

Green Mountain Club

Section Leaders' Handbook



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From the 2001 edition:

A great deal of discussion, energy, and thought went into the current edition of the *Section Leaders' Handbook*. Ottauquechee Section President Heinz Trebitz was instrumental in organizing the handbook and delegating chapters and tasks to volunteers and staff. The following GMC members and staff contributed to the handbook: Dana Baron, Kate Donaghue, Smith Edwards, Sylvia Ewerts, Arthur Goldsweig, Chris Hanna, Dave Hardy, Phil Hazen, Anne Hoover, Paul Houchens, Cindy Lindemann, Dot Myer, Sylvia Plumb, Connie Plunkett, Rebecca Purdom, Mary Lou Recor, Peter Richardson, Ben Rose, Karen Sharpwolf, Martha Stitelman, Sandy Tarburton, Inge Trebitz, Ken Williamson, Connie Youngstrom, Cheryl Vreeland, members of the History and Archives Committee, participants of the Section Presidents' meeting in Rutland, Vermont, April 10, 1999, and participants of the Section Leaders' Forum held in South Royalton, Vermont, November 1999. The GMC Sections Committee and its past chair Andrew Nuquist should be recognized for their work and for having formally suggested to the Board of Directors that the handbook be written and made available to future club leaders.

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide easy-to-use guidance for section leaders and those interested in taking on additional leadership within a Green Mountain Club section. It is an attempt to “pass the torch” of knowledge and experience of the many good folks who have led GMC sections since its inception in 1910

The effort to create such a document originated in the GMC Sections Committee which met on several occasions during 1997 and 1998. This committee presented a final report to the GMC Board of Directors in January 1999. One of the suggestions of the committee was that sections collectively prepare a handbook to guide the individual sections and their officers. This guide would serve as a companion to the already existing *A Trip Leader's Handbook* and *GMC Trail and Shelter Maintenance Manual*.

This revision of the original (2001) edition reorganizes and updates material within the original chapter titles. The appendices, reorganized and revised, are on the Club's web site; hard copy is available upon request.

Overview: Green Mountain Club and Its Sections

The Green Mountain Club was founded in 1910 with the purpose of building the Long Trail. From the very beginning, sections were the heart and soul responsible for blazing and maintaining the trail. Today one-third of the club's members are affiliated with a section while two-thirds are members at-large; however, the bulk of annual trail maintenance and GMC-sponsored outings continues to be done by section volunteers. There are currently fourteen sections of the Green Mountain Club. They vary in size, history, and structure, but they share some basic characteristics:

- Each is responsible for maintaining a portion of the Long Trail and/or Appalachian Trail;
- All section members are members of the Green Mountain Club;
- Each section elects one member to represent it on the GMC Board of Directors. The number of seats on the Board of Directors equals the number of sections plus an equivalent number elected by the GMC membership as general directors.

GMC sections do not exist by themselves. Their activities are carried out by volunteers with different backgrounds and interests and their own ways to support a section and the GMC. The sections are an integral part of the Green Mountain Club and share its mission:

The mission of the Green Mountain Club is to make the Vermont Mountains play a larger part in the life of the people by protecting and maintaining the Long Trail System and fostering, through education, the stewardship of Vermont's hiking trails and mountains.

Presidents' Messages

On March 11, 2010, the Green Mountain Club celebrated its 100th birthday. As it evolved, the Club established and secured the 273 mile Long Trail along the main ridge of the Green Mountains. Starting into a new century, the Club continues to focus on its core mission of protecting and maintaining the Long Trail system. However, its responsibilities have grown considerably: the Club now maintains over 350 trail miles in Vermont including 128 miles of the Appalachian Trail. It is also the designated maintenance organization for hiking trails in the Northeast Kingdom.

GMC members, at large or organized in sections, are the heart and soul of the Club. Fulfilling its responsibilities would not be possible without the hundreds of members who dedicate thousands of hours as volunteers. Organizationally, the club relies on the cooperation between its fourteen sections and a strong team of paid staff. In today's complex maze of competing land use demands and an ever tighter net of regulations many tasks have to be handled by experts in their field.

In its second edition, the Section Leader's Handbook provides updated information reflecting the responsibilities shared between the sections and the GMC office. Within these pages there is a wealth of information which will guide section leaders in performing their tasks more effectively.

Many thanks to the members of the Volunteer Committee, and especially Heinz Trebitz and Ken Hertz, for all their work in preparing this second edition. And thank YOU, the reader, for stepping up to be a volunteer leader within GMC!

Marge Fish, GMC President 2010

From the first edition:

This first edition of the *Section Leaders' Handbook* represents the Green Mountain Club's first effort to share among GMC section leaders what we have learned over the years about maintaining the sections. The importance of the sections to the health of the GMC is unquestioned. How best to maintain section vitality is something else altogether. There is much we can learn from each other without diminishing the individuality of each section. Sections are influenced by the personalities and interests of their members as well as the unique characteristics of the local communities in which section members live. In spite of differences in size and location, we are unified in sustaining the Long Trail and the GMC. I sincerely hope that this booklet will mark the beginning of a continual process to share the best of what each of us has learned from the experience of making the GMC a leader among recreational trail organizations in the Northeast.

Rolf Anderson, GMC President 2000

The Green Mountain Club is unique when compared to other hiking clubs because our mission and club activities are anchored in protecting and maintaining the Long Trail System. Since their inception in 1910, sections have been geographically organized clusters of individuals, united by their shared affection for the outdoors and especially the Long Trail. Over time, this relationship has expanded to include the Appalachian Trail and the Champion Lands in the Northeast Kingdom. GMC Sections provide the local connection to these places, encouraging networking of like-minded outdoor people and providing a forum for local outdoor activities and activism.

If the Green Mountain Club is to continue to fulfill its mandate as “founder, sponsor, defender and protector of the Long Trail System” and its delegated responsibilities for the Appalachian Trail and Champion Lands, then GMC sections must be strong, vital, collaborative organizations. This edition of the *Section Leaders’ Handbook* demonstrates GMC’s commitment to strong sections. Within its pages, you will find a wealth of information geared to helping you, our volunteers, manage and maintain your section. But this edition is just the beginning. Help us make this handbook work for you. Send us your ideas, tips, success stories, and suggestions that you would like to share with others, and we will include them in our next edition.

In closing, I’d like to thank the volunteers and staff, and especially Heinz Trebitz, who put in hundreds of hours to make this handbook a reality. The Green Mountain Club wouldn’t exist without its volunteer members, so a special thank you goes out to all of you in leadership roles, who so generously give your time and talent to make this club the best it can be.

Marty Lawthers, GMC President 2001

Chapter 1: How a GMC Section Works

Sections are formed and exist because their members see a common purpose and want to share their efforts as well as enjoy congenial activities. Basic functions sections have in common include:

- Each section is responsible for a specific portion of the Long Trail System and/or Appalachian Trail in Vermont, and schedules trail work to maintain the trail and shelters on that portion¹.
- Sections offer outdoor and social activities throughout the year. Activity planning is an important facet of section leadership.
- Each section conducts its own annual meeting to review its operations for the past year, elect officers, and provide a major social gathering.
- Each section prepares a newsletter or outings schedule, typically on a quarterly basis, and sends it to its members; newsletters and internet tools are the chief vehicles for communicating information to all section members.

Without volunteers and a supporting membership a section cannot exist. Yet, even while having common goals and interests, volunteers are individuals and function in different ways. Therefore the need arises for understanding how a section functions, and the rules that govern its operation. These are laid down in the section bylaws which typically include, but are not limited to, the following articles (see sample section bylaws in Appendix A):

- Membership (types, voting rights, dues) as defined by the corporation bylaws²;
- Section officers (responsibilities, terms of service);
- Committees (composition, responsibilities);
- Meetings (type, frequency, voting).

Bylaws provide only the formal organizational framework and may be different from section to section. Typical section operations are described in detail in the following chapters of this guide.

Throughout the chapters of this handbook, we hope you will find structures and solutions that fit the needs and circumstances of your section as well as the specific tasks at hand. Use your judgment and keep in mind the following: As section representatives, we are clearly aware that each section of the GMC has its own history, traditions, and procedures. We have tried to incorporate as many of them as possible in the text, accepting that there is often more than one way to do things. Nothing herein should be construed to change practices that have historically worked well for your section.

People are important. Trip leaders, committee chairs, and volunteers are the heart and soul of each section. They come and go and carry with them their own style. Do not panic if an office or

¹ Except for the Northeast Kingdom section, which works on mountain trails in the northeast part of the state.

² The corporation (GMC) bylaws are shown in Appendix A. Each voting member gets one vote; a membership may represent one or two voting members.

task is not always conducted as suggested in this handbook. Consider the integrity and results of the job. Do not, however, change the bylaws to reflect an officer's style or to accommodate a specific situation. Good bylaws provide a stable business framework for your section. They should be written broadly enough to accommodate a range of styles of work. Short-term changes should be avoided.

Chapter 2: GMC Section Officer – Which Job is for You?

This chapter provides an overview of the volunteer jobs available in a section. It describes in more detail what's expected from a section president or vice president. Other section offices are discussed in Chapters 6. through 9. of this handbook (Finances, Membership, Trails and Shelters, and Outings) as these are major components of a section's activities.

Sample Job Descriptions are provided in Appendix B of this Handbook including the following positions:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>President</i> | <i>Membership Chair</i> |
| <i>Vice-President</i> | <i>Publicity/Newsletter Chair</i> |
| <i>Trails and Shelters Chair</i> | <i>GMC Section Director</i> |
| <i>Outings Chair</i> | <i>GMC Alternate Section Director</i> |
| <i>Treasurer</i> | <i>Recreation Chair</i> |
| <i>Secretary</i> | |

Typically the persons holding the positions in the first column above are members of the section Executive Committee and listed in a section's bylaws as section officers. Some section bylaws give brief descriptions of the duties and responsibilities of a section officer or committee chairperson (see Appendix A of this Handbook). Other bylaws only describe how officers are elected, how many terms they may serve, and what functions they have. There are no standard job descriptions for each GMC section office. However there is a general understanding of what tasks each section officer is expected to perform.

