

Smoke & Blazes

Volume 79, Number 2

Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

Summer 2026

Here's looking at you, kid!



Our Killington Section Maple Fest Weekend hike in March included being examined by a herd of curious llamas, and a visit to a sugarcane for a taste fresh from the boiler. Yum! See the hike report inside for more details.



KILLINGTON SECTION



Summer 2026

Killington Section Officers

Herb Ogden, *President*
Allison Henry, *Vice President*
Larry Walter, *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*

Web Site: gmckillington.org

Andrew & Isaac Jones,
Web Masters

Smoke & Blazes

Sue Thomas, *Editor*

Killington Section Directors

Term expires 2027:

Sheamus Fagan
Bruce Peacock*
Maura Wildman*

Term expires 2028

Dave Coppock*
Herb Ogden*
Larry Walter

Term expires 2029:

Allison Henry*
Chad Peterson
Sue Thomas

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

Contact us:

KillingtonSection@greenmountainclub.org

Trail Mix

The 116th **Green Mountain Club Annual Meeting** will be held on Saturday, June 13, at GMC headquarters in Waterbury Center. Come meet the staff and members of other sections, and see our new visitor center. Learn about the club's work protecting and maintaining the Long Trail, and after lunch choose from a variety of hikes in the area. For information and registration: greenmountainclub.org/annual-meeting

Long Trail Day is set for Saturday, September 19, so start planning for this important event, which raised a record \$73,000 last year. Form a team, collect pledges for your solo hike, participate in "trail magic," or come up with a new way to celebrate the Long Trail. We're also looking for more business sponsors, if your company or employer might be interested, contact: rforcier@greenmountainclub.org

Volunteer with the Green Mountain Club! Volunteer positions are flexible to your schedule and a great way to connect to your backyard mountains. Are you a people-person? Become a **Volunteer Trail Steward** at the Mount Mansfield Visitor Center or the Lincoln Gap Trailhead, or a **Barnes Camp Information Volunteer**. Enjoy spending time outside and working with your hands? Consider supporting GMC's trail maintenance or land stewardship initiatives. We have a few openings for **volunteer corridor monitors**, and lots of hands are needed to clear waterbars, remove brush and prepare the trails for hiking season. GMC's volunteers are essential in making our work on the trails possible! Learn more about volunteer opportunities: <https://www.greenmountainclub.org/2026-volunteer-opportunities/>

The Extra Mile

In March the Killington Section participated in an event sponsored by Real Rutland, an organization working to encourage people to move to Rutland by showcasing what the area has to offer. **Wayne Krevetsky, Sheamus Fagan, Herb Ogden, Sue Thomas, Sunghee Jones** and **Larry Walter** manned our table, handing out newsletters and hike schedules, and chatting with prospective hikers. We hope a few of them will join us on the trails this summer!



Chad Peterson and Larry Walter cleared a blowdown on the Leicester Hollow Trail.

Killington Section Annual Meeting | March 29, 2026

After a sumptuous potluck lunch, GMC Executive Director **Mike DeBonis** gave a report on main club activities, among them the opening of the new visitor center and office facilities, publication of the 29th revised edition of The Long Trail Guide and map, and revisions to the bylaws, which will be voted on at the GMC annual meeting in June. He also listed many completed trail projects, including repairs to the Clarendon Gorge bridge in the Killington Section. Mike emphasized that volunteers are critical to the work of the GMC, stating that last year some 874 volunteers logged 12,384 hours on the trail system, representing roughly \$415,000 in value. Projects for the 2026 field season include repairs to Taft Lodge, trail relocations, and bridge replacements at Homer Stone Brook and Peru Peak.

Treasurer **Maura Wildman** was up next, reporting a slight decrease in section assets, and a proposed budget of \$4500 for the coming year was approved. KS delegate **Bruce Peacock** spoke on the March GMC directors meeting (see below). Next up was **Melissa Reichert**, speaking on the work of the Land Conservation Committee, then Smoke & Blazes editor **Sue Thomas** reported that printing and postage costs continue to rise. She will explore the possibility of using the main club's nonprofit status for reduced postage. Switching hats, she then gave an outings report – severe weather caused more than a few cancellations, but many great hikes were enjoyed. She encouraged hike leaders to utilize Front Porch Forum. Trails & Shelters co-chair **Larry Walter** led a discussion about problem crossings at Gould and Sargent Brooks. **Amy & Bruce Peacock** reported on the mostly dormant status of the Sherburne Pass Trail relocation through the Long Trail Lodge site, which led to a spirited discussion about the equally frustrating stalled efforts to remove Cooper Lodge.

