

# STEPPING STONE

## Newsletter of the Bennington Section of the Green Mountain Club

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### Bike Hub Bike Rides

Tuesday evening rides leave the Bike Hub at 5:30 pm. 10-12 mph, pace, 12-20 miles distances. No riders left behind.

Women's Ride: Meet at the Bennington Battle Monument Fridays at 6:30 am. Route will be determined by the needs of the group. 1-1.5 hrs

We will continue to form rides and would love your input.



### Long Trail Day - Celebrate Hiking in VT

Long Trail Day is the social fundraiser and celebration of hiking in Vermont. Individuals and teams will hike anywhere along the Long Trail on October 7 to have fun and raise money to support the Long Trail and all those who benefit from the mountains and trails of Vermont. If you can't hike that day you can still participate by registering and fundraising online.

As we wander the beautiful trails in Vermont we may not realize the work that goes into keeping them safe and walkable - clearing blown down trees, routing water, clipping bushes, repairing shelters, controlling erosion, educating hikers... Contemplate this daunting task of maintaining over 500 miles of trails along with 70 backcountry overnight sites and facilities. *The Long Trail has been free for 100 years - you can help keep it that way!*

**Saturday, October 7th is Long Trail Day.** You can register as an individual or form/join a team. You'll need to register with a \$25 fee which goes straight to your fundraising goal. By registering you receive a special edition GMC beanie and a free digital Long Trail Map. Can you or your team raise \$272? This is the length of the Long Trail from the Vermont/Massachusetts border to Quebec. Go here for more information and to get started: [https://secure3.convio.net/gmc/site/TR?fr\\_id=1080&pg=entry](https://secure3.convio.net/gmc/site/TR?fr_id=1080&pg=entry)



## Nature Notes: White Turtlehead

By Terri Armata

A flower of wetlands, damp meadows and areas of poor drainage, White Turtlehead blooms from July to September. Its smooth flowers resemble the shell of a turtle and the scientific name *Chelone (Turtle) glabra* (smooth stem) describes the plant's appearance. Bees and some moths and insects nectar on the flower. It is not edible but, when harvested while flowering and dried, it has reportedly some beneficial uses as a tonic for indigestion.

White Turtlehead is the host plant for the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly. Eggs are laid on the leaves in large groups of 100 to 700 in early summer. The caterpillars feed together and then drop to the ground to overwinter in leaves and debris. In early spring they will feed again and emerge as butterflies in early July.



**September** marks the beginning of Raptor Migration. Nearby **Putney Mountain Hawkwatch** is celebrating its 50th year of counting migrating hawks and vultures. The count season is September 1 through November 10, with a watcher present every day from 8 am to about 4 pm unless the weather is awful. Visitors are always welcome. For directions and daily count totals go to Hawkcount on your computer and click on Vermont, Putney Mountain.

## Wandering the American and Canadian West

By Hubey Folsom

If my stomach had given me trouble in the Dakotas, it would have been from the bitter water. I was fine, so the taste wasn't magnesium. If I get the collymobbles in Manitoba, it will be from Wednesday morning's astringent red plums. They were wild and thorny; at first I thought they were big hawthorns.

The Canadian border guard wondered why I drove all this way to visit little Turtle Mountain Provincial Park. Which had charming hikes and free fruit to forage.

It's a long dirt road gently up to Duck Mountain. It showered last night and some of today, so my car looks like a farm field. For a slithering moment on the spur up to Baldy, I wished for snow tires.



Yesterday I passed the aftermath of a bad two-car accident. The mangled red cars were near each of the four corners of an intersection. I drive a red car. Somebody failed to stop, and both cars got creamed. There were two ambulances. A moment later I passed a pond with a flock of white swan-like birds.

Look both ways, and keep floating.



Baldy Mountain in Duck Mountain Provincial Park is Manitoba's high point. To confuse us, Bald Hill is a high point in the national park just to the south.



Turtle Mountain Provincial Park's Adams Lake from moose-viewing tower. Turtle is a low rise straddling the North Dakota / Manitoba border with oak forests, spruce lakes, and resorts.

I followed a blue VT pickup into Devils Tower. In Badlands I talked to a couple from Sharon on a two-month trip in their red pickup. The next morning a woman drove out of the campground in a VT Volvo wagon. From the big box on her roof she's out longer than I am. **Is anyone left in Vermont?** I asked the camp host, pointing out a black pickup and its Airstream trailer, also from Vermont.



First bison of the morning.



Offering I saw near Devils Tower.