The sample job descriptions in Appendix B reflect this common understanding. At the same time, they are not all-inclusive. An officer's or chairperson's duties may vary considerably from section to section. Understand the sample job descriptions as checklists. As always, consider what's best for your section and how to do it in your section's traditional framework, with the volunteers available.

The President: Role and Responsibilities

The president of a section is the point person, the prime mover, the communication conduit. The president is the pusher, assigner, and delegator. The president should inspire others and direct them in their duties without being overbearing. Involve other officers. Invest in them. If they are your likely successors, teach and prepare them to be president. Remember that identifying, nurturing, and preparing new potential leaders is part of your job.

All elected and appointed offices within a section involve some work, but none should be overwhelming. In recruiting prospective future leaders or officers for your section, provide a clear description of the job at hand, and the time frame involved. To quote an anonymous saying: "*Few people will agree to take a job if it has no foreseeable end point.*"

Avoid extreme statements. For example, don't tell people, "Oh, there's nothing to it, it hardly takes any work at all!" Also avoid saying, "I'll do it again, but only because I can't find anybody else to take my place." Bemoaning the lack of interest in a position is a self-fulfilling prophesy — it's much better to market your position as important and interesting.

As president, you are expected to express the mission and goals of the organization. You should be knowledgeable about the whole club and understand your section's role within the Green Mountain Club. As section president, you will receive copies of GMC Board of Directors' packets for quarterly GMC board meetings, the same as your section's GMC Board Director. Other section members may be on the GMC Board as General Directors. These directors are a valuable resource for information on club-wide happenings, as well as bringing section issues before the board.

As president, you should communicate regularly with other officers. Many presidents find that it is beneficial to have an executive committee, consisting of the officers, committee chairs, and possibly other core section volunteers, who meet periodically to plan and monitor section activities and develop agenda for upcoming meetings. Well in advance of your section's annual meeting, you should appoint an independent nominating committee (or person) to select a slate of officers for the coming year. Some section bylaws require that the chair of the nominating committee be elected as part of the slate of officers for the coming business year.

The Vice President: Role and Responsibilities

The vice president performs all duties listed for the president should the president be unavailable.

The vice president may be given special responsibilities by the president, based on the special needs of the section. Together, the vice president and president form a team that sets the tone for the section and assures that newcomers are greeted and welcomed. Their example will be followed by other section members.

The vice presidency can be a good training ground for future presidents, but it should not be assumed or required that a vice president will immediately or automatically step up to the presidency.

A Word about Committees

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines a committee as "a group of people officially delegated to perform a function, as investigating, considering, reporting, or acting on a matter."

For a 300 member section with 50 active participants (typical 15-20% ratio), a committee is a good way to handle specific tasks requiring broad input.

Small sections with only 10 to 20 active members may find it difficult to have a committee for every job at hand. Decide which tasks require broad input and committee involvement.

Committees are a great way to involve new volunteers and get them acquainted with the workings of a section, **but**...think twice before establishing a committee: does the charge justify tying up volunteer time in additional committee meetings? Often, already active volunteers end up in still another committee taking time away from their other tasks.

The GMC Section Trails and Shelters Chair

Note: Details on GMC sections trails and shelters maintenance are presented in Chapter 9.

The GMC section Trails and Shelters chairperson is responsible for maintaining the section's part of the Long Trail and shelters as assigned by the main club. He or she will schedule respective section work outings and coordinate additional work needs with the GMC field programs staff.

The GMC Section Outings Chair

Note: Details on GMC sections outings are presented in Chapter 8.

The GMC section outings chairperson organizes and oversees section outings activities. Offering diverse outdoor activities in various section locations is a major tool to attract new members to the Green Mountain Club. The outings chairperson works in close cooperation with the section newsletter editor and publicity coordinator, as well with the GMC Waterbury office, to publish the section outings schedule.

The Secretary: Role and Responsibilities

The secretary takes minutes of all meetings, including meetings of the section's executive committee, and is responsible for retaining and passing on the official copies of the minutes. The secretary may also be in charge of keeping and maintaining all past section records and archives.

Some sections have a corresponding secretary who is responsible for writing letters, as well as a recording secretary who is responsible for taking meeting minutes. This can be the same person. In any case, the section should be clear about who is expected to write what.

The Basics of Taking Minutes of a Meeting

Minutes are a formal way to record the proceedings of a meeting. Not every meeting requires minutes to be taken, but ***minutes are required at any meeting where a vote takes place***. For example, the written schedule of events generated in a planning meeting is a document by itself and no further recording is needed. At the start of a meeting there should be a clear understanding whether minutes need to be taken or not. Typical meetings that require minutes be taken are executive committee meetings or section annual meetings. Minutes do not have to be long or fancy. To be complete, minutes should contain the following:

Date and location of meeting.

Time meeting started.

Who attended (may also be covered by an attached sign-up sheet).

Actions taken, e.g. approval of minutes, acceptance of treasurer's report, motions acted upon.

For motions acted upon, include text of motions, names of who made the motion and who seconded it, and the vote result.

Record important recommendations, points of agreement, and "to-dos" (e.g. who said they would write a letter of thanks).

Time meeting adjourned.

The Treasurer: Role and Responsibilities

Note: Details on GMC section finances are presented in Chapter 6.

The treasurer is the custodian of a section's funds. Treasurers track income and expenses, pay bills, develop a budget, and in some sections manage investments. It is usually the treasurer who reports on income, expenditures, and cash balance at a section's annual meeting.

Note: As they share information from the GMC membership data base, some sections may find it advantageous to combine the functions of treasurer and membership chair.

The Membership Chair: Role and Responsibilities

Note: Details on GMC section membership are presented in Chapter 7.

The membership chairperson is responsible for maintaining a section's membership records and keeping section leaders aware of new members, renewals, and correct addresses. Close cooperation with the main club membership office is very important and helpful. Services from GMC headquarters include monthly membership reports, collecting dues, and help with mailings.

The membership chairperson's work may include recruiting and welcoming new members, or working with other section leaders on this vital topic.

The membership chairperson should be a good delegator. There are small jobs which can have a positive impact on the future health of the section if done consistently and with a personal touch, such as sending a copy of the section's newsletter and membership form to new folks who attend a section event.

Other Section Leader Positions

Publicity/Newsletter Chair

Note: Details on GMC section communications are presented in Chapter 4.

The section publicity/newsletter chairperson generates the section newsletter and oversees the section's publicity communications. He or she may establish contacts with local newspapers, radio, and TV station, and GMC headquarters for publication of section news.

GMC Section Director or Alternate Section Director

As defined by GMC Bylaws each section is represented at the GMC Board by a section Director.

He or she is elected at a section's annual meeting. A director on the GMC board may not serve for more than two consecutive three-year terms, as specified in the GMC Bylaws. (See Appendix A.)

The director is the section's voice and ears at the GMC board meetings, and participates in the board's decision making process. He or she reports to the section president, to the executive committee, or (at the annual meeting) to the membership important developments and business transactions at the main club.

A section may elect an alternate director to perform all of the duties of the director if he or she becomes unavailable.

GMC Section Recreation Chair

Note: Having a section recreation chair is an option likely to be decided by the section's president in cooperation with the executive committee.

The section recreation chair person may be charged with making arrangements for the section's meetings and social functions, including reservations for meeting place, coordinating food among members, equipment needed for speaker, room set-up. A small committee may assist chairperson with these tasks. Obviously, the meetings listed above may be arranged by other section officers or volunteers.

Chapter 3: Profile of a Healthy Section

Volunteers, Leadership Recruitment and Transition

How Section Leaders Describe a Healthy Section

The well-being of a section depends mostly on the make-up of its membership and how people work together. A combination of many traits contributes to a section's viability and vitality. Below, GMC section leaders identified a list of characteristics that can be found in a healthy section.¹

A healthy section

- is visible to the local general public;
- maintains a high retention rate;
- has a growing membership;
- has a diverse membership in age and social background;
- has an active membership which participates in meetings, events, etc;
- provides a variety of activities including activities suitable for families;
- balances trail and social activities;
- pulls its weight in maintaining the Long Trail System;
- is financially well managed;
- HAS MANY VOLUNTEERS;
- encourages depth of leadership;
- practices a leadership succession plan;
- provides job descriptions for officers;
- maintains close ties with the main club and makes use of available club programs;
- maintains communication with other sections;
- maintains a sense of GMC history;
- practices traditions and continuity;
- is familiar with other sections and their way of operating.

In our ranking the above attributes, *volunteers* come first. Volunteers are active section members, and without their service and active participation a section cannot exist. Ask what percentage of your section members are volunteers. Aim for 20 to 25% in a medium size section of 200 members. A smaller or just established section may need a higher percentage; a large, well

¹ This list was compiled by section leaders as part of a workshop on leadership recruitment and development at the GMC Section Presidents' Meeting in Rutland, Vermont, on April 10, 1999.

established section may survive with a smaller percentage. Without the active involvement and dedication of its volunteers, a budding section would not get very far.

How do you draw members into your section and get them to become volunteers or section leaders?

Make the public aware of the section, its goals, activities, and volunteer needs.

Make section members aware of volunteer positions and needs.

Generate interest in projects and assignments.

Make a leadership role or project desirable.

The result will mean not only more members but also volunteers motivated to take action.

How to Attract and Develop Section Volunteers

Potential volunteers are out there just waiting to be asked to help. (For example, after the 1998 ice storm, hundreds of people, members and nonmembers, called the GMC to offer their assistance in restoring the Long Trail.) A few simple steps can help promote a section's needs and recruit volunteers eager to lend a helping hand.

