



## Northern Frontier Section of the Green Mountain Club Winter 2022

### *Season's Greetings!*

We've had a good hiking and trail work season during 2021, even though Covid is still with us and an ongoing concern. The omicron variant has arrived here in Vermont, so we'll have to continue protecting ourselves and those around us. Protection measures include: masking indoors when we're among people outside of our family; N95 and KN95 masks are recommended for omicron; getting fully vaccinated and boosted if we're not already; avoiding carpooling with people outside of our family; staying home when we're sick; getting tested for covid when we've possibly been exposed; avoiding sharing food, water or gear and avoiding crowded parking lots and trails. Please check the Green Mountain Club website [greenmountainclub.org](http://greenmountainclub.org) for updates as the omicron variant evolves.

We held our annual NFS meeting in person last summer, outdoors at the Montgomery Center recreation center pavilion on Sunday afternoon, July 11th. Thirteen members attended and discussed trail work for the season, elected officers for our section and had a nice potluck supper. It was a welcome opportunity to visit and enjoy each other's company. Thanks to Russ Ford for bringing his grill and cooking delicious bratwursts! Our officers stayed the same with the exception of:

Vice President: Russ Ford; Secretary/ Newsletter: Sharon and Ken Whitehead.

Our section scheduled 4 hikes and 2 bike rides for the 2021 hiking season, but only one hike was attended. In July, Jeff and Cathy Miller led six of us on a hike from Route 105 to the Canadian border. It was a fine summer's day to be outside and the view from the border was wonderful. We met and spoke with (and photographed) several hikers who were completing thru hikes northbound and several hikers who were just beginning hikes southbound.

On August 28th, Long Trail Day, our section set up a tent/canopy at the Jay Pass LT crossing (Route 242). Six of our members took turns staffing the site from 9:00 to 3:00, meeting hikers, telling them about the Green Mountain Club and giving them brochures, water & snacks. We were pleased that Howard van Benthuyzen (new GMC President and NFS member) could join us to help on that special day. Approximately 40 - 50 hikers passed through and 7 of them left email addresses for future contact. While we were there, John Predom and members of the NEK section hiked up Jay Peak!

A reminder for all volunteers who work on the trail and shelters: After you do your work, submit a volunteer work report by going to [greenmountainclub.org](http://greenmountainclub.org) and click on "volunteer", then "volunteer report" and type in your information. It's important for the GMC and our section to know the latest improvements and maintenance that we accomplish.

Many thanks for all the hard work of the NFS volunteers, you are each greatly appreciated!

I recently asked GMC Executive Director Mike DeBonis ([mdebonis@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:mdebonis@greenmountainclub.org)) for any updates on the surveillance towers proposed by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection along the Canadian Border. He said that 2 of the six proposed towers might be visible from the LT, possibly from the northern terminus and from Jay Peak. A proposed tower in Richford would be about 5 miles to the west and one in N. Troy would be about 3.5 miles to the east. Mike sent me the link to the "Finding of No Significant Impact Statement" (FONIS) in the proposal and I saw no mention of the LT in it. Mike said that he, "looked online, but didn't see any more updates on proposed locations and construction timelines." If you are interested in finding out more, try contacting our US Congressman, Peter Welch.

The James P. Taylor Series is online again this winter and it looks like there are interesting presentations to check out. It runs from January to March and you access it on [greenmountainclub.org](http://greenmountainclub.org). Click on "Education and Events" to look at the presentations offered and register for any of them.

The NFS isn't scheduling any hikes or outings this winter due to Covid, but be sure to take the opportunity to go on your own trips. The challenge and beauty in winter outings is worth the effort and maybe we'll see each other on the trail!

I wish you good hiking and good health this season.

Ken Whitehead, President NFS

**Hike to Canadian Border**



**Trails Day at Jay Pass**



## **Trails Report**

In September, NFS Trails officers Jeff and Cathy Miller hiked our LT section and evaluated it. Here is their report:

Hiking the Northern Frontier Section of the Long Trail this fall revealed a trail that is in excellent condition due to the hard work of many volunteers, as well as the weeks of work put in by the GMC's professional staff.

Starting in the spring, Trail Adopters and other volunteers cleared numerous blow downs (the winter of 2020-21 was very windy), repainted blazes where needed, and cleared water drains among many other activities. Days of work were involved in ensuring the trail was cleared and well marked.

