TRAILS REPORT

With the snow and freezing temperatures of November, a very productive trail season has come to a close. Although we didn't have the benefit of the Sandwich Range Conservation Association (SRCA) trail crew this season, we've compensated with new resources such as the Shock Incarceration Unit trail crew, plus more difficult and complex work performed by volunteers. Over 910 person-hours were spent on the trails by volunteers, 278 hours by Shock, plus over 198 hours of travel time. As a result we not only maintained the condition of trails, but repaired many existing problems and did preventative work to avoid future deterioration.

Distilling such a busy season into a concise summary isn't easy. Perhaps it's best to review what's been accomplished on each trail.

Blueberry Ledge Trail is by all accounts our most heavily used, with Forest Service counts suggesting nearly 6000 hikers each year. The Trails Committee reblazed the entire trail, and Doug Mayer has continued his ambitious task of updating all signs. Additional signs have been placed along Ferncroft Road, including a request that hikers respect private property rights and not stray from the trail. This sign also acknowledges the work of adopters, in the hope of instilling greater respect, and participation, by others. Blueberry Ledge Trail also boasts numerous log and rock water bars - all cleaned during a combined work trip with the Forest Service. After years of consideration, the Forest Service and Trails Committee also agreed to remove the remaining wooden steps from the ledges. Man-made "improvements" are not in keeping with Wilderness, and the two remaining steps discouraged hikers from relying on their own skills. Judging by the absence of comments, no one seems to miss them.

Due to steep grades, the Tom Wiggin Trail is perhaps our most fragile trail, and a challenge for the adopter. Like most early trails, it was laid out without regard for long-term stability. Fortunately, it

receives light use and has escaped serious erosion. As a protective measure some 30 drains were cut in the side of the trail to prevent the formation of gullies.

The adopters of Bennett Street Trail, Blueberry Ledge Cutoff, Red Path, Pasture Path, and McCrillis Path, all reported clearing their trails with no major problems. On White Mountain Trails Day an enthusiastic crew removed several blowdowns from Tilton Spring Path, which is currently open for adoption. A considerable amount of brush and several large blowdowns were also removed from McCrillis Path, which should make it an even more enjoyable ski trail.

In addition to annual brushing by the adopter, Dicey's Mill Trail was the target of considerable waterbar cleaning by the Trails Committee. An entire day was required to clean over 70 water bars in the section below the Tom Wiggin Trail. Another day was spent cleaning drainage above the Rollins junction. The middle



Chris Conrod and Judy Reardon at Old Mast Road Bridge

third remains to be done. We must pay more attention to existing drainage structures or risk serious erosion damage to our trails. This is a situation where an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure.

The Dicey's Mill Trail benefitted from major drainage work by the NH Department of Corrections Shock Incarceration Unit. Under the experienced eye of Hal Graham, 130' of trail was ditched and graded to eliminate standing water, plus another ditch of 130' was dug to intercept the source of the water before it reaches the trail. Similar work was done on wet sections of Old Mast Road and Cabin Trail, resulting in a dryer trail, and consequently less damage from hikers

trying to skirt the mud. This work will also enhance skiing by reducing snow melt caused by standing water.

Considerable work was also done by Shock to restore 550' of sidehill on Kelley Trail. Over the years these sections of trail gradually collapsed and filled in with debris to the point that virtually no treadway remained — in places only an ankle-twisting slope. The work consisted of sidehill grubbing to restore a stable treadway. There was the usual share of roots and rocks in the way, but this was ideal work for a crew of 10 workers. A short section was also hardened with rock stepping stones. All this was accomplished in just two 5-hour work days.

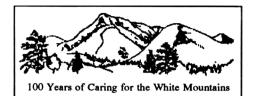
Kelley Trail has also seen much volunteer effort to protect and restore sections of eroded trail near the stream. On White Mountain Trails Day several sections of treadway were rebuilt, and ditching was done to reduce future damage. The damage could have been

prevented by proper attention to drainage, including the removal of blowdowns from the stream, which caused undermining of the banks.

Gordon Path was well cleared, including the removal of numerous widow makers overhanging the trail. The old logging bridge which had decayed to a single log was fortified by the addition of two new topped logs, making this a skiable trail without inviting bicycle traffic.

reported in the Newsletter, the Old Mast Road logging bridge has been replaced with a new pressure-treated foot bridge. This provides safe year-round access to Old Mast Road for hikers, snow shoers, and skiers alike. With the access to Old Mast Road restored, it was felt that the beginning of Kelley Trail might be relocated from the forest road (FR 337) to Old Mast Road. The new route was approved by the Forest Service, and the relocation completed this Fall. Using mainly an old overgrown road, the new route avoids most of the tedious walk on FR 337. Kelley Trail has been fully relocated and signs moved to the relocated

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WODC
Newsletter Editor
Wonalancet, NH 03897

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section. With Forest Service approval, FR 337 has also been cleared for skiing up to its crossing with Old Mast Road.

