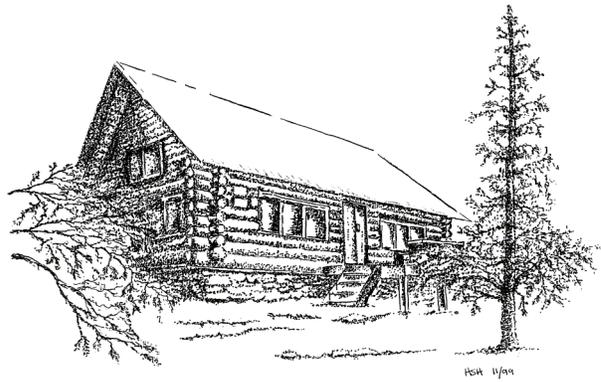


RIDGE LINES



GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB BURLINGTON SECTION

FALL - WINTER 2004-2005

Are you busy? stressed? Does your schedule leave you no time to head for the mountains for a soul-rejuvenating hike? Are you worried about being in the woods during fall hunting seasons? Here are some great ideas for hikes right around Burlington – no heady summits, maybe, but accessible and beautiful.

GREAT LITTLE HIKES RIGHT NEAR TOWN

by Dot Myer

I discovered **Red Rocks** when I had a badly sprained ankle and couldn't do serious hikes for two or three months. This South Burlington Park has a network of trails over rocks, along the beach and through woods. In winter the trails are good for skiing or snowshoeing, and the "ice sculptures" that form along the shore are fantastic. In May there is a profusion of wildflowers: hepaticas, bluets, Dutchman's breeches, trillium, trout lilies, and many others. If you go in July or August, you can stop for a swim after your walk.

Another favorite nearby hiking place is **Shelburne Bay Park**. Trails lead from the parking areas that are just beyond the public boat launch on Bay Road. There are trails near the lake, in the woods, and up over steep little Allen Hill. You can relax on a bench and eat your lunch while watching boats in the bay. Across the road is a nature trail along the **LaPlatte River** where there are often great blue herons and other birds.

Just beyond Shelburne Bay Park is **Shelburne Farms**. They have many trails suitable for skiing or snowshoeing in winter and hiking in the summer. There are geese and ducks in the lake, and views from Lone Tree Hill. You can stop and see baby lambs, pet a burro, or watch horses and brown Swiss cows. There are beautiful gardens and one path lined with lilacs – beautiful to see and beautiful to smell in late May or early June.

*For more suggestions about good walking and hiking trails in the Burlington area, see **Nature Walks in Northern Vermont and the Champlain Valley**, by Elizabeth Bassett. This useful book is available through libraries and bookstores, as well as at GMC headquarters in Waterbury Center.*

The **Winooski Valley Park District** has a number of parks with trails along the Winooski River. The trail behind the Champlain Mill might be hard to get to, with all the construction, but when the dust settles it will once again provide a lovely walking place along the river. I've hiked there many times over about five years doing "tracking" for Keeping Track. It's been exciting to see a small stream developed into a large pond by beavers. Once we saw the beavers up close. We've also seen deer in this area, and signs of raccoons, otters, and other animals. On the Burlington side of the Winooski River is Salmon Hole, a beautiful rocky area along the river.

In the north end of Burlington, there's the **Ethan Allen Homestead**, with trails along the Winooski and through swamp lands.

If you don't mind walking on pavement, the **Burlington Bike Path** stretches for about eight miles along the waterfront. Here you can see everything from busy industry to empty fields and woods, as well as attractions such as the boathouse, ECHO and the interesting sculptures behind the Water Department. Of course there are also beaches – at Oakledge, North Beach, and Leddy Park. I once saw huge flocks of Canada geese on the edge of the lake here. This trail is now connected to trails in Colchester by a bridge across the Winooski River.

When you really want to enjoy the outdoors but don't have time or opportunity to go to the mountains, these may be just what you're looking for.