- Tell your section members and the public that you need help.
- Describe your needs and volunteer opportunities: fieldwork (trails etc.), education and leadership (nature studies, outdoor skills, and activities for kids), communications (home publishing, Internet communication including web site management).
- Seek out teenagers and college students who need to fulfill community service hours as graduation requirements.
- Survey members to find out what they would like to volunteer for.
- Create a volunteer application form with a return address to a section officer or someone willing to contact prospective volunteers.
- Have the GMC office put section volunteer applications in welcome packets that are mailed to your new section members.
- Update bylaws to include term limits, thus opening positions for new volunteers to fill.

Some volunteers are naturals — give them whichever task and they'll run with it. But many need guidance and encouragement. Others may turn down a project for fear they might fail. Here are some suggestions of how to encourage section members to become active volunteers:

- Clearly describe the task and what is expected. Don't diminish it. For example, if attending four committee meetings a year is expected then don't suggest that only attending two will be okay.
- Make projects less overwhelming by breaking them into smaller or incremental tasks.

- Identify levels of involvement and the number of hours necessary to handle specific projects.
- Identify start and completion dates for projects.
- Host section workshops and education programs, or make use of GMC programs, to teach new volunteers trail and officer skills.
- Offer to have the section pay some or all of the cost of GMC workshops, such as first aid or chainsaw certification, for volunteers.
- Implement a buddy system for section officers, board members, and other volunteer positions to provide training for new leaders.

Don't forget your volunteers once they have been found, trained, and given a job. Volunteers need support, help, and sometimes supervision. There needs to be follow-up on their assignments as well as encouragement and acknowledgment. A volunteer satisfied and proud of his or her achievement will help again at the next opportunity.

New Section Officers

After the section annual meeting, notify GMC of newly elected officers. Include full name, mail and e-mail address, and telephone number.

Grooming Section Leaders for Succession

Observation: A healthy section profile cannot be achieved by a single leader or a handful of activists.

Do you sometimes think that you work too many hours for your section? Do you get a feeling of impending burn-out? Do you think there is nobody available or ready to take your job? Nobody is irreplaceable — those who think they are tend to drive away the folks who might be able and willing to assume a larger role over time. Part of successfully serving an office is to pass the baton to another competent individual.

As section leader you need to think about what happens when you step down. Look around early for somebody interested and willing to take on new responsibilities. Get the person involved and share a specific task. Get your potential successor ready for being considered by the nominating committee. Finding and grooming your successor is the final step of a successful volunteer leadership tenure.

Chapter 4: Communications

Information about your section and the Green Mountain Club, for section members and the public, may be provided in a variety of forms: a newsletter, the Internet, local newspapers, radio and television, and local bulletin boards. Scope and style of that information varies greatly according to section needs and the personality of the section newsletter editor/publicity chair. This communication job provides many opportunities for personal expression and fulfillment.

Below are suggestions for using available communication tools. As you choose your preferred communication media, keep in mind that not everybody can be reached by e-mail or the Internet. A section newsletter on paper is still the surest way to reach your audience.

Section Newsletter

Your section's newsletter is your voice to your members. Create a unique format that can be easily and immediately recognized by section members, such as colored paper. Use the newsletter to its full potential by listing your outings schedule, section news, and Long Trail happenings.

Looking for a Sample Newsletter?

Call the GMC office or contact other section newsletter editors to have them put your name on their mailing lists.

Suggested Format

- Computers are marvelous tools for home publishing. Learn about available software or recruit help from an interested volunteer to edit and arrange newsletter text.
- Consider using GMC's logo as part of your newsletter design. GMC offers a choice of formats for the "section-ized" logo, one having the section name within the circle, and the other below the circle. GMC will prepare the chosen format for you.
- Minimize work by always using the same template and recurring logo or header on the front page.
- Use a format that makes copying easy to do.
- Make the newsletter a self-mailer by including an area with a return address and space for a mailing label on the back panel. Talk to your local post office to find what works best in their machines.
- Consider bulk mailing. Sections can use GMC's bulk mailing permit, but that does require you to use GMC's post office in Waterbury Center for mailing. If that is not practical, consider a bulk mailing permit at your local post office. Note that US Postal Services (USPS) require a minimum of 200 identical mailings for a bulk mailing permit. Also, there is an annual permit fee of \$185. At present rates for 200 copies and 4 mailings per year, costs are about equal for bulk or standard first class mail. Cost savings become substantial when mailings exceed 1000 per year. Before you switch to USPS bulk mailing or the use of a commercial mail service, research your options and understand what is involved.

Advice can be obtained from USPS as well as through GMC headquarters and from the Burlington Section .

Suggested Contents

- Include the section's outings schedule, past trip write-ups, and photographs.
- Print the section's annual report; include section officers and how they can be contacted.
- Publish president's and director's reports, nature stories, book reviews, news about members, and information about the GMC and Long Trail.
- Insert a form for new members to use to join your section.
- An insert card could be included listing only outing titles and trip dates that members can use as a handy reference to post on their refrigerators.
- Use the newsletter as a tool to recruit volunteers for tasks and officer positions. List volunteer jobs such as newsletter helper, web site designer, school presenter, or hike leaders.
- Try to coordinate the outings schedule with the *Long Trail News* schedule so that section hikes are listed in the club-wide quarterly, which has a circulation of 6,500 copies. The *Long Trail News* submission deadlines for outings schedules are January 15 for the LTN Spring issue, April 15 for Summer, July 15 for Fall, and October 15 for Winter. That makes for a long lead time. Given your section's time requirements to generate an outings schedule, your planning may have to be held almost 3 month ahead of the first scheduled event on the calendar (for example: the December 1st planning meeting establishes outings for the month of March, April, and May of the following year).
- Note that the GMC web site calendar also lists various events including section outings. The calendar is updated every two weeks and allows sections to post their outings on a much shorter notice.

Internet

For many people the Internet has become the communication tool of choice. How can you put your section online? Find a member who is computer savvy who can advise you, provide starting help, and trouble shoot your online operations.

- **E-mail** is being used by more and more GMC members every day. E-mail is a terrific tool for fast communication among section leaders and volunteers. Establish a member e-mail directory. E-mail letters do not use paper (conservation!) and are cheaper and faster to send. Of course, not all members use e-mail, and some who do may not want to be on your e-mail list.
- Create a section **web site** — an effective way to recruit new and younger members! Suggested web site contents may include an attractive design element; a page describing section trails and shelters assignments; pages with the section newsletter and outings

schedule (most likely they are already in a computer file); pages on trails and trail maintenance; pages with section history; and of course membership dues and donations. Digital photos are attractive, but remember that some viewers have slow connection to the internet. Keep the information up to date. Recruit a section volunteer (or a local school's computer class) to design a web site and host it. Find a volunteer who is willing to accept and respond to e-mail inquiries.

- Create **links** to the main club's web site (www.greenmountainclub.org) and other section web pages.

Media

Use local media to advertise your section. Coordinate all media contacts by the section. It is good policy and avoids duplication as well as confusion to have one designated section member for all media contacts. Become acquainted with editors and writers of your local newspapers, radio, and TV stations. Send them complimentary copies of your newsletter.

Newspapers are always looking for information to print. Establish a relationship with a writer to whom you can send calendar announcements and press releases.

Have your outings schedule printed. Consider, however, how much information your section wants to provide: Administrative meetings or "members-only potlucks" are often omitted from general public listings. Make sure your outings leaders have a clear understanding of what information will be published. Some volunteers do not want to have their telephone number or e-mail address released through the media.

Write mini articles about special outings or trail projects in need of participants; local newspapers often are willing to publish these types of stories if the article is well-written and ready for publication.

Advertise for special events such as your annual meeting or James P. Taylor Winter Series presentation. Provide a boxed advertisement and ask your local paper if they will print it for free. Create and distribute posters for the event.

Provide general GMC informational articles to local free circulars to help make your section and the Green Mountain Club name more visible.

Consider recruiting volunteers for special trail projects using the classified want ads. People looking for employment opportunities may be willing to volunteer on the trail for a day.

Local **radio** stations may offer free public service announcements. Advertise your annual meeting, hike and trail work outings, and special events. Offer to have a section member be a guest on a talk show about the Long Trail.

Local **cable** stations also do free public service announcements on their community calendars. Have upcoming outings aired on a daily basis.

For the more motivated: Contact local **television** stations and locally produced shows such as "Across the Fence" and offer to be a guest or provide information for a Long Trail story.

Traveling Display

The GMC has an easy-to-use traveling display that is available to sections. The display usually comes with a box stocked with club literature to hand out at special events; make sure the handouts are up to date.

Create a traveling display for your section. It can be used to display section history and current activity information at special events such as your annual meeting or Taylor Series presentation. Find a longtime member to create and keep scrapbooks and photo albums. Old-timers have lots of stories to tell, and keeping track of section history (see Chapter 10: Section History and Archives) assures their active participation.

- If possible set up displays at your annual meeting, at section-sponsored slide shows, and at new members' meeting.
- A display put up for a set period of time is often welcome at local malls, outing stores, libraries, and storefront windows. Make sure there is adequate supervision to protect the display and replenish handouts.
- Take a display to local organizational meetings such as PTA or Rotary meetings.
- Attend special Earth Day (end of April) or National Trails Day (first weekend in June) events in your area. Bring along your displays.

Chapter 5: All about Meetings

Meetings usually serve social and/or business purposes. You'll find from the information presented below that both types have similar or identical planning steps. In fact, the section Annual Meeting combines a section's business, as defined in the Bylaws, with a social gathering where you have a unique opportunity to meet other section members in an informal atmosphere. Preceding the business part with a potluck dinner, and running a "free for all" slide show at the end, is a great way to set up a successful annual meeting.

The Potluck as a GMC Institution

Food is fun. It brings people back. GMC has a tradition of great potlucks and it is a good idea for a section's annual meeting. Also, as many working meetings of your section are held in private homes, the hosts and participants share in providing some snacks and beverages. In these hectic times, knowing that you can arrive at a meeting with a dish in hand and thereby gain access to a full smorgasbord is a wonderful incentive.

