

# STEPPING STONE

Newsletter of the Bennington Section of the Green Mountain Club

## CLUB OFFICERS

*President:* Reed Goossen

*Vice President:* Tim Marr

*Secretary & Director:* Martha Stitelman

*Treasurer & Members:* Bill Lyons

*Trails & Shelters:* Matt Vezina

*Website & Meetup:* Ann & Billy Martin

*Newsletter:* Hal March, Lorna Cheriton, Ann Martin

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## AUTUMN HIKING

Summer is waning and we may be sad to see swimming, kayaking and long evenings come to a close. However, hiking in Autumn can't be beat - breathe in that cool, crisp air and immerse yourself in the gorgeous colors of our landscape. If you're not sure where to go, check out descriptions of local trails at <https://www.benningtongmc.org/local-trails.html>



## Autumn Meeting & Long Trail Day

**Autumn Meeting & Potluck or Bring Your Own Bag In Discussion Now: Mid Oct - Early Nov, Details TBA**  
Watch for an email and/or check Meetup

**Long Trail Day Challenge:** To raise funds for the important work that the Green Mountain does to maintain and protect the 272 mile Long Trail and many miles of feeder trails, the Bennington Section offered a challenge. During the week Sep 3-11, an anonymous donor offered to donate \$1 for each mile hiked. Hikers checked in from Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Washington. There were 251 miles hiked during this challenge, resulting in 251 dollars donated, as well as donations from people who didn't hike, but donated directly. Check below to see the final results. <https://www.benningtongmc.org/long-trail-day-info.html>



## Note from the Section President

By Reed Goossen

The Bennington section of the GMC has offered a number of outings this spring and summer. In addition to our annual trail work, there were trips offered for hikes, bird watching, wildflower viewing, bicycling, and the Bennington Trailfest on July 30. Bennington Trailfest was a great success, put on by Bennington's Appalachian Trail Community Committee celebrating Bennington becoming officially named an Appalachian Trail Community.

This fall we will have a fall potluck as we often have done in the past. Details are currently being discussed. Look for an email and/or check our Meetup page.

In late September I will attend the GMC Section Presidents Zoom meeting. We haven't met as a group since late May, so I don't have any updates on main club news.

I think that fall is the best time of year for hiking. We are looking for more leaders to post activities. Please consider picking a date and planning an event.

## Nature Notes: Underwing Moths and Hawk Migration

By Terri Armata

On August 13th I was in Manchester VT looking for butterflies. As I rounded a corner, I saw the outline of what I first thought was a Monarch butterfly. It fluttered out of the bush where it was perched and landed on the side of a shed. It was a moth, quite large and beautiful. I snapped a picture and later at home with the help of the iNaturalist website and a Peterson Field Guide to Moths identified it as a Youthful Underwing, (*Catocala subnata*).

Underwing moths are medium to large, wood-dwelling moths that hold their wings in a spread position when perched. The term Underwing refers to the bright patterns of the hind wings. They also have delightful common names: Oldwife, Tearful, Once Married, Connubial, to mention a few. The Youthful Underwing's caterpillar host trees are butternut and hickory, with adults emerging in July through early fall.

**Hawk Migration:** The season of raptor migration is here. In September all the Broad-winged Hawks in North America begin their journey to the wintering grounds in Central and South America. Here in Vermont Sept 10-20 is the peak for this species. They tend to gather in groups to take advantage of warm thermal pools of air that enable them to gain altitude without flapping and then glide to the next thermal, covering miles with no energy expenditure. Sharp-shinned, Coopers Hawks, Eagles, Kestrels, Merlins etc. also migrate during September through November. The Hawk Migration Assn of North America is an organization that Hawkcount sites in Canada, The USA, Mexico and Central America report to. Putney Mt. in Putney VT and Philo State Park in Charlotte are two such sites.



Visitors are always welcome. For information and directions, as well as daily reports from all the hawk watches go to <https://hawkcount.org>. *Remember to look up, raptors may be migrating overhead!*

## Bennington First Annual Trailfest

By Ann Martin

After more than a year of preparation, Bennington joined the 51 communities along the 2200 mile Appalachian Trail's corridor to become an official A.T. Community. The A.T. Communities are towns that are assets for everyone who uses the A.T., providing food, supplies, recreation, history, volunteer opportunities and more. Just getting this designation is a tribute to the effort and time of many volunteers.



