

# RIDGE LINES

www.gmcburlington.org

Spring 2008

## **GMC Reminds Springtime Hikers To Stay Off High-Elevation Trails**

Here in Vermont, winter feels so long and summer seems so short. We all want to get out on the trails on that first spring day when the sun is shining, there's a breeze from the south, the thermometer hits fifty degrees, and the air is full of the dripping and gurgling sounds of melting snow. But the trails are wet and muddy in the spring. When hikers step on saturated soil, they cause irreversible damage. Hikers can make deep gullies and pits that will be there all summer long. If hikers step off the trail to avoid the mud, they increase erosion by creating additional trenches for run-off.

The State of Vermont closes hiking trails on state land (including the trails on Mt. Mansfield and Camel's Hump) from mid-April to Memorial Day. The state also joins with the Green Mountain Club, Green Mountain National Forest, and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in urging responsible use of *all* of Vermont's hiking trails between sugaring season and Memorial Day.

**Stay off Vermont's sensitive summits.** The delicate and rare tundra plants are easily crushed or ripped out of the earth by the combination of boots and water. In addition to the two closed mountains, hikers should avoid Stratton Mountain, Killington Peak, Jay Peak and Lincoln Ridge (Mount Ellen to Appalachian Gap).

**Walk through the mud. Don't walk around it.** If a trail is so muddy that you have to walk on neighboring vegetation, turn back and find a different place to hike.

**Plan lower-elevation hikes.** A trail may be dry at the trailhead but very muddy higher up. Spring is a great time to walk in lakeside parks or hike on dirt roads, rail trails and rec paths. In northwestern Vermont, some good options are the Burlington and Stowe Bike Paths, Red Rocks Park, Colchester Park and Malletts Bay Causeway, Mills Riverside Park in Jericho, Mobbs Farm in Jericho Center, Niquette Bay State Park, Charlotte Recreation Path and Wildlife Area, Shelburne Bay and the LaPlatte River area, Wiessner Woods in Stowe, Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail and the trails at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge. (There are maps for many of these walks in the *Day Hiker's Guide* and *Nature Walks in Northern Vermont and the Champlain Valley*, by Elizabeth Bassett. Most areas are also easy to find in Vermont gazetteers.)

**Give our hiking trails a chance to dry out. They'll need less maintenance and will be safer and more enjoyable all summer and fall.**

*Inside: Details about Burlington Section membership, trails, shelters and outings ... Preview of March Taylor Series Event: Trekking in Mustang and Bhutan ... News Bulletins about GMC's New Logo and the May 31 Annual Meeting ... Requests for your input about outings and your stories about weather*

## ***GMC Annual Meeting***

**May 31, 2008 at Club Headquarters on Route 100 in Waterbury Center**

**This Annual Meeting will truly be a celebration. By May, construction will be underway for the new Hiker's Center, the replacement for the South Barn that burned in January 2003. As Ridge Lines goes to print, materials are already on site, permits are all in place, and the blueprints are ready. Work weekends are being planned for this spring and summer.**

**Join fellow GMC members from all over the state  
for food, hikes, conversation and entertainment!**

**Details about schedule and activities will soon be posted at [www.greenmountainclub.org](http://www.greenmountainclub.org)**

## ***Get Involved in Your Club!***

This spring is full of great opportunities to get outdoors and do something positive for the Green Mountain Club.

**April 13** - Workshop for current outing leaders and anyone interested in leading trips in the future. This session is your chance to talk with other trip leaders and share stories about fun and challenges.

**April 29** - Workshop for people interested in becoming shelter adopters.

**May 3, 10, 17 and 24** – Trail work outings. Come along and help clip overhanging branches, remove fallen limbs and repair water bars. The May 24<sup>th</sup> trip is for women only.

**June 7** – Celebrate National Trails Day. Be part of a nationwide effort to prepare trails for the summer hiking season.

***Work outings are always full of laughter, camaraderie and fun. In addition, every time you hike the trail afterwards, you'll feel proud that you helped.***

## ***We need your input!!!***

We'd like more GMC members out there leading trips and participating in outings. We put together a questionnaire to get your ideas and suggestions for how to make this happen.

