

# Smoke & Blazes

Volume 78, Number 4

Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

Winter 2025-26



*The panoramic view from White Rocks Overlook on a beautiful day is captured by Sunghee on our September hike to Greenwall Shelter on the LT/AT. Read more about it in the hike report on page 5.*





## KILLINGTON SECTION



Winter 2025-26

### 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](http://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](mailto:KillingtonSection@greenmountainclub.org)

## Trail Mix

Apologies to any members who did not receive the Fall issue of **Smoke & Blazes**. Our mailing labels come from headquarters in Waterbury, where installation of a new computer system caused some problems with membership lists. I hope the issue has been resolved, and that the list will be updated on a regular basis in the future.

Green Mountain National Forest has issued **new guidance on “trail magic”** in response to an increase in unattended food and beverages, leading to concerns around bear activity and waste disposal. All “trail magic” — including water, cold drinks, snacks, prepared foods — may only be given out with a volunteer physically present. Any trail magic left unattended will be removed and disposed of. This applies to cached food and resupplies as well. Thank you for helping us keep the Long Trail System litter free and a safe place for humans and wildlife to co-habitat.

The GMC will once again be presenting the **Outdoor Adventure Speaker Series** at headquarters in Waterbury Center on Thursday evenings starting in late January. Check the GMC website or the winter issue of Long Trail News for information.

A friend sent me an interesting article recently about a high school counselor in Bath, Maine who has been offering **hikes as an alternative to traditional detention**. Studies have found that time spent outdoors reduces mental and physical stress, and can enhance focus. She has found that many kids are more talkative and relaxed after a hike. Detention rates at the school have decreased, and some students now volunteer to participate in the hikes even when not in detention.

## The Extra Mile

**Long Trail Day** in September was a great success again this year. **Wayne & Kathy Krevetsky, Melissa Reichert** and **Bill Cooke** manned the trail magic tent at the Route 103 trailhead, feeding hikers and collecting \$104 in donations. **Herb Ogden** solicited another \$588 in pledges for his LT hike from Clarendon Gorge to the Lower Cold River Road, kept company by **Larry Walter, Allison Henry** and **Sue Thomas**. **Barb & Barry Griffith** assisted the effort by shuttling a car to Shrewsbury. Club-wide, a record-setting \$73,000 was raised, enough to fund 14 weeks of trail work.







*The History Committee, who made it happen -- Dave Wright, Herb Ogden and Section Historian Amy Peacock.*

# Mission Accomplished!

A project several years in the making finally came to fruition with the installation of a state historic marker at Sherburne Pass, honoring the site of Long Trail Lodge, the Green Mountain Club's first clubhouse.

A sizeable crowd turned out for the unveiling on September 27. Killington Section Historian, Amy Peacock, who led the effort, did the honors, then Killington Section President Herb Ogden introduced the speakers, beginning with GMC Executive Director Mike DeBonis, who spoke of the significance of the site in the club's history. Next up was Lindsay Pacheco, Administrative Services Coordinator for the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, the entity responsible for the network of historic markers around the state. Dave Wright then gave a very interesting talk on the



*GMC Executive Director Mike DeBonis.*



*Dave Wright spoke on the history and architecture of Long Trail Lodge.*

history of the building, with personal recollections from his time working there during the years when his uncle managed the property. Dave has amassed a large collection of photographs, postcards and memorabilia, which he displayed for all to examine after the speeches were over.

Many thanks to everyone who had a hand in seeing this through to completion, with a special shout-out to Amy, whose perseverance and good humor were invaluable in getting it done!

**Check out the GMC Store for holiday gift ideas!**



[www.store.greenmountainclub.org](http://www.store.greenmountainclub.org)





# Outing Reports

## **Spirit in Nature | Ripton, August 10, 2025 by Herb Ogden**

Spirit in Nature was established in the late 1990s by a group that included Paul Bortz, the Minister Emeritus of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Rutland. He knew I was active in the GMC, so he asked me to help with trail layout. I've visited it periodically ever since and enjoyed watching it grow to 14 paths for various religions. Short texts or poems relating to them are posted along the trails. Our group of a half dozen chose the longest path, the 1.5 mile Interfaith Path. On this hot day, that was plenty. Luckily about half the path runs near the Middlebury River, providing some inspiration for cool thoughts. We enjoyed the texts and poems and were surprised to find two from Benito Juarez, who was President of Mexico at the time of the U. S. Civil War. More info on Spirit in Nature is at <http://www.spiritinnature.org>.



