

Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club

Volume LII, Issue III July to September 2020 Fred Clark, Editor

President's Message Summer 2020

We're operating in a new and unfamiliar environment this year, dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put in place by government and recreational entities to slow the spread of the disease. As we've all seen, guidance and precautions continue to change quickly. I'd like to devote this space to a summary of what the GMC and the Connecticut Section are doing.

Our Annual Dinner and Meeting: As COVID-19 spread rapidly in March, we made a decision to indefinitely postpone our Connecticut Section annual dinner and meeting for the first time in our 50-plus year history. While a disappointment to all of us who enjoy getting together at the Cheshire Grange Hall to catch up on the past year, the overriding concern for safety made this decision an easy one. As a result of the postponement, we have some incomplete Section business that we'll address somewhat differently this year:

- **Review and approval of the minutes of the 2019 annual meeting:** Kevin Burke's minutes are presented in this newsletter. I moved that the minutes be accepted as presented and Fred Clark has seconded the motion. If anyone is opposed, please notify Secretary Kevin Burke (contact information on Page 2) by July 1, 2020.
- **Election of officers:** Proposed officers are: President – Jim Robertson; Vice President for Trails & Shelters – Mike Shaw; Vice President for Activities – Dennis Himes; Secretary – Kevin Burke; Treasurer – Linda Hagstrom (replacing Dick Hart). Jim Fritz and Andy Hood continue in the three-year Director and Alternate Director terms to which they were elected in 2018. I moved that the list of officers be accepted as presented and Fred Clark has seconded the motion. If anyone is opposed, please notify Secretary Kevin Burke by July 1, 2020.
- **Annual Treasurer's Report:** A partial report is provided in this newsletter. The balance, as of March 31, 2020, in our savings account was \$8,914 and \$3,435 in our checking account. Please contact me or Fred Clark for the complete report.

GMC Activities: We've advised event leaders and prospective participants to consider the risks of getting together in groups and to observe the guidelines of the State of Connecticut on use of outdoor recreation assets. Fortunately, most State Parks and Forests have remained open, so we've been able to get outside this spring. Hike leaders have re-tooled itineraries to avoid the need for car spots and carpooling. On June 1, the State relaxed the recommended maximum group size to 10 indoors and 25 outdoors for social and recreational gatherings. As with guidelines for our society as a whole, the guidance for parks and forests is fluid. The most recent can be found on the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection website:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/State-Parks/COVID-19-Updates-CT-State-Parks-and-Forests>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

You'll note that this edition of the Trail Talk does not include the typical Calendar of Events. To comply with the letter and intent of Vermont guidelines on limiting gatherings, the GMC asked that Sections not publish schedules in our newsletters. Schedules may, however, be communicated via email and internal websites to members. As a result, our schedule for July through September 2020 is available on the wiki page:

<http://www.conngmc.com/newwiki/doku.php?id=start>.

Dennis Himes will continue to send his weekly emails with upcoming and new events. Please contact Dennis if you are not already on his email distribution list and would like to be.

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Green Mountain Club Information

<http://www.greenmountainclub.org>
(802) 244-7037

Connecticut Section Information

<http://www.conngmc.com>

Officers and Executive Committee

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INQUIRIES: Please direct all inquiries regarding the Connecticut Section to the President.

WANT TO HELP THE CONNECTICUT SECTION REDUCE EXPENSES AND SAVE TREES?

Just send an e-mail to the Editor, requesting that you be e-mailed *Trail Talk*, rather than having it printed and mailed. You'll receive *Trail Talk* sooner, too.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE: *Trail Talk* is published four times a year in March, June, September, and December. Articles and activity reports must be e-mailed to the editor no later than the fifth day of the month of the publication. Articles and activity reports must be sent in a Word Document in Times New Roman, font size 10. Reports sent from phones or tablets will be returned.

Editor's e-mail:

fpclark1@comcast.net

MEMBERSHIP: When filling out an application to join or renew your membership in the Green Mountain Club, circle **Connecticut Section** on the application. You will receive, at no extra charge, the Connecticut Section's newsletter

DUES:

Individual Adult	\$45.00
Family	\$60.00
Senior (70 or older) or Limited Income	\$25.00
Sponsor (Individual/Family)	\$75.00

Send annual dues to:

Green Mountain Club
4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road
Waterbury Center, VT 05677-9904

You may also join or renew online at:

<https://www.greenmountainclub.org/>

NEW MEMBERS: The Connecticut Section welcomes these new members who recently joined:

David Knortz Andrew Simon

We look forward to meeting you at our upcoming events.

