Smoke & Blazes

Volume 79, Number 3 ***Killington Section, Green Mountain Club*** *Fall 2026*

Something in the water

Allison enjoys a refreshing dip in the waters of Clear Pond in the Pharoah Lake Wilderness, while Carrie and Sunghee act as lifeguards. Nibbling fish were the only hazards she encountered, see inside for her report.

KILLINGTON SECTION

Fall 2026

Killington Section Officers

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Smoke & Blazes

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Term expires 2027:
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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

Our awesome History & Archives chair **Amy Peacock** has reluctantly resigned, as she and Bruce have relocated to New Hampshire. Heading the Section's History Committee for six years, Amy was instrumental in gaining State recognition for the Long Trail Lodge site at Sherburne Pass and the installation of a historical marker there. We hate to see her go, but wish her and Bruce the best in their new home.

Long Trail Day is set for Saturday, September 19. The Killington Section will once again be providing "trail magic" at the Rte. 103 trailhead, greeting hikers with snacks, cold beverages and information on the Green Mountain Club. If you want Sto help out or contribute goodies, contact **Wayne Krevetski, 802-282-2237**, wkrevetski@hotmail.com. **Allison Henry** will do a "24-24 Challenge," hiking the entire 24 miles of the K Section in 24 hours. To support her with a donation to the club, go to greenmountainclub.org/longtrailday2026, then search for her name under "participants." Find **Herb Ogden's** name to sponsor his 6.3-mile hike with a $63 pledge. Or, plan your own fundraising hike that day or any day that works for you. Register as an individual or form a team. All hike participants will receive a GMC beanie (while supplies last). Those who raise $272 (one dollar for each mile of the Long Trail) will get a code for a free pair of socks from Long Trail Day sponsor Darn Tough. To register, click on **Sign up for Long Trail Day 2026 today**.

The annual **Fall Potluck** will be Saturday. Nov. 21 at 1 p.m. at Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer Street in Rutland. Bring your own place setting (to minimize trash) and a dish to share. After the meal Herb will present a short Long Trail trivia quiz.

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The Extra Mile

Our fearless Trails & Shelters co-chair **Larry Walter** bravely faced down the poison parsnip and poison ivy at the Rte. 4 trailhead armed only with a humble weed whacker, emerging victorious with the foe flattened and visibility restored to the parking lot.

Chad Peterson, Larry Walter and **Sue Thomas** have volunteered to keep the trailhead registers at the Bucklin Trail, Canty Trail and Sherburne Pass stocked with sign-in sheets, supplied by **Herb Ogden**, who will pass them on to GMC headquarters when full.

Sixteen-year-old Anya Stephenson Kopij, convinced her dad Mark to join her on an end-to-end Long Trail hike this summer. **Ruth Hare** and **Sue Thomas**, along with Anya's mom Heather, helped out with food drops, transportation and lots of moral support. The father-daughter team, seen here in Wallingford, reached the Canadian border on August 2. Congratulations!

Upper elevation work day | June 6, 2026, submitted by Larry Walter

Perfect weather again. I keep waiting for the other foot to drop. Those present included myself (Larry Walter), Dave Coppock, Steve Tuckerman, Aaron Epps, Wayne Krevetski, Creston Rabtoy, Matt McCoy, Dave Charnock, Chad Peterson, Allison Henry, Denise Coriell, Candy Jones, Joel Blumenthal and (remotely), Herb Ogden. Herb called earlier and volunteered to solo-clean some of the side ditches going north from Route 4 on the LT. That's a total of 14 people!

Dave, Wayne and Creston headed out to porcupine-ravaged Clarendon Shelter. Thanks to Wayne for driving his truck out there with the supplies as the old class-four road has deteriorated of late. Team one replaced all of the T&G flooring on the two lower sleeping platforms and replaced the table surface. They also installed steel flashing around the edges and Creston plans to staple hardware cloth onto other chewable edges in the near future. The mileage-sign up by the main trail is due for replacement, but the bolts were rusted too badly to be removed. Creston will return with a 3 kilos of C-4 explosive (where did he get THAT?) to remove the old sign and replace it with a new one supplied by the main club. He's also going to paint on a lot of vinegar/cayenne solution to slow our local fiber-feaster down. Big thanks to Creston for taking all of this extra work on.

