the GMC of \$162,000.

A surprising second bequest from the Wissman Estate totaling \$966,000 was received. The Board voted to use \$305,000 for staff-suggested projects, which included funding for the Northern Trail work, accessibility improvement to the Wheeler Pond Camps, and funding for Strategic Conservation Plan implementation. \$564,400 was directed to the endowment.

The GMC Annual Meeting will be held at the new Visitor Center on June 14.



# Backtracking



*Doc Gaskell, Addie Spaulding, Craigie Perkins, Gale Spaulding and Mary Perkins in front of Deer Leap Lodge (now The Inn at Long Trail) preparing for a hike up Killington in 1940.*

## Off to work we go...

The Killington Section maintains 24 miles of the Long Trail, from Rte. 140 in Wallingford to Maine Junction in Killington, as well as six miles of side trails and seven shelters. We rally the troops in the spring to ready the trail for the busy hiking season, and again in the fall, to “put the trail to bed.”

Come lend a hand on Saturday, May 3 as we tackle the lower elevation portions of the trail – see the hike schedule for details.



*Replacing the roof on Cooper Lodge inside a cloud in the early 1980s.*



*Herb Ogden Jr. and Sr. hauling the 2-seater outhouse to Gov. Clement Shelter in 1966 on the back of their VW pickup truck.*

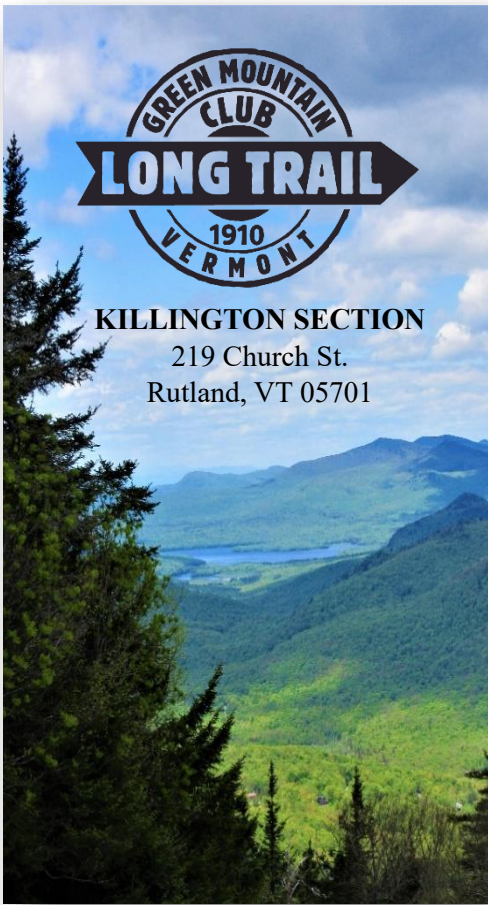


*An international crew from Volunteers For Peace spent several summers doing trail work on the Killington Section in the mid-1990s. Among other projects, they built the bridge south of the Rt. 4 parking lot.*



*Barry and Cindy check the mileage on the Bucklin Trail in 2015 after Tropical Storm Irene caused heavy damage.*





**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