*Larry embraces the spirit in nature.*

## **Bird's Eye View | Birdseye Mountain, Castleton, August 24, 2025 by Dave Coppock**

By prior agreement, a group of us met at the gate of the old Birdseye Mt. Ski Area at 0930. Participants included Lisa, John, Nancy, Larry, Dave, and two overworked branch trimming tools wielded by Dave and Larry. We had permission from the landowner to walk up the ATV trail he maintains up to the north summit of this triple-peaked mountain. The way starts out on easy grades, but starts getting serious after the .75 mile or so. Then it ramps up steeply as the mountain pitches upward. All the way, Larry & I moderated our pace by clipping just about every branch protruding over this old woods road. At around 1.5 miles, the route sneaks up on the north summit from behind and presents beholders with a stunning open view. Lookers on a clear day can spy West Mt. Ski Area near Glens Falls to the west, and the peaks to the north of Chittenden to the east. In between is a panoramic scene that includes Lake Bomoseen, the Adirondacks, and the Champlain Valley. This hike offers a huge bang for the buck. We enjoyed a long, relaxing lunch on the summit under threatening skies, but very comfortable temperatures. On our descent, a rainstorm caught us and forced us to layer up. It was done by the time we reached the cars. This hike is perfectly suited for those who want a moderate hike that can be done in a relatively short time, with an astounding payoff at the top.





## Spider Man | Moscow Pond, Bomoseen, August 16, 2025 by Sue Thomas

This was not a GMC hike, just a few friends getting together on a beautiful summer day, but I feel it was worthy of a write-up anyway. It was a long hike, but we made it to the Glen Lake overlook just in time for lunch, then wound our way



back along the lake for a well-deserved break on one of the small peninsulas that jut picturesquely into the water. As most of us settled down on the grass, Larry went in for a swim, no-doubt frightening away a group of women who boarded their kayaks to leave – all but one, who had discovered a rather large

spider hitching a ride in hers. Ever chivalrous, Larry waded over to the rescue, scooping up the stowaway and flinging it shoreward. Unfortunately the little guy proved more aerodynamic than he looked, and once airborne, he sailed right past the shoreline and headed straight for Sunghee's face! There followed much shrieking – Sunghee? The Spider? Both? I'm sure they were equally unnerved. Sunghee was revived with a stop for ice cream on the way home. The spider may need years of therapy.



## Greenwall in Gold | Greenwall Shelter, Wallingford, October 4, 2025 by Sue Thomas

This year's drought may have dulled the colors a bit, but we were still treated to a lovely fall day and plenty of gold leaves sparkling among the evergreens. And low water levels can be your friend when you have brooks to cross, which we did, as we huffed and puffed our way up. The LT/AT wastes no time gaining elevation on that stretch. The day was unseasonably warm, so layers were shed in a hurry. Frequent rest breaks were in order, but the group soldiered on and we reached Greenwall Shelter just at noon for lunch. It's such a pretty spot that one



hiker opted to remain there while the rest of us continued on up to the rock garden and overlook.

While controversial in the trail community, which tries to adhere to a "leave no trace" philosophy, the rock garden, for those who have not seen it, is an impressive collection of constructions by aspiring artists and stone masons, filling a large clearing at the head of the overlook trail. Or perhaps

it's the work of aliens, bored while awaiting repairs to their spaceship...who can say? Whatever its origins and environmental correctness, it's always interesting to see.



The view from the overlook makes all the huffing and puffing worthwhile, looking west above the talus slope and across the valley. Abundant pine cones in the treetops promise good eating for the forest critters this winter. After a while we were joined by two hikers who turned out to be a mother and son who had hiked with us years ago – the then-little boy had made quite an impression by gallantly taking all the ladies by the hand and helping them over a fallen log. It was great to see him again all grown up and still hiking. We picked up our stray hiker on the way down, and as it was quite warm by then and we felt we had earned a treat for our labors, we went in search of ice cream...but alas, the snack bars have not yet adapted to climate change and had all closed for the season. Sigh.