Elections were then held to replace retiring directors **Wayne Krevetski** and **Melissa Reichert**, each having served two consecutive terms and not eligible for re-election. **Chad Peterson** and **Sue Thomas** were elected to take their places, and **Allison Henry** was re-elected to a second term. **Bruce Peacock** will replace **Amy Peacock** for the remainder of her term, and he will continue as our delegate to the main club. **Maura Wildman** continues as treasurer, **Larry Walter** replaces **Melissa Reichert** as secretary. **Herb Ogden** and **Allison Henry** remain president and vice president, respectively.

Board of Directors Report | *March 14, 2026 submitted by KS rep. Bruce Peacock*

The 25/26 budget is in good shape with two months to go. There could be a surplus of \$150,000, primarily due to fundraising, which is 125% of budget, and expenses, which are on budget. Membership is down by 1000 people however, from the average of 10,000. The Development team will be focusing on this issue. Federal funding, which was a big concern at this time last year, firmed up and is not currently a problem. The endowment passed over \$9 million for the first time in January. It has receded slightly in the last two weeks with the rest of the market, however. The 26/27 budget was reviewed and approved. Expenses are up 1.7% over this year. The independent auditor gave a report on the fiscal year ending April 2025. GMC was given an unmodified opinion, which is as good as you can get. The auditor singled out GMC's sizable endowment, lack of any debt, and rigorous financial controls as indicators of strong financial health.

The GMC will be losing space in the Smokey House Center in Danby to house work crews and back-country caretakers for southern Vermont. The board approved assigning \$432,000 just received from the Weissman bequest for the future purchase of real estate to house southern field workers. The board agreed to relinquish control of the KHT corridor (former Champion International Land in the Northeast Kingdom) to the Northwoods Stewardship Center while continuing to support Northwoods with GMC volunteers.

The Governance Committee's proposal to amend the bylaws to comply with Vermont law and reflect actual practice was approved by the board. It was substantially the same proposal distributed a few weeks ago with a few tweaks that Herb suggested. It eliminates the position of alternate director, which apparently is not allowed by Vermont law. It also gives the board authority to make sections amend their bylaws to comply with board actions. The committee promised to come up with a section bylaws template to help. The amendments will be voted on by the membership at the annual meeting in June. A motion was discussed to have the Governance Committee continue working with section leaders and staff to develop final recommendations for a smaller board (e.g. 15 members) and other remaining issues. Several directors that are active section members objected to the language and succeeded in amending the motion to add language, "while maintaining appropriate representation for sections" after the 15 members. This amended motion was passed.

Outing Reports

A Magic Pyramid | Wildcat Crag, Chittenden, March 15, 2026 by Larry Walter

I was a little surprised when I got some interest in this hike, since it was supposed to snow around 3" on the valley floor. A quick assessment of the road on Friday proved that it was not muddy, but we decided to wait til Sunday the 15th. Robin Folsesy of Ludlow (and Philly), a newcomer joined Lisa Pettis and I at the Mendon Town Office at 0800 and headed up the hill to Wildcat Road, off of the Chittenden Reservoir Road. They hadn't plowed, but the new snow was light and only about 2" deep. My little Prius had no trouble. Can't beat new snow tires. Sure enough, there was a pickup already parked in the 2.75-car parking lot at the Lefferts Pond gate. Turned out to be a good friend of mine, Kim Kinville, who used to work for the same GMNF office as I did, more than 11 years ago. Jeez. I'm getting old.

This hike was rated difficult, mainly due to the fact that it was hard to tell what kind of snow cover we'd have, which turned out to be pretty thin. There were a couple patches of ice left by the snowmobiles where their trail (and the Catamount Trail) took off uphill from Wildcat Road. The yellow gate was still open, but there weren't any sled tracks. It's late in the season, so I suspect the locals opted for a less rocky road to play. I don't think I've ever seen a skier up there. After about a 20-minute climb and sighting the magic, pyramid-shaped rock on the right, we followed a faint trail up the hill, marked by snow-covered cairns. Another 15 minutes brought us to the foot of the Wildcat Crag, wherein we slid to the left, below the cliffs. Some are a continuous 130' to the top. There's another switchback route to cliff-left that we ascended (more ice...had to put on the micro spikes) to where we could circle around to the top for a nice view of Blue Ridge, Leffert's Pond and Chittenden Reservoir. After a quick lunch, we retraced our steps to the road and back to the car. I was surprised there were no other vehicles parked there when we got back. Would have been a good day to ski out to the reservoir. It's supposed to rain and get into the 60s tomorrow. So much for our winter wonderland. Total time worked out to match my prediction of 4 hours. First time THAT'S happened.