Oxbow Overlook; did you know the Little Missouri River used to flow north to Hudson Bay? Glaciers rerouted it east to its current course



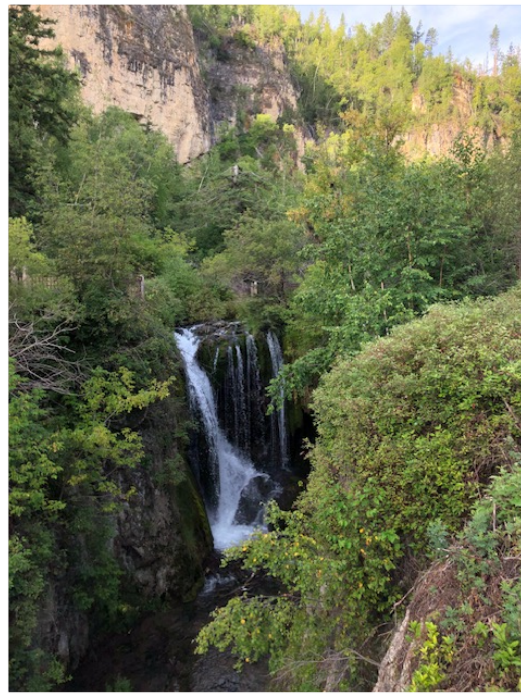
Overlook in Badlands NP



Two German-accented man and woman climbers faintly visible on Devil's Tower.



Sunrise with bison, then I saw a flock of turkeys and two herds of bison while driving to Badlands overlooks.



Roughlock Falls, off Spearfish Canyon in Black Hills, SD

Badlands is pretty, but Bryce Canyon and Death Valley are more colorful. Still, this trip was about visiting places I'd not already been.



## Trailfest 2023

By Ann Martin

Will the rain come? What time will the rain start? Will there be thunder and lightning? Is the Trailfest on or off? Up until almost the very last minute it was uncertain if the second annual Trailfest would take place or not. Fortunately, the rain cooperated and didn't start until just after the celebration.

Bennington has the distinction of being designated as an official "Appalachian Trail Community" - one of only fifty-one such towns along the whole 2000+ miles of the AT and only one of three in Vermont. These towns work to promote and protect the Appalachian Trail, and Bennington welcomes hikers with many opportunities for lodging, eating, resupplying, shopping, site seeing, and more.



On July 29th, hikers, community members, vendors, and organizations gathered at the Bennington Recreation Center for free food, camaraderie, and information about outdoor opportunities. For hikers there was a shuttle back and forth from the trailhead, camping on Friday and Saturday night, lunch at the Trailfest, and a pancake breakfast on Sunday morning, all at no cost. With the rainy weather and flooding prior to the event, there were fewer hikers on the trail, but those who attended appreciated all the support.

Among other activities, you were able to check your knowledge during the Trail Trivia contest (with prizes!) such as "Who knows when the AT was completed?," listen to hikers as they shared their experiences such as "Share your greatest challenge along the trail," watch a demo of a search and rescue operation by the Civil Air Patrol, and learn the 10 essentials to put in your backpack.

Both hikers and community members browsed the information booths to learn about Leave No Trace principles, Vermont State Parks, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Bennington Bike Hub, US Forest Service, VT Fish and Wildlife,



Bennington Area Trail System (BATS), Southwest Tech Forestry Program, Lake Paran, Green Mountain Club, and Civil Air Patrol.

Chris Bates was there from the TV show “Outdoor Secrets Unwrapped” and interviewed Tracy Lind of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Jonah Spivak from the Town of Bennington, and Ann and Billy Martin of the Green Mountain Club. You can see the interviews at [vimeo.com/849952878](https://vimeo.com/849952878)

*Make sure to join us next year - it just keeps getting better and better!*

## The Evolution of the 10 Essentials (and what we carry now in our packs)

By Barbara Raskin

Robin and I started hiking and camping in the early 1970's, right around time that hiking gear technology was experiencing a burst of innovation, resulting in a steady flow of new products available for people who loved being outdoors. We saw our childhood cotton waffle long underwear give way to polypropylene; heavy polyester sleeping bags were morphing into lighter weight (but often still weighty) down bags; single wall canvas tents were overtaken by nylon tents with screens and sometimes a rain fly. Although our flashlights became smaller, sleeker and lighter, we were still gripping our Mini Maglites between our teeth or propping them up against rocks while we set up camp in the dimming light.

In the 21st century, selecting hiking/backpacking gear is nearly a sport in and of itself, with hikers facing a bewildering number of choices in all categories of equipment. However, whether you intend to venture out for only a few hours of day hiking/exploring or a full season of overnight, “end to end” trail conquering, it is important to make sure your pack contains what we refer to as “The Ten Essentials”, the basic gear we should bring along with us to keep us safe, comfortable, and equipped to respond to the “unexpected” on our adventures. What I didn't realize until recently, was that the Ten Essentials list, much like hiking gear in general, has also evolved over the years. According to the Recreation Equipment Incorporated (REI) website:

The original Ten Essentials list was assembled in the 1930s by The Mountaineers, a Seattle-based organization for climbers and outdoor adventurers, to help people be prepared for emergency situations in the outdoors. Back then, the list included a map, compass, sunglasses and sunscreen, extra clothing, flashlight, first-aid supplies, fire starter, matches, knife and extra food.