The celebration to mark this event was a huge success. At the Bennington Recreation Center, July 30th, on a sunny, windy day, about 200 people, including more than 60 thru-hikers, attended the festivities. Internet posts and notices left at trail access sites in the region provided Trailfest information, and hikers were offered shuttle rides to and from the A.T. trailhead. Attending were local day hikers, long distance hikers, people interested in protecting our landscapes, as well as people who just enjoyed meeting and talking with others.

At the event were trail and hiking-related demonstrations, information from groups like the Green Mountain Club; the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, which oversees the A.T. Trail Community program; the Green Mountain National Forest and U.S. Forest Service; the Bennington Area Trail System; and the Bennington Museum. Local businesses were there with samples and products to purchase. Among many options one could learn about Lake Paran, see a bear canister, sample hickory-bark syrup, see what goes into a hiker's backpack, listen to hikers' tales about their many and varied experiences, and much more. Hamburgers, hotdogs and more were grilled up by The Abbey Group, which provides meals to Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union schools, and local businesses. Greg Van Houten and Cindy Baxter provided musical entertainment.



Word of mouth travels quickly along the trail, and letting hikers know that Bennington is a welcoming place with much to offer is a positive for our community.

If you missed it this year, make sure to attend the 2nd annual event next year, you won't be sorry you did! You can see the complete article written by the Bennington Banner on our website [benningtongmc.org](http://benningtongmc.org)

# Old Roads and Trails in the Broad Brook Area

By Hal March

Thanks to Barb & David Primer for mentioning the old road from Henderson which inspired us to start this search! Here are some that Marge and I found using tracking on the Gaia GPS Topo map. Disregard the teardrop shaped marks; they are waypoints I used during tracking.

A The Dome Trail - This and the next 3 are on most maps, but are here as reference points.