Big Rock Cave Trail has received much attention from its devoted adopter, Steven Winship. Steve has not only kept up with the familiar tasks of brushing and blowdown removal, but is one of the few adopters to personally take on the vital task of water bar cleaning. Thanks, Steve. Unfortunately, a section of Big Rock Cave Trail follows an old road along a clear-cut, and is always very wet. With the assistance of the Chocorua Mountain Club (CMC) a joint work trip was held to install new drainage ditches, a rock waterbar, and elevate the treadway above the water. The result is a relatively dry, stable trail, without the risks, costs, and delays associated with relocating the trail.

The adopters of the Wonalancet Range Trail, Walden Trail, Rollins Trail, Short Cut, and Square Ledge Trail, all reported work on their trails. An additional work trip on the Square Ledge Trail resulted in placing stepping stones in a muddy area that hikers had been skirting.

Chris Conrod, adopter of the Lawrence Trail, spent his annual overnight work trip on this remote trail. In addition to clearing brush and water bars, the entire trail has been re-blazed. Chris has the distinction of being the only person to participate in every scheduled work trip this year. Congratulations Chris, and thanks.

Sleeper Trail was thoroughly cleared and blazed during a 3 day work trip in which seven people participated. Despite some confusion about the trailhead, overnight rain, and ferocious Black Flies, a great time was had by all. A catered spaghetti dinner by Peter Smart, fruit pies from adopter Doug Mayer, and distinguished companionship made it all worthwhile.

The Sleeper trail was formally readopted by WODC at the annual meeting, and it was voted to restore the original extent of the trail up to Rollins Trail. This extension was approved by the Forest Service, who will officially turn it over to WODC next year. It was similarly voted (and approved by the USFS) to extend Rollins Trail to its original terminus at the top of Blueberry Ledge Trail. Closing these gaps in the trail network should enhance our maintenance efforts, as well as be more intuitive from a route-finding standpoint.

Finally, Brook Path has been completely re-blazed, and new rock steps built at the lower end. Constructed during the last work trip on a blustery October day, the nine steps will serve to stabilize the steep gravel bank where the trail joins the road. The Trails Committee extends a special acknowledgement to the adopter, Roger Korpi, for proposing this work and participating in its implementation.

In closing, I would like to extend a personal "Thank you" to Doug Mayer, John Mersfelder, Chris Conrod, and the many other WODC members who invited, encouraged, and supported my involvement in these activities. It's a privilege to be associated with such a devoted organization. I hope to see you all on the trail!

Peter Smart

Editor's Note: Peter has justly praised those who have labored on behalf of the Club. He has neglected to say what we all know. It is Peter's industry and leadership that have inspired us.

1993 ANNUAL MEETING

August 22, 1993, the day of the Annual Meeting, was a busy one for members. At 4:00 pm a special program, "Recollections," took place in the Wonalancet Chapel. Following a showing of slides, there were comments and remembrances by people who are familiar with the history of the Club and Intervale, as well as questions. At 5:15 a pot luck supper was held in the picnic grove. Thirty members and friends attended;

each year the number grows. It is an opportunity to meet new people as well as neighbors and hiking companions, to connect names with faces, and a time for conviviality.

The Annual Meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by President John Mersfelder. Following opening remarks by the President, the Secretary and Treasurer gave their annual reports. A copy of the Treasurer's Report is printed below.

Treasurer's Report

At the 1992 Annual Meeting, members voted to make the Club's fiscal year coincide with the calendar year. As a consequence, the following report, submitted by Treasurer Dick Daniels, includes transactions between January 1, 1993 and October 18, 1993. In the future, Annual Reports will be for the full calendar year.

l .		
Income:		
Member dues		2121.00
Bank Interest		36.76
Tee Shirt Sales	3	278.00
Map Sales		1254.00
Decal Sales		48.00
Contributions		219.00
	Total	\$3956.76
Expenses:		
Trails work		820.95
Clerical		386.70
Memberships		63.00
Tee Shirts		245.26
Miscellaneous		7.00
	Total	\$1522.91
Net Gain (Loss)		\$2433.85

Sally Zink reported that 190 maps have been sold since January 1, with a total of 1,036 sold to date. Clarinda Philips reported on memberships: there are 13 new individual members and 12 new family members. WODC members are from 17 states and the District of Columbia, with 122 from New Hampshire and 50 from Massachusetts. The 1992-1993 mailing list includes over 200 names.

Forest Liaison Chairman, George Zink, reported no significant action during the year. Peter Smart, Trails Chairman, gave a report of activities. See the full report on page 1 of this *Newsletter*. Following the trail report, Peter showed slides which he has taken of the work crews and adopters on the trails, and some of the work accomplished during the year.