Name tags are always helpful. Even if everybody knows everybody, there are hopefully a few new people, and name tags make it so much easier for them. Plus, some of us forget each others' names!

Formal Business Meetings

Depending on purpose and nature, first decide whether the meeting is formal or strictly for working on and reaching a specific result (such as a quarterly schedule of outings). An agenda may be useful but not always necessary. Ask whether you need minutes. Minutes are required at any meeting where a vote takes place. Once you get started, stick to the agenda.

Sample Steps to Running a Formal Business Meeting

Approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

Receive the treasurer's report.

Adopt the budget.

Hear committee reports.

When an agenda item is introduced, be clear on whether it is an action item.

If action on the item is required, entertain a motion.

When a motion is made, it must be seconded.

Make sure the secretary has the motion correctly recorded. Having the secretary "read back" the motion ensures that it is correctly recorded and that everyone knows what the motion is.

Call for discussion.

During discussion, amendments are in order.

When an amendment is moved and seconded, it becomes the item on the floor until it is voted on.

Call for a vote: “All in favor?”, “All opposed?”, “Abstentions?”

Announce the outcome (e.g. “The ayes have it, and you have passed the motion.”)

Practice democracy: Solicit opinions (e.g. “Would anybody like to offer a different opinion?”)

Try to recognize people who have not spoken before recognizing the same person again and again!

Keep it moving — it is okay to bring an item to closure when all the opinions have been heard once or twice.

The Section Annual Meeting

Are there section members you’ve never met? They may turn up at an annual meeting. For some of them it’s the only opportunity to participate. The annual meeting serves a business purpose as well as being a social gathering for all members. Create the atmosphere and allow time to have members get acquainted and chat. Don’t overwhelm them with section business. Some members may be just as happy to enjoy the company over a potluck dinner.

It’s nice to have an official speaker but sharing slides and stories in an informal manner may be a better way to make section members feel part of the family.

President’s Agenda

Before and after the business meeting...

- Welcome attendees.
- Commemorate members who have died during the past year.
- Name and welcome new members.
- Honor outgoing officers and outstanding volunteers.
- Award door or raffle prizes (if applicable).
- Open “free for all” slide show, or...
- Introduce guest speaker.
- Thank guest speaker.
- Close meeting.

For the official business meeting ...

- Open meeting and approve minutes of last year’s meeting.
- Hear reports from officers and committee chairs.
- Hear and approve financial report.
- Review other old business.
- Hear report from the nominating committee.
- Call for nominations from the floor.
- Elect new slate of officers.
- Review new business.
- Adjourn business meeting.

Ten Planning Steps for a Perfect Annual Meeting

The section president may appoint a committee to plan and organize the annual meeting, the chairperson being the vice president or any other section leader or volunteer. Other sections may trust the planning to a veteran member who is familiar with section traditions and past annual meetings. In any event, the organizers should keep a good balance between the social and business part. Members want to enjoy the meeting!

If possible, each year hold the meeting in the same general location and during the same month. Selecting a good convenient site is important. Many sections have access to a church or local hall.

1. Reserve the designated location (e.g. local church, community hall). This needs to be done early so that the date and details can be printed in the section's newsletter.
2. Most section Bylaws require member notification for the annual meeting by mail or in a periodical such as the section newsletter. The invitation must state the date, time and location as well as the purpose of the meeting. Typically, such notification may list the proposed slate of officers for the coming business year. In addition, this is a good time to ask members to bring dishes for the potluck.
3. Contact the GMC office to let them know about the annual meeting. Invite the club president, executive director, or other staff members to the meeting. Discuss possible topics for a brief address.
4. Decide whether you need a formal speaker or prefer members to share slides and adventures of the past year. When talking with potential speakers, always ask if they charge a fee. Decide if your section is willing to pay a speaker or offer to reimburse them for traveling expenses. Always invite them to join the section for dinner. Ask potential speakers if they need items such as a screen, slide projector, or extension cord or if they will bring their own. Ask for a short biography and details about their program so that a proper introduction can be given at the meeting.
5. It may be nice to purchase gifts for the most active trip participant, trail worker, and trip leader. The section treasurer will reimburse the buyer. Table decorations or door prizes are optional. Keep records or find out which club member may have unused miscellaneous items from previous meetings.
6. A few days before the annual meeting, the chairperson or other committee member should contact the location and the speaker with a reminder, to make sure things are all set and will be on schedule.
7. The contact person for the dinner (list in section newsletter) will be getting calls about what foods to bring. He or she will direct people to bring a dish in one of four general groups: main dish, salad, bread, dessert. Usually, people will bring their own alcoholic beverages. Make sure, however that juices, tea (hot water plus bags), coffee, milk and sugar are available. Church kitchens often have salt and pepper. It is easier to have members bring their own dinner ware.

But have some paper cups and plates, as well plastic forks, knives and spoons available, just in case.

8. Make sure that at least 3 or 4 people will come early to help set up tables, etc. Usually finding helpers to clean up after the meal isn't a problem.

9. On the night of the dinner, make sure that everyone involved is bringing their assigned items. Provide name tags and a sign-up sheet for attendees.

10. At the end of the evening, make sure the tables and chairs are back in their original location and that all agreements with the contact person at the site have been met. Don't forget things like locking all the doors, etc. Also make sure the site and speaker have been paid; send thank-you notes to both.

Section-Sponsored Special Events

Special events may include educational meetings (including those offered by the main club), workshops, informal member slide shows, the GMC James P. Taylor Winter Series and other programs. Planning largely depends on the purpose and setting of the event. The checklist below includes many elements already described for the annual meeting. Modify your approach as needed.

Find site, determine time, and recruit speaker.

Find a volunteer to act as contact person for the event.

Advertise in section newsletter, *Long Trail News*, local newspaper, radio, etc.

Plan for refreshments (cups, plates, napkins, etc.).

Arrange to get key for the site or have the facility opened and closed.

Plan activities for children if needed.

For slide shows, arrange for a projector, extra bulb, screen, and extension cord.

Get name tags and provide a sign-up sheet.

Remember: Leave No Trace. At the end of the evening, put away chairs and tables, pick up trash, turn out lights, and lock up.

Hosting a James P. Taylor Winter Series Event

Since 1992, the James P. Taylor Winter Series has provided adventure, educational, and nature slide shows to members and the public. The series has matured to the point of including events that are a bit more professional than the average home slide show but are affordable to host. The series has been a terrific way for the club and its sections to showcase their presence and activities to the area community. In recent years many sections have helped to sponsor series slide shows in their area and have been able to use the events as a way to recruit new members and fundraise. Hosting a Taylor Show brings section members together in an additional annual

event. Planning for and hosting the event is a team effort where members can work together as well as share in the satisfaction of a show well done.

If your section is interested in hosting a Taylor show, the section president should appoint a person to be responsible for the event. He or she will contact the GMC point person for Taylor Series shows by mid-July. (At the time of writing, the point person is the education coordinator; check with the Volunteer and Membership Coordinator for current information.) The GMC point person can provide you with a list of potential speakers and their presentations. The more popular presentations get booked pretty fast, so make your selection early. Alternatively, sections can find their own speakers and topics of interest and make appropriate arrangements.

When the selection has been made, the section will have to provide GMC with the title of the show, the speaker's name and date, time and location of the show. This information will be published in the *Long Trail News* and through other media outlets. The GMC point person can also provide detailed information outlining the planning steps and event responsibilities for both the hosting section and the GMC staff. Many of the planning steps are similar to what needs to be done for running other section meetings (see above). Appendix E provides some planning forms.

Hosting the GMC Annual Meeting (GMCAM)

Every year, in late May or early June, GMC holds its annual meeting. It's an event much like the section annual meeting, combining business and social functions, but operating on a considerably larger scale, involving up to 150 people, mostly club members. There is a business meeting on Saturday morning, followed by a selection of outings ranging from two to four hours in length. Later, members meet for a happy hour and dinner, followed by a formal presentation. There may be a slide presentation on the preceding Friday evening, and another outing offered on the following Sunday morning.

There is no formal process for deciding where a GMCAM will be held in any given year, and who will host it (check the list of GMC's annual meetings over the last 10 years in Appendix F.) Usually sections offer to hold the meeting on a rotating basis, but the location may be selected to fit a specific club event, such as celebrating the completion of the new Visitor Center in 2009. Of course, holding the annual meeting at different locations in Vermont offers great opportunities to showcase "Vermont's hiking trails and mountains". Also, sections can join together in hosting a GMC annual meeting. In any case, the process involves close coordination and joint decision making between the sections and the main club.

While planning and hosting the GMCAM involves the steps described above for a section's annual meeting, the work and volunteer involvement is much greater and varies with local resources and conditions. A significant new dimension is added with the planning and running of several outings.

Appendix F of this Handbook also contains two generic planning forms which may be helpful to sections interested in hosting a GMCAM. Additional planning material can be obtained from the GMC Volunteer Coordinator.

Chapter 6: Finances

Did you just get elected Treasurer of your section? Welcome to the job! As section treasurer you are expected to keep things under control. It's likely that you receive praise only once per year at the annual meeting. Your work is low profile but nevertheless requires meticulous attention to details.

Managing a section's assets and keeping its finances healthy can be a daunting task. The following are some tips from Sylvia Ewerts, a longstanding member and treasurer of the Burlington Section who has also served on the GMC Board of Directors and its finance committee.

Finance Committee or Treasurer's Office Responsibilities

Note: Your section may or may not have a standing finance committee.

- Maintain section's assets in a fiscally sound manner.
- Develop a budget. It provides a clear overview of the section finances and a great checklist of section activities associated with costs. The budget serves as a "script" for your finance report at the section annual meeting.
- Normally, the budget covers one year (or less). A sample budget is provided in Appendix G of this handbook.