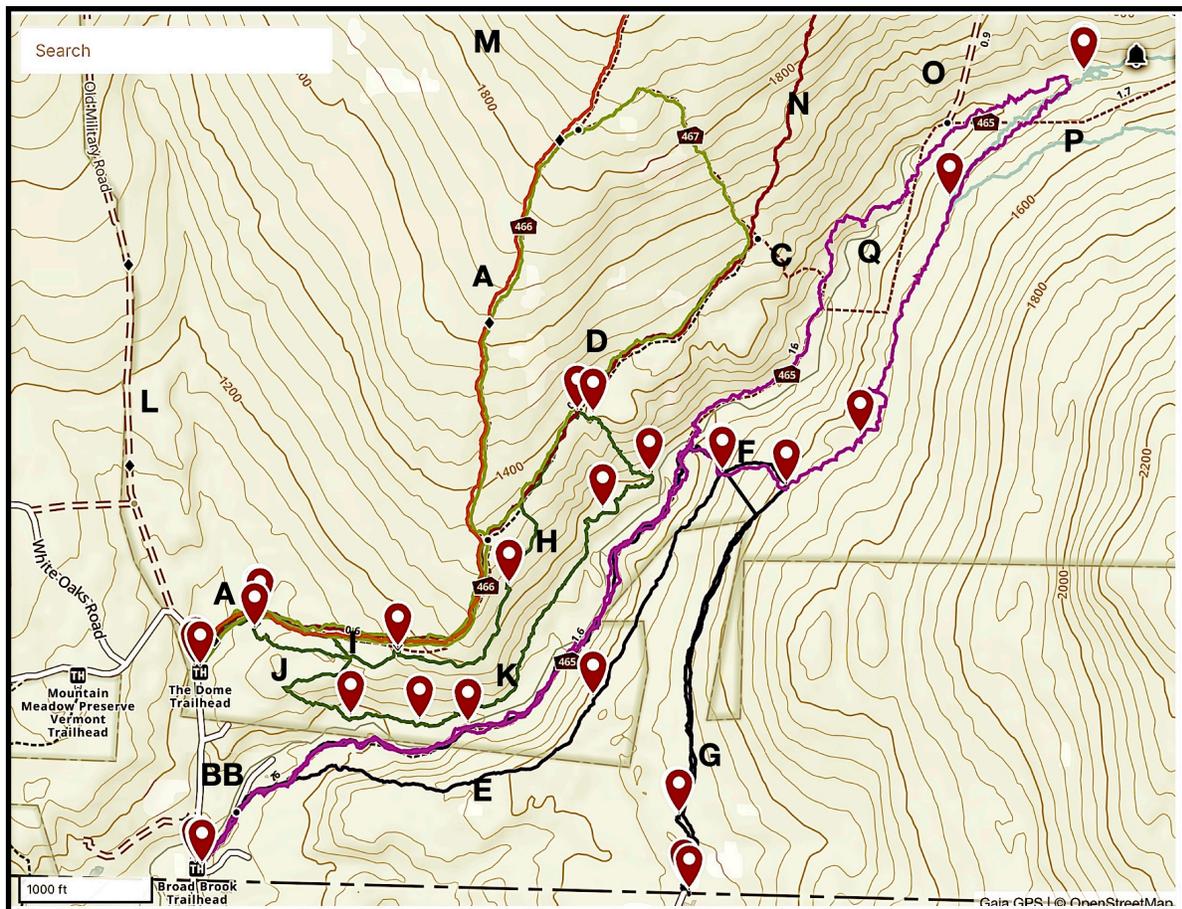
BB Broad Brook Trail

C Agawon Trail

D Quarry Road off A

E An easy, open road high above Broad Brook. Going north from the BB trailhead, the trail bears to the right before the Water Treatment Buildings, then climbs a rocky slope. Where it turns back down to the brook look for an unmarked path/road to the right. This goes north, then climbs on an angle up the steep bank. At the top it levels off and runs north. Toward the end, with the brook visible below, when the road turns up to the right, look for F.

F A herd path that leaves the BB at the first crossing and goes east up the bank to E. This path follows E up to a brushy open area where E seems to end, but F continues east straight up the bank to meet G.



G Road shown on old maps that runs from Henderson Road in Williamstown north to Broad Brook but the south end is on private land. Going north from F, it gets wet and rough but still hike-able.

H Old road that runs from D below and parallel to A almost down to the trailhead.

I Road/bike path that cuts from A over a grassy berm, swings right (south) along the edge to J. (The bike path continues on, up and down, finally coming out onto H below the meadow on A. A sign by the bike path says “NOTICE! This is not an authorized trail. We ask for your cooperation in staying on designated trails to allow this area to revegetate... constructing trails on National Forest System land without approval is subject to a fine of not more than \$5,000 and/or imprisonment...etc.”)

J Old road that goes steeply down to level ground and K.

K On the east side of a stone wall, an old road (traveled mostly by deer) runs from the brook north, roughly parallel to BB and rising on plateaus above it for almost a mile until it ends at the edge of a huge washout. Here, a bushwhack up the bank gets you to about the middle of D (and bike paths). Or at the lowest point, scramble down and cross Broad Brook to get to BB.

L “Old Military Road” to Sweet Rd. in Pownal, VT. Fairly heavy ATV use.

M Old road from L to A. Continues east, dissolving in a wide tangle of rock & ATV mud holes.

N Steep continuation of D to M. Partly shown on 2008 Williams College “North Berkshire Trails” map.

O “East Dome Trail” On some maps but I couldn’t find it in the mess on M

P Road northwest off G. Becomes very wet, swings north toward BB.

Q dotted line = ?

### Broad Brook Trail

*By Ann Martin*

To add to Hal’s article, a small group hiked the Broad Brook trail at the end of July. It is a lovely trail with the sound of flowing water, beautiful brook, large boulders, and the day we went there were very few bugs. The trail was well marked and not overgrown. Be aware that we crossed the brook 9 times - rocks were slippery, water was running, and a hiking stick or pole definitely helped when crossing. It took a bit over 5 hours plus a lunch stop to go out and back. Higher water levels would present larger issues and even make crossing impossible, so check before you go!



### Update on Local Bike Trails

*By Hal March and Ann Martin*

It’s exciting to see our communities working to put in bike trails. These trails link different parts of the community while providing a safe, off-road place for walkers, joggers, and bikers. Today the beautifully paved and maintained [Ashuwillticook Bike Path](#) goes 12.7 miles from Pittsfield to Adams. Imagine one day

being able to continue on to North Adams to Williamstown to Bennington and beyond! Pieces of this are currently under construction.

