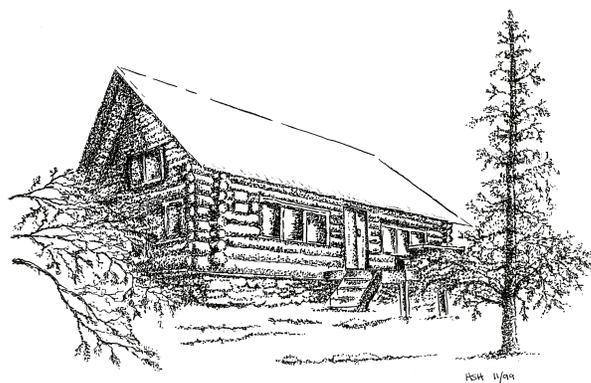


RIDGE LINES

GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB
BURLINGTON SECTION

Summer 2016



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Lake Champlain dredged for supertankers?

The top of Jay Peak blown off?

An A-bomb on Mt. Snow??

On pages 2 and 3, historian Bruce Post describes an alarming period in the state's history - and a critical turning point that made present-day Vermont possible.

Read *Vermont's Environmental Spring*. We welcome questions and comments!

Last Good-bye to Winter

On page 7, trip leader Mary Lou Recor waxes poetic about a winter solstice hike on the slopes of Mt. Mansfield.

Also In This Issue

This quarter's diverse list of outdoor activities includes hiking, walking, biking and paddling. Would you like to know more about some of the destinations before planning your summer calendar? Page 4 has information about Shelburne Pond, Mobbs Farm, Niquette State Park and Snake Mountain.

Outings - pages 5-7

Want to save the GMC some expense? And save a tree or two?

Many Burlington Section members have already chosen to receive *Ridge Lines* electronically instead of getting paper copies in the mail. They are reducing paper use and, at the same time, helping the Section to trim expenses. If you'd like to start getting your newsletter as an on-line PDF only, just send us your name, at gmc@gmcburlington.org. Each quarter, you'll get an email message letting you know when the latest issue is posted online and where you can read it or download and print it.

Vermont's Environmental Spring

By Bruce Post, member of GMC's History and Archives Committee

My introduction to Vermont environment history began not in a classroom but in a bank. As a freshman at Norwich University in 1965, I went downtown to open an account at the local Merchants Bank. I saw two photos on the wall behind the teller's counter. They showed Northfield's Dole Hill during the sheep craze of the 19th century, nearly devoid of trees and certainly a contrast with the Dole Hill I saw daily.

Those barren hills represented a dark distinction of Vermont's environmental legacy. "Not even in the cotton and tobacco belt," wrote JFK's Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, "were soils exhausted faster and forests mangled more thoroughly than on the hillsides of Vermont." Vermont was so damaged by the abuses of lumbering, grazing and land speculation that many of its best and brightest fled the state, and by 1850, the Green Mountains had entered a long, sleepy twilight that would last a century.

By the 1950s, things began to change. According to one environmental historian, the world experienced "the most profound turning point in the history of the environment." Sleepy Vermont, which, like New York City, had been "a nice place to visit but you wouldn't want to live there," was jolted awake. With the interstate highways uncoiling slowly from south to north, time and space had suddenly shrunk. Similar to the late 1700s, when population soared from 300 in 1763 to 85,000 in 1791, Vermont boomed again, and now, people no longer were content only to visit; many of them stayed.

Governor Deane Davis summed up this transformation in his Farewell Address to the Legislature in 1973: "Suddenly Vermont was no longer perceived as simply a beautiful pastoral state, fun to visit but a hardscrabble place to live. No longer poor, yet still retaining so many qualities of life which other states have lost, Vermont today is being subjected to population growth, changing land use, and mass consumption never known before."

Crazy ideas abounded: a ski area and high-altitude chalets on Camels Hump; dredging Lake Champlain for supertankers; a nuclear plant on the lakeshore in Charlotte; a missile control station on Mount Mansfield; an underground detonation of an atomic bomb to improve the skiing experience at Mount Snow; and blowing off the top of Jay Peak.

