

Smoke & Blazes

Volume 78, Number 2

Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

Summer 2025

The View From Above



John and Lisa enjoy the panoramic view from the summit of Mt. Antone at Merck Forest and Farmland Center in Rupert, on a Killington Section hike up the Masters Trail in March. See Larry's report on page 5.



KILLINGTON SECTION



Summer 2025

Killington Section Officers

Herb Ogden, *President*
Allison Henry, *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 2026:
Wayne Krevetski*
Melissa Reichert*
Allison Henry

Term expires 2027:
Sheamus Fagan
Amy Peacock*
Maura Wildman*

Term expires 2028
Dave Coppock*
Herb Ogden*
Larry Walter

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

Contact us:

KillingtonSection@greenmountainclub.org

From the President

Thank you to everyone who attended our annual meeting in March. The discussion of GMC issues was interesting and instructive and the potluck was unusually good. We're off to a good start in the 2025 hiking season, and soon we'll have the dedication of the state historic marker at Sherburne Pass telling about the Long Trail Lodge and the Long Trail.

Thanks in particular to Wayne Krevetski for serving our section as President for the last five years. In the beginning, some innovation was necessary to hold meetings, but the Section continued to function well despite the pandemic. I'm glad Wayne will continue to represent us on the Trail Management Committee and will remind the GMC that Cooper Lodge still poses a problem.

This seems to be my third time as Section President. I know I was from 1996 to 2002 and from 2018 to 2020. This time should be easier than the last, since Cathy and I moved back to Rutland in March after nearly 21 years in Mount Tabor. I miss living surrounded by the Green Mt. National Forest and a quarter mile from the Lake Trail, but I'm glad to be closer to where we leave for outings and where we meet.

Herb Ogden

Trail Mix

The **Clarendon Gorge bridge** has been closed due to a failed cable. This will be a major disruption for AT/LT hikers and a detour route and shuttles are being investigated. Repair is scheduled for late May, check the GMC website for updates.

Larry Walter has removed the **log book box** from its former home on Center Street and given it a facelift. It now resides on the back wall of Engineering Services of Vermont at 9 Washington St., just south of our customary meeting place. Hike leaders should ask participants to sign in at the beginning of each outing. Thanks to Larry, and to the business owners for giving us the space.

The **2025 GMC Annual Meeting** will be held at the Waterbury Center headquarters on Saturday, June 14. It's a great chance to meet folks from other sections, hear about the club's projects, take in a hike, and this year, check out the newly opened Visitor Center. See your Long Trail News or greenmountainclub.org/annual-meeting for details and registration.

The Killington Section **upper elevation work day** is coming up on June 7, come lend a hand as we ready the trail for the summer hiking season. All levels of participation are welcome, from ferrying volunteers to trailheads to clipping brush and sawing blowdowns. Tools are provided, see the hike schedule for info.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Dept. has closed a number of hiking trails to protect peregrine falcon nesting sites, including: **Rattlesnake Cliff**, Salisbury; **Snake Mountain**; Addison, and **Mt. Horrid** north of Brandon Gap. Trails reopen Aug. 1. For a complete list see the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website.

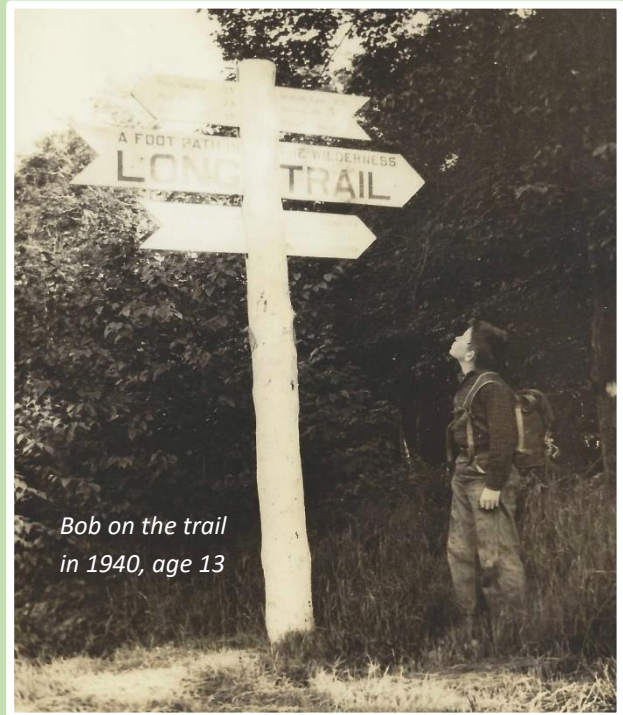
The Killington Section mourns the loss of retired Green Mountain National Forest archaeologist **Dave Lacy**, who passed away in March. Dave conducted assessments for shelter and relocation projects along the LT/AT, and led the summer archaeology camp for kids exploring Aldrichville near Little Rock Pond. His enthusiasm for historic preservation and eagerness to share his knowledge will be greatly missed.