Treasurer Duties

- Deposit income in a bank account. Coordinate with Membership chair to see that the section receives dues for new members.
- Pay bills as they become due. Verify that expenses are in line with the adopted budget, or as otherwise approved.
- Handle charitable contributions.

Committee Member Responsibilities/Tasks

- Review budget.
- Advise on investments of special funds.
- Audit section finances for approval of treasurer's report at annual meeting (optional).

Administrative Details

- **Receipts.** Most will be checks. If cash, verify amount with receipt.

- **Payments.** Expenses included in budget may be paid upon presentation of valid receipts. Put check number on receipts. All expenses are to be paid by treasurer.
- **Unbudgeted Expenses.** Expenses not in the budget must be approved according to rules established within the section, perhaps within the bylaws.
- **Postage for section newsletter.** (Compare Chapter 5, Communications). Under certain circumstances postage savings may be realized through a special permit. The rules are complicated and need careful study. Procedures involve an annual fee and remittance of postage to the Postmaster (local address) as newsletters are mailed.
- **Budget.** Prepare with finance committee and executive committee at end of fiscal year. Reconcile accounts and prepare annual report for approval at annual meeting. Make budget copy available on request.
- **Documentation.** Documentation of section income, purchases and expenses provides the basis for your annual budget. Obtain receipts for all purchases. Write check number on the receipt; it makes it easier to keep track. Keep a log of income and expenses, noting date and check numbers; put log “id number” on checks and receipts to provide cross references. Checks for expenses incurred by treasurer should be countersigned by the president. Be prepared for an audit at any time.
- **Change of officers.** Prior to change, request change forms from bank(s).

Laws and Regulations that affect Section Finances

Nonprofit Status and How to Use the Vermont Sales Tax Exemption

The GMC is a registered 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization (corporation). Sections do not have their own stand-alone tax exemptions, and must work under the umbrella of the corporation to take advantage of applicable tax exemptions.

Vermont Sales Tax

Your section is not subject to Vermont sales tax for purchases. As treasurer, you should make your section volunteers aware that they should not pay sales tax when they purchase a taxable item for GMC. In order to take advantage of this the purchaser must be able to present the merchant with a copy of the GMC “Resale and Exempt Organization Certificate of Exemption,” available on request from GMC. Answers to any questions or advice on handling club funds can be obtained from the GMC finance director.

Section Sales Activities

If your section sells merchandise that has been purchased from a manufacturer or wholesaler, the sales are subject to Vermont sales tax. Examples include note cards, maps, books, etc. (note that clothing is exempt from Vermont sales tax). On these sales, you should collect 6% sales tax and

remit it directly to the Vermont Department of Taxes, if required, or send it to the GMC finance director along with an itemization of the sales, so that GMC can meet its tax obligation. In addition, some municipalities have a local option tax, usually 1%, and this should be collected and remitted where applicable.

Charitable Contributions

If somebody wants to make a donation or contribution to the section and intends to claim it as a charitable deduction from their income taxes, the donation must be sent directly to or through the main club. Checks can be made out to a specific section or simply to “Green Mountain Club” with a note; in either case, funds earmarked for a specific section are disbursed by the GMC finance director to the section treasurer.

New Member and Renewal Dues Payments

When a new member joins the GMC, he or she is invited to join any section or to remain at-large. Dues for at-large as well as section members are paid directly to GMC headquarters. There is no extra fee for section affiliation.

Under GMC bylaws, a percentage of section members dues is remitted to the sections. As set by the Board of Directors, currently 25% of these dues are allocated to the section, and are sent to the section treasurer on a monthly basis.

Auditing

Legally, a section is considered part of the GMC, a registered 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization, and is included in the general audit of the main club. In other words: there is no audit requirement for an individual section. At the end of its fiscal year (April 30) GMC will request (usually by e-mail) the section treasurer to provide an official bank statement showing a section’s assets. These will be included to the GMC balance sheet and thus become subject to the general club audit. (Information source: GMC’s financial director, GMC’s auditing service.)

A section may want to conduct its own internal audit, which could be performed by its finance committee or a committee appointed by the section president. Good documentation and the existence of a section budget should be sufficient to satisfy a respective auditor review.

Chapter 7: Membership

The membership chairperson (or “coordinator”) is responsible for maintaining a section’s membership records and keeping section leaders aware of new members, renewals, and correct addresses. The membership chairperson presents summary information (such as membership counts) to regular meetings of the executive committee and to the annual section meeting. In some sections, the membership chairperson also functions as treasurer. Both positions will find spreadsheets to be a useful tool.

The section as a whole, and especially its leadership, is responsible for retaining existing members and recruiting new ones. Each section assigns the relevant tasks in its own way; not even the strongest membership chairperson would be able to do all of this alone.

The following paragraphs describe the administrative tools available to the section membership chairperson, and offer advice for the complex task of keeping existing members in the fold, gaining new members, working with fellow section leaders, and using several communication media to reach section members, new and old.

Membership Assistance from the GMC Office

Your primary contacts at GMC headquarters will be the Membership and Volunteer Coordinator and the Membership Assistant.

Monthly Updates

GMC headquarters maintains a data base for processing member information including dues payments and donations. Once a month, the GMC Membership Assistant sends reports to section membership chairs and section treasurers. If there is no membership activity within a section during the previous month, the section does not receive a report.

Membership chairs receive information about new members, address changes, transfers from at-large or other sections, expired memberships, and renewals. Section treasurers receive the same information as well as a check for dues received during the previous month. Sections are entitled to 25% of dues from their respective renewals or new memberships and 100% of all contributions designated specifically for section use.

The membership chair will normally share new member information with the section president and newsletter editor. The president can initiate personal contact (telephone or e-mail) and the newsletter can present the new names to the general membership.

Membership Renewal Process

Each month, office staff and volunteers send “rolling” renewal notices to at-large and section members prior to the anniversary of their respective join dates. Second and final notices are later mailed to members who have not responded to previous notices. In January of each year, the

GMC Membership Coordinator works with officers to write or revise the renewal letters for each of the sections.

Members are dropped when they do not renew within the four months following their expiration date. The section Membership Coordinator might consider taking additional steps to retain members, such as writing informal notes or making telephone calls.

Transferring Members

At-large members and members of other sections are welcome to transfer to the section of their choice. Either the prospective member or a section officer can contact the GMC membership staff to request the transfer.

As confirmation, the transferred member receives a section membership card and a copy of the section's most recent newsletter or activity schedule from the GMC's main office. The section membership chairperson may wish to send an additional welcome note. The GMC notifies sections about membership transfers in its monthly reports. In most cases, unless the transfer takes place during the month when the member has joined or renewed, sections do not receive their share of the transferred member's dues until he or she renews.

Mailing Labels and Membership Lists

Mailing labels and membership lists are available from the GMC membership office at no cost. Respective requests should be made at least two weeks in advance. Include a mailing date and specify whether labels should be organized in alphabetical or ZIP code order. Membership lists can also be sent electronically. The club maintains all membership data in Raiser's Edge and can convert information into a variety of formats, including Word, Excel, and Microsoft Access.

Access to Mailing Lists of Other Sections and At-large Members

On June 3, 1995, the Board of Directors approved a policy regarding the internal distribution of mailing lists. Lists or labels are available at the discretion of the Executive Director. Approval is granted based on the following guidelines:

- Purpose. The mailing is an invitation to members beyond the section to help with a special project, to subscribe to a section newsletter, to attend a special event, or to consider the formation of a new section. Any requests for internal mailing lists with the intent to solicit new section members will be declined.
- Procedure. Submit a written request to the Executive Director. Where appropriate, prior approval should be obtained from the trail management committee, the fundraising committee, or affected section presidents. If approval is denied, the petitioner may appeal to the Executive Committee. The Executive Director may request reimbursement for mailing label costs.

The GMC New Member Welcome Packet

New Member Welcome Packet

Every new GMC member receives a welcome packet from the Green Mountain Club. Packets are prepared and mailed weekly by staff and volunteers.

The ***GMC Welcome Packet*** contains a membership card, a welcome letter signed by the Executive Director, a set of GMC bylaws, a current issue of the *Long Trail News*, a list of information about each of the sections, a summary of member benefits (see Appendix D), a logo sticker, a publications guide, and information about upcoming workshops and special events. For new *section* members the packet additionally contains a copy of the section's most current newsletter or activity schedule and (if so arranged by the section president) a welcome letter from the section.

Some sections send a separate welcome letter and may include the section bylaws, and even a token gift, such as a section patch.

Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Members

While recruiting new members may be done in a carefully planned membership campaign (see below), it is mostly an ongoing job shared by section leaders as well as members. As one section leader points out, many new members are outings participants who see an activity advertised in the local news or through web listings such as maintained by GMC and other outdoors organizations. At their first outing, they talk to the trip leader and other members, and get a copy of the section newsletter or other club hand-outs. Hopefully they come back to the next outing. People like to help with trail work or participate in various trips. When you talk with current and potential members you may find that there are enough families, seniors, young adults, backpackers, peak baggers, canoers, bicyclers, or Sunday strollers in your area to merit scheduling trips specifically suited for them.

Trip leaders should obtain name and contact information for any nonmember participants. A section officer can then invite the participant to become a member.

If you launch on a section membership campaign, take time to think whom you are trying to reach. Many people (our at-large members) prefer to support the GMC and its goals financially, without being physically involved in the trips of a section. These may be reached by communication through public media, including newspapers, web sites and appropriate mailings.

An ample supply of brochures, membership applications, and copies of the *Long Trail News* is available at your request from the main office. The GMC staff can also help with examples of letters and flyers for outreach and publicity.

The following list is a collection of ideas that have worked for some sections.

Make Use of Free Publicity

- Include your events schedule on the section web site.

- List outings and events in local newspaper calendar.
- Mail your schedule to other groups, such as outdoor or environmental clubs, social networks, trails associations, and churches.
- Post outing schedules and GMC membership brochures on community bulletin boards or in sporting goods stores, book stores, supermarkets, co-ops, health food stores, laundromats, fitness centers, libraries, and information kiosks.
- Host a Taylor-Series presentation and use the posters for publicity in the same locations.
- On flyers include tear-off telephone numbers for the membership chairperson.