INSIDE

More on privies	Page 2
Hiking in hunting season	Page 4
What's a wampahoofus?	Page 4
Activities	Page 3 and pages 5-7
Heard Along the Trail	Page 7

*More on Answering Nature's Call ...
When You're Out Enjoying Nature*

In the July issue of Ridge Lines, we advised hikers against urinating in any of the privies along the Long Trail or adjoining trails. We said that hikers should use the woods to pee and “should never leave tissues or toilet paper behind. Bring plastic sandwich bags with you and either carry out paper and sanitary products or burn them in a hot fire at approved fire pits.”

Burlington Section member Pete Saile pointed out two possible sources of confusion:

First, the sentence might suggest that hikers should burn plastic sandwich bags. **Don't!** As Pete noted, “it is common knowledge that the burning of plastics releases dioxins into the atmosphere.” For the same reason, hikers should never burn disposable diapers or tampon applicators if there's any plastic in them.

Second, it's true that there are approved fire pits at many shelters and tenting areas. Unfortunately, not everyone uses these pits well. If you feel you have to burn something, make sure every single scrap is burned. Pete is a shelter adopter, and many times he's retrieved plastic, glass, bottle caps and paper that weren't fully burned and were left in the fire pit. Leaving garbage behind in a fire pit is exactly the same as leaving garbage around anywhere else. (Pete also reminded us that some shelters are designated "No Fire" areas. Hikers can enjoy evening campfires at the many shelters that do have fire pits but should never burn anything in areas without an official pit.)

So – yes, there are fire pits, and yes, hikers can use them. But the best use of the pits is to have a nice, cozy wood fire at the end of a day of hiking. As for garbage and waste, it's always best to pack out everything that came with you into the woods.

A FUN DAY IN THE WOODS -- AND A CHALLENGE FOR OTHER BURLINGTON SECTION MEMBERS
by Jan O'Brien

Want a chance to hike, meet interesting people, sweat a bit, and do something worthwhile – all at the same time?

On July 10, I worked with eight other volunteers to replace the Duck Brook privy with a new moldering privy. I've wanted to volunteer for trail or shelter work for a few years, and this was the very first time my schedule matched the GMC date.

Our leader, Chris Hanna, had done a great deal of advance planning so we could all be productive on Privy Day. There were many tasks going on simultaneously, with the aim of a completed project before nightfall. First, we all helped carry the materials, supplies and tools to the Duck Brook shelter area on the LT north of Jonesville. After lunch, the old privy was dismantled (actually demolished!), which wasn't at all the dreadful task I expected. We carried out the old building materials (Leave No Trace) as the new privy was being assembled. By late afternoon, the building was stained and finishing touches were completed.

As a brand-new volunteer who's over age 55, I had wondered if I could truly contribute and not just be in the way. By the end of the day, I'd had fun, worked hard, solved problems, shared camaraderie with great people, and enjoyed many hours out on the trail in the woods and mountains. We'd all had a delicious lunch together and many good laughs - and a sparkling new moldering privy was ready for hiker use that night. I felt like I did something good for myself, the GMC and the Long Trail. The new privy – *my* privy - should last 20 years or so. I'm already looking forward to the next shelter outing this summer!

Now - the challenge! While I was carrying materials, tools, stain, etc. back and forth on the trail, it came to me that every member of the GMC truly can make a contribution to the upkeep of trails and shelters. Each of us should volunteer just once a year to help out with a trail or shelter project. If you're not able to go out on the trail, you can help by contributing even a few dollars towards materials and supplies. (Businesses are often willing to do their part by cutting prices. For the Duck Brook privy, Chris Hanna bought a surprising amount of new materials from a local company for just \$6!)

Join in, contribute, support. Many hands and minds working together can accomplish amazing things!

Look for a front-page article in next April's Ridge Lines for more information about volunteering as well as a schedule of the spring workdays along the Burlington Section's part of the Long Trail and side trails.

