

The Trail Talk



VOL. XXXVIII NO. III

July 2005

New Members

Cynthia Jones
Manchester, CT

George Jackson
Killingworth, CT

Paul Brame
Glastonbury, CT



Mattabesett Trail Maintenance April 9, 2005

Because Sarah was leading a trip in our section from Rt. 68 to Black Pond on Connecticut Trails day in June, I decided to inspect and blaze that section first this year. After breakfast at Guida's we spotted cars at Black Pond then drove to Rt. 68.

We blazed, picked up trash and clipped the section. Several of us went for pizza after.

*John Bensenhaver, Dave Chatel, Allen Freeman,
Sarah O'Hare, Mary O'Neill
Leader: Dick Krompegal*

Mattabesett Trail Maintenance May 1, 2005

We procrastinated starting our work day waiting for the rain showers to stop, at Guida's eating breakfast. With the rain letting up we drove to Rt. 68 to spot a car then drove to Paug Gap to start out maintenance. We worked from the gap back to Rt. 68.

*Michael Dow and his son Jake, Lora Miller, Sarah O'Hare
Leader: Dick Krompegal*

Silver Hill Camping April 16-17, 2005

We had a great Spring weekend for another trip to the Silver Hill camping area on the Appalachian Trail near Cornwall Bridge. Although no other club members were able to join us, Brenna, Jimmy and I decided to take advantage of the fine weather and backpack up the hill to the campsite. We were fueled primarily by Brenna's 10-ingredient trail mix (recipe below). After setting up our tent, the kids checked out the water pump, which seemed to take forever to prime and then spewed forth very rusty water, probably the result of an idle winter. We were joined soon after by a group from the New Milford YMCA, many out for their first-ever backpacking excursion. Seems they had started out Friday from somewhere north of Route 4, completed a trail maintenance project, then hiked south to Silver Hill. They sent up large tarps, and started preparing dinner. Still full of trail mix, we waited a while before cooking our pasta dinner, then watched the moon's first quarter rise over the Housatonic River valley.

By morning, the temperature had dropped to a cool 37 degrees, but warmed up quickly as the sun rose in the sky. After breakfast, we finished packing and hiked down the hill, hoping to do some fishing in the Housatonic. However, it was obvious from looking at the high water level and the swift currents that any fish would be clinging to the undersides of rocks, and not interested in munching bait, so we headed home. A stop at the Berkshire General Store in Cornwall for sandwiches, snacks, and ice cream, and the Wildlife Action animal park in Goshen completed our trip.

Backpackers: Jim, Brenna and Jimmy Robertson

Brenna's 10-ingredient trail mix: Goldfish (cheddar cheese) crackers, pretzels, chocolate covered raisins, raisins, "Craisins", peanuts, cashews, white chocolate chips, M&Ms, and smashed granola bars.



Club Information

http://www.conngmc.com

Officers & Executive Committee

Carol Langley—President

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Sarah O'Hare, 2nd Vice President, Activities

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Please direct all inquiries regarding the Club to the President:

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The Trail Talk is published four times a year in January, April, July and October. Activity schedules are included in each issue. Reports of activities and articles must be sent to the editor no later than the tenth day of the month of the publication. Send articles to:

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Membership

When filling out the form to join or renew circle the Connecticut Section on the application to receive, at no extra charge, the Connecticut Section's newsletter and activity schedule.

Dues:

Individual Adult \$ 35.00

Family \$ 45.00

Senior (70 or older) or Limited Income \$ 20.00

Nonprofit or Youth Group \$ 50.00

Business or Corporation \$125.00

Send annual dues to:

The Green Mountain Club

4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road

Waterbury Center, VT 05677-9904

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



Long Trail Maintenance

May 20 – 22, 2005

This weekend's trip to Kid Gore was expected to be the last look of approval on our proposed relocation of a section of the Long Trail north of the shelter. On Friday, Greg Western and Zyla, GMC crew members, walked it with Dick and Bill for decisions on what project our section's volunteers would tackle later this summer. Three other workers arrived over the course of the afternoon and after settling in for the evening we relaxed with appetizers and dinner in front of a fire. The nearly full moon lit up the sky as darkness fell.

Greg and Zyla departed at daybreak and with the bright sun and blue sky promising a glorious spring day we were all up early to begin our day. Jack, and Frank with his chainsaw, headed north to remove the blow downs from the harsh winter. While at Lydia's rest with no place to sit (the old bench had rotted away) they fashioned a new seat. It has been affectionately nicknamed "Krompy's Kouch." Before heading south Dick, Bill and Sarah closed off the southern side trail to the shelter for two trails were unnecessary. The sign that Frank had made years ago was removed and will be placed elsewhere. They then continued along clipping and removing many blow downs. Working about two miles to where last year's blazing ended they turned back and finished the blazing working north to the shelter.