Lotsa Llamas | Maple Fest Weekend, Middletown Springs, March 21, 2026 by Diane Bargiel

Maple Fest weekend was a little nippy, with snow-capped mountains and some dramatic clouds, but we enjoyed ourselves. Walking up the west side of Coy Hill Road is a great workout with pretty scenery and only a few houses, and at the top, there were two payoffs. First, we got to see those beautiful llamas on that historic farm with a house that was built in the late 18th century. Imagine living up there in an old-fashioned winter in 1790!

The second payoff was that it was open house at Mahar's Maple Farm at the top. <https://www.maharmaple.com/history> The sap was cookin' hot and fresh, and Ryan was there to show us how the syrup is made and to answer our questions. I left with some of his fabulous maple cream. Other folks drove back up after we got to the bottom of the hill where our cars were parked in order to avoid schlepping a few gallons of maple syrup in their packs. I can't say I blame them! I'm making myself hungry with all of this syrup talk. I think I'm just gonna have to make some French toast for supper!



Herb makes a new friend at the llama farm.

High-elevation work day, Saturday, June 6 -- See the hike schedule for details!

Tamarack Notch Tour | Mendon, April 4, 2026 by Herb Ogden

Five of us and one very nice dog enjoyed this outing on a sunny day in the 50sF. From the Tamarack Notch Aitken State Forest parking area, we walked the interpretive trail that was finished last year, past numerous stone camp stoves built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The area was later used as a Girl Scout camp. Continuing north, we

followed a path to a big cellar hole and other remains of a farm, which apparently was reached via a stone wall-lined lane that came up from the CCC area. We climbed up to the Wheelerville Road and followed it to McLaughlin Falls, stopping along the way to visit the little Lydia's Cemetery. At the falls, we took the road that leads south into Shrewsbury, left it at the little Wilkins Cemetery, and descended to the Cold River on the part of the Notch Road that has not been used since Tropical Storm Irene caused a landslide between Tamarack Notch and the Cold River. We lunched at the Notch Road bridge, then followed a wood road back to the CCC area rather than following a somewhat precarious path above the landslide. We finished by taking the rest of the interpretive trail past the big chimneys



Herb, John, Lisa, Steve and Fred by the North Branch of Cold River.

of two of the CCC buildings. Near them stood the CCC building where we had our Thanksgiving potlucks into the 1980s, before all the buildings were razed. I remember little about the building, but I do remember Ray Catozzi had a mishap there. We were heating our dinner on the wood cookstove. Ray was drinking coffee from a styrofoam cup. He absentmindedly put it down on the hot stove. The result was fried styrofoam covered with fried coffee, quite a mess.

Mud Season Mystery Meander | Pittsford to Proctor, April 11, 2026 by Sue Thomas

My original plan was a hike to Silver Lake, but learning there was still snow and ice there, and feeling we had all had about enough of that, I scanned my memory banks for another destination that wouldn't violate mud season restrictions.

So, we gathered at the Gorham covered bridge, where I eyed our four-footed hiker, Fred, wondering what his curly cream-colored coiffure would look like after a dose Vermont mud. He had a brief run-in with a lab as we began our trek and harsh words were exchanged, but for the rest of the hike he was a perfect gentleman.

Our route took us on an old wood road up and over the steep ridge, shaking out our winter muscles in a hurry. A short road walk up top took us to our lunch spot at a small park on the shore of Beaver Pond, where the sun finally emerged to take the chill off. We detoured to check out a Crown Point Road marker commemorating the route of the military road built in the mid-1700s by the British to connect their fort on Lake Champlain with Fort No. 4 in New Hampshire. On the way back we stopped to examine the remains of a small, round structure, wondering if it might have been a kiln? Descending the ridge, we were treated to a very Vermont view of mountains, fields and farms, visible only until the leaves return. Some very bad jokes and puns were flying about along the way, and we all had a marvelous day, with the possible exception of Fred, whose sad future undoubtedly included a bath.



Fred inquires about when lunch will be served.