Crew Deux, comprised of Me, Denise, Candy, Aaron, Matt and Joel, took on the long- neglected waterbars, stone culverts and ditches of the Canty Trail. Like the Bucklin Trail, this thing will wear ya out in no time. It's a good thing we had so many people to throw at it. Reports called for blowdowns in the lower section but they turned out to be above the cascades. Matt and I were able to remove all four (five?) with the 500mm Katanaboy, a wedge and a small axe. Managed to draft a young hiker into pulling on the saw at one site. He made us look like old men, but as Matt reminded, we ARE old men. Joel and Aaron gallantly waterbar'ed ahead to the summit, only to drop their weapons and retreat in a most undisciplined manner before a cloud of female blackflies. With Denise's help, the trail has been pretty much clipped clean as well. The old trail register is in good shape, but we should probably add a bit of flashing to the top edge.

Crew Trois, including Allison, Steve, and Chad (aka, Brains, Brawn and Beauty, specific identities unassigned) cleaned out the waterbars about a mile south on the Sherburne Pass Trail to the sink hole. They spent a lot of time brushing in six to eight "braided" herd paths to match each original, blazed route. As decreed by Dame Allison, this section will now be known as the One True Path. It's going to be so nice when we replace that nasty creek-bed of a trail on the lower section with the proposed reroute (through the foundation of the earlier Long Trail Lodge building), along with the deconstruction of Cooper, in 2042. There's an annoying, muddy spot by the trail register that Steve has vowed, as a newly indentured Three-B member, to return to and remedy. In order to appear witty, I directly plagiarized Allison's email report, but people say she relies heavily on AI.

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Trail Mix (*continued from page 2*)

GMC Director of Field Programs **Keegan Tierney** plans to relocate a couple hundred feet of trail north of US 4 to align with the trail on the south side, per Town of Mendon request, to keep hikers from crossing the highway diagonally.

Vermont rifle season runs from November 14 – 29 this year. If you venture into the woods wear blaze orange, or choose back roads, parks and bike paths. For a complete list of the various hunting seasons, go to **vtfishandwildlife.com**.

Outing Reports

Reluctant Spring | Wildflower Walk, Mendon, May 16, 2026 by Sue Thomas

Where oh where were the wildflowers?? Not in all the usual places, where I searched in the days leading up to the hike. There were a few here and there, but not the abundance of most years. I suspect, like most of us, they did not enjoy this year's extended winter and frosty May mornings. Perhaps the drought in the fall had something to do with it too. Not the best time to be a wildflower all in all. But in any case, we managed to scare up a few: both red and painted trillium, anemones, swamp saxifrage, foam flower, false Solomon seal, marsh marigold, cress, hobble bush, one rather droopy trout lily and two Jack in the pulpits. Wild ginger, bellwort, Dutchman's Breeches and Clintonia were all flourishing but not yet blooming. John's binocs zeroed in on several species of warblers, an oven bird and a scarlet tanager, and we tried not to disturb a mama phoebe nesting in the trailhead kiosk, so it was a productive day after all.

For the Birds | Equinox Preserve, Manchester, June 20, 2026 by Diane Bargiel

We did another zig-zaggy kind of hike over at the wonderful Equinox trails totaling about 6 1/2 miles. This time we started at the upper parking lot of Burr & Burton Academy that has a trail head. It's OK to park there on weekends and weekdays after 3 PM during the school year. Then, we walked up the blue trail until the red gate connection where we then veered off onto the Aspen Trail over to Trillium. We took a right heading up the mountain a little bit where we connected to the Maidenhair trail that heads over toward the southern Vermont Arts Center.

It was exciting to have Claudia with us, who is a bonafide birder, even having taught some birding classes! There's a section of Maidenhair where a lot of trees were taken down. Claudia let us know that opening up that patch and leaving some of the debris allowed a habitat to be created that is conducive for certain birds to return. Claudia was so excited to hear some songs that hadn't been there for a couple of decades or so. They have returned!

Well, once we got down to the end of Maidenhair, we turned right to take Trillium back towards the main system and went all the way up to Robin's Lookout where we sat for a while and enjoyed the view. We decided to make an alteration to my original plan and used the Mount Bluff trail to take us up, over, and down to the pond as opposed to going more directly down to the flat Pond Loop Trail. That was a worthy adjustment. There was water in the brook along the way, and we got another elevation change, so that was good for working off some calories from our snacks! When we got down near the pond, we went to an old deer trail behind the boathouse for a lovely view. But, that little excursion took us to a bunch of poison ivy along the trail. Yikes! Luckily, I don't think any of us got it. Phew!!

Anyways, we made our way back via the Flatlanders trail. What a delightful day with wonderful conversations and a couple of new voices in the mix. Hiking is such a great way to make new friends and motivate us to get out of the house to commune with Mother Nature! Thank you Green Mountain Club and all of the hiking groups in our beautiful region and state!