The morning was perfect. Sunny, no clouds and although the trees had yet any leaves the ground was a carpet of colorful wildflowers. The surroundings made the chore of maintenance a delight. At least for awhile anyway as clouds eventually moved in and sprinkles began. Fortunately, it was getting towards lunchtime when we planned our return to the shelter. After lunch some of us napped and some began a new project of clearing the rocks from the trail leading to the newly moved privy. The outhouse had been moved just the day before and it had been placed backwards to give its occupants a view. The rockwork was strenuous and backbreaking but the effect was pronounced. There is now a kinder and gentler path for those nighttime needs.

A full day of work deserved a little celebration so with a grand fire going, thanks to Frank and his chainsaw and Jack's fire master skills, we were content. We were soon joined by a couple and their dog who spent the night in the shelter. The rain continued through the night and into Sunday morning. Dick, satisfied with our accomplishments of the days prior, chose to call it a weekend. Several more weekends of work are anticipated later this summer and fall. All hands are welcome to contribute in getting our relocated trail section opened to the hiking community. Contact Dick for the dates and how you can help.

*Trail Maintainers: Jack Sanga, Bill Brodnitzki,
Frank Maine*

*Written By: Sarah O'Hare
Leader: Dick Krompegal*

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Bike ride on the Farmington Canal Greenway May 29, 2005

Riding the Farmington Canal Greenway was a wonderful way to spend part of the Memorial Day weekend; however, truth be told, when I scheduled the bike ride, if I had noticed that my selected date fell on a holiday weekend, I would have picked another day. Usually, on nice holiday weekends, the Farmington Canal Greenway is especially packed. Further, Cheshire hosts its Memorial Day parade on Sunday, the day of my ride, which can make traffic an absolute nightmare. Despite having the odds against me, nonetheless, my Mr. McGoo luck kicked in, and we were able to have an enjoyable ride without the headaches.

We started at about 10 a.m. at the northern parking lot in Cheshire. There were people on the greenway, but the greenway was hardly crowded. The weather was perfect: partly cloudy, about 70°F, and moderate humidity. There was a headwind on the way back to the cars, but the wind was nothing egregious.

Those of you who have ridden this greenway know how beautiful it is. The canal runs parallel to the greenway for about half the way, I think. The water appeared very clear and somewhat swollen. Mallard ducks were sprinkled along the canal, often times alone and quietly quacking at no one in particular. We saw an entire assortment of dogs and pups including two especially overweight beige pugs with dark faces. As their tongues bounced up and down, they looked like they were grinning, but somehow, I didn't think they were.



We also saw a swan with its neck contorted in the most interesting position at the canal lock museum as well as fuzzy goslings much further down the greenway standing on a stone wall in a pond, which I presume was some sort of a settling basin structure for the nearby factory. There were a couple of maverick goslings boldly swimming around on their own in another part of the pond.

We reached the end of the rail trail in record time, and took a break on the Hamden High School steps. We had a very pleasant time talking, even discussing the validity of the global warming theory without breaking out into a fist fight. When the sun came out and started making me sleepy, I suggested that we head back. On that way back, we decided to become mavericks ourselves and climb the rail fence blocking the closed off section of the old rail line to do some exploring; however, even though respect for the fencing installed to keep people out wasn't enough to deter us from our delinquency, the poison ivy sure was.

We zipped back to the cars in record time again. The ride was about 22 miles, which we did in about two hours, I think. We could have done it faster if it weren't for the people who

thought that the yellow bollards in the middle of the greenway to block vehicular traffic actually meant 'congregate around here and block the greenway.' It wasn't so bad, though. The closest we got to technical mountain biking was riding over them. (Joke)

The ride ended sooner than I hoped, but I was still quite satisfied at the end. The ride was quite refreshing and relaxing with the only excitement being John Bensenhaver's water bottle taking a nose dive off the top of their car as they attempted to drive away. After rescuing the bottle, John (my husband, that is) and I drove off ourselves, about a half hour before the start of the parade and the ghastly traffic jam, with John doing his duty of driving us home and me doing my duty of promptly falling asleep.

Participants: Mary O'Neill (Leader), John O'Neill, John Bensenhaver, Dayle Bensenhaver

Mattabesett Trail CT Trails Day June 4, 2005

There couldn't have been a more appropriate trail for our club to celebrate CT Trails Day on than our own section of the Mattabesett Trail. Thirteen hikers met at Black Pond where we shuttled to the northern trailhead at Reed's Gap, Rt. 68. The day was expected to be a hot one so we kept the pace moderate and stopped frequently for water breaks. Lunch had been planned for the high cliffs overlooking Black Pond but as the morning passed into afternoon, with the temperature rising and hikers needing lunch we stopped along Besek Ridge, short of our destination. There was little shade as the sun beat down on us and reflected off the rocks. Our views looked south and west and below us Alex counted eleven swimming pools in the new housing development. How inviting their cool, blue waters looked!