Follow up on Inquiries

- Have extra copies of the section's newsletter/schedule along on all outings. Some sections have a membership application form printed on the back of their newsletter.
- Mail or e-mail your schedule, application form, and newsletter to people who inquire about your section;
- Keep the names of interested people on your mailing list for several months.

Make New Members Feel Welcome

- Welcome new members in your section newsletter;
- Write a welcome letter from your section and send it to the GMC office for inclusion in the section welcome packet;
- Create a section membership application form which allows new members to list their preferred activities;
- Invite newcomers to a specific event such as a potluck or a pancake breakfast.

Keep Existing Members Engaged

- Categorize your mailing list - if you have one - to make it easy to send information, invitations, or requests to particular groups depending on the type of outreach: newcomers, seniors, families, volunteers, trail workers, etc.
- Make such demographic information available to other section leaders to help them tailor activities to specific group preferences.

Member and Membership Counts, Category and Status

When reporting the section membership totals, remember that a membership can represent either one or two people (voting members.) Any comparison of membership strength must count one or the other – either memberships or people. Be explicit about which you are reporting, so that

someone looking at the results from different years or from different sections can make valid comparisons. Also look at the “standing” attribute in the membership report; you probably want to count only the “active” memberships.

When preparing a budget, the treasurer should note membership “category.” Life memberships produce a large but one-time income, while “complementary” memberships produce little income.

The membership count determines the number of newsletters mailed, while the voting member count determines a quorum for the annual meeting.

Chapter 8: Outings

Role and Responsibilities of Activities Committee or Coordinator

The outings or activities coordinator is key to the success of a section. She or he is responsible for soliciting volunteer leaders and putting together an outings schedule which provides activities for various interests and ability levels. Often the first experience a member has with a section is when they attend a scheduled outing. Outings create interest in a section. They introduce new members to the GMC. They allow members to get to know each other and build friendships. They lead people to places they have never before explored. They give volunteers a chance to develop and sharpen their leadership skills. They are a source for recruiting new section leaders. They teach an appreciation for the outdoors. They showcase the beauty of Vermont. Best of all, outings are fun.

Every section generates their outings schedule in a different manner. The work may be done by an outings committee, an outings coordinator, or in an informal planning group meeting at regular intervals (e.g., quarterly). What follows are guidelines for how to organize and run section outings, gleaned from information provided by coordinators from the various sections. They are by no means exhaustive, but are meant to spark ideas and guide newly formed or revived sections.

Developing a Method for Generating an Outings Schedule

Potluck

Food draws people. Schedule a potluck or dessert get-together two weeks or a month before the schedule needs to be ready for the newsletter. For example, meet in May to work on outings for July, August, etc. Invite all trip leaders, potential trip leaders, and anyone else interested. Rotate the location — people's homes, local libraries (if they allow food), and restaurants are possibilities. By getting together, volunteers can come up with ideas for new trips and commiserate (if need be) over problems they have encountered. Leaders are more likely to schedule an outing if you and the calendar are sitting right in front of them. The potluck is a great way to generate interest and volunteers.

Meeting

A potluck without the food.

Telephone

The key to using the telephone for scheduling is an outings coordinator or two who are willing to make the calls. The coordinator has a list of potential trip leaders and their phone numbers. In some sections, one person makes the calls and another handles the paperwork, i.e. sending trip

forms to the leaders and organizing the information for the newsletter editor. In other sections, the coordinators get together to make the calls.

Internet

Provided most trip leaders have e-mail, this works well. Two weeks (or whatever amount of time the coordinator decides works best) before the schedule is due for the newsletter, the coordinator sends an e-mail asking for outings and dates. The coordinator then fits them into the calendar, using e-mail to work out any conflicts. E-mail is fast, easy, and virtually free. It can save the section time, paper work, and postage. The section may also develop a web-based calendar, allowing members to see what has been entered and then enter their own events.

Information Needed for the Outings Schedule

Date of the trip

Destination

Type of trip (hike, bike, canoe, ski, snowshoe, visit to museum, etc.)

Distance

Difficulty rating (difficult, moderate, easy – See box below)

What to bring (lunch, money, weather gear, day pack, etc.)

Leader's name and contact information – e-mail or telephone number (when is the best time to call, do you want your name, e-mail address, or telephone number in the newspaper)

A brief trip description

Any other helpful information (family outing, for experienced hikers only, etc.)

You may develop an outings form requiring the above information to be filled in by your trip leaders.

Usually, the coordinator collects the completed forms and generates a schedule which is provided to the newsletter editor by an agreed upon deadline. The forms may also aid newsletter editors because all necessary information is provided. Sample forms can be found in Appendix C.

Rating Outings for Level of Difficulty

GMC Turtle Outings: Turtle outings are designed for people who like a slower pace and a shorter day. They offer an excellent way for a section to attract new members, especially families with small children or people who move slowly. To qualify as a “turtle” trip, an outing must be less than 5 miles in length, gain less than 500 ft. in elevation and take less than 4 hours.

Easy: available to almost anyone.

For hikes: less than 5 miles and less than 1,000 ft. of elevation gain.

For bike trips: less than 15 miles, fairly flat.

For ski trips: less than 6 miles, fairly flat.

For snowshoe trips: less than 3 miles, less than 800 ft. of elevation gain.

For canoe trips: less than 5 miles, flat water.

Moderate: for the average participant with some experience.

For hikes: 5 to 8 miles, 1,000 to 2,400 ft. of elevation gain.

For bike trips: 15 to 35 miles, flat or moderate hills.

For ski trips: 6 to 10 miles with less than 1,000 ft. of elevation gain.

For snowshoe trips: 3 to 6 miles with 800 to 2,000 ft. of elevation gain.

For canoe trips: 5 to 8 miles for flat water, less than 5 miles for Class I or II rapids.

Difficult: outings where the participant needs to be fit and should be experienced in the activity.

For hikes: more than 8 miles or more than 2,400 ft. of elevation gain.

For bike trips: more than 35 miles or with long uphill sections.

For ski trips: more than 10 miles or more than 1,000 ft. of elevation gain.

For snowshoe trips: more than 6 miles or more than 2,000 ft. of elevation gain.

For canoe trips: more than 8 miles for flat water, more than 5 miles for Class I or II rapids, or any Class III or higher.

While most information is straight forward, consistent difficulty ratings are not easy to arrive at. The GMC 's *A Trip Leader's Handbook* provides guidelines for rating outings. (See box above.)

Advising and Supporting Trip Leaders

More gentle advice can be found in the *Trip Leader's Handbook* published by GMC in 1997. It is a great resource especially for new leaders. The outings coordinator should keep several copies on hand to pass around during an outings planning meeting or other occasions.

The outings coordinator needs to be familiar with the trails, waterways, and bike routes. Trip leaders sometimes look for advice on where to go and what conditions to expect or they just want to talk over the proposed outing. It helps if the coordinator knows the route. Certain trails on state land are closed during spring mud season (April 15 to Memorial Day weekend) and it is advisable to avoid some areas during November hunting season. The coordinator can make the leader aware of any fees or permits required. The coordinator also needs to consider Long Trail work hikes, GMC main club activities such as annual meeting, and holidays which will affect the schedule.

Other important considerations include:

Observing Group Size

To protect natural resources, the GMC actively educates the public to follow specific group size recommendations. Section trip leaders should not only be aware of these recommendations but should practice them as well.

Day Hikes (numbers include leaders)

In fragile areas such as alpine summits (Mt. Mansfield, Camel's Hump, Mt. Abraham), shorelines (Sterling Pond, Stratton Pond), and designated wilderness areas within the Green Mountain National Forest, the recommended maximum group size is 10.

For day hikes in most areas, the recommended maximum group size is 20. Ideally, groups should be much smaller than 20, or broken into subgroups with each subgroup having a leader.

If you must travel big, hike to less-popular areas (i.e. not Mt. Mansfield, Camel's Hump, Mt. Abraham). Break into smaller parties and use different trails to get to the same destination, or hike on the same trail, but leave at staggered times. Keep subgroups from converging at the same spot at the same time.

Overnight Hikes (numbers include leaders)

On overnight trips, the group size should be limited to 10. Most Long Trail and Appalachian Trail shelters are not designed for large groups, and due to limited space, the GMC recommends 4 to 6 in a party. Groups should not take up more than half of any shelter.

Leader Replacement and Trip Cancellation Policy

Because activities are planned so far in advance, sometimes leaders are unable to lead the scheduled trip: A business trip extends into the weekend or the leader gets injured. Stuff happens. It would be nice to have a list of substitutes, the way school systems replace teachers, but that is rare. Instead, the outings coordinator or trip leader can call around looking for a replacement. Often, there are people within the section who are willing to substitute, especially someone who was planning to participate in the outing anyway. If no replacement can be found, the trip will

have to be canceled. If far enough in advance, it is possible to keep the outing from publication in local media. Otherwise the leader will have to tell people the bad news when they call, with appropriate apologies. For sections that include time and meeting place in the newsletter/media announcements, someone must be at the announced location to explain changes.

Liability and Insurance

GMC offers recreational activities to people of all ages. However minors (below age 18) may participate in GMC outings only when accompanied by a parent or designated guardian.

A participant in a GMC outing should understand that hikes, ski or snowshoe trips, as well as other recreational activities involve some risks. Thus, while GMC volunteers provide leadership and guidance to an outings group, every participant is responsible for his or her own safety and cannot expect the club to assume liability for injuries or damages incurred during an outing.

Hopefully, every participant has some form of health insurance.

Trip leaders are covered by the GMC insurance against liability claims filed by a participant in their GMC listed outing. Outing leaders should be GMC members in good standing in order to maximize their standing as “agents of GMC in leading outings.” More information can be obtained through the GMC Executive Director.