Ridge Lines

Co-Editors: Laura Philipps and Maeve Kim

Outings: Phil Hazen, Paul Houchens

Printing: Hard Copy

Production: Len Carpenter, Llyn Ellison, Pam Gillis, Corky Magoon, Carol Mogilski, Sally Spear, Andy Squires, Carlene Squires

Send contributions to: Maeve Kim, maevulus@aol.com

Send address changes and subscription requests to:

Dot Myer, 7 Patrick Street, So. Burlington 05403 or
Dotmyer@together.net

Mark Your Calendars!

Here are FOUR great opportunities for Burlington Section Members.

December 1, 2004

Are you thinking about some long-distance backpacking? Are you full of questions?



How much weight should I plan to carry?

How can I get my body ready for the challenge?

What's the best sleeping pad?

Should I carry a tent?

What about a water purifier?

There are so many different kinds of trail food!! How do I decide what to buy?

Here's your chance to talk with veterans of the Long Trail, John Muir Trail, Appalachian Trail, and Wonderland Trail. Bring your questions, your water bottle, and some finger food to share.

- *Brownell Library in Essex Junction*
- *Wednesday, December 1st*
- *7:00 to 9:00 pm*

(Have you already completed some long-distance hikes? Join the party and share what you've learned!)

For more information, call Brynne Lazarus at 863-1469.

February 5, 2005

The **Burlington Section Annual Meeting** will be on February 5, 2005, from 5:00-9:00 pm, at the Faith United Methodist Church on Dorset Street in South Burlington. There'll be delicious food for the taste buds as well as lots of food for thought. The Annual Meeting is a great time to get to know fellow Burlington Section members, hear what's going on in the Club, and contribute your ideas. Look for details in the January 2005 issue of **Ridge Lines**.

January 15 – 17, 2005

Enjoy a weekend at the **Wheeler Pond Cabins** in Vermont's beautiful Northeast Kingdom, at the edge of the Willoughby State Forest. Both cabins have beautiful views of pond and mountains. As you relax, chat and eat, you'll see wooded Moose Mountain straight across the pond and rocky Wheeler Mountain off to your left.

The Wheeler Pond cabins are sturdy and have good wood stoves and a plentiful supply of firewood. Both cabins are equipped with sleeping platforms, tables, benches and chairs, as well as an assortment of dishes, pots and pans. Visitors bring their own water, lanterns and camp stoves.

There are hiking and walking trails all around the camps. An easy walk takes you to the "Gnome Steps", flat black stones making a beautiful series of waterfalls. Wheeler Mountain provides amazing views of Lake Willoughby and Mt. Hor. (One recent hiker described Wheeler Mountain as "Mansfield-like views with one third the climbing".) The mostly wooded Moose Mountain trail features a rocky lookout from which you can see Wheeler Pond and the cabins. There are also many miles of old CCC roads and other dirt tracks through neighboring woods.

For the January weekend, we'll climb Wheeler Mountain and maybe do some snowshoeing or cross-country skiing on old roads and trails.

For more information and to register for this trip, contact Dot Myer by January 12 at the latest. Dot can be reached at 863-2433 or at dotmyer@together.net

February 25-27, 2005

The **Wiesel Trails Cabin**, located on The Adirondack Club's Heart Lake property 8 miles south of Lake Placid, is available to the Green Mountain Club and Burlington Ski Club from noon Friday to Sunday morning. We can drive directly to the cabin, which accommodates up to 16 people in four bunkrooms. It's heated and has modern plumbing, hot and cold running water, and showers in separate men's and women's washrooms. There's a complete kitchen with refrigerator, stove, and most of the equipment we'll need. A list of attendees and phone numbers will be mailed for making carpooling arrangements.

We'll enjoy backcountry skiing or snowshoeing. Trails in the park aren't groomed but they might be tracked by other visitors. We'll decide where we will go each morning depending on conditions for the day. (It isn't necessary for everyone to go in one group as long as no one goes onto trails by themselves.) There are plenty of other activities also, including the possibility of a ranger's talk at the visitors' center. Feel free to bring small musical instruments, songs, or games for the evenings.