(Continued on P.7)

LOW-IMPACT SURVEY

My interest in the trails of the White Mountain National Forest was sparked in 1990 when I assisted the Forest Service in monitoring the use frequency of two trails maintained by WODC. To obtain data, photoelectric trail counters were placed at strategic locations on the Dicey's Mill and Blueberry Ledge trails. It was determined that 3,231 people traveled these trails in the 7 month period between April 15 and November 14.

I began to speculate about the adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts due to this amount of foot travel. If over three thousand individuals traverse a single 9 mile loop in 7 months, wouldn't it be useful to have a picture of how knowledgeable these visitors are? How aware are these hikers of ways in which the degrading of ecological processes by humans can be minimized or even eliminated?

With a picture of hiker knowledge, educational programs could be designed and implemented before any severe degradation actually occurs. Although there is never any guarantee that knowledge will lead to ethical behavior, it is nevertheless a prerequisite. Fortunately for the implementation of this project, I was able to locate an obscure questionnaire through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), a questionnaire developed by Lynn Andersen in 1981 for a somewhat similar study. It is vital to any survey to use an instrument which has been established as valid and reliable. Consequently, I was saved from having to perform a complex and lengthy pretest. With minor modifications, my survey would accomplish the goal of broadly defining hiker knowledge of low-impact recreational practices.

One hundred and twelve individuals were contacted before they embarked on their hikes from the Ferncroft kiosk on eight separate days from June 20 to September 5, 1993. One hundred individuals agreed to fill out the 30 question survey. The intent was to receive descriptive data of use patterns and the hikers' knowledge of low-impact techniques. Note that since 100 respondents were questioned, the number of responses represents the percentage of responses.

Analysis and Conclusions

There are no astounding surprises in the data, although I did not expect to see as many "No Opinions" as the preferred response. The average number of No Opinion responses per question was 21.8. This could be interpreted as an indication that many people did not know the correct response and wished to express that, or they had no opinion. In

Hiker Questionnaire and Responses

Questions 1-10 and corresponding answers in this table provide a profile of the hikers interviewed. The answers are open-ended. Questions 11-30 in the second table have coded answers. The <u>letter</u> codes are: A (Agree), D (Disagree), NO (No Opinion), and NR (No Response). The code <u>numbers</u> give the total responses for a given code letter. E.g., A33 means 33 respondents agree. The ideal response is in italics(A33).

is in italics(A33).	
QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1.) Primary objective of trip?	Hiking-81, Camping-10, Other-8, Mountain Biking- 1
2) Number of nights?	Zero-74, One-15, Two-10, Six-1
3) With whom are you hiking?	Alone-6, Family-39, Friends-53, Organized Group-2
4) Planned itinerary?	Blueberry Ledge trail to Mt. Whiteface, both ways-28; Not sure-13; Blueberry Ledge Trail to Whiteface, via Rollins Trail, down Dicey Mill Trail-11; Wonalancet Range Trail-8; all Others (total of 10 different itineraries)-30.
5) Primary reason for choosing this area?	Climbing all "4,000 footers"-28; Have been here before and enjoy area-24; Other (total of 8 different reasons)-19; Decided to try the area more or less by chance-12; No response-8; Heard from others that it is pleasant-6; Interested in climbing a peak with open summit-3.
6) Do you intend to spend a portion of trip "bushwhacking?"	No-97, Yes-2, Maybe-1.
7) Do you know if the trail you intend to hike enters a designated Wilderness?	No-51; Yes-2; No response-4.
8) How many trips are you aware you have made into designated Wilderness?	More than ten-46; Three or four-20; No trips-13; One or two-9, No response-1.
9) What organizations have contributed to your knowledge of Wilderness?	Appalachian Mt. Club-50; Sierra Club-11; Hiking experience-10; WODC-6; Maps and signs-5; Boy Scouts-4; Forest Service-3; Others (total of nine others)-9.
10) How often do you read information posted at kiosks?	Occasionally-36; Frequently-36; Always-25; Never-2; No response-1.

11) Litter left by others should be carried out wherever possible.	A	D	NO	NR
	95	2	2	1
12) Human waste (feces) should be buried whenever possible.		NO	D	NO
		8	3	1
13) Aluminum, plastic, and glass should be burned or buried.	D	A	NO	NR
	85	11	3	1
14) Camps should be located at least 200 ft. from lakes and streams.	A	NO	D	NR
	79	14	6	1
15) Use of biodegradable soaps in lakes and streams prevents pollution.	A	D	NO	NR
	47	26	26	1
16) Lightweight or soft shoes worn around a camp lessens impact on the area than do heavy hiking boots.	A 52	NO 36	D 11	NR 1

either case, indecision is a negative indication of low-impact awareness.

