

Smoke & Blazes

Volume 76, Number 1

Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

Spring 2023



Springtime in Vermont means syrup! Join us on Saturday, March 25 for a mud-season-friendly walk in East Poultney and a visit to a sugarhouse during Maple Open House Weekend. See the hike schedule for details.

Killington Section Directors:

Term expiration 2023

Sue Thomas*

Wayne Krevetski

Melissa Reichert

Term expiration 2024

Ruth Hare*

Amy Peacock

Maura Wildman

Term expiration 2025

Bill Cooke

Dave Coppock

Herb Ogden

**Second consecutive 3-year term.*

Not eligible for re-election.

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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*

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Ruth Hare *Alternate*

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Maura Wildman	774-8425, mwild0411@gmail.com

Email update: We have installed a new email system which will enable us to utilize our contact list more efficiently – that is, once we learn the ropes! So, if you have requested to receive Smoke & Blazes electronically but are still getting a paper copy, please be patient while we coordinate our lists and get it rolling.

Mud Season Reminder

It may not be your favorite time of year, but alas, it comes every spring just like taxes. And the GMC considers it to run from snowmelt (generally early April, though it varies) until the trails are dry, usually around Memorial Day weekend. Some trails will be closed, and hikers are urged to stay off all wet and muddy trails during this time. Help us protect the trails from erosion, by following these guidelines as you head out to savor spring:

- Don't hike on muddy trails, especially above 2500'
- Respect trail closures and have an alternate plan
- Turn back if you encounter muddy conditions
- Hike on bike paths, mountain roads and other durable surfaces
- Don't step around the mud, it tramples vegetation and widens the trail--walk through the mud if you can't turn back
- Don't underestimate the weather, you may still find snow and ice
- Check out some great alternative hiking destinations on the GMC website: greenmountainclub.org

The Extra Mile

People much more tech-savvy than myself (which is admittedly, almost everyone) have been commenting for a while now that the Killington Section website could use an overhaul. Webmaster **Andrew Jones** to the rescue! Andrew has worked his magic on several aspects of the site to bring us up to date, including a new calendar system for upcoming event information and the ability to utilize other calendars, like Google calendar, Outlook and iCal. More changes are in the works.

And did you know the Killington Section has a Facebook page? **Allison Henry** created it for us years ago, and she continues to post useful updates, hiking-related stories, trail-condition alerts and photos.

In Memoriam

The Killington Section lost a good friend with the passing of **Gary Salmon** in January. Gary was a forester for the Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation for 36 years, fought forest fires out west, and enjoyed working with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps., building and maintaining trails and bridges on state land. Over the years he led many tree identification hikes for the Killington Section. His knowledge and enthusiasm for sharing it will be greatly missed. Let's all go out and hug a tree for Gary!



***The earth
laughs in
flowers***

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Bloodroot, a spectacular early bloomer. We'll take to the woods on Saturday, May 13 for a wildflower walk, see the spring hike schedule for details.

Outing Reports

Hiking Backward

Slate History Trail, Bomoseen, Nov. 19, by Sue Thomas

Armed with a pamphlet from the nearby state park, we followed the trail past old quarries, slate piles and abandoned buildings, all once part of the company town of the West Castleton Slate Co. By 1850 slate was in demand, and the mill was humming, moving slate by rail from the quarries to a wharf on the lake, where a horse-powered ferry took the rail cars to Hydeville. A kiln was added in 1855 to produce marbled slate.



We visited a recently discovered cemetery with unmarked stones, likely the final resting place of immigrants from Wales, Ireland, French Canada and Slavic countries who came to work in the mill. Highlights of the history trail are the ruins of a large sawmill, which sawed both coal and lumber, and the huge slate mill, both powered by water from nearby Glen Lake. The original mill, built in 1868, was one of the largest in the country, and even now it's an impressive structure. From there we ambled past several houses constructed of stacked slate in the mid-1800s, one of which was once the company store, office and post office, and still features the bell rung at starting and quitting times. We had a lovely stroll along the lake to another large quarry, where mounting the huge pile of waste slate (our pamphlet informed us that about 85% of the quarried stone was waste) rewarded us with a beautiful view.

Under the Big Top Slate Valley Trails, December 4, East Poultney, by Diane Bargiel



I was joined by longtime Killington Section member and S & B's new editor, Sue Thomas, plus three other folks for a loop hike (You know how I love loops!). We hiked for about five miles or so on the Slate Valley Trails Fairgrounds West system off of route 140 in Poultney, not far from the border with Middletown Springs.