Many people carry a home owners or rented property insurance. Typically, these policies include a liability component which covers claims for injuries or damages on or off the insured property.

Certain “high risk” carrying activities (such as rock climbing) are not covered by the club liability insurance.

In any event, an outings leader is expected to know the inherent difficulties of his or her trip and use common sense as well as prudent safety precautions.

Publicizing the Schedule

Consider the following ways to get the word out:

- Section newsletter and web site

- Long Trail News*

- Local daily newspaper (community or outdoor bulletin board)

- Free weekly newspapers (most towns have them)

- Local radio stations

- Local television stations (especially those with a local cable access)

- Use your imagination!

Coordinate all media contacts (best to use one person). If possible, develop a rapport with a contact at the various local media outlets. Once you do, your announcements are more likely to

be accurately printed or get air time. Check with each outlet to find the format they require as well as the lead time.

Keeping Track of Expenses

The section should reimburse the coordinator or newsletter editor for expenses related to the schedule. These can include postage, envelopes, paper, and trip leader recognition. How the reimbursement is done is decided by the section's executive committee.

Developing Trip Report Forms

Some sections use trip report forms. They are given or sent to trip leaders prior to the outing. Participants sign in (name, address, telephone, member status) and the trip leader completes the form with a brief narrative of the trip. They can be used in the newsletter, for the section's history and archives, and to monitor trail conditions. Sample forms can be found in Appendix C.

Outings Need Trip Leaders and Volunteers

Recruiting Trip Leaders

Although this isn't solely the responsibility of the outings coordinator, the coordinator is in an excellent position to recruit. Let's face it — who else is going to do it? The best people to recruit are those who have good leadership qualities and are interested in the section. Watch for outing participants who have a lot of outdoor experience, who attend section sponsored events regularly, and who have developed people skills. Sometimes people who are new to your area will attend a number of section sponsored activities as a way of getting to know the area. Often they've been involved with outdoor organizations elsewhere and are experienced leaders. Be sure to get the word out that you're looking for qualified leaders; mention it at your annual meeting. For interested people who have not lead outings before, have them co-lead with an experienced leader a couple of times so they can "learn the ropes." Make it easy for anyone interested in leading to contact you.

Recognizing Volunteers

Volunteers lead outings for a number of reasons: They enjoy being with like-minded outdoor people; they like introducing others to some of their favorite geography; they have a leadership gene in their DNA which won't be denied. In general, they don't do it for public adulation. However, it is important to acknowledge their contribution, publicly as well as privately. They like knowing you appreciate what they do for the section. Some ways of thanking them are:

- Send annual thank-you letters to all leaders.

- Recognize exceptional volunteers in section newsletter.

Publicly recognize volunteers at annual meeting.

Give token awards such as whistles, flashlights, caps, patches, certificates, etc.

Host an appreciation dinner or potluck.

Say thank you every chance you get.

Chapter 9: Trail and Shelter Maintenance

Many GMC sections have been founded “to maintain and establish trails and shelters in the Green Mountains which the Corporation [GMC] assigns to the section and/or for which the section accepts responsibility.” Trail and shelter maintenance is a very important aspect of every section’s activities.

Set-up and Responsibilities

The Long Trail, the Appalachian Trail in Vermont, and “blue-blaze” side trails are built on land owned by the state of Vermont (managed by the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation), the federal government (managed by the Green Mountain/Finger Lakes National Forest or National Park Service), the Green Mountain Club, and private individuals. Some parcels are encumbered by easements. The ultimate control over the land is in the hands of the property owner. Although property owners are generally quite pleased that the GMC and its sections volunteer to maintain the trail, they do impose restrictions on how we operate. These restrictions are most often related to safety.

Policy for trail maintenance is the responsibility of the GMC directors. The Trail Management Committee (TMC) is appointed by the GMC President with the directors' concurrence. The TMC can make policy recommendations for the directors to adopt, but most of its effort goes towards general oversight of the field program. The TMC membership varies from year to year but are drawn from all sections.

Each section maintains a trail segment assigned by TMC. These assignments have evolved over decades and may or may not be documented as formal agreements.

The bylaws of each section designate an officer responsible for trail maintenance. The trails and shelters chair is officially bound by the restrictions imposed by TMC, GMC, and landowners, although in day-to-day practice these should be considered resources to help the chair.

The section trails and shelters chair is responsible for organizing the maintenance of the section’s assigned shelters and trails, in addition to coordinating activities with GMC staff and, if necessary, the landowners.

Most sections maintain their trail using volunteers. Some sections schedule work outings for major projects but have adopters perform general trail maintenance. Most adopters are assigned, if the section so desires, by the adopter coordinator at GMC headquarters. Adopter reports are forwarded from the GMC office to section trail and shelter chairs so they have the latest

Who is involved with Maintaining the Long Trail System?

GMC sections
GMC Trail and Shelter Adopters
GMC Field Programs Staff
GMC Trail Management Committee
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR)
U.S. Forest Service
Private Landowners

information regarding work on their section of the trail. Trail and shelter chairs report volunteer hours back to GMC.

Shelters and trail sections should be visited at least twice a year, during the spring and fall, to assess conditions and perform necessary maintenance. This is a minimum, and chairs are encouraged to conduct maintenance outings more frequently. Maintenance or resource problems that need further attention should be noted in the course of these trips and reported to the section's trail and shelter chair and the GMC director of field programs. Policy issues should be brought to the attention of the GMC Trail Management Committee.

Dave Hardy, the GMC director of field programs is available for consultation and can be reached at 4711 Waterbury Stowe Road, Waterbury Center, Vermont 05677-9904; phone: (802) 244-7037 ext. 20; e-mail: dhardy@greenmountainclub.org. Consultation is necessary for all trail relocations and modifications of overnight sites.

Coordination with the U.S. Forest Service and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation should be arranged through the GMC Field Programs office.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's New England Regional Office is located in South Egremont Massachusetts and can be reached at 413-528-6333, e-mail atc-nero@appalachiantrail.org, or see www.appalachiantrail.org.

Job Basics

While section trails and shelters chairs are experienced maintainers, it is important to state here the three precepts that determine trail maintenance priorities:

- hiker and maintainer safety
- natural resource protection
- quality of hiker experience

Safety is the most important consideration while working on the trail. There is always the potential for accidents while using trail maintenance tools in the woods. Maintainers need to be aware of the following safety guidelines:

- Wear personal protection gear.
- Use safety equipment.
- Use the right tool for the job.
- Avoid fatigue or dehydration.
- Do not work alone.
- Communicate.

Encourage your trail workers to enroll in some of the first aid courses offered by GMC; perhaps the section can cover enrollment costs.

Basic trail maintenance includes:

- Cleaning out leaves and debris in existing drainage structures (waterbars, dips, and ditches) and draining areas of standing water.
- Keeping the trail clear of blowdowns, brush and annual vegetation. Think of carrying an upright 4 by 8 plywood sheet along the trail (but trim the path a little narrower below your waist to prevent excessive trail widening).
- A step-over blowdown across the trail less than a foot high is a good deterrent to wheeled vehicles, especially near the trailhead. Consider leaving those in place. And in a federal wilderness area, the trail should only be brushed wide enough to permit the clear passage of a fully laden linebacker sized backpacker, which is more like 2.5 feet wide.
- Maintaining well-defined paint blazes.
- Blocking in unofficial trails and campsites with brush, and piling brush along trails that are too wide.
- Making an assessment of the condition of the trail and repairing or reporting problems that need additional attention. This includes reviewing and sharing information obtained from trail and shelter registers.
- Reporting on signs that are missing, inaccurate, or damaged.
- Report any potential proposals to relocate treadway directly to GMC director of field programs for TMC and agency consideration.

Basic shelter maintenance includes:

- Inspecting, cleaning, and performing minor repairs on the shelter and outhouse.
- Cleaning and maintaining the shelter water supply and wash pit.
- Inspecting the outhouse or composteer.
- Removing trash from the shelter and surrounding area.
- Keeping paths clear of vegetation.
- Making an assessment of the condition of the structures and repairing or reporting problems that need additional attention.
- Reporting on signs that are missing, inaccurate, or damaged.
- Look overhead for hazard trees and potential deadfalls above the campsite. Report them to GMC as soon as possible, if you cannot safely remove them.

Assessments of trail and shelter conditions should not be limited to maintenance outings. Reports of trail and shelter problems observed during a hike are always welcome and should be sent to the GMC director of field programs. Section members should always be encouraged to look for and report maintenance needs to the trail and shelter chair.

Planning and Running a Work Outing

The trail and shelter chair is responsible for planning and running a trails and shelter work day. The process includes the following major elements:

- Scope out the work site. Know what type of work needs to be done and at which location. Estimate how much time the job takes and how many people. Use the assessment of trails and shelter conditions developed during prior walk-throughs.
- Schedule work outings. This needs to be done in coordination with the outings chair and the section newsletter editor/communication chair to ensure publicity.
- Recruit and retain volunteers. Try to estimate how many helpers are likely to turn up at the meeting place. Always err on the side of getting volunteers to return, rather than completing a particular job; as one volunteer states: "I'm a volunteer; I can quit anytime."
- Lead a hike on the section's maintenance section of the LT/AT during the summer or fall. This lets you both check out the trail and talk to participants about the spring and fall maintenance hikes.
- Run the work outing in an efficient and safe manner.

The most critical role of the section trails and shelters chair is to decide what maintenance projects to address immediately, what to defer, and what to refer to the Long Trail Patrol. It is helpful to maintain a photographic record of trouble spots. (Observers' reports may overstate the seriousness of a problem.) It is important to understand which conditions are transient (such as springtime bogs) and which lead to trail widening or destruction.

Also, the chair must determine the least-intensive remediation.