Four questions drew a majority of incorrect responses: 15, 18, 24, and 28. The content of these questions represents topics which could benefit from updated educational materials. It should be considered, however, that 74% of the respondents were embarking on a one day hike, without any intention of staying overnight. Although the low-

impact section of the questionnaire was designed to assess visitors' general knowledge of ethical behavior while in backcountry locations, 13 out of 20 questions specifically relate to overnight camping. Many of the response inconsistencies described below may represent a lack of direct experience with camping. For example, although 73% of the respondents had no opinion, or agreed that biodegradable soap prevents pollution when used in lakes and streams, 82% also implied in question #22 that wash water should not be returned to lakes or streams. Hopefully, they understand that all wash water should be excluded from water bodies.

Another example of inconsistency is the finding that 60% of the respondents agree that a large, rock, fire-ring should encircle a campfire whenever possible, while 57% agree that campfires leave a scar on the land that is difficult to

restore. One could speculate that this data suggests hikers would use a backpacking stove (82% agreed that this practice preserved the wilderness quality), or would use existing fire-rings. On question 30, 76% of respondents indicated that campfires should be avoided on heavily used sites because firewood is scarce. Yet the fact that a whopping 57% either had no opinion or agreed that standing dead trees may be used for firewood certainly does not bode well for the overall awareness of minimum impact. On the other hand, the questions which drew the heaviest support for minimum impact practices were questions 11, 12, 13, 21, and 22. These questions refer to practices which the public has adopted. The carry-in and carry-out ethic has reached almost universal consensus. It is interesting to note that the 3 questions which contained the highest percentage of responses for low-impact practices,

	_	_		_
17) Camps near trails or summit views create a visual impact that detracts from wilderness experience of others.		NO	D	NR
		26	10	1
18) A large rock fire-ring should encircle a campfire when possible.	A	NO	D	NR
	60	21	17	2
19) Ditching around tents is acceptable if the campsite is wet.		NO	A	NR
		28	16	2
20) Building camp furniture around the campsite is okay as long as only natural materials are used.	D	NO	A	NR
	59	25	13	3
21) Using a backpacking stove instead of a campfire helps preserve the wilderness quality.	A	NO	D	NR
	82	14	2	2
22) Wash water should be returned to lakes and streams.	D	NO	A	NR
	82	13	3	2
23) Campfires leave a scar on the land that is difficult to restore.	A	NO	D	NR
	57	28	13	2
24) Bright colored equipment is best for wilderness use.	NO	A	D	NR
	44	33	21	2
25) Campsites should be selected in a wooded area with minimum ground cover.	A	NO	D	NR
	60	27	10	3
26) Standing dead trees may be used for firewood.	D	NO	A	NR
	41	29	28	2
27) Human waste deposited at least 200 ft. from lakes and streams will probably not enter the water.	D	A	NO	NR
	41	32	23	4
28) It is acceptable to stay at one campsite for more than several days.	A	NO	D	NR
	36	35	28	1
29) The compaction of soil at campsites does not significantly affect plant growth.	D	NO	A	NR
	79	15	5	1
30) In areas of high elevation or on heavily used sites, campfires should be avoided because firewood is scarce.	A	NO	D	NR
	76	18	5	1

describe actions which are not limited to wilderness (11, 12, and 13).

In designing educational programs, one should consider the broadest implications of their application. A person does not need to be in wilderness to understand soil compaction, vegetation loss, erosion of nutrient layers, and aesthetically unpleasing environments. The only successful long-term solution to ecological degradation goes beyond reaching only those who regularly visit Wilderness. The education of all potential visitors to think about their behavior with a kind of situational flexibility has global implications. At the same time, environmental education is an on-going process with many practical applications right at home. Authoritative decrees and lists of recommended "do's" and "don'ts" accomplish little to empower people to make the kinds of decisions that are based on intelligent evaluations of continually

changing variables. A paradigm giving greater importance to the <u>type</u> of use than to the <u>amount</u> of use, will do more to sustain our wilderness resources, our own homes, neighborhoods and communities.

Andrew Thompson

1994 DUES

Dues for the 1994 calendar year are as follows:

Individual . \$10 Family . . . \$18

Organization \$25

Payments are now accepted.

KATE SLEEPER TRAIL

The Kate Sleeper Trail is the principal connecting link between WODC trails and the network of trails maintained by the Waterville Valley Athletic and Improvement Association. Prior to the creation of the Sleeper Trail in 1900 there was no direct path by which climbers starting from Wonalancet could reach the Tripyramids.