Shirley Strong, the first woman to be President of the Green Mountain Club, later commented that during the years between 1966 and about 1970, everything just "fell apart". "Things were happening, too many pressures, too much development, too much big money from outside."

Despite what poet William Butler Yeats wrote - "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold" - people like Shirley Strong made sure that not all was lost in Vermont and that a vital center, against the odds, could hold. No supertankers. No missile control. No atomic bomb. Jay Peak, though, with the thirty-foot-deep lobotomy on its summit, remains a grotesque scar, proof that the forces of destruction remained strong.

Yes, destruction loomed, but so did salvation. Some feel 1962 was the pivotal year. Nationally, Rachel Carson published her wake-up call, *Silent Spring*; here at home, a G.E. employee named Bob Spear prompted the formation of the Green Mountain Audubon Society, whose conservation committee became a pioneering advocate. The first shoots of Vermont's environmental spring peeked through the snow.

Across Vermont, small coalitions formed to defend specific sites and general regions. Some of the historic battles included:

- In Chittenden County, the State Forest and Parks Board rejected a proposal to turn Camels Hump into a ski area. Bob Spear, in 1963, proposed that the whole of Camels Hump be preserved as a mountain park. In 1966, a "Save Camels Hump" committee was formed, and in 1969, the Legislature created Camels Hump State Park.
- In Caledonia County, the Army Corps of Engineers was poised to build a hydroelectric dam in Victory Bog, a 1,000-acre plus wetland; in 1960, the U.S. House of Representatives appropriated the necessary funds. U.S. Sen. George Aiken opposed the hydroelectric proposal but had his own bad idea for drowning the bog: flooding it for a 2,800-acre national recreation area. In 1969, fortunately, the State of Vermont stepped in to purchase Victory Bog and preserve it for the future.

- In the mid-1960s, Shirley Strong invited Bob Spear, UVM botanist Hub Vogelmann and Roland Wilbur to form the Green Mountain Profile Committee to protect the Green Mountain highlands. It called for the establishment of a continuous strip of wild lands from south to north, largely following the path of the Long Trail. Significant restrictions would have been placed on ski area expansions and the construction of roads, towers and buildings within the strip.
- In spring 1969, Bill Schmidt, the executive director of the Windham Regional Commission in Brattleboro, made a little-known but historically-significant phone call to Deane Davis, the new Governor. He asked Davis to tour the Florida-style land speculation threatening the Deerfield Valley and the towns of Wilmington and Dover. Davis was shocked by what he heard, and after making three trips to Windham County in May and June, he made land development control a central part of his legislative agenda, which included the passage of Act 250.

The struggles were never easy, and not all were resolved satisfactorily. Camels Hump and Victory Bog, the localized sites, were clear and enduring triumphs. Success at protecting our mountains and valleys from development and destruction was, at best, limited, often characterized by modest victories amid major defeats; even these small achievements are tenuous, always subject to threat, much like the alpine tundra on top of Mount Mansfield.

Looking back, which a historian necessarily does, I view Vermont's environmental spring figuratively akin to the so-called democratic "spring" movements that rise up from time to time in autocratic nations. In those, the early shoots of democracy emerge only too often to be trampled down when powerful forces strike back. I remember the Prague Spring of 1968, a brief interlude of political liberalization in Czechoslovakia, beginning in January but crushed by Soviet tanks in August. In 1989, what could be called the Beijing Spring in China lasted even less time, tanks crushing students in Tiananmen Square and stamping out the seedlings of reform.

Inevitably, spring comes and goes, but like the seasons, promise can reemerge. The hope is that those early shoots establish their roots before they are trampled. In Prague, they did; in Beijing, they did not.

In Vermont, our environmental spring had enough time to sow the seeds of future success. Yet, the failure to pass the proposed State Land Use Plan — Deane Davis called it his greatest regret — signaled springtime's end. Ever since, plenty of boots have been around to stamp down what remains of the environmental flora that took root. Just look around.

The end of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 provides a lesson. Then, a woman approached Benjamin Franklin, one of the delegates, and asked, "Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?" With no hesitation whatsoever, Franklin responded, "A republic, if you can keep it."