Trailhead Roulette | Shelving Rock Mountain, Fort Ann, NY, April 18, 2026 by Allison Henry

I had originally planned a trip to Prospect Mountain in Lake George for this hike, but I changed my mind the day before due to a forecast for a potentially dreary and cloudy day. The Prospect Mountain trail is a very steep climb up a trail that is eroded down to bedrock in places which wouldn't be fun in damp weather. All that effort for a socked-in summit didn't sound like fun either. I chose Shelving Rock Mountain instead, knowing the trail is a woods road most of the way with gradual climbing. Shelving Rock Mountain is in the eastern section of the Adirondacks near Fort Ann. Other well-known trails in the area include Buck Mountain and Sleeping Beauty. When I went out the door the morning of the hike, I was delighted to find that it was already at least ten degrees warmer than had been forecast, and much sunnier! Our party of four Rutlanders met up with another hiker at the VT/NY border, and after an uneventful drive we had the not-so-uncommon experience of having to poke around a bit to figure out where the trailhead actually was. In my defense, there are about a dozen trailheads in the same area. When we left our vehicles we happily left most of our down vests, hats and

microspikes behind (while making sure we had enough warm gear among us in case of emergency before jettisoning everything). Larry brought at least three saws, at least two of which hung from his belt, which resulted in questions and/or suspicious stares from other hikers we encountered. The hike turned out to be a perfect day. The sky was clear, the sun was out, and the ascent was easy. The weather was so warm that most of us were down to T-shirts even when sitting at the summit for lunch. Much of this trail is on what appears to be carriage roads with extravagantly built stone retaining walls.

After the hike I looked up the history of the area. Most of us who are familiar with the region have heard mention of the Knapp Estate, referring to a section of private property on the eastern shore of Lake George. According to the Adirondack Explorer, the Knapp Estate was a 7, 000- to 8,000-acre summer estate owned by Union Carbide founder George Owen Knapp in the late 1800s. Knapp had a mansion built near what is now known as Shelving Rock Falls, and supposedly the mansion even had a funicular (cable car) railway to bring residents and guests up the steep cliffs to the mansion. The estate also had miles of carriage roads, some of which we admired on our hike.



Allison, Sunghee, Lisa and Larry soak up some spring sun.

Old Turnpike Road | Mendon, April 25, 2026 by Herb Ogden

Eight people* and two very well-behaved dogs showed up on a fine spring day to hike the unmaintained part of the old Rutland to Stockbridge Turnpike, chartered in 1804. From the snowplow turnaround in Mendon east to the last two camps, the road was in good condition. The forest floor was beautifully green with false hellebore and ramps. We inspected the partly collapsed lime kiln that shows on the 1869 Beers Atlas, passed a cellar hole on the right, and then thanks to a hiker's sharp eyes, spotted something I'd never seen before. A little west of the westernmost camp, above the old highway, stood an originally square stone pile, just downhill from a small quarry. We surmised this was another lime kiln. Continuing downhill, we entered a short muddy stretch and stopped for lunch next to another cellar hole. Soon we came to the junction of the Wildcat Road. Water from the beaver pond was flowing over it. Thankful for the modern road that runs higher than the original swampy route, we ascended to The Elbow and the Long Trail crossing. On the worldwide web, one person claimed we could see the unfinished grade of the Woodstock & Rutland R.R. This was fantasy. It was merely the wide, bulldozed logging road that the LT briefly follows north of the gap. No railroad was graded west of Woodstock. *The people were very well-behaved too.

Backtracking



Caretaking at Stratton Pond

By Winnie Chevalier

Back in the fall of 1982, '83 and '85, I worked for the Green Mountain Club as a caretaker at Stratton Pond and 'filled in' at other mountainous ponds when those caretakers needed a day out. Stratton Pond lies within the Pioneer Section of the Club. Those members are responsible for heavy maintenance at the site such as digging new privy holes and building new tent platforms or shelters. All tools and materials would be carried in by the members via what is now a side trail but was once the main trail in from the Arlington/West Wardsboro Rd. The trail