**WANTED:** Hike leaders! It's a fun way to connect with other lovers of the outdoors and share favorite places. Contact Sue: 802-773-2185

## Up to our Elbow | The Elbow Loop, Mendon, October 11, 2025 by Larry Walter

This hike was falsely advertised as a return to The Ball, down Arlington way, but after failing to secure permission from private land owners, it became apparent that this one wasn't going to happen. Drawing from my near-photographic memory of prior hikes, I had to act quickly, think creatively and come up with an exciting alternative. After 15 minutes of frightening mental maneuvering, littered with synaptic traffic jams, I dove for the next Sue Thomas off-ramp. After a couple minutes she came up with a hunter-less (first week of bow season), fun, and reasonably challenging route. We (me, Sunghee and Sue) met at the Route 4 LT/AT parking lot, (which was already filling up) at 0900, and managed to shuffle across the highway between waves of 70 mph Mass license plates attached to auto-piloted, 370 hp, AWD 8-passenger, window-tinted Chevy Subdivisions. Once en route towards our 51st state (Canamont), we crossed about 50 board bridges (one of which is brand new) to where we spotted the familiar Catamount Ski Trail markers. Sue was a little concerned as to whether we could follow the CT tags from there, but I convinced her that given my spectacularly spotless record of unlostness, we'd have no problem running clockwise. Just for future reference, unless you were skiing black diamonds at age 2 like Coppock, this is NOT a great skiing route. The original trail location 'engineer' seemed to adhere to the following principles: A) follow natural, self-draining terraces which are fun to ski; B) When encountering any pre-WWII, negative or positive 30%-grade skid trail, take it; C) Plunge or herringbone on said laundry chute a minimum of 1000 vertical meters until encountering another pleasant, natural terrace; D) Resume pleasant ski path for at least 50 feet. Actually, walking the ski trail is fun. We had nice colors and the traffic noise quickly faded as we worked our way around to the northwest towards Turnpike Road. I think we took about 45 minutes to reach the class-3 road, which we took to the



north, passing three or four nice camps along the way. After that we descended and then ascended on Elbow Road for another ½ hour with nice views of short cliffs off to the east. A lone Toyota pickup went bouncing by and he stopped to chat for a couple minutes. He was avoiding home tasks to enjoy the spectacular weather, as were we. Once we topped out at a major saddle (The Elbow), we jumped onto the LT and headed south towards Deer Mtn. I had forgotten how much of an ascent it is to get back to Tucker Johnson shelter. After having lunch at the shelter, we continued on down the LT to our cars. I think it worked out to around 6 miles and maybe 1000 feet of climbing. Thanks Sue, for coming through on this one.

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## Board of Directors Report | September 13, 2025 submitted by KS rep. Bruce Peacock

The Treasurer reported that the first quarter of the fiscal year (May through July) was on budget. Contributions were 21% above budget. Memberships were off but that was attributed to conversion to a new software system, so reminders were sent out later than usual. There have been no problems with payments related to the federal projects. Executive Director Mike DeBonis reported that with no floods so far, this has been the first "normal summer" since before Covid. Keegan Tierney, Director of Field Operations, submitted a report to the Board that highlighted the following accomplishments:

- ❖ Completion of the southern terminus relocation
- ❖ Broke ground on the Belvedere Mountain trail relocation
- ❖ Ran a successful first half of the season at full staffing
- ❖ Purchased an excavator to save time and money on trail construction
- ❖ Completed a helicopter airlift to Taft Lodge and the Battel overnight site

The rest of the meeting was devoted to the preliminary report of the Governance Committee. It has been 10 years since the last governance review was completed. The Committee identified three areas for examination:

- 1) Bylaws changes to reflect current practice, current Vermont law for non-profits, and to eradicate some loopholes.
- 2) Board size
- 3) Section Structure

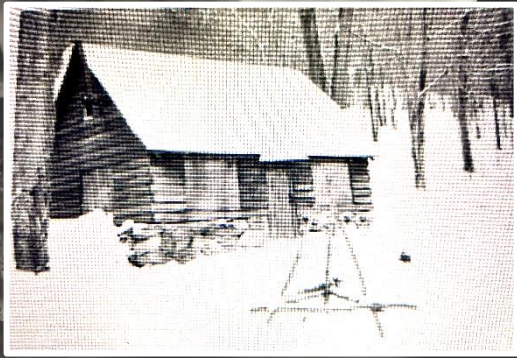
They plan to have the final proposal ready for Board approval in March so it can be voted on by the full membership at the June annual meeting.