The original trail was located and blazed by Edgar J. Rich, cleared and cut by WODC. Whether the actual cutting was done by Rich is uncertain. Edgar Rich was a founding member of the Club, and an early President. A most respected member of the community, he was selected on several occasions to carry on delicate negotiations with members of the community, neighboring hiking clubs, and officials responsible for acquiring lands to form the White Mountain National Forest. His profession was law; he served as General Solicitor for the Boston and Maine Railroad. [See "Edgar J. Rich" in the May 1993 Newsletter.]

The trail is described in the 1901 WODC <u>Guide To Wonalancet and The Sandwich Range of New Hampshire</u>, but is not named.

"The path leaves the top of Mount Whiteface at Camp Shehadi in a northwesterly direction and descends to the source of Down's Brook (sic) at an elevation of thirty-four hundred feet. This is the lowest point on the path. It then passes over three swells on the ridge connecting the two mountains, striking the south slide on Tripyramid at an elevation of thirty five hundred feet."

First mention of a name occurs in a description of a climb undertaken by

Camping on the Sleeper Trail. Doug Mayer, Andy Fay, John Mersfelder, Peter Smart, Chris Conrod, Mike Bromberg, Judy Reardon

AMC members in 1903 — "a party of eight, four men and four women, climbed Whiteface, crossed to Tripyramid by the Rich and Sleeper Trails..."

The origin of the name is found in a description of the Woodbury Trail written in 1904 by A. L. Goodrich in The Waterville Valley: A History, Description, and Guide.

"The older Sleeper Trail, named for the proprietor of Wonalancet Farm, starts about half way up the E. Side of the South Slide on Tripyramid, and follows the crest of the ridge before mentioned."

From the 1908 WODC Guide to the Paths and Trails of the Sandwich Range we learn the trail is designated as the Sleeper Trail, and was given the name by Edgar Rich.

The proprietor of Wonalancet Farm referred to above is none other than Katherine "Kate" Sleeper, who in the summer of 1891 opened the Wonalancet Farm as an inn. It was under her dynamic leadership that the community was transformed. She revitalized the Chapel, organized the Wonalancet Out Door Club, brought the first telephone to the community as well as the first post office. Kate Sleeper married Arthur Walden in 1904. Mt. Katherine, the Sleeper Trail, WODC, and the Wonalancet Chapel are memorials to her. Whether the Walden Trail is named for her, for Arthur, or both, is uncertain.

Keeping the trail open has proven more difficult than its original cutting. The high elevation — ranging from 3,500 to 4,000 feet — makes it vulnerable to blowdowns; its distance from a trailhead at either end — 4 miles from the kiosk at Ferncroft, and 4.8 miles from the kiosk on the Livermore Road— requires a long hike

before trail work can begin; its light usage allows brush to grow unimpeded. And there were other difficulties. Between 1913 and 1917 the trail was impassable due to timbering activity. Numerous comments in WODC Trails Reports and AMC Guide books describe the havoc created by timber operators, particularly near the junction of the Sleeper and Downes Brook trails.

"The first part is difficult to trace as the woods around were logged in 1913 and the years following. The trail is at present (1915) hardly passable, and is not likely to be cleared until logging in the vicinity is finished, about 1916 or 1917."

Two major events, the hurricane of 1938 and World War II, resulted in obliteration of the trail for a decade. Not until 1947 was it reopened and regularly maintained. A letter to the President from the District Ranger in 1952 warned that the trail might be abandoned; WODC members seemed disinterested in the future of the trail.

In the 1950's the Sub Sig Outing Club of Boston, organized in the World War II years by workers of the Submarine Signal Corp, became interested in joining The New England Trail Conference, and to qualify needed a trail to maintain. Members learned there were trails in the White Mountains ripe for adoption: a Forest Service Ranger suggested Sub Sig might wish to adopt the Sleeper Trail. Binding contracts between Cooperators and WMNF were non-existent. Without any protestations from WODC, the Sleeper Trail was transferred to Sub Sig in 1959. A Sub Sig member recalls the episode:

"Many Subsiggers worked enthusiastically to reopen the trail during the late summer and fall (of 1959). On September 14 we lugged tools up the Downes Brook Trail, built a temporary plastic-roofed lean-to at the junction to use as base of operations, and got started. The eastern part, full of hurricane timber, was very slow going. Farther along there were some stretches where the old trail followed wood roads. Since the sun could come in here, the growth of underbrush was very fast, so we moved the trail sideways into the woods so it would be less work to keep clear. For about half a mile, where we could not find the old route at all. I laid out the new route and cut the trail..... On November 11 I called Ken Sutherland to report completion, and at the 1960 trail Conference Sub Sig qualified for membership on the basis of this job."

Sub Sig was custodian of the trail for over thirty years, enthusiastically at first, but less so as the years went by. During the late 1980's, trail conditions and signing gave evidence that maintenance efforts were sporadic. Perhaps Sub Sig interest was lagging. In the early 1990's a resurgence of interest within WODC led members to suggest reclaiming the trail. Member pride waxed as the Centennial year approached, and it was learned that the Sleeper Trail and the ridge along which it runs, are named for the principal founder of the Club. In the Fall of 1992, with approval of the WODC Executive Committee, the Sub Sig Club was asked whether it would be willing to restore the trail to its original "home."