We started on the Ringmaster Trail, then turned onto Big Top, where we climbed a bit using switchbacks that work for mountain bikes, so nothing was too steep. We had the good fortune to hang out with a barred owl who seems to have adopted the trails. "Whooo goes there?" "Whooo said that?" "I cook for me. Whooo cooks for you?" Well, it was a treat.

Anyways, at the top, we had a couple of views to enjoy, and then Big Top connects with Scrambler, which then reconnects with Ringmaster at the bottom a bit further down the trail than where we had started on Big Top. So, the hike had some variety, nice views, hardwoods & hemlocks and a marshy area, with a mixture of fairly flat terrain and some ups and downs to exercise a variety of muscles.

It's always nourishing to be in our Vermont woods and to see the eye candy that they provide. It's a personal bonus that this system of trails is practically in my backyard, so-to-speak. Whooooo could ask for anything more?

Unusual Views and Honeysuckle Hell

Chapman Farm Site & Cemetery, January 14, West Haven, by Herb Ogden

Despite overcast weather in the 20s, five of us showed up for this outing in the Nature Conservancy's Buckner Preserve. Recent rain had put the Galick Road under a couple inches of water in a few places, but we all easily reached the parking lot at the north end of the road. With permission of David and Elaine McDevitt, who lease the old Galick place, we headed north on the lane between the house and the barn and sheds instead of having to follow the Susan Bacher Trail to the kiosk in the fields above the farm. We soon left the official trail, passed by the field barn, and headed down to a brook crossing that would have been difficult if we had had more rain. We followed the old road up to a field that was mowed at least until the Galick brothers sold their farm to the Nature Conservancy in 1989, then under ledges and past a stone wall, emerging onto another former field, now partly grown up to honeysuckle and evergreens. Near the top of the field, we followed a faint ATV track west to its edge, then took an old road, narrowed by honeysuckle, through the woods down to the former Chapman farm.

The Chapman farm shows on Scott's 1854 map of Rutland County, reached by a road that branched south from Main Road in West Haven. The house still appears on the 1869 Beers Atlas, but no road to it does. According to the McDevitts, this was farmed into the 1950s, and vehicles could reach it from the Galick place. North of the fallen-down farmhouse are the remains of a large barn with a cement foundation. At one time, the farmer ferried cans of milk across Lake Champlain, where they were picked up on the Delaware & Hudson Railroad's line from Albany to Montreal. We visited neither the house nor the barn because a horrible hedge of honeysuckle hampered us.



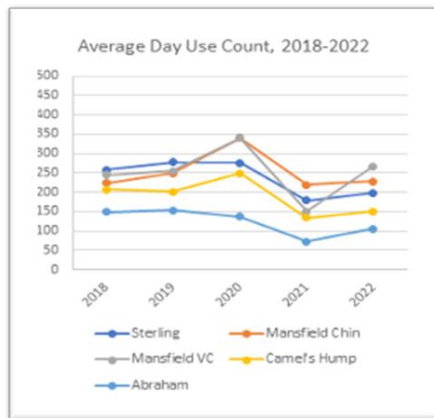
Following a flagged path through the honeysuckle almost down to the lake, we then climbed a little and reached our destination, the Chapman Cemetery. The McDevitts had found it in 2019. After hearing that there was a cemetery near the lake a mile or two north of the Galick farm, they had been looking for years. All four headstones were down, and the honeysuckle was so thick that they couldn't be seen even twenty feet away. Volunteers from the Vermont Old Cemeteries Association (VOCA) restored this cemetery after restoring the Galick Cemetery (above the Susan Bacher trailhead), the Stewart Cemetery (southwest of the Tim's Trail trailhead) and the Adams Elbow

Cemetery (farther south on a low hill overlooking the lake) in 2021. They brought supplies in from Whitehall by boat. Unfortunately, a big tree limb had since fallen on one headstone, breaking it, and one other headstone was down. I have notified VOCA and expect they will work on it this year. The four headstones are of Ebenezer Chapman (1769-1849), his second wife Esther Jones (1773-1856), their daughter Mariah (1815-1842), and their son Ebenezer, Jr. (1830-1865).

Like all my excursions to cemeteries so far, this was a round trip, not one-way.

Board of Directors Report *Submitted by Alternate Rep. Ruth Hare*

When our first-string delegate to the main club board (Larry Walter) unexpectedly had to sit out the December meeting, I suited up and came off the bench as the alternate delegate. I learned that hiker usage trends have changed again, fundraising was looking encouraging, and it's a tricky business to balance a reverence for history with modern values and awareness.