# Backtracking

## Tucker-Johnson A Tale of Three Shelters

*Gale Spaulding, Mary and Craigue Perkins at Fred Tucker Lodge, Probably Bob peeking from behind, 1938.*



**B**uilt in 1938 by the Long Trail Patrol, Fred Tucker Lodge was situated just a mile north of Sherburne Pass. At that time the Long Trail crossed over the highway at the top of the pass and continued north, skirting around Deer Leap Mountain to the west of the present-day Inn at Long Trail. It was a spacious cabin with bunks for 12 and a woodstove, and was named for Fred H. Tucker of Boston, a long-time member of the Green Mountain Club.

In 1969 the Long Trail Patrol used the lodge as its base of operations while building a replacement north of Willard Gap. The summer issue of *Smoke & Blazes* that year reported, "This new shelter will replace Tucker now that the beech tree finally fell on it." It featured bunks for eight and a picture window in the privy, and was christened Tucker-Johnson Shelter in honor of Otto Johnson of Proctor, who bequeathed \$1,000 for the construction.

Sadly, that structure was burned to the ground by an arsonist in 2011. Reconstructed in 2018 with help from Killington Section volunteers, the current Tucker-Johnson sits a little to the north of the old site, and features a bear box and an accessible moldering privy – no picture window, but it will not have to be moved to a new hole, much appreciated by those of us who have done that!



*Ray Catozzi, Steve Pulling, Ira Hawley and Rob Carey replaced siding on Tucker-Johnson (#2) in 1985. See p.6 for a photo of the third and current structure.*

**December 2025 – February 2026**

Bring water and a lunch. Wear sturdy footwear, dress appropriately for the weather and be prepared for weather changes. Snowshoes or grippers may be needed for winter hikes. Distances are round trip and approximate, as are elevation gains. Hike leader has discretion to refuse anyone who is not adequately prepared. If you are sick or have any symptoms, please stay home and join us next time.

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**December 6, Saturday – Equinox Preserve, Manchester**

We'll hike a combination of routes in this beautiful natural area on the lower elevations of Mount Equinox. Distance and difficulty will depend on which we choose, but likely 4-6 miles with some climbing and some flatter terrain. Snowshoes may be needed if the weather demands. Rain date Sunday. Call for meeting place and time. **Diane Bargiel, 413-687-1109**

**December 13, Saturday – Wildcat Crag, Chittenden**

Hike to Leffert's Pond and then climb to the summit of Wildcat Crag. Snowshoes or grippers may be needed, dependent on the weather conditions, rain date Sunday. Difficult, 5 miles, with about 1000' elevation gain. Call for meeting place and time. **Larry Walter, 802-775-3855**

**January 3, Saturday – Mendon Peak, Mendon**

Climb Rutland County's highest trailless peak on the well-established bushwack route following Eddy Brook. Enjoy views of Killington Peak to the east and the hills of Shrewsbury to the south. 7 miles, difficult with a 2000-ft elevation gain. Snowshoes will be required. Call for the meeting place and time. **Sheamus Fagan, 802-498-8751**

**January 10, Saturday – Lapland Pond, Lake George Wild Forest, Dresden**

Hike moderately rolling hills past several remote ponds. Minimal elevation gain, 5 miles, moderate. Option to continue to Millman Pond depending on conditions and group preference. Snowshoes or grippers may be needed. Call leader for meeting place and time. Must call by 5 p.m. Friday to sign up. **Allison Henry, 802-779-4404**

**January 17, Saturday – Hot Dog Roast, Location TBA**

We're reviving a popular mid-winter tradition. Join us for a short hike or snowshoe followed by lunch in the outdoors. Bring hot dogs or whatever you want to roast over the fire. We'll decide on a location based on the conditions at the time. Snowshoes or grippers may be needed. Call for meeting place and time. **Larry Walter & Vivian Bebee, 802-353-3976**