Remembering Bob Perkins

Bob was born into the Green Mountain Club in 1927, the son of avid Killington Section members Craigue and Mary Perkins. He was a Long Trail end-to-ender, and though he spent most of his adult life away from Vermont working as an engineer, he continued to hike, completing the John Muir Trail while raising his family in California.

On retirement, he and Thelma returned to Rutland, where he enthusiastically joined in on club hikes and work parties, served on the board of directors, and for many years was the editor of *Smoke & Blazes*, which was fitting, as the newsletter was started in 1948 by his parents and aunt. He painstakingly compiled and preserved a complete set from vol. 1 through the 2000s, which are archived and available at the Rutland Historical Society, along with his parents' photo albums.

Bob took up running late in life, competing in 5k races into his 90s, and passed away in March at just short of 98.



*Bob on the trail
in 1940, age 13*

Killington Section Annual Meeting | March 29, 2025

Wayne called the meeting to order after a delicious potluck meal. Treasurer **Maura Wildman** was first up, reporting increases in the Section accounts, with our biggest expense being *Smoke & Blazes*. Trails & Shelters co-chairs **Larry Walter** and **Dave Coppock** were up next, and we were happy to hear of positive feedback from thru-hikers, who consistently comment that the K-Section is one of the best-maintained on the trail. Discussion followed on the pros and cons of acquiring a parcel of land near the Canty Trail, which would be useful to expand the limited parking. The Trust for Public Land could buy and hold the property until GMNF funds are available – Mollie Flannigan at GMC headquarters will keep us informed. Projects on the docket for our spring work days include six bog bridges, two sills, floorboard replacement at Minerva Hinchey, and the inevitable winter blowdowns. Outings chair **Sue Thomas** reported that our hike schedule is filling, but we do need more hike leaders. The GMC's new volunteer code of conduct should be reviewed by hike leaders. As **Smoke & Blazes** editor, she requested the hike leaders get reports and schedule info in early.

KS Historian **Amy Peacock** relayed the exciting news that the historical marker for the Long Trail Lodge site is ready and being stored in Barre til the ground thaws enough for installation. Once in place, we will host an unveiling. As to relocating the Sherburne Pass Trail through the site, we will need Killington's approval and increased funding for site cleanup. KS Representative to the Main Club **Bruce Peacock** summarized the March 15 board meeting. *See his report on page 7.* **Melissa Reichert** then reported on the Land Conservation Strategic Planning Working Group. With the addition of a grant-funded staff position more time will be devoted to protection of the last four miles of Long Trail, as well as shelters, side trails and access points. **Wayne Krevetski** covered the Trail Management Committee, where there is great concern about funding from State and Federal partners, and contingency plans are needed. Cooper Lodge is on the back burner (again!). A new system for communicating with ridgerunners is in the works, and several trail relocations are planned.



Elections were last on the agenda, with **Larry Walter** replacing Bill Cooke on the Board of Directors, **Herb Ogden** taking over as President and **Allison Henry** moving to Vice-President. **Melissa Reichert** and **Maura Wildman** will continue as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

Outgoing President Wayne Krevetski turned over the reins to Herb Ogden.