Wanted: **New hike leaders are always welcome! Contact Sue at 802-773-2185**

Naked, Not | Woodward Reservoir Paddle, Plymouth, July 5, 2026 by Ruth Hare

I'm relieved to report that we did *not* encounter any naked sun worshipers on the shore of Woodward Reservoir, which I'm told was what awaited Larry and Viv on an earlier paddle there. Instead, the closest thing was the boys from the Farm and Wilderness camp -- properly swimsuited -- who were having a diving lesson as we navigated among them.

When Larry, Viv and I set out at midmorning in two canoes, we were almost the only people on the water. The scene would have been more peaceful if not for the holiday weekend traffic noise from Route 100 running along much of one shore. But the reservoir offers many small coves and separate arms to explore away from the road. At one point we encountered a drooping footbridge leading to a near-shore island. All three of us measured with our eyes, took stock of our flexibility, and decided not to try to limbo beneath it.

The open-air shelters of the summer camp beckoned to the carpenter in Larry with their rustic style, while I felt sorry for whoever's job it would be to wash all the wet towels, shorts and other camper clothing hanging from every railing and bunk.

By the time we finished our exploration of the reservoir's shoreline and the sunny day was heating up, waves of paddle boarders had set out from the full parking area. Clearly canoeists and kayakers are outnumbered now. Perhaps everyone had flocked there to look for naked sunbathers.

Feeling Like Fish Food | Pharaoh Lake Wilderness, July 11, 2026 by Allison Henry

I have led at least a half dozen Killington Section hikes in the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness, mostly in the winter, and I thought we'd like a summer hike in the area to check out some of the ponds without any snow and ice. I had a busy evening the night before the hike and we had an early start the day of, and I know I missed a few last-minute calls so I apologize to those who might have been left out. Our group of five, with four K Section diehards and one K Section friend, took two cars to Putnam Pond Campground where there are several trailheads leading into the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness. I had scoped out the hike earlier in the week like a good hike leader and I chose a route counterclockwise around Putnam Pond by way of the Clear Pond Trail and Grizzle Ocean Trail.

For the first mile or so the Clear Pond Trail goes over small rolling hills with no significant climbing and skirts a few ponds and swampy areas. We reached our first real views on the shores of Rock Pond and Little Rock Pond (not the same Little Rock Pond as the one on the Long Trail in Vermont – this was an imposter). After reaching Rock Pond and Imposter Pond, things began to get interesting. First, we had to cross a giant "bridge" over part of one of the ponds which consisted of wood slats on stacks of wooden sills, and which listed gently to one side. After the bridge, the trail goes across a small peninsula with the terrain mostly bedrock and mud pits. Sunghee started to lose her balance and began grasping at air to avoid falling into the mud. At first I held out my hiking pole in a panic as if I was going to grab Sunghee with it, but somehow in that fraction of a second I thought better of it and grabbed the back of her clothing instead. A lucky save! We went on to Clear Pond and had lunch in the sun or shade, as individuals preferred, at the Clear Pond lean-to. After eating I proposed a swim in the beautiful waters of the aptly named Clear Pond, *(continued on page 6)*

(continued from page 5)
but no one chose to join me. The pond was full of little fish and one member of our party tossed in a crumb from lunch and it became a full-on feeding frenzy with different fish grabbing and losing the tasty morsel.

Before jumping in I scoped out the shoreline carefully, checking for snakes and also making sure there'd be a way to get back out that did not involve hauling myself out of the water on my arms and stomach like an exhausted seal. I half walked, half belly-flopped into the water and after I was in for a few seconds I realized my fellow hikers were pointing and laughing. It turns out, as soon as I was floating in the water I was SURROUNDED by the aforementioned little fish. There was some mention of a spa treatment where little fish nibble off calluses and other imperfections, but I did not find this prospect to be very appealing. Meanwhile, one member of our party noticed some poison ivy right where she was sitting. She ran away screaming although that might have been due to the sight of me flailing around in the water. The rest of the hike was uneventful. When we reached the intersection with the Grizzle Ocean Trail, we reminisced about being on that same trail in three feet of snow about a year and a half prior, and everyone agreed that the summer weather was much more desirable (or at least, I did, and I didn't listen to anyone else's thoughts on the subject).

We exited the woods into the campground, and had a nice stroll through the day use area of the state park back to our cars. The group of three in my car decided to take the Ticonderoga Ferry on the way home. One of the ferry operators noticed Larry's Green Mountain Club Volunteer shirt, and he asked several questions about the logistics of trail maintenance and hike planning. We enjoyed talking about the Long Trail and even shared some local lore. If you want to know what we told him, you'll have to join us on a hike sometime.