Please take a few moments to complete the Outings Questionnaire online at [www.gmcburlington.org](http://www.gmcburlington.org).

**Or** download the questionnaire, fill it out, and mail it to Richard Larsen, 11 Discovery Road, Essex Junction, VT, 05452.

You can also call Rich at 878-6828 to request a paper copy of the survey.

For more information, contact Rich Larsen ([larsen007@aol.com](mailto:larsen007@aol.com)) or Paul Houchens ([houchens@comcast.net](mailto:houchens@comcast.net)).

## ***Revised Logo***

There have been several GMC logos in the almost one hundred years since the Club was started. In many of the variations, there was no obvious connection between the Club and the Long Trail. In March 2007, the Board of Directors adopted a revised logo. In addition to the main club, each of the Sections has a new and improved logo. The revised logo emphasizes the connection between the work of the Green Mountain Club and the Long Trail.

## **See Your Story In Print**

**Most Vermonters who've spent any time outdoors have stories about the weather. Have you hiked in mud to your kneecaps? Put your head down and trudged blindly through gale-force winds? Skidded all over an icy mountain? Share your story by sending it to Maeve Kim: PO Box 1086, Jericho Center 05465 or [maevulus@surfglobal.net](mailto:maevulus@surfglobal.net).**

## *Committee Reports - cont.*

**SPECIAL EVENTS** – Anneliese Koenig organized a very successful annual meeting for the Burlington Section on January 19, 2007, with great food, lively discussion and a program by noted wildlife photographer George Wuertner. The next special event is the March Taylor Series presentation. For more than ninety years, the Long Trail has inspired Vermonters to seek adventure in the Green Mountains and beyond. The James P. Taylor Series, named after the man who first envisioned the Long Trail, brings adventures through stories and photographs. Join us for inspiring and fascinating presentations that will transport you to mountains and waterways near and far—a great way to spend an evening!

### **Trekking in Mustang and Bhutan**

March 21, 7:00 PM, in the McCarthy Recital Hall at St. Michael's College in Colchester

Since retiring from the business world in 1998, Jason Bacon has completed five treks in the Himalayas. With the able assistance of retired National Geographic photographer Jim Blair, Jason (who is now President of the Vermont Historical Society) has prepared an exciting slideshow that will take you to the remote regions of Mustang and Bhutan in the Himalayan Mountains. Join us for an exciting evening of slides and stories about the most famous mountain range in the world.

Tickets are \$5 for GMC members, \$8 for non-members, children under 12 years of age are free, St. Michael's College students \$4. Tickets are available at the door only. All proceeds support GMC's Local Sections and the Education Program.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** - Our director, Sue Girouard, attends meetings of the GMC Board of Directors as a representative of the Burlington Section. She brings specific issues to the attention of the main club and then shares information about the main club with our local membership. Here's a quick summary of some important issues dealt with by GMC during the past year:

**Centennial Celebration** - The Long Trail and the Green Mountain Club were "born" on March 11, 1910. GMC is planning a major 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party. The celebration will actually begin in August 2009, when GMC hosts the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Biennial Conference at Castleton State College. This conference will be a whole week of workshops, hikes and excursions. Information about the conference and volunteer opportunities is available on the website [www.Vermont2009.org](http://www.Vermont2009.org). For more information, contact Jean Anderson at [jeanoutdoors@aol.com](mailto:jeanoutdoors@aol.com). She's in charge of volunteer recruitment for the conference.

**Centennial Book** - One part of the Centennial Celebration has been underway for many months now. Volunteers have been working on a Centennial Book featuring historical photographs and prose. The book is expected to be available by August 2009.

**Jay Peak Clear Cutting** - In July, two men illegally cut a back-country ski trail off the side of Jay Peak, destroying nearly one thousand trees and creating a scar almost a mile long and about 60 feet across at its widest point. GMC supports the recommendations of forestry experts who have urged that the area be closed to skiing to prevent permanent damage. Some skiers are angry about the GMC's efforts. This controversial issue has pitted different groups of backcountry users against each other.