Now, I imagine some Vermonter approaching Shirley Strong back in 1970, when Act 250 was signed into law. "So, Ms. Strong," they would ask, "What have you left us?" Shirley would answer, "A beautiful state, if you can keep it."

And keeping it is up to us.

Executive Committee

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Vice President – vacant

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Director – Michelle Connor

We're looking for a Section vice-president. If you're interested, please contact ted@ted-albers.net

As you're deciding what GMC outings to enjoy this quarter, here's a chance to learn more about four of the beautiful destinations.

Mobbs Farm in Jericho is the destination for a June 4 spring bird walk. This is a diverse property with rolling hills, open meadows, deep forest, streams and wetlands, given to the Town of Jericho in 1968. Fitzsimonds Road (just outside Jericho Center) cuts through the property, with well-marked trails on both sides. There are now over nine miles of trails for walking, running, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, birdwatching, mountain-biking and even geocaching. (Motorized use isn't allowed.) The trails on the west side of Fitzsimonds Road have several well-constructed bridges as well as scenic waterfalls and a long area of gravel beach next to Mill Brook.

The property was used for farming for decades, and visitors can still find barbed wire fences, cellar holes and stone walls. One corner of the land was the site of the town landfill for over twenty years, and Jericho still maintains its town garage and supplies of sand and salt there.

On July 10, there will be a hike on **Snake Mountain** (also known as Grand View Mountain) in Addison. The long "snaky" ridgeline is famous for panoramic views of the Champlain Valley and Adirondacks. In the late 1800s, visitors from all over the northeast enjoyed dances and croquet on the grounds of the Grand View Hotel, high on the mountain. The hotel was abandoned in 1925, but its wide stagecoach road remains as a hiking trail.

Geologically, Snake Mountain is part of the Taconics even though it's not contiguous to the rest of that range. It has two areas of conserved land: Snake Mountain Wildlife Management Area (run by Fish and Wildlife) and The Nature Conservancy's Willmarth Woods Sanctuary.

Shelburne Pond is the destination for two outings, a hike on July 24 (which will also include Shelburne Bay) and a paddling excursion on September 10. In one the most developed areas in the state, Shelburne Pond features wetlands, wildlife corridors, rare plants and endangered species – factors that made it an important goal for conservationists. Over eleven hundred acres were originally protected by UVM and The Nature Conservancy and are now managed by UVM. The forest and shoreline comprise the H. Laurence Achilles Natural Area. (Achilles was an heir to the Kodak fortune, a philanthropist, and a major supporter of TNC.)

The area features a one-mile walking trail through forest as well as the pond and swamp for fishing, paddling, and ice-skating. Some of the adjacent land is farmed, with conservation easements. The pond has shallow muddy sections, some areas with gravel bottoms, and some areas as deep as 25 feet, providing lots of diversity for pond wildlife. Along the shore, there are overhanging ledges and fallen trees that are great for fish.

The pond tends to get a lot of slimy green algae starting in late spring and lasting all summer, so it's not a prime swimming destination. In addition, some people avoid swimming there because of Northern Water Snakes – but other visitors look forward to seeing the long, camouflage-patterned animals.

Because Shelburne Pond is a state fishing access, fishing is the first priority for spots in the parking area. It's a big lot, so recreational paddlers and people out for a day of fishing should coexist peacefully – but if you're not fishing, it's wise to park well away from the gravel boat launch area.

On August 21, enjoy a rambling hike at **Niquette Bay State Park**. The 584-acre park is named for Niquette Bay, an indentation on the northeast shore of Malletts Bay. This is a geologically diverse area. You'll see sheer limestone cliffs rising straight out of the water 60 feet high. You'll see brooks, ridges, ravines and sandy beach, along with views of the lake, the islands and the Green Mountains. There's a series of loop trails, mostly easy walking with a few moderate sections.

Section Outings

Summer 2016

Unless otherwise specified, call the trip leader to sign up, find out what equipment you'll need, and learn about any changes. Check with trip leader before bringing your pet along. Human guests are always welcome. Trip leaders often arrange carpooling. If you ride along in someone else's car, we recommend reimbursing the driver at the rate of 10 cents a mile.