In addition, the northern crew of GMC's Long Trail Patrol spent a good portion of the summer working in the Northern Frontier section repairing the trail. Of particular note is the work the crew did on a long, steep and badly eroded section of the trail just north of Route 242 near Jay Camp. As reported in the Long Trail News Fall 2021 edition: "Two and a half weeks of work resulted in a new waterbar, about 15 feet of turnpike, seven check steps, and a 20-step stone staircase on the steepest section." Their work was commented on by numerous hikers in the latter part of the season and we should all be appreciative of their work and dedication. We will enjoy the fruits of their labor for years to come!

Nature played a part in the favorable condition of the trail this year as well, but not necessarily in a way we want to see repeated. Northern Vermont was in a significant drought for most, if not all, of the 2021 hiking season and while that led to dry trails, it also led to dry stream beds. Water was hard to come by on the trail save for certain locations primarily near GMC shelters, such as Shooting Star, Laura Woodward and Hazen's Camp. Where to find water became an even greater part of conversations between hikers, especially when passing those headed in the opposite direction. But then the Trail Magic started! In the second half of the season, the trail between Hazen's Camp and Jay Camp had almost no water sources. Miraculously though, bottled water started appearing at the Atlas Shelter just off Route 242 near Jay Camp. Other stashes of water were reported to have been found at other shelters as well. That bottled water, supplied by elves (or at least people who understand what it's like to hike with little to no water) was magical! Hikers, especially thruhikers, couldn't say enough good things about having that water available. To say it was welcomed and appreciated is an understatement. Thank you to all who supplied the Trail Magic this year! Hopefully, nature will supply the water next year.

To sum up, the trail in the Northern Frontier section is in excellent condition as a result of the hard work of volunteers and professionals this past season. Thank you to all those who helped put the trail in excellent condition. And a special thank you to those who exemplified the spirit of the Long Trail by providing water to fellow hikers!

Now on to 2022!

Jeff Miller

## GMC Board Meeting – 9/18/21

Jason Buss, Director of Finance, shared slides to go over this quarter of the club's finances. Overall, the club is in a very strong position financially and continues to track as expected against the budget.

Alicia DiCocco, Director of Development, gave an update on membership, development and the Capital Campaign. We have crossed over the \$2.5 million mark for the capital campaign. Long Trail Day was incredibly successful due to the level of participation we had from individuals. Michelle Connor, chair of the Development Committee, gave an update on the work of the committee which has mainly been responding to a board survey regarding board fundraising. Shana Trombley from CPG Enterprises, the consulting firm supporting the campaign, gave an overview on the campaign progress. Development Committee members Anne Houser and Don Taylor shared what they have been working on as part of the campaign, namely an outdoor retailer collaborative (which now has 5 businesses) and individual thank you calls to donors, especially new donors.

The group split into break-out rooms to discuss and brainstorm ways to thank donors for their gifts and how to deepen relationships with new donors. A number of good ideas were identified.

Mike led an overview and update on the strategic planning process. Mike outlined the progress on the current strategic plan in the board packet. Mike also screen shared a diagram showing the success of each initiative overlaid with the effort put into each initiative. Our next five-year strategic planning process will begin between now and the next annual meeting, mostly with information gathering and process planning. We will likely need to hire a consultant to gather information to inform the plan and help draft the plan. We aim to have a draft plan available to review at the June 2022 Annual Meeting.

Specific to the Norther Frontier Section, there is money in the GMC budget for management of the Big Jay property. At this time there has not been any needed management activities identified for this parcel.

Kip Potter  
NFS GMC Board Rep

## Shelters Report

Our section includes five shelters (Hazen's Notch, Jay Camp, Laura Woodward, Shooting Star, and Journey's End), plus the Atlas Shelter adjacent to Rt 242. The shelters are in good condition, thanks to the stewardship of their volunteer adopters. We had challenges during last summer's drought with the water supply at Jay Camp, and adopters made several trips in to dig out and deepen the spring at the camp, and to carry in additional jugged water. This was the first time I can recall water issues at that location.

The present structures at Laura Woodward and Shooting Star were built in September 2001. Materials were airlifted to the sites by helicopter, although the airlift was delayed by a few days when all non military flights in the US were grounded following the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

As best as I recall, the current above ground mouldering privies at those shelters were also built in 2001. The lower, compost-holding structures on both privies are at the end of their useful lives and will need replacing in the next year or two, although we should get a few more years from the upper structures.

- Russ Ford

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