### **New Williamstown Bike Path**

The new 2.4 mile bike path in Williamstown is open, sort of. It begins at Syndicate Road, just off Rt. 7, where there is a small parking area, unfinished at this point. A sign there says PATH CLOSED AHEAD - maybe at least until work ends at 4:00. It looks as if the path is unofficially OPEN on weekends, when we rode it. Newly paved, it runs along the south side of the Hoosic River, then beside the Williams College playing fields (there usually is parking on the other side) to Cole Avenue, where the crossing is still under construction. The path goes by the Cole Ave Apartments, enters the woods, crosses the Green River on a spiffy new bridge and comes to the cornfields in Linear Park, where the path surface turns to crushed stone. It ends at The Spruces, where there is ample parking, as well as a large construction area.



Although there are plans to connect south with the Ashwilticook Rail Trail in North Adams, this non-rail section has been named The Adventure Trail. For a wild, optimistic look at these plans: <https://cms9files.revize.com/northadamsmma/community%20development/North%20Adams%20Adventure%20TrailFinal013020.pdf>. There also have been discussions about running The Adventure Trail or some bike trail north to Bennington, possibly along the old track bed of the Berkshire Hills trolley. As you can imagine, this would present some challenges, but the ultimate goal will be to go further north through Vermont to Canada. **Go rail trails!**

### **New Bennington Rail Trail**



If you drive by the Aldi intersection these days you'll see construction going on there. The intersection is being altered for the new bike path that goes through. The new Rail Trail begins at the Bennington Station (where it links to the Riverwalk Pathway). It heads north / northwest along the rail corridor, crossing the Roaring Branch on the existing rail road bridge, then crosses over Northside Drive right by Aldis and CVS. From there it goes behind the Cumberland Farms to Orchard Road (leading to Molly Stark School). The path will be paved for this entire length.

From Orchard Road, the rail trail will continue to Emma Street, but that section will be gravel surface. The rail trail is a crucial link. Once done, this means that for the first time since before the modernization of our road system, we will have safe pedestrian and bike access from Downtown Bennington all the way to Northside Drive, to the Ninja Trail and Bennington College, and ultimately to the village of North Bennington.

## GMC Annual Meeting

By Billy Martin

June 11, 2022. Yes, we all met on a beautiful day at the GMC Waterbury Campus AND in person outside. THAT was so wonderful. You could feel the energy from all who attended the meeting. The last, in person, GMC annual meeting was held in 2019 and many of us remember the venue where we camped, used cottages, took hikes, and learned a lot about the activities in which our club was engaged. The current leadership of GMC provided an outstanding presentation of our club. Many thanks to Howard VanBenthuyzen - President; Nancy McClellan - VP, Caitlin Miller - Secretary; Nancy Thomas - Treasurer. To see the very informative speech from the president which covered everything from a bit of history to membership to finances to waste management, please click this link: <https://www.greenmountainclub.org/green-mountain-club-2022-annual-meeting/>

This year was upbeat for many reasons. Wait, I'm getting ahead of myself. Starting on Friday afternoon many volunteers helped move picnic tables around the outside of a large stand-alone tent. We placed chairs inside the tent to accommodate the guests. Tables for food and beverages were set along the border of the GMC HQ building. Checkin tables were made ready for the arrival of all us GMC'ers on Saturday.



Mingling amongst the crowd of approximately 100 people, putting faces to names, meeting new people, being introduced to various newsletter editors of our sections was extremely rewarding. Saturday morning, of course, parking was jammed. Lines were formed for the coffee and sugar addicts to get their morning drink and bagel. Did I forget to say that a large (purple, green and brown) cookie in the topographic shape of the long trail was made for all participants to enjoy. (Yum)

The bell was rung and the meeting began. Fortunately an outdoor amplified speaker was adjusted so the persons under the tent as well as those outside the tent at the picnic tables could hear the speakers.

Along with the previous meeting notes, the intro of officers, and budget details, there was one section of the meeting that I felt was most significant. The organizers had assembled a panel for discussion. You know, kind of a boring idea! Wrong!