June

6/4 (Sat) **National Trails Day** Help clear the Long Trail (and some side trails). Bring work gloves, lunch, water. Tools provided or bring your own. Meet at UVM visitor's lot at 8am or Richmond Park & Ride (Exit 11) at 8:30am. Moderate work trip. Slow-moderate pace, 4-10 miles, 1000-2000' elevation gain. Pam Gillis, 879-1457 or gillis1986@gmail.com. John Sharp, 862-3941.

6/4 Sat **Spring Bird Walk** Songbirds have returned to Vermont, and they're courting, squabbling, mating and nesting. We'll take a leisurely walk (2-4 miles) at Mobbs Farm in Jericho, through fields and woods and alongside a stream. 7AM start. Maeve Kim, maevulus@surfglobal.net or 899-4327.

6/5 (Sun) **Mansfield Forehead** We'll go up Frost/Maple Ridge and down Wampahoofus/Butler. Hopefully the lady slippers will be out on Frost then! Difficult hike, 6 miles, 2500' elevation gain. Sheri Larsen, 878-6828 or larsen007@aol.com.

6/11 (Sat) **Worcester Ridge / Skyline Trail** We'll climb the Middlesex Trail to the summit of Mt. Hunger, then follow the Skyline Trail to Mt. Worcester, returning on the Worcester Mt. Trail. Difficult hike at a moderate pace, 11 miles, 3000' elevation gain. Contact leader by 6/9. David Hathaway, 899-9982 or david.hathaway.78@gmail.com.

6/12 (Sun) **Mt Abe via Batelle Trail** We'll park at the Battell trailhead and hike up to Mt Abe. Difficult hike, 7 miles, 2500' elevation gain. Carlene Squires, 434-2533 or carlene@gmavt.net.

6/18 (Sat) **Mt Abe via Batelle Trail** We'll park at the Battell trailhead and hike up to Mt Abe. Difficult hike, moderate pace, 7 miles, 2500' elevation gain. Wes Volk, 355-4135 or wesvolk@gmail.com.

6/19 (Sun) **Biking in Shelburne & Charlotte** We'll meet in Shelburne and bike the Bay Park Trail north to Harbor Road, then continue to its end at the Shelburne Shipyard (about 8 miles round trip). We'll return on Harbor Road, cut through Davis Park and take trails to Bostwick Road, where we'll ride to Charlotte Beach and return (16 miles round trip.) Easy terrain at a moderate pace, about 24 miles. Group limit 5. Contact leader by 6/18. Ted Albers, ted@ted-albers.net.

6/25 (Sat) **Appalachian Gap to Theron Dean Shelter** Hike from Appalachian Gap on Rt 17 to Theron Dean Shelter and back. Moderate hike, moderate pace, 4-10 miles, 1600' elevation gain. Lee Wrigley, leewrigley@myfairpoint.net.

6/26 (Sun) **Sterling Pond via Elephant's Head Trail** Park down by Stowe resort and hike up Elephants Head and then maybe on to Madonna. Difficult hike at a moderate pace, 9.6 miles, 1500' elevation gain. Wes Volk, 355-4135 or wesvolk@gmail.com.

July

7/2 (Sat) **Laraway Loop** From Davis Neighborhood we'll head over to Coddington Hollow, follow the Long Trail up over Laraway Mt., and return via Davis Neighborhood Trail. Moderate hike. Moderate pace. 8 miles. 1600' elevation gain. David Hathaway, david.hathaway.78@gmail.com or 899-9982.