After lunch it was just a short descent to Black Pond where our cars were parked. We all felt deserving of the ice cream offered at Guida's and in no time we found ourselves seated at the shaded picnic tables with our cool refreshments. It was hoped (and expected!) that all GMC members and friends enjoyed CT Trails Day whether hiking, pedaling or paddling. Set aside the first Saturday of June each year and join in on an activity with us or some other group and share your knowledge, interest and love for the out-of-doors. And spread the word about the CTGMC!

*Hikers: Richard Krompegal, Carol Langley, Leslie and Richard Chandler, Mary Frazeur, Carol and Scott Mitchell, Julie, Al and son, Alex Reiff, Mary Jane Greissle, Jerry Bloom
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*



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Unknown Pond Backpacking Trip (rescheduled from rainy May) June 7-9th

We met Tuesday night at Crawford Notch State Park for a quiet peaceful evening around the campfire. On Wednesday morning we got up early to head the Northern Region of the White Mountains to a tiny quaint village called Stark. We checked out the historic covered bridge there before heading to the trailhead of Unknown Pond. We took the trailhead in off the Mill Stream Rd and backpacked in to the campsites by Unknown Pond. We dropped our packs and had a quick lunch. While we were eating, we were visited by a very large hare, brown with white paws. A biologist there doing a bird count told us that his coat was changing for the summer to brown and the white paws were the last of his winter coat which is all white.



We decided to take the Kilkenny Ridge Trail to Mt Cabot. On this hike, we saw the biggest variety of wildflowers in bloom everywhere. We saw two snakes on the trail and one very big surprise about 3/4 of the way up the mountain. We rounded the corner and there, completely covering the trail was a HUGE dead moose. Well we pondered what to do as the trail was narrow and the moose fully blocked it with thick forest all around. Lori and Brian decided to turn around and head back to a side trail to see The Horn and it's views. Mandy and Grace decided in their quest to bag Mt Cabot as it's on the 4000 ft peak list, to bushwhack around the moose. That was fairly challenging and a few scraps and bruises later, we headed to Mt Cabot, elevation 4170 ft. It was a bit disappointing that there was no view at the top but we were satisfied to have survived the climb. We joined Lori and Brian back at the campsite where they shared about the beautiful views they had seen at the Horn. We had some time to enjoy the pond around sunset. We had the whole mountain to ourselves and it was quite peaceful. After building a small campfire, we headed to bed and went to sleep to the sounds of the peepers in the pond, a lullaby of nature.

Thursday morning we got up early and headed for the cars. After backpacking out, Lori and Brian headed to CT via scenic Route 7 while Mandy and Grace stopped at the Basin in Franconia Notch and then took the Kancamagus Highway. It was clear and sunny and the views were incredible. We probably totaled around 11 miles for the two days.

*Hikers: Mandy Brink, Grace King, Brian Mazarella
and Lori Peter*



Farmington River Kayak/Bike Trip June 5, 2005

Only two people showed interest in this little adventure Henry Smith and a new member Sherri Hennessy we met in Plainville. Our little caravan with Kayaks and bikes in tow motored to Mainstream Outfitters in New Hartford where we locked up our bikes for the return trip. We then drove to Pleasant Valley and put in on the Farmington River for our kayaking trip down stream.

First we had flat water then whitewater the river alternated between the two making for a fun time. We had a good ride the 5-hour trip was done in 1-½ hours. Starting out early we had the river to ourselves and had a few bird sightings. Using my inflatable Kayak was a wise choice since there were many rocks and in some places the river was very shallow. Sherri Hennessy had a 17lb. Kayak made by Hornbeck Boats that handled well the first time on the river. Taking out just above Satan's Kingdom we locked up our watercrafts and jumped on our bikes. The ride was easy except for one short climb just before Pleasant Valley. Our lunch destination was The Blue Sky Restaurant where we each had a delicious spinach, coconut and orange salad with Raspberry Vinaigrette.

This restaurant turns out to be a Jimmy Buffet Mecca with music, pictures and other paraphernalia. It is also the place where the gentlemen from our Northwest corner of the state gets oil for his vehicle that the bears seem to like.

We had a great time and I plan to do this event again next year with hopes of more members joining me.

*Thanks to Henry and Sherri for Kayaking and biking with me
on this beautiful later spring day. L. Carol A. Langley*



Shenipsit Trail May 14, 2005

A warm spring day with a few peeks of sunshine was the weather for the day. The last time I had been to Soapstone Mt. was probably 15 years ago. Well things to do change and they did. The old dirt road that I had remembered driving on was no longer passable with a motor vehicle. The dirt bikes have literally ruined the roads leading to the mountain.