Friday night dinner is at a local restaurant. Saturday night dinner and both breakfasts are a group affair, with everybody bringing something. Everyone is responsible for lunches, hors d'oeuvres and beverages. A \$50 deposit, which covers the cost of lodging, must be sent to trip leader to ensure a spot.

For more information, call Tom Dettre at 872-0434. This trip always fills up early, so don't delay.



HIKING DURING HUNTING SEASON

The GMC urges hikers to remember that *all* the land crossed by the Long Trail is open to hunting. Many other Vermont trails also cross prime hunting land. Hikers should be aware that there might be hunters in the woods for much of the fall and winter. Deer rifle season is a time of particular concern because there are so many more hunters than at any other time.

The exact dates of hunting seasons change each year. Here are the dates of some of this year's hunting seasons. (This information is from the 2004 *Vermont Digest of Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Laws*, available free from game wardens, places that sell outdoor equipment, and many country stores. Veterinarians and pet food stores often offer bright-colored cards with hunting season dates.)

Deer Rifle Season – November 13-28

Youth Deer Hunting Weekend – November 6 - 7

Bow and Arrow Deer Season – October 2 - 24

and December 4 - 12

Muzzleloader Deer Season – December 4-12

Black Bear Season – September 1 - November 17

There are also fall or winter seasons for hunting ducks, geese, grouse, turkeys, squirrels, rabbits, beaver, otter, mink, raccoons, fishers, fox, skunks, and bobcats.

Hikers should take special safety precautions during late fall. **Always wear blaze (fluorescent) orange.** You can get blaze orange vests and jackets at outdoor supply stores. *Never* go out into the woods dressed all in brown, tan, or black. *Don't wear* clothing with patches of white that might be mistaken for the white tail of a deer. Any pets that hike with you should also wear blaze orange, in the form of good-sized harnesses or "saddle blankets".

Vermont's hunters and hikers have co-existed safely for generations. Maintaining this record requires common sense, caution and preparation from both groups!

The Wampahoofus: A Sad Evolutionary Tale

by Maeve Kim

My dad was a native Vermonter who was a Long Trail end-to-ender and hiked every side trail around Mt. Mansfield many, many times. He used to tell the following story about the legendary wampahoofus, the namesake of the beautiful trail on the flanks of Mansfield.

The wampahoofus was a large mammal, now extinct, that some say resembled a moose-gnu hybrid. Its worldwide range was limited to part of Mt. Mansfield, usually between 2600 and 3200 feet up.

Like many large mammals, the males and females didn't have much to do with each other except during the period of the year devoted to courtship and mating. The rest of the year, the males wandered around Mt. Mansfield in a clockwise direction, grazing and enjoying the scenery, never descending into the valleys, never climbing to the very highest elevations. Females spent a few months a year in the higher reaches of Nebraska Notch, nursing their calves. (My dad's great-grandfather recalled coming across five of the ungainly cows, each caring for one nursing calf. Quite a sight.) Most of the year, though, the females walked around Mansfield at a high level, although never on the ridgeline. Unlike the male, the female wampahoofus always went around the mountain in a counterclockwise direction. When males and females met at the wrong time of the year, they passed each other without a second look. At the right time of year, of course, they mated.

Now, after hundreds of generations of walking laterally across a slope, the legs of the wampahoofus adapted. The males, who went around the mountain in a clockwise direction, developed shorter right legs than left legs. The females, after eons of counterclockwise perambulation, began to grow shorter left legs than right legs.

This unusual evolutionary adaptation worked fine for many generations – but unfortunately, the uneven leg gene appeared to be dominant. The males' right legs kept getting shorter and shorter, as did the females' left legs. Eventually, when a couple met to mate, things just didn't fit. The wampahoofus died out. Vermont – and the world – lost a truly unique creature.

To visit the Wampahoofus Trail, climb the Butler Lodge Trail from the Stevensville Trailhead in Underhill Center. Follow the trail around the back of the Lodge, pass the start of the Rock Garden Trail, and you'll be traversing the haunts of the wondrous beast.