At the annual meeting of Sub Sig on October 21, 1992, responsibility for the trail was transferred to WODC. The Forest Service gave its approval for the change in November. Readoption was complete when the membership voted unanimously in the affirmative at the August, 1993 annual meeting.

The WODC Trails Committee suggested that the trail be renamed the "Kate Sleeper Trail" to insure there is no doubt as to the significance of the name. The Forest Service has approved the change. Efforts are underway to make the necessary changes to the subsequent issues of the AMC Guides, and maps.

The history of the Sleeper Trail is an example of how casual, at times, trail creation and maintenance have been. Many trails - perhaps the Sleeper were cut without consulting land owners or, after 1911, the National Forest. The naming of the Sleeper Trail was apparently not formally approved by WODC, AMC, WMNF, or any legal entity. The Trail was kept in climbing condition whenever and however the individual trail worker saw fit, without established standards, and not on an annual basis. Records also illustrate the ups and downs of Club interest in trail maintenance, and the casual manner by which trail adoption was transferred from one group to another.

It is anticipated that WODC's readoption of the Kate Sleeper Trail represents a long-term commitment of Club members to its stewardship. Long live the Kate Sleeper Trail!

George Zink

EASEMENTS AND WODC

In both the conservation field and the real estate and estate-planning field, easements are often considered, and may be already familiar to the readers of this newsletter. However, this article will discuss some types of easements that could be helpful to the WODC particularly, and to its members who own property in Wonalancet.

An easement is a right that a landowner gives to others to make use of something on the landowner's land, or a guarantee that the land will not be used in a certain way. Perhaps the most common easement is the right to cross over the land, usually in a fixed location, which is often referred to as a "right of way", although that terminology usually leaves it unclear whether the "right of way" is the strip of land over which others are allowed to pass, or the right to pass itself. Other examples of easements can be the right to take water from the landowner's land, or the right to clear a view on the landowner's land for the benefit of neighboring land. Closely related to easements are "restrictions", which are limitations on how the land can be used. These restrictions are usually included in the deed received by a buyer when the property is purchased, and the restrictions are binding on all future owners of that land, so that the seller who includes the restrictions knows that the land is permanently protected from certain uses. Common restrictions are to prohibit commercial uses, to prohibit certain unsightly uses, to prohibit clearing trees in certain areas, and to prohibit building more than one house (or even prohibiting any buildings at all). One question that arises is who would enforce these restrictions and easements if a buyer of the land decided to violate them. Previous owners of the land can enforce, and abutters who own land with the same restrictions from a common predecessor owner can enforce, but none of these may wish to be responsible for enforcement in court. Recently, organizations like the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests have institutionalized the practice of accepting this responsibility by receiving "conservation easements". These conservation easements give to the SPNH or similar organizations all the development rights to the land, or at least



Judy Reardon reads new trail sign

the right to enforce the restrictions. The Chocorua Lake Conservation Foundation has been receiving such easements since the 1960s on various tracts of land surrounding Lake Chocorua, as has the Wonalancet Preservation Association in Wonalancet. Such conservation easements and restrictions not only protect land in the ways desired by the landowner, but also the granting of an easement can be a charitable deduction for income tax

purposes, since the landowner is contributing the value of the easement.

Landowners should give particular thought to the deeding of easements to trail corridors. The WODC has always emphasized the fact that the public already has the right to use the trails due to what is called legally an "easement by prescription", meaning long use over more than 20 years (as much as 100 years in the case of certain WODC trails). This long usage has created the legal right to keep the trails open so the public can use However, to formalize easement, and to give WODC the official right to protect the existence of the trail as an organization, rather than as just a representative group of the public that uses the trails, there would be benefits to landowners giving written easements to WODC to supplement the existing easements by prescription. The situations in which written easements are essential are those where the landowner would like a trail to be rerouted to a more convenient location. Without a written easement to guarantee that the public will always have the right to use the new route of the trail, and that the WODC will have the right to maintain that route, the WODC has no legal alternative to continuing to use the historic route of the trail. In recent years, the Trails Committee has put a great deal of effort into trying to remove annoyances to landowners caused by public use of the trails, including making trail signs clearer and reminding the public when they are on private land that they need to respect it. Although a large portion of WODC trails lie in National Forest, key sections of most of our trails make use of private land. Some landowners may be concerned that their heirs or their buyers may find the trail location ambiguous. inconvenient enough that those parties might someday try to interfere with trail usage. An easement deed can prevent this from happening, by allowing the trail location to be specifically described or adjusted in a way that is mutually agreeable to all parties. Using written "right of way" easements to the WODC to change or memorialize the route of the trail can make the trail more completely compatible with the landowner's needs, perhaps provide a tax benefit to the landowner, and will make the WODC trail maintenance job easier now and in generations to come. There is even a possibility that under the federal Symms Act, trail organizations may be able to get grants to cover the costs of formalizing trail corridors.