Outing Reports

Backcountry Adventure | Killington, February 8, 2025 by Dave Coppock

Four hearty skiers showed up at the meeting place for this advanced backcountry ski tour. We caravanned up to the White Road parking lot, parked cars, and donned our ski boots. Then we hiked about 3/10th of a mile on the road to reach the start of the ski trip. With climbing skins attached to our skis, we ascended an old logging road that has been maintained for skiing. It simplifies the trip up to the gorgeous birch glades above 2700' in elevation. Conditions were superb. A continuous series of snow storms combined with consistently cold weather had kept backcountry skiing alive almost all winter. We skinned upwards on a generous pillow of dense snow. Once across the brook at 2700' elevation, we started breaking trail up through the glades where the deep, thick snowpack reduced our pace. But the woods were stunningly beautiful and we didn't mind the slog up to the large clearing at the top of "Joel's Bowl." We took in the serenity of the setting and then doffed the skins for the ride down. The wind-packed snow made turning difficult. Some exciting ski gymnastics and tumbles resulted from this descent. I will withhold the names of those who flailed. But before long came the piece de resistance in the form of "The White Road," a 2.5-mile easy cruise back down to Wheelerville Road. We scooted along smartly while enjoying the distant view of the Taconic Range through the trees. At around 2:30, we reached the parking lot and went our separate ways.

A Perfect Winter Day | Plymbury Loop, Shrewsbury, February 22, 2025 by Sue Thomas

A bluebird sky, slightly less-frigid temperatures and a lot of sparkly new snow – it was winter at its best, and coming after a week of nose-numbing weather and daily shoveling it was more than welcome. We headed up one side of a loop on a well-packed snowmobile trail which follows an old road through lovely woods, with occasional views of snow-covered Shrewsbury Peak and Killington. Tracks of squirrels, grouse, snowshoe hare, and a fox intent on lurching on same, got us thinking along the same lines, but seating options were few. Not realizing how deep Shrewsbury's snow can be, John ventured off the trail to explore a log that looked promising, and immediately sank out of sight, we were only able to locate him by his hat. Around that time



reinforcements arrived in the person of Jerry, who schussed up behind us on his skis and joined us for the remainder of the hike. This was handy, as had John not fought his way to the surface we would still have adhered to the Killington Section policy of returning from all hikes with the same number we started with. (We have never been sticklers about whether they were exactly the *same* ones.)

Snowshoeing on the Psychopath | Grizzle Ocean, March 15, 2025 by Allison Henry

The Pharaoh Lake Wilderness area, west of Ticonderoga, NY, is one of my go-to areas for K section hikes. It offers a ton of hike options, with miles of well-marked trails and it's an easy drive from Rutland. This hike was scheduled for early February but we ended up cancelling due to a last-minute unpredicted freak snowstorm and very cold temperatures. On the new hike date, we were having a heat wave with temperatures predicted to be above 70. Our contingent of four people from Rutland met up with three more hikers at a convenience store not far from the trailhead, and then we caravanned to the trailhead inside Putnam Pond Campground. It had been close to 60 degrees at our rendezvous point and there was no snow in town and so we wondered whether we'd even encounter any snow. On the final mile or two of the



drive to the campground the snow began magically appearing all around us. In the woods at the trailhead, the snow was at least two feet deep and somewhat packed down on the trail surface but soft and wet and getting softer and wetter. We put on our snowshoes but many of us opted out of hats and mittens as it really was warm a few feet above the ground. Larry wore a beach hat because the weather was nearly tropical seven feet above the snow where his head is located. We set off for Grizzle Ocean, a nice out-and-back to a pond and lean-to. Partway through the hike, things were going so well that we considered changing our itinerary to a trek around Putnam Pond instead, but after a wrong turn to a dead end we decided to stick with our original plan. It was windy at the Grizzle Ocean pond but the sun was warm and most of us opted to sit on the edge of the still-frozen pond for lunch. On our hike back out, the conversation somehow turned to the difference between a sociopath and a psychopath and most of us had very scientific opinions on this matter. Then someone asked about the difference between a sociopath, psychopath, and hiking path. We gave the matter some thought and determined that a sociopath and psychopath can lack empathy or can be manipulative, but a hiking path just lies there and waits to be trampled on. As we approached the trailhead we marveled at how much of the snow had melted in the several hours since we'd set out. With the very warm air, snow, and pretty woods it really was a glorious day.