Usage declines from pandemic highs

It surprised me to hear that day visitor numbers have returned to pre-pandemic levels or even lower in most cases at sites where GMC caretakers collect data (see the accompanying chart). The total number of caretaker contacts with day visitors was slightly up from 2021, at 70,367, but varied widely by site. For example, Little Rock Pond's average day visitation was up 79%, while Griffith Lake's was down 45%. If these numbers surprise you too, it may be that you encountered another trend: increasing foliage season tourism. October was by far the busiest month in 2022 for Vermont's three alpine summits (Mansfield, Camels Hump and Abraham). With the weather staying warm and snow-free into late October, the hiking season is getting longer. The club may need to bolster its summit stewardship program to cope with higher fall usage.

Fundraising trends are positive

In addition to shifting usage trends, the club is experiencing the pressures of workforce competition and inflation. Revenue was tracking above 2022 levels as the club hit the midpoint of the fiscal cycle. Year-end giving was expected to determine overall fundraising success for the period. That said, the budget is projected to be tight through the rest of the fiscal year as the club does more work and spends more than in previous years. Staffing costs continue to rise but remain a fairly stable portion of overall spending, because revenue has kept pace. The value of the endowment in November was \$6.6 million.

A shelter by any other name ...?

Existing club policy allows for naming features such as trails and shelters after people. But recently it came to the attention of leadership that the club had no process for considering whether to remove a person's name because of "morally repugnant" behavior. The board considered revisions to the naming policy in March 2022 and adopted them in December. The new policy largely defers to the judgment of those who made the original naming decision, sometimes many decades ago. Factors to consider include: how central the person's offensive behavior was to his or her public identity (the less central, the weaker the case for change); the importance of the person's role in the club's history; the harmful impact of the behavior on the club's mission; community identification and tradition around the feature; and the strength and clarity of the evidence. One board member argued that the policy set too high a bar, saying that it created too many outs to avoid changing a name. I agreed and added that the policy didn't seem to reflect the fact that a lot of morally repugnant behavior was hidden in the past and the voices of those who might have made it publicly known weren't heard at the time. I believe only one board member voted against the policy. I tried to register an abstention, but Zoom may have foiled me. I didn't feel justified in opposing the policy, given that I'd had minimal time to consider it and wasn't part of the policy consideration in March.

Local projects

- Bucklin Trail: A short reroute now bypasses a section where the trail had eroded into a gully more than 2 feet deep. The club will monitor erosion to see if further measures are needed.
- Cooper Lodge, etc.: The meeting ran behind schedule, so there wasn't time to get an update.

Strategic planning

Unfortunately, I had to hit the showers before the board discussed the club's draft strategic plan for 2023-2028. Leadership expects to bring a revised version to the board in March.

Audit

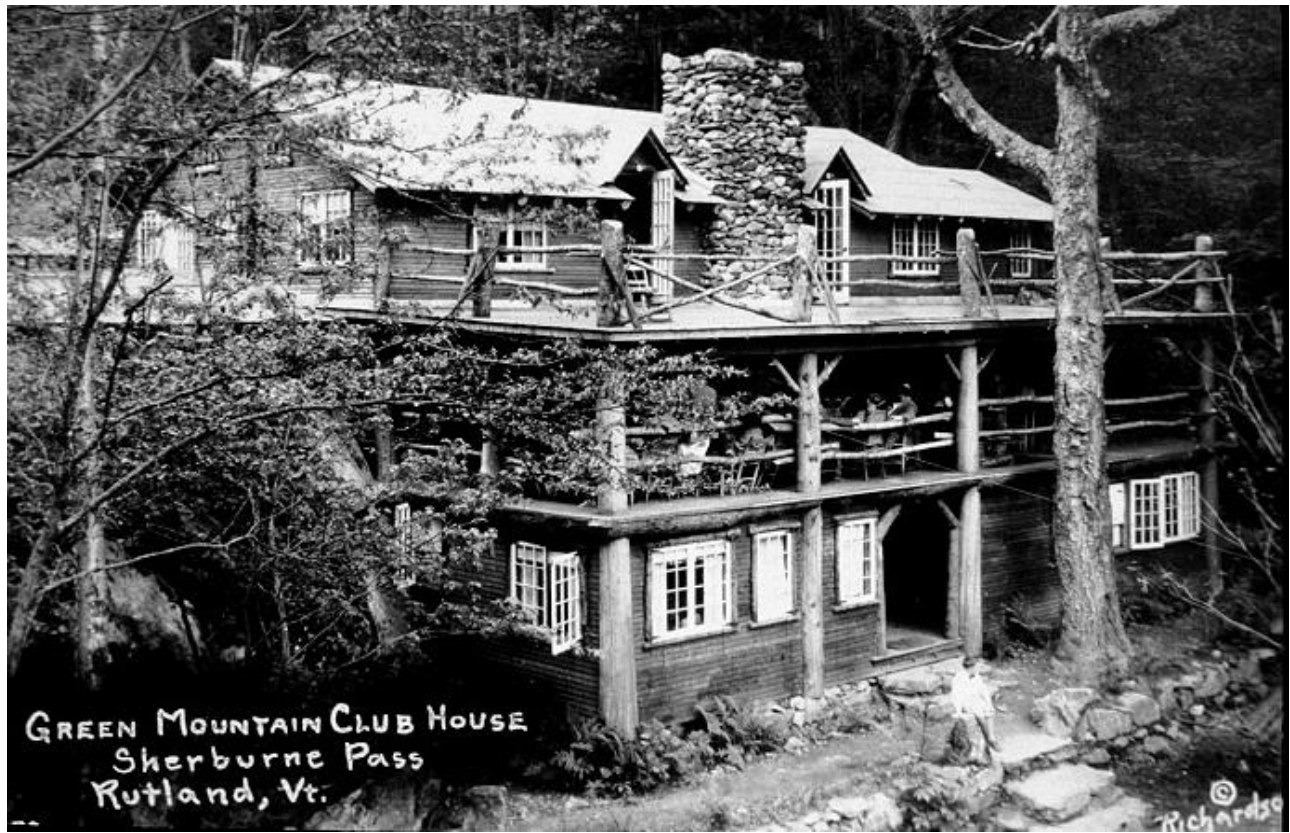
The club received a clean audit. 'Nuf said.