The two important questions the Mountaineers hoped to address with the list were:

- 1) Can you prevent emergencies and respond positively should one occur?
- 2) Can you safely spend a night (or more) outside?

An updated version of the Ten Essentials is from a systems point of view rather than a list of specific pieces of equipment. The list these days looks something like this:

1. **Navigation:** map, compass, altimeter, GPS device, personal locator beacon (PLB) or satellite messenger
2. **Sun protection:** sunglasses, sunscreen, sun hat or hoody, other sun-protective clothes
3. **First aid:** including foot care and insect repellent
4. **Knife:** plus a gear repair kit
5. **Fire:** matches, lighter, tinder and/or stove
6. **Shelter:** carried at all times(space blanket, light emergency bivy)





7. **Extra food:** beyond the minimum expectation
8. **Extra water:** beyond the minimum expectation
9. **Extra clothes:** beyond the minimum expectation

There are many more choices available to hikers in all the above categories, and choices will certainly vary among hikers depending on their destination, length of time expected out on the trail, the weather forecast, as well as the hiker's own comfort level with certain equipment (ie. carrying a physical map and compass vs a cell phone with a trail map app, and separate battery bank for recharging the phone).

Robin and I have found that our Ten Essential preferences have morphed over the years with the evolution in gear technology. As we often hike together, we also tend to share items between our packs rather than each of us carrying every item on the list.

So here's what we actually carry on full day hikes between the two of us:

1. **Navigation:** A Suunto compass, and map of the trail. We also carry our cell phones which have compasses, as well as trail map apps, but don't yet use these regularly. We make sure our phones are fully charged prior to going out, and keep them on airplane mode on longer days to preserve the battery life.
2. **Sun Protection:** Brimmed nylon hats, sunglasses, sun protective shirts and pants, small tubes of sunscreen.
3. **First Aid:** a zippered bag with mole skin, various sized bandaids, small gauze pads, surgical adhesive tape, iodine and alcohol prep pads, cuticle scissors, triangular bandage, large safety pin, insect repellant, ibuprofen, whistle. We also both carry headlamps which we keep charged (Barb's), or loaded with fresh batteries (Rob's).
4. **Knife/gear repair:** multitool pocketknives; duct tape(wrapped around my fire starter bottle- see below.)
5. **Fire:** water proof matches and a Bic lighter in a ziplock bag; fire starter (we prefer drier lint mixed with vaseline or melted candle wax) stored in a lidded, empty pill bottle that also serves to hold a length of duct tape wrapped around it for gear repair.)
6. **Shelter:** two reflective blankets, and 6 feet of paracord.
7. **Extra food:** In addition to lunch, we carry GORP made of dried fruit, nut and M&Ms; and protein snack bars.
8. **Extra water:** We each carry 1 1/2-2 liters of water for a full day hike (particularly on hotter days), preferring reservoirs over Nalgene bottles. We also carry a BeFree filter with a liter bag to allow us to filter extra water along the way as needed.
9. **Extra clothing:** In summer, Rob prefers to carry a wind breaker for a shell, and a lightweight fleece for a midlayer; Barb prefers a puffy vest and water resistant shell. If rain is in the forecast, we swap out the lighter shells for waterproof gortex rain jackets. In the fall (or if we'll be at higher elevations in spring or fall), we also carry fleece hats and gloves, and more substantial midlayers. In winter we carry multiple extra layers. In all seasons, Barb carries an extra pair of hiking socks.

Whatever your particular preferences might be for your own Ten Essentials, if you make a habit of carrying them with you for even shorter day hikes, you'll be better able to address the unexpected on all of your future outdoor adventures.

## Sawyer Training and Certification Class

By Billy Martin

Did you know that chain saws are not allowed in designated wilderness areas? However, there are still trees that fall across trails or unsafe trees that need to be taken down and removed. Thus, the “old fashioned” method of using a hand crosscut saw is still in practice today. I attended a 3 day Sawyer Training and Certification class which was sponsored by GMC HQ. The class was held near Pico Mountain, east of Rutland, on private land.

A bit of history: Around 1850 the concept of each tooth of a saw being the same was challenged by creating teeth that cut, alternating with teeth that raked out the cut fibers. These 'Antique Crosscut' saws are made of high-quality steel, making them durable and coveted for use today. They deliver clean-finished cuts with their smaller teeth.