Below is a logistics checklist that can and should be expanded as needed:

- Identify a meeting place and a time.
- Provide clear directions to the meeting place.
- Recruit enough section members and other volunteers to do the job.
- Be sure participants bring food, water, clothing, gloves, and bug dope.
- See that the appropriate tools are available in sufficient numbers.
- Provide a first aid kit or make sure a first aid kit is available for each work crew.
- Run a short tailgate safety session at the meeting place or trailhead. Making participants aware of safe practices and potential job hazards is an important step for a well run and safe outing.
- Divide your volunteers into groups of 3 or 4 to work on assigned trail sections. A crew of 4 can usually work ½ mile per hour but expect variations to this guideline. An assignment that takes more than 4 hours to complete can be overwhelming to some volunteers.
- Allow for time to walk to the work site(s) and back to the meeting place or where cars are parked.

- Arrange for car pooling to the starting point of each work section.
- Assign a leader for each working crew. Ask the leader to make notes and provide a report on the work done and special observations.
- Keep a list of attendees and know whom to contact in case of injury or delay.

More advice:

- Have fun. When the weather turns bad, do not hesitate to call off the outing and get your volunteers home safely.
- Thank your volunteers! Remember, you may need their help again some time soon.
- Use the *GMC Trip Leaders Handbook* and the *GMC Trail and Shelter Maintenance Manual* as references for running trail work outings. Useful guides are published from time to time by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Appalachian Mountain Club.
- When all is done, write a work report. Include the number of volunteers, the total hours worked, and the part of your section's trail responsibility covered. That report (or part of it) will be needed by the GMC Field Office and at the section's annual meeting. Submit each report to the GMC Volunteer Coordinator; you can do so on the GMC web site using https://www.greenmountainclub.org/maintenance_report.php

Identify Trail Ownership and Understand Regulations

The trails maintained by the GMC are located on a variety of properties. Be sure you know on whose land your sections are located. Each landowner or manager has different regulations and you should be aware of them. Within the Green Mountain National Forest, you should know the appropriate district office of the U.S. Forest Service. In designated wilderness areas there are special regulations that prohibit the use of power tools; please contact the GMC director of field programs to discuss local regulations. On state land the regional office of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation is the contact. On private land and for any other clarification the GMC director of field programs can help you. It is a good idea to invite your contacts from government agencies, GMC staff, and members of GMC Trail Management Committee to your section annual meeting.

If you have any question about land ownership, start with the Long Trail Guide and then ask GMC for help. In general, most of the private land is in northern Vermont and most of the National Forest land is in southern Vermont, while the Ethan Allen Firing Range in Bolton is federal but not National Forest. State owned land includes the Mount Mansfield and the Long Trail state forests.

Ensure a Safe Working Environment

Safety is an important aspect of field work. Each year, the GMC and the U.S. Forest Service run safety workshops on the operation of chain saws and recommended personal protection such as

gloves, safety chaps, safety goggles, hard hats, and hearing protection. According to GMC policy, chain saws should be operated only by persons who have attended a chain saw safety workshop offered by the U.S. Forest Service or other accredited entities.

Know your volunteers. Choose a trusted person for a crew leader. Be sure your volunteers can handle the job assigned to them. If in doubt, try to do a specific task at some other time and have it done by the right person. Send your volunteers to one of the safety and trail maintenance workshops that the GMC offers.

Track Project and Volunteer Information

Record keeping is an important task for the trails and shelters chair. Record each volunteer's name, their work completed, and their travel hours. This information significantly helps the GMC Field Programs office meet matching requirements for various grants as well as documenting public support for the Long Trail and backcountry recreation in general.

As with any committee chair, attending executive and outings committee meetings is part of the job, as is reporting to the section at the annual meeting.

Documents That Can Help You Do Your Job

The following references can be obtained through the GMC office by phone at (802) 244-7037 or by e-mail at gmc@greenmountainclub.org.

GMC Trails and Shelter Maintenance Manual (2001) is a must-read. It fits in a pocket and provides trail standards and fieldwork guidance. Soon to be available online, at www.greenmountainclub.org.

Long Trail System Management Plan contains specific policies on trail management, developed by the GMC Trail Management Committee and adopted by the GMC Board of Directors.

GMC Trip Leaders' Handbook gives tips on how to organize trips, including trail maintenance outings.

The GMC's Manual for Bin Composting and Waste Management in Remote Recreation Areas (1995) is available for shelter adopters who maintain bin composters.

Appalachian Trail Design, Construction, and Maintenance (2000), by William Birchard, Jr. and Robert D. Proudman. This book, which can be purchased from the GMC, is an excellent reference on trail maintenance and construction.

Appalachian Trail Fieldbook – Maintenance and Rehabilitation Guidelines for Volunteers, Second Edition, (revised by Morgan Somerville) The Appalachian Trail Conservancy. This is the field text that all adopters and section T & S chairs should have. Contact the GMC director of field programs or the volunteer coordinator for your copy.

The Appalachian Mountain Club's The Complete Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance (1998) 3rd Edition, by Carl Demrow & David Salisbury. This is an informative book but GMC standards for trail maintenance are not the same as AMC standards.

Chapter 10: Section History and Archives

Why Keep a Section Archives?

The Green Mountain Club has a history dating back to 1910.. Many of the Club's sections have been in existence for nearly as long. Section history is an important part of GMC history. Knowledge and understanding of our shared past helps bind the Club and its sections together. Old-timers like to reminisce on their experiences in earlier years. Newcomers like to learn more about the section and its past.

An understanding of the past can have practical applications as well. Sometimes funding and permitting decisions revolve around documented historic use of land or structures. This is especially important as the GMC takes on the responsibility of land ownership and stewardship.

Over the years, section leadership runs through many hands. It is easy for records and artifacts to get lost, either because their historic significance was not recognized at the time or because people moved on or passed away. It is important for sections to establish a procedure for saving materials for the future.

Sections can play a vital role in preserving our common link to the past. As we make an effort now to save records and artifacts, future historians will have a better understanding of the history of the GMC and its sections.

Who Should Keep a Section Archives?

Ideally, sections appoint a section historian or archivist. Alternatively, a section leader, such as the secretary, may take on this function. Another option may be to seek out volunteers who are interested in sharing the responsibilities of organizing the section's archives. The main requirement is that those who do this job are willing to commit time and energy to preserving the section's past.

Section Historian or Archivist: Roles and Responsibilities

The section historian or archivist has two major roles. First, he or she is responsible for collecting and organizing records and artifacts. Secondly, he or she should establish a procedure for saving new materials as they are created. Some of the specific duties of a section historian may include:

- Collecting and organizing materials that document the section's past.
- Establishing a system of organizing the archives and passing it on to future historians.
- Establishing a system to save documents as they are being created, while keeping in mind that paper documents are still the best proven medium for permanent storage.
- Learning about and following accepted archival methods for the preservation of materials, including the use of archival (acid-free) supplies.

- Periodically requesting historic items through the section newsletter and at section gatherings.
- Encouraging and facilitating the writing of a section history.
- Stimulating interest in section history through newsletter articles, displays, and presentations.

What Should Be Included in the Section Archives?

The history of a section is found in many media, from the hiking boots of a founding member to the minutes of section annual meetings. Well-preserved and identified photographs are a valuable source of historical information. Here are some examples of materials that can be included in a section archives:

- Founding documents, bylaws (including amendments), and other legal documents.
- Minutes of meetings, agendas, treasurer's reports, officer and membership lists, and other administrative records.
- Newsletters, outing calendars, press releases, and newspaper clippings.
- Photographs, slides, videos, etc. Where possible, identify the images with dates, locations, and names, using archival writing instruments..
- Awards, dedications (?), and other special recognition of the section and its members.
- Trail maps.

Where to Find Historic Information about a Section

Historic information about the section can be found through many sources:

- Section leaders, officers, and members, especially those who have been active for a long time and are interested in section history, and past section historians.
- Section newsletters and the *Long Trail News*.
- Long Trail guidebooks and other GMC publications.
- For many sections, a wealth of historical information is found at the Vermont Historical Society Library which houses the GMC archives, the Vermont State Library which has the state newspapers, and the University of Vermont, Bailey/Howe Library, Special Collections Department.

Remember that section history is being created all the time. Documents and artifacts saved today will not have to be tracked down in the future!

Where to Keep Section Archives

Storing and preserving a section's archives is a challenge. Space is always at a premium, time takes its toll, and people move on. Ideally, the section should find a safe, long-term location for its archives. If the archives must be moved, try to ensure that the collection is kept together and that section officers and other members know the location. Especially valuable items may be sent to the Vermont Historical Society Library or to the GMC office.

How to Drum up Interest in Section History

Use section history to keep it alive! Display documents and artifacts at meetings and public events. Make scrapbooks available for members to look at and laugh at. Provide forums for older members to share their stories with newer members.

Display section history on the section web site. For one example, look at www.gmcmontpelier.org/archives/index.htm

Most importantly, continue to build the section's archives and ensure that it is passed on safely to future generations.

Appendices

The various appendices to this Section Leaders Handbook are provided on our web site; this appendix provides a link to each one. The GMC Volunteer Coordinator will be happy to provide a printed copy upon request. Many of the documents shown here are subject to change, and some may be implemented as online forms or other online tools. Check with the relevant section for the latest version. Contact information for the GMC Volunteer Coordinator and for the sections is provided in each issue of the *Long Trail News* and on the GMC web site, www.greenmountainclub.org .

Note: for the moment, the material is on a section web site rather than the GMC web site; look at www.gmcmontpelier.org/slhb2001/index.htm .

Appendix A: Bylaws

GMC Bylaws

Montpelier Section Bylaws

Ottauquechee Section Bylaws

Appendix B: Job Descriptions

Appendix C: Outing Planning and Reports

Burlington Section Outing Information

Montpelier Section Outing Planning Form

Burlington Section Outing Report

Montpelier Section Outing Report

Appendix D: Section Descriptions and Member Benefits Sheet

Appendix E: Taylor Series checklists

Appendix F: GMC Annual Meeting checklists

Appendix G: A Section Budget