(Special thanks to Keegan Tierney, director of field programs, for providing the charts shared at the meeting and data from the Long Trail System Annual Report.)

Backtracking

Preserving our Past

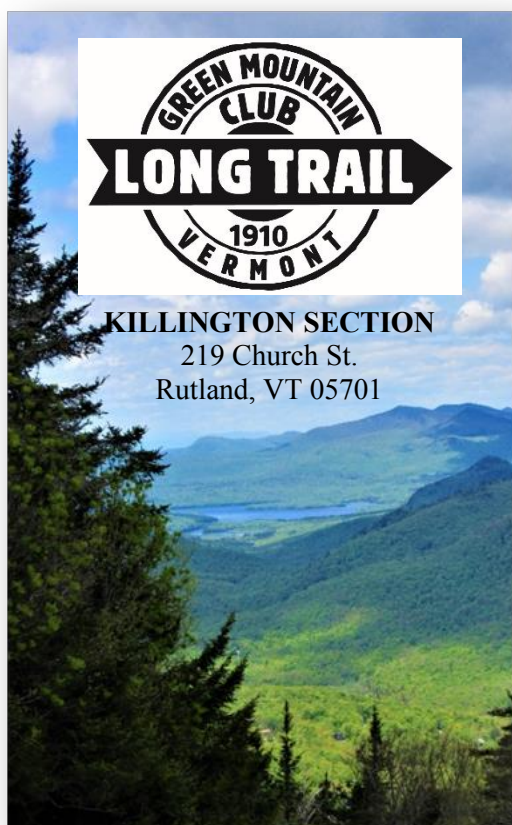
By Amy Peacock, KS Historian, photo provided by David Wright



The Long Trail Lodge, built in the woods just south of Route 4 at the peak of Sherburne Pass, opened as a clubhouse for the Green Mountain Club (GMC) on Saturday, December 1, 1923 with a grand reception. According to the December 1923 issue of the Green Mountain News (now the Long Trail News) over 200 people attended. A buffet lunch was served and attendees danced into the evening to the music of a five-piece orchestra. Three decades later in 1954, after years of financial losses the GMC Board of Trustees recommended that the lodge be sold. Grover Wright (uncle of Killington Section member David Wright) purchased the property. Sadly, the main lodge burned down in 1968. Remnants of some of the other original buildings still exist today.

The Killington Section has long held an interest in historic preservation of the site. Recently the Killington Section history committee met with Mike Debonis, executive director of the GMC, to discuss this prospect. While Mike said that the GMC is supportive of historic preservation, the issue is complicated. First steps involve negotiations between the GMC and the lodge-site land owner Powdr Corporation (parent company of Killington Resort). Mike recommended that in tandem with these negotiations the Killington Section form a plan of what historic preservation might look like, so that when negotiations are complete we will be ready to move forward. The first goal of the history committee will be to determine what historic preservation options exist for the site. Following that, steps will be outlined for moving forward and for including input from all Killington Section and other interested GMC members. The Long Trail Lodge was not only unique, but well-loved by many.