Old Masters | KGMC Masters Trail to Antone, Merck Forest, March 22, 2025 by Larry Walter

I was not expecting any calls on this one, since the weather didn't look so great, but Lisa P. called the night before, and then John D. the following morning. Meeting people at prearranged places always seems to get messed up, and this was no exception. After collecting Lisa in West Rupert, I backtracked, found John, and, not knowing how bad the road was going to be, we piled into Lisa's AWD Subaru to complete the route up the "Hollow" to the trailhead parking lot. There's a huge sap collector there that was making industrious sounds and puffing out some steam. The lines running into this place are immense. I can't imagine how many trees are tapped. I was surprised that we ran into several blowdowns while chugging up all 24 switchbacks to the first summit. There was one fellow with his puppy, but they only got about 15 minutes up and then came back down. I cleared out enough to make things easier for a hiker, but it'll take some more attention before the Merck guys get a vehicle down or up it. This trail is a nice one to do in the winter, with leaves off, and increasingly open views to the south, including Equinox near the first summit. After you hit the top of the ridge, you do a short descent to the main trail junction and a short-steep ascent to the top of Antone. The Merck crew installed a new bench at the top, but that's not the main view point. Another 5 minutes down the hill to the north brings you to the big payoff where there's a nice oak (?) to lean on and the remains of the old bench. Plenty of places to sit and eat lunch. Met three other groups while there, one, a group of guys making their 18th annual Merck pilgrimage and another all-woman group which had rented the Ridge cabin. Their leader was 60 years old on that day. Group number three was pretty snooty, so we left them alone. After some photos we decided to backtrack to the car, rather than making any you-walk-I'll-drive-around plans. I drove back up to the Merck visitor center at the end of the day and visited Ellie the Merck Cat. She's somewhere around 15 now and content to just hang out by the stove.

Almost Spring | Watkins Hill Road, April 13, 2025 by Diane Bargiel

The sun didn't quite bless us, but at least we weren't rained on like we would have been had we gone on our original date of Saturday. We did most of Watkins Hill Rd. and I probably should have let us go the full route, as I had forgotten that folks either hadn't been on that road before, or it had been a while. For some, it would have been good to go to the "T." Sorry about that, folks. Come another time on a sunny day when the wildflowers have popped up. There are spots of Watkins Hill Rd. that bloom with fabulous wild-flowers such as trillium, hepatica, bloodroot, dutchman's britches, trout lily, ramp, spring beauty, cohosh, and some tiny white flowers, but it's just a little too early for the big reveal. However, Sue's sharp eyes actually spotted some hepatica for us, which was cool. The patches of hemlock forest are always lovely, and the stream that runs near the road and the gorge that it creates had a very healthy amount of water, so that was cool. The goats and the horse were out at the farm, but the cows weren't in the upper pasture yet. It's too wet there these days. Unfortunately, some numbnut uses *(continued p.6)*



spots to dump his beer cans and trash and this time, he treated us to a couple of dead pigs, which added a lovely aroma to a spot. They are in a particularly steep section so even the animals would have a bit of a tough time to safely get at them. The coy dogs are probably cursing out the guy. The spot in the photo where we ate a snack was far from the pigs. It has some nice boulders along the creek to sit on. All of that reinforcement was put in after Tropical Storm Irene.