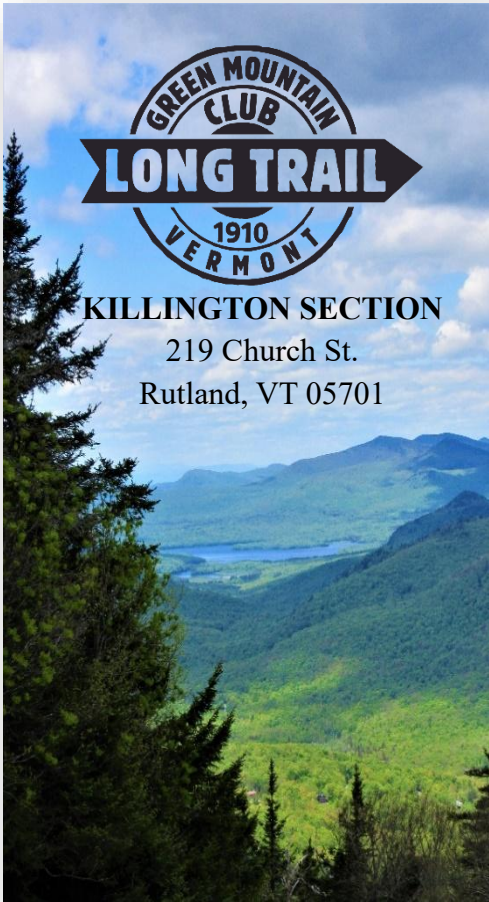
today begins further east of the old trail and goes up over Stratton Mountain, where the concept of the Long Trail was first conceived. Today there is one large shelter positioned before you reach the pond, with tent areas at that site as well. The old tenting area on the north shore is no more as the beavers finally won out and flooded that area.

I would begin my stay at the pond in the fall after the summer caretakers, usually college students, left. I would kill the last mosquito and enjoy the solitude and beauty that is Stratton Pond. The sunsets were phenomenal! My responsibilities as a caretaker were to meet and greet hikers and campers as they arrived at the pond. Sort of like a hotel front desk clerk. I maintained the trails around the pond and those within about a thirteen-mile radius; both north and south on the LT, out to the Lye Brook Wilderness Area (back then there was a visible trail out to follow), the then Stratton Mountain Trail (up and over and down to the Arlington/West Wardsboro Rd.). I would carry a bow saw when checking the trails and several times needed to remove 'blow-downs' from the trail. Keeping the drainage ditches clear of debris after a rain storm was another chore. Cleaning the then existing shelters and fire pits was constant after campers' visits. There were two Adirondack-style shelters at the pond as well as one north and one south; each about six miles from the pond. I would walk around the pond each evening after folks had settled in. I would answer questions, give hiking information and collect the fee. These minimal fees collected in the Finger Lakes/Green Mountain National Forest were part of my earnings and bought my food. I was paid a small amount by GMC at the end of the season.

The first couple of nights on the pond alone were a bit unsettling, but I soon got used to the night sounds. The second night there was a bear huffing about. I never saw it. The only bear I did see while at the pond was the tail end of one rushing away from my noise as I hiked along the trail. The barred owls kept me company many nights with their calls back and forth. One evening as I was returning to my tent from doing rounds, I encountered an antlered moose. Not enormous but large enough. I told him how beautiful he was. He looked at me with vegetation and water dripping from his mouth, continued chewing and then turned and walked away. When I got back to my tent area and was sitting on a rock, I heard splashing and looked up to see the moose swimming across the pond. How wonderful that encounter was! Many evenings I would have my supper on the shore of the pond while watching the beavers enjoying theirs of succulent young branches. If the beavers were swimming across the pond and something disturbed them, with a thwack of their tail upon the water they would disappear below. You never could tell where they would surface. Once in a great while I would hear the crashing of a tree as the beavers felled another one in order to reach the tender branches. Sometimes the fallen tree ended up across the trail. I would then cut and remove it. During my last year of caretaking, the beavers tried to dam up a small stream that flowed into the pond which would have flooded the tenting area. I dismantled their hard work each day for three days. After that, I think they got the message. No dams, please.

The folks I met were all interesting in their own way. I recall one family coming in for a day hike with a young child and having to offer Hershey's bars along the way to keep him moving. Another time a couple came in; he arrived well before the wife. I went back to see what I could do. She was overloaded. I took her pack, and so on to the pond we hiked. One encounter was very negative. Locals came in with rifles. Their camping 'stuff' in black garbage bags. I explained that no shooting was allowed within 500 feet of the pond area. He argued that his grandfather blah, blah, blah. I informed him I would be contacting my supervisor. No shots were fired, however, dirty diapers and a sack of trash was left for me to clean up. I took many sunset photographs and made a slide show of them for the AT Conference held at Poultney in 1985.

I love being out in the forest and wilderness. I no longer backpack, however I still hike (mostly alone) and camp. My pace has slowed from three miles an hour to two or less depending upon terrain.



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 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