7/10 (Sun) **Snake Mountain** Assuming it will be intolerably hot (anything over 70 degrees in my book) we'll walk in the shady forest up Snake Mountain (in Addison County near Vergennes, just east of Rt. 22A.) This easy to moderate walk climbs about 900' to an overlook (at about 1300'). This 2½ hour four-mile hike winds through a forest with a wonderful mix of trees. It's relatively flat for the first ½ mile then climbs steadily to a nice viewpoint facing west to Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks. The trail joins an old summit carriage road (there used to be hotel at the top) which we may take down. Meet-up in the Shelburne town center in front of the Pearson Library and fire station. Ted Albers, ted@ted-albers.net

7/16 (Sat) **Milton Town Forest** Since our spring hike was rained out, we'll try this when the trails are (hopefully) dry. We'll meet to walk the Milton Forest trails off the Milton-Westford Road. This is a 4+ mile hike that passes by beautiful Milton Pond. It's an easy hike at a moderate pace that includes a small number of short hills. We'll be out approx. 2 hours. Wear proper footwear for hiking that will include some hills. Dogs are welcome but must be on leash in designated areas. Easy hike. 4+ miles. Group limit 15. Contact leader by 7/14. Nancy Hankey, vtgardener1@myfairpoint.net.

July Outings – continued

7/23 (Sat) **Jay Range, Adirondacks** We'll take the ferry from Charlotte to Essex, NY, and then drive to the trailhead in Upper Jay. From the trailhead, we'll climb through the woods for about 1.5 miles until we reach an open ridge. The trail continues on the ridge for another couple of miles. The plan is to continue to a point where we have a view of Lake Champlain. Along the ridge there are terrific views of Whiteface Mountain and the other Adirondack High Peaks. We'll return the same way we went up. Estimated hiking time is 5½ - 6 hours, including lunch and stopping at viewpoints. All participants will need to contribute to the cost of the ferry and gas for drivers. Difficult hike. Moderate pace. 7 miles. 2750' elevation gain. Group limit 10. Contact leader by 7/21. Sheri Larsen, 878-6828 or larsen007@aol.com.

7/24 (Sun) **Shelburne Pond and Bay** Let's explore the trails, great views, and wildlife around Shelburne's waterways. Moderate hike. Moderate pace. 5 miles. 500' elevation gain. Group limit 8. Contact leader by 7/22. Adam Heckle, aheckle@uvm.edu or 233-8091.

7/29 (Fri) **Lincoln Gap to Appalachian Gap** We'll carpool from Burlington to Appalachian Gap to drop off car(s) and proceed to Lincoln Gap. This a wonderful all-day ridgewalk along the Long Trail with our initial ascent up to Mt. Abraham. From here north, the trail continues ascending and descending several 4000' peaks with 360 degree views. Bring your binocs and a fun attitude. Ideally we'd like to begin hiking @ 0830 from Lincoln Gap. Difficult hike. Moderate pace. 12.3 miles. 2100' elevation gain. Contact leader by 7/28. Pete Saile, 658-0912.

August

8/6 (Sat) **Bolton Mountain and Puffer Shelter** We'll hike up an old abandoned section of the Long Trail from Bolton Valley ski area. At the intersection with the current Long Trail we'll go north over Bolton Mountain to Puffer Lodge and enjoy the most stunning views on the Long trail. Difficult hike. Moderate pace. Group limit 8. Contact leader by 8/4. Phil Hazen, 355-7181 or philhazen@comcast.net.

8/7 (Sun) **Mansfield Loop** From the state park we'll head up the CCC road and Halfway House Trail, then follow the Long Trail to the summit and return down Sunset Ridge. Difficult hike. 7 miles. 3000' elevation gain. Rich Larsen, 878-6828 or larsen007@aol.com.

8/13 (Sat) **Sawteeth, Pyramid, & Gothic, Adirondacks** From the Ausable Club we'll take have an easy walk to Lower Ausable Lake, then climb Sawteeth and Pyramid and then continue to Gothics, one of the Adirondack 46 high peaks. Difficult hike. Moderate pace. 12.5 miles. 3100' elevation gain. David Hathaway, david.hathaway.78@gmail.com or 899-9982.

8/14 (Sun) **Colchester Pond** Come enjoy a casual hike around a glacial pond, bobcat habitat and historical farmland. Moderate hike. Moderate pace. 5 miles. 250' elevation gain. Group limit 8. Contact leader by 8/12. Adam Heckle, aheckle@uvm.edu or 233-8091.