The panel was led by moderator Amy Kelsey, former GMC Vice President and Director of Operations for the Nature Conservancy. Members of the panel included:

- Rebecca Washburn - Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation, and Director of Lands Administration and Recreation. (Now that's a Title!)
- Mollie Flanagan - Green Mountain Club, Director of Land Conservation
- Ilana Copel - Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Office Administrator and Outreach Coordinator
- Keegan Tiernay - Green Mountain Club, Director of Field Operations

As very direct questions were asked to the panel members, one could get a glimpse of the breadth of topics that our GMC club must understand and make decisions which affect the trail, its presence in the forest and local communities. Not only is the hiker impact considered on the trails, but wildlife corridors, tread strength for increased usage, interdepartmental coordination between the national, state, county, and local organizations, and the protection of the trail. The panel was super, hope something similar is on the agenda next year.

GMC has protected all but 6.5 miles of the 272-mile Long Trail corridor and permanently protected all major river crossings. The club manages more than 500 miles of trails, and has more than \$11,000,000 in assets including our endowment, trail structures, and the Waterbury Center campus. GMC is also responsible for managing and monitoring conservation interests on 25,000 acres of conserved land.

There were 3 GMC lifetime membership awards given. Listening to these persons' lifetime contributions and leadership in their sections caused one to realize that no matter how efficient and creative the HQ of any organization is, the reality for GMC effectiveness is the thousands or millions of volunteer hours to which we all contribute that makes the Green Mountain Club so special, and the Long Trail so wonderful.

*Keep up the great work everyone, see you on the trail!*

## Looking Back at Autumn Images from Last Year



## Schedule of Upcoming Events: Autumn 2022

Always check our Meetup Site for information or updates to the following events, as weather or other aspects may change these dates and details. Additional trips may be added: <https://www.meetup.com/benningtongmc/> Note: VT Regular Deer Hunting Season begins Saturday, November 14 and ends Sunday, November 29.; MA Shotgun Season November 28-December 10.

### **Sep 17, Saturday - Hike a forest road along Bolles Brook in the Glastenbury Wilderness Area**

This moderate (out and back) hike of 6 miles or more will explore historic remains of charcoal kilns used in the late 1800's. The old Long Trail was located here, and it is where Paula Welden, a Bennington College student who mysteriously disappeared 76 years ago, was last seen. (The Bennington Museum's website [benningtonmuseum.org](http://benningtonmuseum.org) gives info on its Sept 18 program "The Enduring Mystery of the Paula Welden Case.") The terrain is gradually uphill to where the east and west branch of Bolles Brook diverge, where we will explore the right fork which features a beautiful stream and gnarly old trees. This is not a fast hike, but fairly long. The group will stay together, but if a subgroup wants to turn back early, we can accommodate that. Bring lunch/beverage, and extra layers of clothing. Leader: Tim Marr. RSVP via Meetup. Check meetup the day before for updates.

### **A Sunday TBD in Mid Oct to Early Nov - Bennington GMC Meeting and Potluck**

Details are currently under discussion. Watch for an email and/or check Meetup for details. Presentation: Hamilton and Lorna's March 2022 Costa Rica trip.

### **Oct 1, Saturday - White Rocks National Recreation Area, Wallingford, VT**

Distance: roughly 5 miles. Total elevation gain: 1500 feet. Not a hike suitable for dogs. Meet at Bennington Rec Center. 9:30 a.m. About an hour drive to the trail head. Hike to the "other" White Rocks, (the more famous one, at least to the National Forest Service), the one NOT in Bennington. This hike has two parts. The first part is a short hike (0.8 mi one way) on the Ice Beds trail, to a point at the base of the White Rocks where ice is said to persist in a hole all through the year. After returning to the parking lot, we will then hike on Keewaydin Trail up to where it meets the Long Trail, then head south on the LT until we reach the White Rocks Cliff about 1.5 miles from the parking lot. If the weather is clear, we will have great views of the fall foliage to the south and west. An adventurous option for those who want is to climb up the White Rocks from the ice beds at the base, up to the cliff and meet the rest of us at the top of the cliff. Note that to be included on this hike you will have to sign up on Meetup no later than September 30: <https://www.meetup.com/benningtongmc/> Limit: 12 hikers. Contact: Reed Goossen [rgoossen@gmail.com](mailto:rgoossen@gmail.com); mobile - 215-595-6391