Hopping up the Trail | Silver Lake, Leicester, Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025 by Sue Thomas

Saturday's dismal weather convinced us to postpone, and we sure were grateful – no Easter egg could have been a brighter blue than the sky on Sunday. It was a chilly morning, so we set off up the Silver Lake Trail with our Easter bonnets clamped on tightly. It's a hop, skip and a jump to the Falls of Lana, but steep enough to warm our pink ears and noses quickly. After admiring the falls, our next stop was the overlook above the penstock, where trailing arbutus bloomed. Snow was still visible on the distant Adirondack High Peaks, and lake Dunmore below us reflected the Easter egg sky. Up at Silver Lake we parked our fluffy tails on the remains of the old hotel's retaining wall by the shore to nibble our lunches, entertained by a pair of loons. All too soon it was time to hop on down the trail, but we made a detour to inspect the water tower below the lake, and another to read an inscription on the rock face down the road a piece – “*All I am and all I ever hope to be I owe to my mother.*” What a perfect way to spend Easter – the sky was blue, the sun warm, and our wildlife sightings included two loons, a hawk, a downy woodpecker, and I could swear I caught just a quick glimpse of a large white rabbit carrying a basket...



Board of Directors Report | March 15, 2025 submitted by KS rep. Bruce Peacock

Construction of the new visitor center in Waterbury has been completed and it is beautiful. It features large gathering areas, a retail space and office space for about half the staff. If you attend the annual meeting on June 14 you will get a chance to see it. I believe they have intentions of adding more interpretive displays in the coming months. When Mike Debonis gave us a tour he mentioned the rustic furniture in one of the meeting spaces they call the Club Room was modeled after the Long Trail Lodge. The office space is in the basement and is spartan but efficient, and no longer requires mopping up of leakage through the foundation every time a heavy rain raises the water table. The final cost was \$1.57 million, an increase from \$1.1 million due to a delayed start and construction material expense increases. Funds from the Wissman estate were used to cover the difference.

Nancy McClellan will be stepping down as GMC president at the annual meeting. Don Taylor, the current vice president, has been nominated to succeed her and Bob Paquin has been nominated to be the new vice president.

The 2025 fiscal year ending April 30 has been fairly tight and required letting go two mid-level managers to finish on or slightly below budget. The 2026 budget reflects a 14% increase; about one third in personnel costs, the rest for contractors for specific projects. The budget expects a 10% increase in direct giving and release of restricted funds to balance. There was considerable concern by the treasurer and staff about the future of our federal funding. GMC currently budgets \$500,000 directly through grants and agreements with the U.S. Forest Service and indirectly from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, which receives its funding from the Department of the Interior. This accounts for over 40% of the cost of the annual field program. GMC has not received any indication that this funding is at risk, but that is not much comfort based on government activity since January 20. All of the field staff have already been hired. Contingency plans are in the works.

Some of the projects Keegan Tierney, director of field operations, is planning include: restoration of the Beaver Meadow Lodge, reconfiguration of the Battell overnight site, relocation of 1700 feet of the trail off private land near the Massachusetts border, and relocation of a third of mile on Belvedere Mt. off eroded, private land. Mollie Flanigan, director of land conservation, discussed the three-year \$250,000 conservation grant she received. She has hired a person with those funds to be the land stewardship coordinator for two and a half years, freeing her up to implement the strategic conservation plan. A web consultant will be hired this summer to begin an upgrade of the GMC web page. There was a request from several sections for some sort of template on the website that sections could readily modify and use to communicate section news and activities. Staff was non-committal on this. The afternoon was devoted to a governance retreat. A 10-member committee is looking into how to improve the GMC's governance structure including the board of directors, the standing committees, and interactions between staff and the sections. The board split into three groups to brainstorm ideas. The governance committee will continue to gather data and report back in 2026.

Backtracking

When Grandma Hiked the K-Section

By Mark Youngstrom, photo by Leonard Korzun



Shortly after we bought our old house in the late 1970's, our farmer neighbor, Leonard Korzun, gave us an 8"x10" B&W photograph he took. On the back it is labeled "Old lady from Georgia walked the trail by herself twice." Our house and the Korzun Farm are on Lottery Road in Shrewsbury close to the LT/AT crossing. The photo, of course, is of Grandma Gatewood (Emma Rowena Gatewood), the first solo female hiker to complete the Appalachian Trail, the first person to complete the trail three times and, until 2014, the oldest woman to hike the Appalachian Trail. Put all those notable accomplishments aside for the moment, as Grandma Gatewood has quite an astonishing backstory.