8/21 (Sun) **Niquette Bay State Park** We'll walk the full circumference of Niquette Bay State Park. Plan on 5 miles, approx. 2 hours, with mostly uneven terrain, some small hills, a little rock scrambling and a set of steep stairs. Dogs welcome if leashed where indicated. Entrance fee unless you have Green Mtn. Passport. Wear proper footwear for hiking and bring water. Easy hike. 5 miles. Group limit 10. Contact leader by 8/19. Nancy Hankey, vtgardener1@myfairpoint.net.

8/27 (Sat) **Big Crow Mountain and Nun-da-ga-o Ridge (Adirondacks)** The best of the Adirondacks isn't always the high peaks. We'll start from Crow Mountain Clearing, ascend Big Crow (2815'), follow the ridge to Weston Mountain (3195'), descend past Lost Pond and return to the trailhead. Frequent viewpoints from the ridge and no backtracking. Moderate hike. 5.6 miles. Group limit 10. Mary Lou Recor, 660-2834 or mlrecor@myfairpoint.net.

8/28 (Sun) **Cantilever Rock** From the Underhill State Park we'll head up the Sunset Ridge Trail and take the spur to Cantilever Rock. Easy hike. Moderate pace. 4-10 miles. 1200' elevation gain. David Hathaway, david.hathaway.78@gmail.com or 899-9982.

September

9/3 (Sat) **Whiteface Mt. from Smugglers Notch** From the top of Smugglers Notch we'll climb to Sterling Pond, then follow the Long Trail over Madonna and Morse Mountains, continue to Whiteface Mountain and return. Difficult hike. Moderate pace. 11 miles. 4000' elevation gain. David Hathaway, david.hathaway.78@gmail.com or 899-9982.

September Outings - continued

9/10 (Sat) **Shelburne Pond Paddle** Let's take a walk through the paths in UVM's Achilles Natural Area at Shelburne Pond then go for a paddle. Lying in the heart of one of the more developed parts of Vermont, this area encompasses freshwater wetlands, forested uplands, and agricultural lands. Our one-mile walk will take us through parts of these environments. Then into our paddle-crafts to explore the various natural areas and points of interest around the pond (of which I am no expert but will have guidebook handy). Lets hope for a cool clear day! Easy walk & paddle. Ted Albers, ted@ted-albers.net.

9/17 (Sat) **Three Ferries Ride (Lake Champlain)** From the King Street Dock in Burlington, we'll ride on bike path north to Local Motion's bike ferry to South Hero. After following West Shore Road (gravel), we'll cross over to New York on the Grand Isle/Cumberland Head Ferry. We'll then head south on Rte. 9, which has a wide shoulder, through Plattsburgh to the ferry dock at Port Kent for our final water crossing. Moderate bicycle. 42 miles. Group limit 10. Mary Lou Recor, 660-2834 or mlrecor@myfairpoint.net.

9/24 (Sat) **Mount Mansfield** We'll head up the Butler Lodge Trail for a little snack at Butler Lodge. And then it is the Wampahoofus Trail to the Forehead. And then, and then . . . The Chin with great views! Difficult hike. Moderate pace. 10 miles. 3000' elevation gain. Group limit 10. Phil Hazen, 355-7181 or philhazen@comcast.net.

Outing descriptions ahead of time, and trip reports afterward, don't really capture the fun, camaraderie and delight of GMC outings. Trip leader Mary Lou Recor has decided to address that shortcoming by writing her trip reports in verse. Here's her wonderful description of a winter solstice hike to and from Butler Lodge, where a group of Boy Scouts was already settling in for the night.

'Twas the night of the solstice
and all through the lodge
hung mittens and jackets,
the Boy Scouts' hodgepodge.

The trail had been tricky
with ice and some snow.
From the porch we watched sun set,
in its last amber glow.

When it came time to eat,
we were no slackers,
a feast for a king:
cheese, cookies and crackers.

Then into the darkness,
we brave hikers went,
slowly making our way
by tiny headlamp lamp.

At the end of the trail,
we sang our good wishes,
while the Boy Scouts at Butler
were freezing their tushes.

As we drove from the trailhead
all full of good cheer,
our thoughts on the future,
"Can't wait 'til next year."

Ridge Lines

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