### **Oct 8, Saturday - Fall Foliage Hike in Williamstown (rain date Sunday)**

Meet at 10 AM at the Sara Tenney Trailhead, 2 miles up route 2 from route 7 in Williamstown. The trailhead on the left. Hoping for beautiful views at various points by hiking down the Sara Tenney Trail into Treadwell Hollow and up to Petersburg Pass, then north over the Taconic Crest Trail, and down Shepherd's Well Trail to return. This is a 4 mile hike, with both climbs and descents. Limit: 10 hikers. Margie March, leader. (413) 458-3162.

**Oct 15, Saturday - Up and Over Bald Mountain**

Starting from the water tank on Harbor Road on the Bald Mountain East Side trail in Woodford up to the top of Bald Mountain and down the other side ending at the Branch Street trail head in Bennington. We will arrange the spotting of cars for this hike when we see who is coming. Estimate 4-5 hours including rest tops and lunch. Approximately 6 miles with about 1400 feet elevation gain. Rated Moderate and requires a degree of stamina, some previous experience desirable. RSVP on Meetup. Limited to 10 participants plus the 2 leaders. Check the Meetup site the night before the hike for last minute updates or changes, particularly if the weather is questionable. Bring layers of clothing, water, lunch, snacks, sturdy hiking shoes, possible rain gear. Meet at 9:30 at the Bennington Rec Center. Ann & Billy Martin

**Oct 23, Sunday - Easy paced hike up Prospect Mountain, Woodford**

Easy paced hike up Prospect Mountain, Woodford via the beautiful, remote Mountain trail, a steady climb with a 600 foot elevation gain. Some nice views from the ski trails at the summit of 2767 feet. Hike down the access road, for a total distance of about 3 miles. Some exploring at the summit is an option. Back to Bennington by 4pm. Meet at Bennington Rec Center at 1pm. Leader: Tim Marr. Prefer RSVP via meetup, or call/text 518-257-0829. Wet weather cancels hike, so check Meetup for updates on the morning of the hike.

**Nov 5, Saturday - Burgess County Road Harmon Hill Loop**

Start at Burgess Rd and Gore in Bennington, hike up to meet Stage Coach Rd, to the Appalachian Trail, to the top of Harmon Hill, and then down the west side of Harmon Hill back to Burgess Rd. Estimate 4-5 hours including rest stops & lunch. Approximately 6 miles with 1500 feet elevation gain. Rated Moderate and requires a degree of stamina, some previous experience desirable. RSVP on Meetup. Limited to 10 participants plus the 2 leaders. Check Meetup site the night before the hike for last minute updates or changes, particularly if the weather is questionable. Bring layers of clothing, water, lunch, snacks, sturdy hiking shoes, possible rain gear. Meet at 9:30 at the Bennington Rec Center. Ann & Billy Martin

**December 26, Monday – Participants Choice.**

RSVP on Meetup. Leaders: Lorna and Hamilton. Meet at 1pm at the Bennington Rec Center.

**January 1, 2023, Sunday - Ski or snowshoe or hike Bolles Brook trail**

A traditional GMC Bennington New Year's Day outing. Start the New Year with an energizing outing, about 2-hour, out-and-back trip along the beautiful brook with snow-covered rocks and ice formations. All are welcome, whatever your pace. We will stay together for awhile, then some will go faster or farther. Leaders: Lorna and Hamilton. Meet at 1pm at the Bennington Rec Center.

**SKIING CROSS COUNTRY** - Given the unpredictable weather and snowfall, ski trips and winter hikes will be posted "**Pop-up**" style on the website and/or Meetup.

**GMC Membership:** If you have not joined the GMC, please consider joining as this organization protects and maintains the Long Trail System for all of us. If you have joined, don't forget to renew your membership. **Online vs Print Newsletter:** In these times, many people are choosing to read this newsletter online as it shows better with color photos, more information, live links, and reduces printing and mailing costs. If you no longer wish to receive the printed black and white copy please email Hal March. [halmarch@yahoo.com](mailto:halmarch@yahoo.com) Disregard if you have already notified him. Anyone who expects to receive a printed newsletter should make sure that their GMC membership has not lapsed."