SPECIAL THANKS to members Charlotte Hitchcock and David Wells. Each issue Charlotte facilitates the e-mailing of *Trail Talk* by formatting the layout and reducing the file size; and David facilitates the mailing of *Trail Talk* by stuffing envelopes and donating the postage.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

Hiking in the age of the Coronavirus April 5, 2020 by Mandy Brink

We rearranged our hike plans to match the rules set forth for staying safe during this coronavirus outbreak. Our first consideration was changing our plan so that we did not have to stage cars. Our second is that we had to consider a hike with options to have groups of five or less. We had six. So first we opted to hike in Pachaug but changed the hike to the Lowden Brook area where we could do a linear hike that allowed a road hike plus a wood hike option. **George Jackson** and **Linda Hagstrom** offered to do a road section, starting from the parking area right by the rhododendron sanctuary and looping to the Lowden Brook picnic area. Mandy Brink, **Don Hagstrom**, **Sarah O'Hare**, **Jim Robertson**, and I and our two four-legged hikers, **Molson** and **Bella**, started on the Pachaug Trail by the youth area, heading to Philips Pond. Lowden Brook has always been a favorite. It's a beautiful brook with its twists and turns and the trail is right on the edge of the brook for a little over a mile. It was a happy brook, babbling and running along us as we walked. At the picnic area we had a snack before heading on to Philips Pond. We were happy we got an early start because the Philips Pond area was starting to get busy by the time we arrived. We stopped there for our lunch break. After putting in 6.5 miles, we were back to the cars, to reunite with George and Linda and head to Buttonwoods for the perfect ending, a nice big ice cream cone.

Pachaug State Forest, Philips Pond to Hell Hollow April 20, 2020 by Mandy Brink

The hike was rescheduled to Monday due to nasty rainy weather on Saturday. **Jim Robertson**, **Don** and **Linda Hagstrom**, **George Jackson**, **Tom** and **Patty Adams**, and our four-legged hikers, **Molson**, **Arlo**, and **Bella** met me at Philips Pond. I'm not sure if you ever heard of the song *Noah's Ark* but it has lyrics that go like this: "the animals they came on they came on by twosies twosies, elephants and kangarooies" ... That is pretty much how we had to break up the group for our hike, to maintain social distancing. We broke up into groups of two and three and would trade off at trail junction points on the trail. We took the Pachaug Trail out to Hell Hollow. There was a snack time by the pond before heading on the Quinebaug Trail to loop back, again to avoid staging cars. Once back to the cars, we decided we weren't quite ready to quit, so we hiked over to check out the horse camp area. That section gave us about 6 miles for the morning. Despite the fact that it was cool, sometimes a bit gray, we decided we still had to suffer through ice cream at Buttonwoods. After that, we all headed home to warm our now cold bodies with some type of warm beverage.

Nehantic Trail March 18, 2020 by Sarah O'Hare

With the coronavirus on the rise, a decision had to be made how to proceed with this hike. Originally planned for both the Nehantic and Pachaug Trails with a car shuttle, it was changed to an out and back on the Nehantic Trail, so no ride sharing was needed. Anxious to break free from our isolation at home, **Jim Robertson** and **Molson**, **Mark Blanchard**, **Fred Clark**, **Don Hagstrom**, **Jeff** and **Margaret Duenges**, and I met at the entrance to Hopeville Pond State Park.

Our morning on the trail was a delight for the senses. An occasional grove of white pines gave off that unmistakable pine fragrance and the evergreen needles cushioned our footfalls. A farm field, anticipated as our lunch spot, had been freshly fertilized. So powerfully aromatic it was that we had to continue along some distance to find a more suitable dining atmosphere. At this time, fit bits and phones were checked. The averaged miles suggested that it was a good turn around point. So back we hiked. Don, Jim and Molson took an unmarked trail they saw earlier, thinking it may have been a short cut around a rock outcrop. Apparently, it was, as the rest of us met up with them later. We followed the now familiar trail back, crossing a few roads, passing low lying wet areas, through the aromatic pine forests and then found ourselves back at Hopeville Pond State Park. The phone and fit bits were again averaged and we found that we had hiked approximately seven miles.