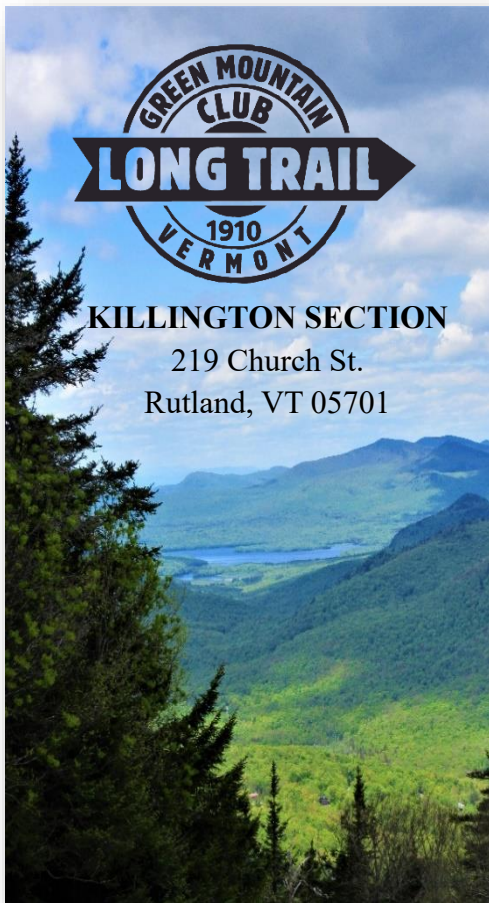
Born in 1887 in Ohio, Emma was raised in a log cabin with 14 siblings. Her father, who lost his leg in the Civil War, lived a life of gambling and drinking, and her mother tended to all the household duties and child-rearing. Emma completed her formal schooling in the eighth grade. At 19 she married a 27-year-old man,

worked on his tobacco farm and had 11 children. Her husband was violently abusive throughout their entire marriage, severely injuring her several times and nearly killing her. In 1941, she was granted a divorce, raised the remaining children who were in the house herself, and worked various jobs to get by. By 1951, all the children were out of the house.

After reading of the Appalachian Trail in a National Geographic magazine, Greenwood set off in 1954, at age 66, from Mt. Katahdin, to walk south. She got lost, broke her glasses and ran out of food. Rangers convinced her to go home. However, the next year, she set off again, this time from the south end of the AT in Georgia and 146 days later climbed Mt. Katahdin to complete her mission. She hiked in sneakers, without a tent or sleeping bag, and with all her gear and food in a 15–20-pound denim sack which she carried over her back. In the sack was a shower curtain to keep rain off, a blanket, Swiss Army knife, flashlight, Band-Aids, iodine, a pen and notebook, Vienna sausages, raisins, peanuts and bouillon. Then, in 1957, at 69 years old, "Grandma Greenwood" as she became known, set off again and completed the AT for a second time. Along the way she accepted the hospitality of folks for lodging, or she slept in the woods along the trail on a bed of leaves. Two years later, at 71, she completed the 2,000-mile Oregon Trail, averaging 22 miles per day. Then, in 1964, at 76 years old, she completed the Appalachian Trail a third time, this time in sections. Into her early 80's, Grandma Gatewood was still hiking and clearing trails near her home in Ohio. At the time of her death in 1973, at 85 years old, Greenwood had walked an estimated 14,000 miles (and she started at 66 years old!).

What a treat it must have been for Leonard Korzun to walk up the road from his milkhouse to visit with this remarkable woman and ask to take her picture. Looking at the photo, Grandma's outfit, sack and hiking stick looks exactly like a 1957 photo in the GMC archives.

For more information on this amazing woman, read the NYT's bestseller "Grandma Gatewood's Walk" by Ben Montgomery.



**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:	NAME: _____
Individual.....\$45	ADDRESS: _____
Family.....\$60	_____
Senior/Student/Friend.....\$25	PHONE: _____
Contact us for information on life memberships and categories for giving at a higher level.	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