As meeting time move closer I found myself looking at maps and trying to find the parking lot off Gulf road since I could not drive over the mountain to get there. Well others in our group were doing the same. Finally reaching the parking lot I found Lora Miller looking confused and saying is this the right place. Meeting time was 9:00 but by 9:45 no one else

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showed so we drove to Crystal Lake Road and started to hike north. The trail was well marked and very easy. As we hiked along we noticed a very delicate purple/rose colored flower that we saw frequently along the trail. After some research by Lora the flower was identified as "Gay Wings" (Fringed Polygala) that is part of the milkwort family. They bloom in May & June in rich moist woods from Alberta E. to New Brunswick & S. to Georgia.

Crossing many dirt roads we hiked on when suddenly I seeing hikers coming our way, I said to Lora, "that looks like Sarah O'Hare." Sarah had Dave Hardy's 50 Hikes in CT. in hand and after meeting up with Skip Patterson they decided to do the loop hike around Soapstone Mt. After a few minutes of conversation we each continued on our way. I later learned we had another hiker Bill Falconer hiking by himself but turned around after not meeting up with anyone.

Lunch was enjoyed at a picnic table on the top of the mountain where were serenaded by a pair of Bluebirds. Then we climbed the observation tower from which we had a great panoramic view of the hills and valleys. It was a short but pleasant hike we finished about 1:30. Thanks to the hikers that made an honest effort to hike with the leader who could not be found. Lesson learned don't rely on the old brain to remember things, scout out the trail even if you have hiked it before.

*Hikers: Lora Miller, Sarah O'Hare,
Skip Patterson & Bill Falconer.
Leader: Carol A. Langley*



Risley Pond Saturday July 2

The Risley Pond Loop Trail is one of the lesser known Blue Trails in CT. The park is owned by the Manchester Conservation Land Trust and is a secondary source of water for the Manchester Water Company. Our hike began at the northern end of the pond and closely followed the pond's bank for a short distance. A few small fish caught our attention as did the rope swing. Jimmy's eyes widened as his dad, Jim, explained how one would use it. Dad, maybe if...? No, son, not today.

After crossing a log bridge over a brook the trail split, a blue/yellow dot blaze marking a path that followed close around the pond. We continued on the blue-blazed trail which took us in a southeastern direction, deeper into the quiet of the woods. It was a hike of few miles and before long we found ourselves at the south end of the pond at a dam. Here were many wildflowers, dragonflies and a young fisherman sleeping, enjoying the quiet of the morning. We silently passed him then turned north through a field that

borders the western shore of Risley Pond that brought us back to the parking area. As it was a short morning hike there was an option for a bike ride afterwards on the nearby Hop River Bike Trail. Jimmy, Jim and Sarah extended the morning's activity by taking a short ride.

*Hikers: Jim Robertson, Jimmy Robertson,
Skip Patterson, Polly Silva
Leader: Sarah O'Hare*

Fabulous Weather At Story Spring June 24 – 26, 2005

Participants in the annual spring maintenance trip to Story Spring enjoyed unusual mild, dry weather minus the dreaded Black Flies. The heat, however, brought out the pesky horse flies. Leader Dick Krompegal, Marge Hackbarth and Nanette Roina arrived Friday afternoon. While Dick clipped the trail north of the shelter Nanette and Marge cleaned out the fire ring and gather wood for the evening wiener roast. Unlike the last year only through hikers (college boys) used the shelter that night. Around 8pm Frank Maine arrived with his trusty chain saw.

In the morning Dick and Frank took care of blow downs between Story Spring to near a vista about 2 and a half miles south. Nanette went back to the car to get a hoe where she met Marjorie Fish from Londonderry, VT carrying in 40 pounds of wood chips for the composting privy. Nanette and Marge helped Marjorie store the chips in the privy. She kindly offered the through hikers a place to stay at her home on their re-supplying trip to Manchester.

That afternoon, two groups of women stopped at the shelter for a welcome rest. The heat was building up. Marge and Nanette made a feeble attempt to clean some water bars but did enjoy seeing the carnivorous pitcher plant in the old beaver pond. Everyone quit work early because of the heat then spent the afternoon and evening snacking and enjoying liquid refreshments. Two older male hikers came in late afternoon. The heat was wiping everyone out.

Sunday morning the trail crew up got a later than usual and said good bye to the AT through hikers who were doing the AT for a month at a time with aim of finishing the whole trail eventually. Both were southern gentlemen. Before leaving for home Dick and Frank stained the picnic table. They flagged the table and left a sign to warn hikers not to use the table until Monday afternoon.

Remembering former rainy, buggy trips to Story Spring we four were sorry other club members didn't get a chance to enjoy the weather.

*Workers – Nanette Roina, Frank Maine
Written By Marge Hackbarth
Leader Dick Krompegal*



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