Not quite ready to head back into our quarantine status, we all headed over to nearby Buttonwoods for ice cream. The farm fields here, too, had been recently fertilized. However, we were able to overcome the odor to enjoy the wonderfully smooth and sweet ice cream treats, the perfect way to end a day of hiking.

Rocky Neck Extension Loop Hike May 2, 2020 by Mandy Brink

We had exactly five for our hike, just making the social distancing cut off. **Jim Robertson**, **Kerry Robertson**, **Rob** and **Marianne Valley**, and 4-legged hikers, **Bella**, **Molson**, and **Alba**, joined me. It was a bit of a muddy start. It was not long before Rob took off his sandals and continued to do the rest of the hike in his bare feet. For those of you who have never hiked with Rob, it is amazing the terrain he will cover in bare feet. We stopped at Tony's Nose Overlook for a beautiful view of the bay. We stepped down a few rocks and Jim announced that we were on Tony's Chin. I thought he was completely serious about this until I learned a few days later that he had just made that part up. He figured since Mt. Mansfield had a

nose and chin and Sleeping Giant had a nose and chin, so should Tony's Nose overlook. From there we hiked to the pavilion and had a nice snack break in a grassy area near the beach. What a view this day. Sunshine glimmering on the water giving us a nature's show of varying colors on the water. Alba practiced her agility skills by hopping up on the stone wall and trying to decide if it was wise to jump over the other side. What we failed to notice was the sign in this area that said no pets. Luckily for us, we were made aware of this restriction on the way out by a ranger. He was nice about it as the restriction had just started the day before. Over the bridge we went and back to our loop trail for the hike out. The trail was getting busy with hikers and dogs as we got out to our cars. These days it is better to go early for hiking. We did about 3.5 miles.

Burr Pond State Park
April 22, 2020
by Sarah O'Hare

Today is the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. It appeared that Mother Nature was in quite a mood this morning, trying to reclaim her grip on winter. She gave us a very cold morning with thick clouds, blustery wind, snowing at times, sun at times, a little warmth, no wind, more wind and then snow again. Mother Nature's tempestuous mood was not going to deter Dave Amidon and me from our hike. We set off in a counter-clockwise direction on the Walcott Trail, a loop trail around Burr Pond, through forest of mountain laurel and hemlock. At the southern end of the pond, we took a detour onto the Muir/Walcott Connector Trail. Here, the trail became more of a challenge as we climbed over and around rocks. Two trilliums were hesitant in opening their blossoms, seemingly waiting for a more favorable day.

At the end of this connector trail, we turned west onto the Walcott Trail. A side trail through a tunnel of mountain laurel beckoned for exploration of the peninsula that jutted out into the pond. If not for the gusty winds, it would have been a fine spot for a picnic. Retracing our steps back to the Walcott Trail, we began heading east to complete our loop around the pond. Once back at the park, with its sandy beach and picnic area, we stopped at the picnic grove to have lunch. Dave shared memories of sunny days here, paddling this pond with his wife. While we ate, a pair of geese and their seven hatchlings, so small were they, their wings barely more than nubs, climbed out of the water. It was a wonder that the goslings weren't blown like tiny tumbleweeds through the park. When our fingers became cold enough to lose feeling, it was time to get back to our cars and crank up the heat. It was then, at last, when Mother Nature began to release her grip on winter. The clouds parted and the sun shone.

Usually the drive home from a hike is uneventful but today it was quite the opposite. While driving down Rte.

44, a black bear was munching grass along the side of the road. Of course, I stopped and observed, until it eventually turned into the woods. It was a great way to end an enjoyable morning on the trail.

Buckingham Reservoir & Case Mountain
Recreation Area
April 25, 2020
by Jim Robertson

We moved this hike by a day due to a forecast for poor weather on the 26th. **Sarah O'Hare** and **Don and Linda Hagstrom** joined leader Jim Robertson for a walk that totaled about 8.5 miles. On a beautiful Spring Saturday, we got an early start from Coop Road off Hebron Avenue, finding the parking area already full and cars starting to line the road. A level road walk led to the trail along the east shoreline of Buckingham Reservoir, owned by the Manchester Water District but located in Glastonbury. We wound our way north, pleasantly surprised to find that a normally muddy section of trail had dried nicely, apparently due to recent Connecticut DEEP removal of a beaver dam that had flooded the marsh adjacent to the trail in previous years. Our walk continued onto the Shenipsit Trail that led us to Lookout Mountain in the Case Mountain Recreation Area. There we stopped for lunch, maintaining social distances of at least six feet, and enjoyed nice western views of Hartford and the hills and mountains beyond.