Pity the Horses | Killington Carriage Road, July 25, 2026 by Herb Ogden

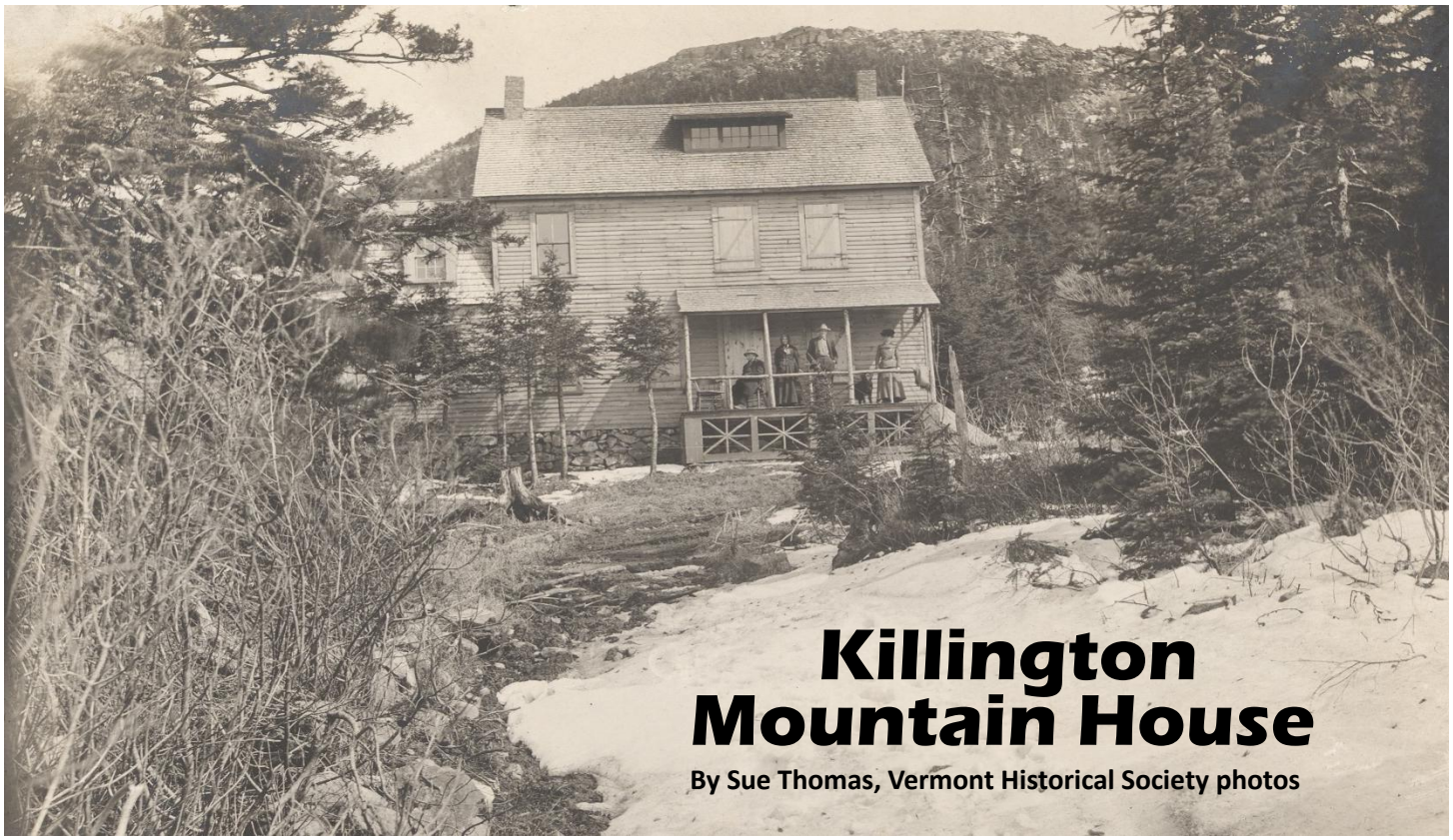
This was advertised as a difficult 6.8-mile hike with 2100' of climb and a mile of bushwhack, so I wasn't surprised when our total party numbered four. We had beautiful weather, even a little cool at the top. A couple dozen other people and several dogs were taking advantage of it. Though we were not officially in a drought, the Cooper Lodge spring was down to a trickle. The Ridgerunner had cleaned up the lodge, but the inside looked decrepit, with one set of bunks at an uncomfortable angle and no cover on the picture windows. Some of the roofing was ripped up. I spent my first LT overnight there around 1960 and fondly remember a nice cabin with a stove and glass on all the windows. Now I hope the GMC persuades the state to demolish it down to a couple feet of wall to show what was once there.