**Long Range Planning Committee** - The current long-range plan was adopted in 1998 and revised in 2002. Interested GMC members from every section met in November to brainstorm and discuss the club's future.

**Second Century Campaign** - GMC's goal is to raise 5.25 million dollars, which will be used to rebuild the Hiker's Center, complete the protection of the Long Trail, and continue regular maintenance of trails, privies, tenting areas and shelters. The last year has seen great progress towards this goal.

## *Summary of Committee Reports*

*The Burlington Section has many working committees made up of volunteers who specialize in the behind-the-scenes activities that keep the club going. Here are reports about these activities for the year 2007.*

**MEMBERSHIP** – Dot Myer reports that the Burlington Section has 986 members, up 27 from a year ago. There are 727 separate memberships, many of which include more than one person in a family. Starting this fall, Dot has been sending e-mail reminders to people who haven't renewed. It's too soon to know whether this kind of reminder will be successful in prompting "drop-outs" to rejoin. We hope it will be!

**TRAILS** - Pam Gillis reports that there were five regular trail outings plus a women-only workshop during 2007. In addition to clearing away blow-downs, which were more numerous than in previous years, volunteers clipped overhanging branches and cleared water bars. The women-only day was an addition to the regular schedule and allowed us to clear most of Frost Trail, something we usually don't get to do. To make sure we had tools for everybody, we bought two more pairs of loppers, a tool that always gets a lot of use.

It's easier to get the trails in shape when there's a large group of volunteers. On average, nine volunteers showed up for each 2007 work outing, including the leaders. That's a good number, but a few more would be great. There's work for people with a wide variety of experience, abilities and strength. **We have a lot of fun on work outings and have the satisfaction of getting the trails ready for a busy hiking season. So please come out and help!**

**OUTINGS** - Rich Larsen and Paul Houchens report that the Burlington Section had 108 outings planned in 2007. Outings included hikes, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, paddling, road walks and nature walks. You can read summaries of many trips online at [www.gmcburlington.org/category/trip-reports/](http://www.gmcburlington.org/category/trip-reports/). **THANK YOU, TRIP LEADERS!**

We estimate that 75-80% of the planned trips took place. The typical number of participants was 6 people. Many outings had great participation - as many as 14 people - but an unfortunately large number of advertised outings drew few or no participants. Outings led by new leaders tend to suffer from low attendance. It may be that people are not as eager to sign up if they don't recognize the leader's name. **Goal for every Burlington Section member: Participate in a few more trips in 2008, and especially consider going along with a new leader.**

**SHELTERS** – Linda Evans reports that 2007 was another quiet year, thanks to the benevolent forces of Mother Nature. A few trees were cut down so they wouldn't fall on Taylor Lodge. Bark mulch was carried in, garbage carried out. A commemorative plaque was installed at Twin Brooks Tenting Site in honor of Roland Burroughs, a long-time member who served as a one-man trail crew along the gnarly trails of the southern approach to Mt. Mansfield. Eighteen volunteers completed 83 hours of work. The volunteers included our eight dedicated site adopters: Kerstin Lange at Duck Brook Shelter, Clem Holden and Herm Hoffman at Buchanan Lodge, Jeff Bostwick at Puffer Shelter, Jen Andrews at Taylor Lodge, Jon Boyson at Butler Lodge, Scott Buckingham at Twin Brooks Tentsite, and John Bennett at Taft Lodge.

**TREASURER** - Joel Tilley provided information about income and expenses. **At our Annual Meeting on January 19, the Burlington Section donated approximately \$27,000 to the main club's trails and shelters committee Second Century Campaign.**

**WEB SITE** - New webmaster Ted Albers discussed changes in the Burlington Section's website. It's now in the form of a blog so that people can contribute comments. Approximately 500-600 people per month have been visiting the website ([www.gmcburlington.org](http://www.gmcburlington.org)).