Any landowner who wishes to discuss these possibilities further should feel free to contact any member of the WODC Executive Committee, or the author (at Box 350, Chocorua, NH 03817).

Judith Reardon

(Continued from P. 2)

By unanimous vote, members readopted the Sleeper Trail, and approved changing its name to the Kate Sleeper Trail.

Affirmation on use of the traditional Blueberry Ledge Trail route was noted with the following persons using the trail during 1993: Chris Conrod, Doug Mayer, Peter Smart, Judy Reardon, Martha Chandler, John Chandler, Barbara Sidley, and Ted Sidley.

The Wonalancet Preservation Association (WPA) presented a resolution which Barbara Sidley read, concerning the desire to acquire community land and a building in Wonalancet. A motion was made that WODC designate an individual to meet with officers of WPA as they consider implementing the resolution, and to inform Club members of developments.

Members voted in support of a 1994 budget presented by Treasurer Dick Daniels, for \$2,768, of which \$1,800 will be spent on trails work.

Officers elected for the coming year are given elsewhere in this issue. Special note was made of Barbara Sidley's years of service as Secretary of WODC. She was first elected to that office in 1976. Her 17 years of service as Secretary is the longest on record, exceeding that of Alice Walton who served 13 years as Secretary-Treasurer from 1929-1942. Without exception Barbara's reports are models of clarity, completeness, and accuracy. Her good nature and kindness shows in the reports as well as in her person. She has performed her task admirably. We all thank her for a job well done.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Sally Y. Zink

WINTER ACTIVITIES

Last year, George Bates, an avid cross country skier, saved the day for many of the participants on the Lost Pass ski trip, with his trusty <u>Jack Rabbit</u> wax. George has been asked to hold a waxing workshop at his cabin in Whiteface Intervale on December 30, 1993, at 10:00 am. After learning all one needs to know about the subject, and applying the wax appropriate to one's skiis, participants will take to the trails for a short ski trip. So, gather family and friends and learn more about the intricacies of waxing. <u>Advance Registration Necessary!</u> Phone George Zink at 323-8693 to register.

This year's cross country ski trip will be held on February 12. Beginning on the Kancamaugus Highway, skiers will follow the Oliverian Brook Trail to the Lawrence Trail, and then down the Old Mast Road to Wonalancet. Whether a skier continues on trails to Tamworth, or terminates the trip in Wonalancet is an individual's

1994 Officers
President John Mersfelder
Vice-President Barbara Sidley
Secretary Judith Reardon

Secretary Ju Treasurer Membership Cl. Trails Chair. Newsletter Sally

Barbara Sidley Judith Reardon Dick Daniels Clarinda Philips Peter Smart Sally/George Zink

choice. Leader of the trip is John Mersfelder. Phone him at 323-7793 for questions or to make arrangements to join the group. Advance Registration Necessary!

Last year's program on animal tracking was cancelled due to a heavy snowstorm. Dick Fortin has offered to spend the afternoon with us. Meet at the Cook Memorial Library in Tamworth on Saturday, March 12, at 1 pm. Following a slide presentation, participants will trek into an area where tracks abound. Phone John Mersfelder at 323-7793. Advance Registration Necessary!

A cross country ski trip on Mount Washington is planned for Saturday, March 5, 1994. Peter Smart and Judy Reardon were most enthusiastic about last year's ski, and plan to repeat it. Call Peter at 323-8666 to join them. Advance Registration Necessary!

Sally Y. Zink

RARE FIND

Editor's Note: This article about WODC member Fred Lavigne and his rare find is reprinted courtesy of the <u>Boston Globe</u>.

The August shadows lengthen early on the slopes of Sandwich Notch, still latticed with the stone walls and chimney holes laid down in the 18th century when this hillside was a thriving Colonial village, a base for trade with the north woods.

The village has been deserted since about the Civil War, so long ago that birch and maple trees have recaptured the hillside. Trees throw up gaps in the stone walls, and birches grow in the chimney holes. But lilacs still grow in what used to be dooryards, and butternuts, turning yellow before the maples, still stand by barn foundations.

Fred Lavigne, logger and environmentalist, scrambles up the leaf-covered slopes and over the stone walls. His excitement can be felt in the air, too, and it rises as he walks along one of the walls that looks like a terrace, perpendicular to the slope of the hill.