Any trip to this area requires a stop at *The Chimney*, a remnant of a long-gone building on the Gray/White Trail. The structural integrity of the stonework and mortar were confirmed, and the box wire was verified to still be in place. We continued south, eventually reaching Buckingham Reservoir again. This time we followed the west shore trail down to the sunny opening by the dam. Unfortunately, two unleashed, unruly dogs coming from the opposite direction got Molson stirred up into a few loud barks, but he quickly put the incident out of mind. We were not so quick to let go, however, as the dogs' owners were surly when we suggested they control their animals.

The walk down and across the outlet stream provided good views of the dam spillway, flowing with more water than I ever recall seeing. A steep climb back up to the dirt road for the pleasant walk back to our cars finished the outing. But by 2 pm, we found crowds of people in the parking area, and Coop Road was completely lined with parked cars. Many folks were outside, attempting to shake off the COVID isolation and restrictions.

**Minutes of the 50th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Section of the Green Mountain Club
at the Cheshire Grange, Saturday, March 30, 2019**

The meeting was called to order by Jim Robertson at 7:03 pm.

Kevin Burke, Secretary:

- Read the minutes taken at the 2018 meeting.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve these minutes. The motion was approved.
- Current membership: 100 family members, and 80 Individual members.

Dick Hart, Treasurer:

- Presented the treasurer's report from March 24, 2018 to March 29, 2019.
- Income from dues and the annual meeting totaled \$2,572.50.
- Expenses to publish and mail Trail Talk, stamps, trail maintenance expenses, Annual Dinner, gifts for Annual Dinner, Dave Hardy memorial contribution, Mt. Bromley Fire tower contribution, and copies totaled \$2,254.06.
- Ending bank account balances on March 29, 2019 were \$2,351.61 (checking) and \$8,911.67 (savings). Interest earned on savings account was \$2.67.

Mike Shaw, First V.P., Trails and Shelters

- Led 4 maintenance trips (2 Spring, 2 Fall).
- 10 workers participated.
- Brushing, water bars, pruning, blazing and blowdown removal.
- Said that dates have been set for 2019 Spring trips.

Dennis Himes, Second V.P., Activities:

- Reported that there were 28 day-hikes, 5 paddles, and 7 backpacks covering 31 days.
- There were 2 winter weekends in the Catskill and White Mountains.
- Grand Canyon adventure
- There were 8 leaders and coleaders.
- Trail Magic Day was once again performed at Kelley Stand Road and was greatly enjoyed by both the recipients and the magic providers!

Jim Fritz, Director and Liaison to GMC:

- Reported on the highlights of the GMC's status and activities. The themes include:
Operational Excellence
Protecting and managing the trail resource
Engagement and Inclusion
Strengthen our sections, membership, and volunteers

- The 109th annual meeting is to be held at Windridge Camp, Roxbury, Vt., May 31-June 2, hosted by the Montpelier Section

Fred Clark, Editor, Trail Talk:

- Introduced as the new Trail Talk editor, filling the big shoes of his predecessor, Carol A. Langley
- More people are choosing to have Trail Talk e-mailed to them. Paper copies currently being mailed: 53. This is down from 66.
- Acknowledged the valuable assistance of Charlotte Hitchcock and Dave Wells in getting Trail Talk e-mailed and mailed.

Jim Robertson, President, Connecticut Section:

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- Introduced Tom Candon, Green Mountain Club President, and Michael DeBonis, Green Mountain Club Executive Director.
- Recognized long-time members in attendance: Joe Kekacs, Rosemary Miller, and Ross Landis.
- Gave special thanks to Carol Langley for purchasing very nice commemorative mugs celebrating the Connecticut Section's 50th anniversary.
- Election of officers to serve until next Annual Meeting:

Motions were made and seconded to nominate the following people for the following offices:

President Jim Robertson

First Vice President, Trails and Shelters

Mike Shaw

Second Vice President, Activities

Dennis Himes

Secretary Kevin Burke

Treasurer Dick Hart

The motion was unanimously approved.