Please feel free to reach out to any of us on the history committee with questions, ideas, thoughts or concerns. We will do our best to keep everyone informed of progress when it happens.



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 bookstore 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 also 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

Make check payable to "GMC" and mail with this application to:

Green Mountain Club, 4711 Waterbury – Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB: KILLINGTON SECTION OUTINGS www.gmckillington.org

March – May 2023

Bring water and a lunch. Wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the weather and be prepared for weather changes. Distances are round trip and approximate, as are elevation gains. Hike leader has discretion to refuse anyone who is not adequately prepared. Call the hike leader for meeting place and time, and if you are unable to go, please let the leader know ASAP so that someone else can take your place if space is limited. Leaders may require covid vaccination. If you are sick or have any symptoms, please stay home and join us next time.

March 19, Sunday – LOST POND TRAIL, Pharoah Lake Wilderness Area, Chilson, NY

The trail starts at Putnam Pond Campground and ascends gradually to Lost Pond. We will then hike the one-mile loop around the pond and return the way we came. The loop around the pond has some moderately steep, rocky sections at the far end. Total distance 4 miles, moderate, micro-spikes or snowshoes may be needed. Vaccination required for carpooling. **Allison Henry, 802-779-4404**

March 25, Saturday – MUD SEASON MAPLE MEANDER, East Poultney

Please join us for a walk near a local sugarhouse that will include part dirt road with an historic cemetery and old school-house, hemlocks, hardwoods, & cows, and part off-road hiking or snowshoeing (if Mother Nature cooperates). Spikes & hiking sticks may be useful if the back roads are still icy, 2 – 4 miles. We will be closest to Green's Sugar House (located on Finel Hollow Rd.), where they traditionally have sugar-on-snow, maple cotton candy, dressings, spices, and more. Mahar's is not far away with maple cream, maple cream covered pecans, walnuts, and peanuts, and Marshalls & Verlaskas are also nearby so you can buy a pint or two at each place and compare! See how the liquid gold is made! Vaccination including boosters recommended, and required for carpooling as of publication date, check with leader for updated covid protocol. **Diane Bargiel, 413-687-1109**

April 22, Saturday – KILLINGTON SECTION ANNUAL MEETING, 1 p.m., Godnick Center, Deer St., Rutland

All are welcome to join us for a short business meeting and election of officers, followed by snacks and socializing out in the yard. It's a great way to meet folks who share an interest in outdoor recreation, and learn about our work protecting and maintaining Vermont's Long Trail. Vaccination recommended. Bring snacks to share if you like.

Sue Thomas, 802-773-2185

April 29, Saturday – TUCKER JOHNSON SHELTER, Killington

We'll follow the Long/Appalachian Trail north from Route 4, climbing steadily to Maine Junction, then take the Long Trail to the shelter. (If the trail is muddy, an alternate destination may be chosen.) 3 miles, moderate, with some steep climbing. Vaccination recommended for carpooling. **Larry Walter & Vivian Bebee, 802-353-3976**

May 6, Saturday – LOW ELEVATION LONG TRAIL CLEAN-UP, Shrewsbury/Cuttingsville/Wallingford

Join us for our annual day of clean-up and maintenance, preparing the trail for the hiking season. We will clear waterbars, trim brush and cut blowdowns on the lower-elevation stretches. Bring work gloves, sturdy shoes and lunch, tools will be provided. **Larry Walter, 802-775-3855 or Dave Coppock, 802-683-1614**

May 13, Saturday – WILDFLOWER WALK, location to be decided

An easy-to-moderate hike to admire the woodland flowers of spring. Mother Nature is fickle, so the location will be determined by how the season advances. If spring is very late this year an alternate date may be needed. Spring is also a great time to spot birds, so bring binoculars if you wish. Vaccination recommended for carpooling.

Sue Thomas, 802-773-2185

May 20, Saturday – WALLINGFORD POND, Mt. Holly

Wallingford Pond from the East. 4 miles, 300' climb. Easy, but wear water-resistant shoes in case spring mud puddles persist. We'll hike east from the end of the driveable part of Beaver Meadow Rd. in Mt. Holly, pass the remains of several farms on old roads, and reach the east shore of the east part of Wallingford Pond on an ATV track. We can finish off with a quarter mile hike up to a fine easterly view. Bring lunch and, so that you don't turn into lunch yourself, bring bug repellent. Full COVID vaccination, including boosters recommended by the CDC required.

Herb Ogden, 802-293-2510, hogden@vermontel.net

Sue Thomas, Editor
219 Church Street
Rutland, VT 05701



KILLINGTON SECTION

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