With pride Lavigne shows off his state champion tree, a slender one, really, 80 feet high and about 14 inches in diameter. The trunk rises straight as a plumb line for about 20 feet and then bends sharply for about a foot, then returns to its straight growth to the crown. It looks like a paper clip that has been straightened out. The crown of notched leaves spreads out about 36 feet.

Two years ago, Lavigne said, "I was just walking along the wall in the woods and I suddenly stepped on the burrs. I said, 'What do we have here?'"

Lavigne's champion is an American chestnut, once the master of the forest, for nearly a century threatened with extinction. Around it are littered the strings of dried chestnut flowers and the spiky burs of nut cases on the forest floor.

"This tree certainly is a rare find for New Hampshire," said John H. Herrington, executive director of the American Chestnut Foundation. "Northern New England is about the northern limit of the tree. In my opinion, the chestnut is an endangered species, and there aren't many trees in the woods any more."

Lavigne bends down and pinches open a bur. The nuts are soft and brown, the size of shriveled watermelon seeds. Only a fertilized tree produces the round chestnuts that fed the animals of the north woods and were stuffed into the holiday turkeys of Sandwich Notch residents. A chestnut cannot fertilize itself. Lavigne needs another chestnut.

The Sandwich Notch tree is, however, a survivor. It is cochampion, according to the Big Trees contest run by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. A similar chestnut, 76 feet high, was found in Walpole. Vermont's champion, in Berlin, Vt., is a little larger at 88 feet.

Once millions of chestnut trees dominated the woodlands of the East Coast. About 40% of eastern woodlands, Herrington said, were chestnut. "They said that a squirrel could travel from

Winter Activities (See article for details)

Dec. 30 X-C Waxing Workshop. George Bates, Leader

Feb. 12 All day X-C Trip. John Mersfelder, Leader

Mar. 5 Mt. Washington X-C.
Peter Smart & Judy Reardon,
Leaders

Mar. 12 Animal Tracking. Dick Fortin, Leader

Maine to Georgia in the branches of chestnut trees and never touch the ground," Lavigne said. The nuts fed Colonial families and their livestock, such as hogs, and provided a cash crop to be sold to city dwellers.

The trees grew fast so the wood was straight-grained and often used for fences, log cabins and rustic furniture. Antiques specialists say a lot of those old-fashioned ice boxes were made from chestnut. Moonshiners in the South burned chestnut wood when they made whiskey; it is a hot flame and burns almost without smoke. The straight, rot-resistant chestnut trees still can be found in Appalachian fences.

"After I found the tree, I learned that I have a table in my house that I thought was oak, really was chestnut," Lavigne said. Chestnut wood looks much like oak but is more translucent, as if it had already been varnished.

About a hundred years ago the disease that killed the chestnut invaded the United States. It was a blight, originating in Asia, that seeped into the trees through wounds. Once inside, the white fungus, looking a bit like a deadly flower, fanned out beneath the bark, preventing water and nutrients from nourishing the tree.

It was discovered in the Bronx Zoo in 1904 and spread like a human disease.

Lumbermen urged residents to cut down the remaining chestnut trees to keep the blight from killing them. They became telephone poles, railroad ties. M. Ford Cochran, a writer for National Geographic magazine, suggested in 1990 that this may have made the situation worse. "What natural blight resistance lurked in the vast gene pool of American chestnuts may have gone to carry wires for AT&T," Cochran wrote.

All that was left of the majestic chestnut was its name: chestnut street, chestnut hill. Most of the chestnuts found today are blight-resistant oriental chestnuts, their leaves less jagged: imports.

Still the native chestnut trees carry on the fight, here and there. There is a forest of about 5,000 in West Salem, Wis., although the blight was discovered there in 1987. The national champion chestnut, 70 feet high but with a diameter of 5 feet and a crown of 88 feet, is located in Sherwood Ore. And deep in the woods, standing alone, or, like Lavigne's tree, hunched up against a stone wall, some lone chestnuts try to survive.

Soon, most of them get the disease and die. The chestnut roots carry on the fight underground, some fanning out from long-dead trees. They sprout quickly, then in about a decade they get the blight too, and die away.

The American Chestnut Foundation, headquartered in Brattleboro, is trying to breed blight-resistant species. European silviculturists are trying something called hypovirulence, an infection that surrounds and kills the blight. American scientists are doing gene-splicing experiments designed to slow the growth of the deadly fungus. "I think the species can survive," Herrington said, "It's going to take time, it's going to take money, but I believe we can do it in the next 15 years or so."

The Foundation is supporting a chestnut research program in Connecticut and already is testing cross-bred trees. "I'm interested in the tree he found," Herrington said. "We need to collect all the genetic material We can get."

Up on the hill overlooking Sandwich Notch, Lavigne's barren tree may be able to be pollinated to make more survivors. "There's a good chance," Herrington said.

Thank you

to all the hard working

Trail Volunteers