**January 24, Saturday – Aitken State Forest East Road, Mendon**

We'll follow the East Road south from the Tamarack Notch trailhead, then follow another good wood road east to the edge of the State Forest, where there's a wide view to the west. Round trip 4.8 mi., total climb about 600', moderate difficulty. We'll hike unless there's enough snow for snowshoeing or skiing. Bad weather date January 31. For meeting place and time contact **Herb Ogden, 802-772-7322, [hogden@vermontel.net](mailto:hogden@vermontel.net)**

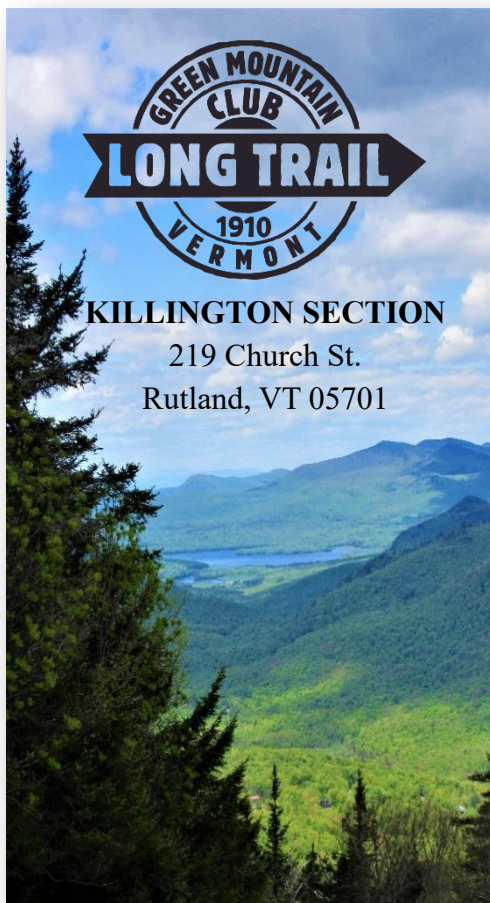
**February 14, Saturday – Sugar Hollow Brook, Pittsford**

Celebrate Valentines Day with a short but scenic afternoon hike or snowshoe featuring a babbling brook and a fearsome beast! Bring hot drinks and treats to share if you'd like. 1.5 miles, mostly easy with a short climb, option to go longer if we choose. Bad weather date Sunday. Call for meeting time and place. **Sue Thomas, 802-773-2185**

**February 28, Saturday – Chittenden Brook Ski, Chittenden**

This trip requires advanced backcountry skiing skills, including the ability to make at least controlled snowplow turns. Climbing skins are not necessary. We must have two or more cars – leaving one at the Chittenden Brook pull-out on route 73 we'll head to Brandon Gap and ski the relatively easy ascent south on the Long Trail to the Chittenden Brook Trail (2.3 mi.). This 1.8-mile trail, though not generously wide and gentle, was designed with skiing in mind. It has just enough space and runout to be fun. Once we reach the campground, it's an easy 2.5-mile ski out to route 73 on a logging road. Call for meeting place and time. **Dave Coppock, 802-683-1614**





## Your invitation to join

### Killington Section, Green Mountain Club

The Killington Section, based in Rutland, VT, is a chapter of the statewide Green Mountain Club. Membership in the Section includes membership in the Club. Members receive a membership card, the Club quarterly *Long Trail News*, and the Section quarterly *Smoke & Blazes* including a schedule of outings, trail work parties and social events. Members also receive reduced rates on items from the Club store and at most overnight sites served by caretakers. Membership dues help to maintain trails and shelters in the Killington Section (Route 140 to Route 4) and the Long Trail system throughout Vermont.

#### ANNUAL DUES:

Individual.....\$45  
Family.....\$60  
Senior/Student/Friend.....\$25

Contact us for information on life memberships  
and categories for giving at a higher level.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Kirk Trails and Shelters fund supporting the Killington Section's maintenance and preservation of trails and shelters.

I would like information on volunteering for:

\_\_\_ trail work, \_\_\_ shelter work, \_\_\_ sign making, \_\_\_ publications, \_\_\_ leading outings, \_\_\_ publicity, \_\_\_ education, \_\_\_ tech support

Make check payable to "GMC" and mail with this application to:  
Green Mountain Club, 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, VT 05677