Thinking of downsizing, John checks out an appealing option on the Bucklin Trail.

Where the 1880 hotel once stood, below the lodge, we found a couple of pieces of brick from it. A few feet farther down, I pointed out that the 1879 carriage road went straight where the Long Trail turns slightly east. The junction was obscured by blowdowns, but the gullied-out carriage road was easy to recognize a little farther downhill. The next mile was, as advertised, often a bushwhack, where we left the road to pass blowdowns that we couldn't pass over or under. Though I don't think the road had been cleared since the 1960s, when it was getting more traffic than the Bucklin Trail, no trees had grown in it. We suppose the road had been so thoroughly eroded down to bedrock and gravel that trees couldn't grow. Instead, there was luxuriant moss of different colors. The going got much easier after the junction with a wood road that crosses the Bucklin Trail and has been cleared periodically. From there on, the footing was generally much better than on the upper 1.5 mile of the Bucklin Trail.

Not much wildlife was evident. We heard thrushes and probably a hawk or two. The only mammals were a couple red squirrels and a chipmunk that may live in Cooper Lodge.

Backtracking



Killington Mountain House

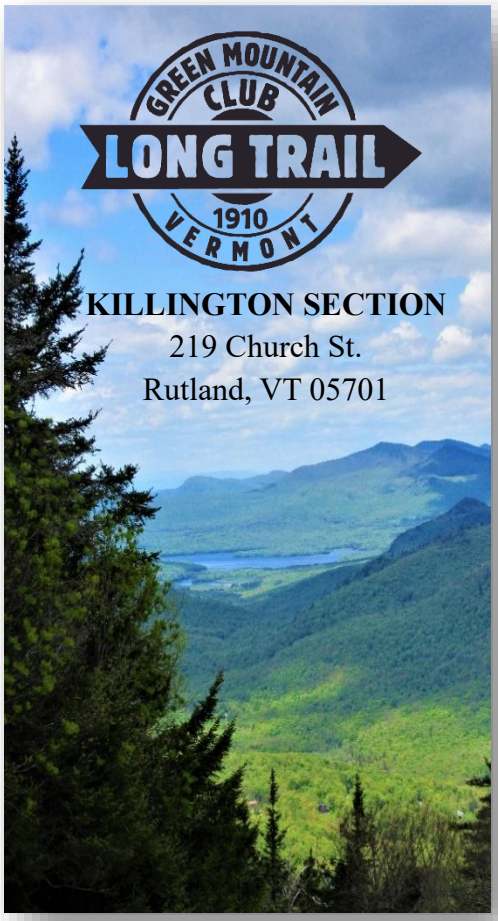
By Sue Thomas, Vermont Historical Society photos

The Rutland Herald reported on August 18, 1859 that Leverett Wilkins of Mendon was constructing a "rough road" from a lumber mill (likely at McLaughlin Falls) in the Wheelerville area up to Killington Peak. With access now in place, Vincent Meyerhoffer constructed a rustic cabin about 300 feet below the mountain's summit, where he hosted friends and family for many years.

By the late 1800s the mountains of New England had become a popular destination for the wealthy seeking to escape the summer heat and polluted air of cities. Mountaintop hotels proliferated, and hoping to cash in on the tourist trade, the citizens of Rutland raised money to construct a 4-mile horse and carriage road up the mountain from Wheelerville, along a route laid out by General Richard Cutts, a surveyor with the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, in 1879. Meyerhoffer's now-enlarged cabin opened as Killington Mountain House in 1880, with rooms for 30-40 guests, stables, annexes and porches, as well as a croquet lawn, which was situated roughly where Cooper Lodge sits today. It must have made for some truly vicious games -- wow, could you ever "send" someone! Oscar Wilde was among the luminaries who signed the hotel guest book, now in possession of an area Historical Society. Local people made use of the road as well, often making the trip at night in order to catch the spectacular sunrise from the summit.

In 1888 when an electric railway to the summit was proposed, Meyerhoffer purchased an additional 324 acres on the mountain for $500, anticipating an increase in business. However, the railway project never got off the ground, and with automobiles beginning to replace the horse and buggy, business at the Mountain House waned. In 1901 Meyerhoffer sold the hotel and property to Rutland businessman M.E. Wheeler for $2,000, and by 1910 The Mountain House had closed its doors for the last time.

The Carriage Road to Killington, circa 1912.



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