Prior to the steel and tooth design by these innovative companies, a tree was felled by an axe and then cut into pieces using cross cut saws with straight teeth design. Saws with a straight back are called Bucking saws. The modern 2 man cross cut saw of 1850 allowed saws to fell and cut the trees into smaller segments. These saws were extensively used from 1850 through early 1900's. Companies such as Disston, E.C. Atkins, Simmons and Harvey Peace were the main suppliers of Cross Cut saws to the world.

Listen to a podcast describing the 3 day sawyer training class that I attended in June. You will also see many images of the crew, videos of trees being set up for felling, cross cut and buck saws in action.

Go to [benningtongmc.org/](http://benningtongmc.org/) and choose *About* and then *Stories and Podcasts*.



Many kinds of crosscut saws



Two man crosscut bucking saw

## Message from the President

Just a reminder that every season is tick season! With warming temperatures, another tick, The Lone Star Tick, is pushing into our territory. Check our website to see more information about this tick and to see precautions to take to lessen the chance of getting any kind of tick. [benningtongmc.org/ticks.html](http://benningtongmc.org/ticks.html) In summary, we now have an additional reason for doing a thorough tick check after each time we hike.

Regards: Reed Goossen, Bennington Section president



## Schedule of Upcoming Events: Autumn 2023

Always check our Meetup Site for more information or updates to the following events, as weather or other aspects may change these dates and details. Additional trips may be added: [www.meetup.com/benningtongmc](http://www.meetup.com/benningtongmc). Be an active member of Bennington GMC by joining Meetup. Meetup members always receive email about upcoming events.

### **September 16, Saturday: Mile Around Woods, a Relaxed Pace Dog Friendly Hike**

Bring your best 4-legged friend, or just yourself, and join us for a jaunt around the Mile Around Woods in North Bennington. Additional details to be posted on Meetup. Leader Ken Milman

### **September 27, Wednesday and 28, Thursday: Work Days at Neuheim Shelter**

Possible 2 day project to dismantle and take out the old picnic table, then haul up lumber and assemble the new one. Not an overnight. Additional details to be posted on Meetup. Leaders: Ann & Billy Martin

### **September 30, Saturday: Buxton Ravine Trail, Williamstown, MA**

Meet at 10 AM at the Construction Parking area on the north side of the Williamstown rotary, routes 2 and 7, to carpool to the hike, as there is only room for two cars at the trailhead. This hike is approximately 4 miles, starting with a brook crossing, then a moderate climb up the side of the ravine to the Birch Hill Area. Additional details to be posted on Meetup. Must RSVP by Friday on Meetup or phone 413-458-3162. Leaders: Margie & Hal March

### **October 1, Sunday: Relaxed Pace Family Friendly Walk in the Prospect Ski area, Woodford**

Easy paced hike via the beautiful, remote Mountain trail. Details to be posted on Meetup. Leader: Tim Marr

### **October 7, Saturday: Long Trail Day**

Celebrate hiking and raise money for the Green Mountain Club by hiking on the Long Trail. Details at: [https://secure3.convio.net/gmc/site/TR?fr\\_id=1080&pg=entry](https://secure3.convio.net/gmc/site/TR?fr_id=1080&pg=entry)

### **October 8, Sunday: Relaxed Pace Family Friendly Hike on the Lower BATs**

Includes a stop at the Halloween Tree and the Cave. Details to be posted on Meetup. Leaders: Ann & Billy Martin

### **October 14, Saturday: Fall Foliage Hike**

We will scuff through golden leaves hiking down Old Adams Road, climb the Appalachian Trail, where balsam trees will let you know you have hiked into the boreal zone. We will turn onto Jones Nose Trail, and descend into great fall foliage views. Additional details to be posted on Meetup. Please let me know if you are bringing additional hiker(s) or if you are dropping out, as the hike is limited to ten. Leader: Margie March

### **October 19, Thursday: Loop in Woodford**

Includes a stop at the old Waters Hill Cemetery. Details to be posted on Meetup. Leaders: Ann & Billy Martin

### **October 21, Saturday: Relaxed Pace Family Friendly Hike in Fisher Scott Memorial Pines Natural Area**

Explore the big trees in this area of Arlington. Details to be posted on Meetup. Leader Ken Milman

### **October 28, Saturday: Relaxed Pace Family Friendly Hike in Hopkins Forest, Williamstown**

Details to be posted on Meetup. Leader Robin Tarnus

### **November 4, Saturday: Hike to Stratton Pond**

Meet at Rec Center at 9:00. Details to be posted on Meetup. Leaders: Reed Goossen and Kathy Kindness.

### **November 11, Saturday: Autumn Potluck at Second Congregational Church**

Gather at 5:30, supper at 6:00, presentation to be decided. Anyone welcome to attend.