Guest speakers:

Tom Candon, GMC President:

- Budget is balanced.
- Capital budget is fixed to 2030.
- Is working on getting more people in the 25-45-year-old age group to join and get involved.

Mike DeBonis, GMC Executive Director:

- Increase in trail users. Focusing on turning more trail users to be members and volunteers.
- 35 to 40 trail staff hired for 2019.
- U.S. Forest Service is providing funds for Kid Gore Shelter! Work possibly to begin in 2020.
- Bromley Fire tower is funded: \$265,000. Permitting process has begun.

- 2019 is the 50th anniversary of caretaker program.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Burke, Secretary

President’s letter – continued from page 1

Long Trail Maintenance: As of this writing, the State of Vermont still requests that visitors coming in from other states self-quarantine for 14 days upon arrival. The Long Trail is now open to hiking, but the facilities – shelters and privies – are still closed to limit COVID infections. After considering these factors and after discussion with GMC Field Director Keegan Tierney, Mike Shaw and I elected to postpone the first two work weekends in May and early-June. Mike will determine and communicate a new schedule when the restrictions are lifted.

As many have said, we’ll get through this unique period in time together. Hopefully all of you and your families and friends are healthy, and are finding opportunities to get outdoors.

See you on the trail,
Jim Robertson

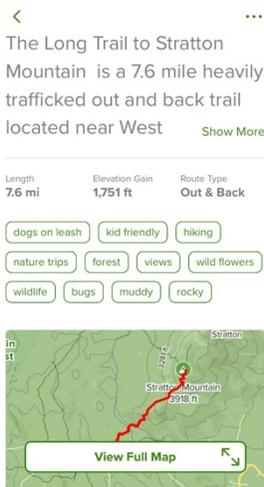
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Upcoming events are listed here: <http://www.conngmc.com/newwiki/doku.php?id=start>.

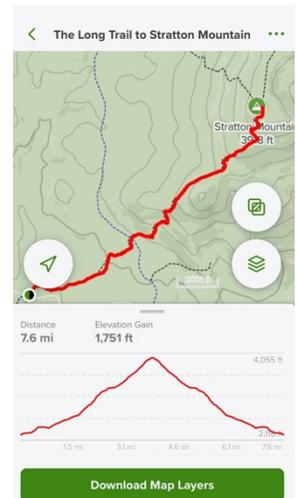
Maps or Apps – Tell us about your favorite trail app

Members increasingly talk about trail apps that they use while hiking. True confession: I don’t use trail apps. I never hike without a map, compass, and altimeter. Many of you bring these items as well as a smart phone on which you have loaded a Trail app or two. Which do you use? I asked member Charlotte Hitchcock to tell us about her favorite trail app. Write to me about your favorite app, and I’ll share your trail app review in a future issue.

Fred Clark



I use the *AllTrails* app along with a paper map and guidebook (my overall favorite is *The Dog Lovers Companion to New England*). This is an excellent tool for anyone who loves maps. *AllTrails* has a very elegant interface with beautiful topo maps, and shows your current location on the map using GPS — very helpful to orient yourself in the case of a poorly marked trail junction. It’s easy to zoom in and out for the broader context. It includes suggested hikes in all the places I’ve been recently, from well-known public parks to local conservation areas in the New England states. Directions to the trailhead have been accurate, and the mapping is continuous beyond the target trail, so you can easily explore other areas outside the suggested route. Permitted and recommended users are listed for each trail (dogs, children, skiing, birding) and these are mostly quite appropriate – these screen shots show an example. There is a free account, or a choice to pay for the Pro version. I’ve been using it for several years and have the paid version because I can save favorite trails, record my route, and download maps for the times



when I’ll be out of range of data service (the GPS will still show up). Other map layers such as USGS topo maps can be downloaded and viewed instead of the proprietary mapping. As always when using a cell phone, there’s the need to watch for a drained battery, so it’s important to have your paper map with you. Using *AllTrails*, I’ve discovered a number of new places to walk around my new home in Durham NH, by searching for my town and browsing the offerings.

Charlotte Hitchcock