

Trails Committee

Peter Smart, Chairman
Chris Conrod
Fred Lavigne
Evelyn MacKinnon
Judith Reardon
Susan Bryant-Kimball



WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB

Caring for the Sandwich Range since 1892

Reply to:

Peter Smart
P.O. Box 350
Chocorua, NH 03817

tel (603) 323-8666
fax (603) 323-7467

Trails Bulletin

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A mid-season review of WODC trail events and future plans.

Special Events

On April 1st **Judith Reardon** and **Peter Smart** attended the **New England Trails Conference** in Greenfield, Mass. There was a lively panel discussion on the pros and cons of user fees for hiking trails, much like the fees already charged at campgrounds in the WMNF. Given the general lack of funding for trail maintenance this is a topic we can expect to be hearing more about. There was a WODC display in the exhibit area which included samples of WODC signs ranging from the old blue and white, up to the current 5-sided Wilderness design with no paint. The Spring Newsletter was distributed along with other WODC literature. But the highlight of the day was a tool workshop co-sponsored by the WODC and Trailwrights. Both groups had their tool trailers on display so other trail groups could study these alternatives for tool transportation and storage. We also demonstrated the use of a grip-hoist for moving rocks along an aerial cable, a relatively new technique that does less damage than rolling or dragging them along the ground. Expect to see increased use of grip-hoists on WODC trails this year.

Grip-hoists were also the topic of a **Hoist Workshop** sponsored by the **Appalachian Trail Conference** on April 15th in Lyme, New Hampshire. The program was led by **Lester Kenway**, the trail director for **Baxter State Park**, who pioneered the use of grip-hoists for trail work in New England. The classroom portion of the program covered aspects of grip-hoist safety, different kinds of equipment, and various ways of moving heavy things from here to there. In the afternoon we put these ideas into practice by moving several rocks on a nearby section of the Appalachian Trail. The program was attended by **Fred Lavigne**, **Chip Kimball**, and **Peter Smart** from the WODC, as well as trail crew leaders from AMC, ADK and other groups.

WODC Tools

Inspired by the recent grip-hoist workshop, the Trails Committee has purchased a set of straps, slings, and other rigging equipment to enhance the use of the grip-hoist on loan to the Club from Fred Lavigne and Peter Smart. Chip Kimball will also be lending an extra 100' cable to help with the movement of larger rocks, such as needed for repair of portions of the Kelley Trail (See article below.) A very special "thank you" is also extended to **International Mountain Equipment** of North Conway for their donation of two climbing ropes. While no longer suitable for climbing, they can be most useful for trailwork. We have also expanded our basic supply of shovels, hoes, saws, clippers, and crow bars to insure we can equip the larger work crews we expect this year.

While the tool trailer provides an ideal home for the bulk of these tools, it does little to meet the needs of WODC adopters who need quick access to a set of clippers or a bow saw. This problem has been resolved by placing a basic set of tools in a locker near the Ferncroft Kiosk. A sign-out sheet will help us insure that the supply is adequate for peak needs, and a handy supply of Work Trip Reports keeps the Trail Committee informed of problems that may need special attention.

Schedule Change

The talk by Vinton Thompson on "Comparing Insects", originally scheduled for July 22, will be rescheduled for a later date in August.

Trail Funding

Our 1995 trail work is funded primarily by WODC membership dues and contributions. Together with funds from the USFS, this makes it possible to hire the **Sandwich Range Conservation Association (SRCA)** to perform some of the more extensive trail repair and restoration projects. A recent grant from **Eastern Mountain Sports** is also being used to supplement our basic support of SRCA. Many thanks to EMS for this timely contribution!

The Trails Committee is very pleased to report that we have received the first pledge towards the proposed **WODC Trails Trust Fund**. A subcommittee is being set up to define and establish the fund, which we feel will improve our ability to make long-term trail maintenance plans. We are most grateful to the anonymous donor for the confidence and support shown by this pioneering gift.

Trails Open for Adoption

Volunteer adopters are the first line of defense against the frequent blowdowns and fast growing brush that constantly attempts to choke off the trails. Prompt trail clearing not only makes it easier for passing hikers, but protects against trail-widening and other damage that can rapidly occur as hikers seek a path around these obstacles.

The WODC currently has several trails open for adoption. The **Old Mast Road** is a fairly easy trail to maintain, mostly requiring regular patrols for blowdowns and brushing on the upper sections. Although the **East Loop** itself is only ½ mile long, its adopter must hike over 3 miles to reach it. This is a great trail for someone wanting to climb Mt Passaconaway on a regular basis!

Co-adopters are also needed to help maintain water bars on many trails. Volunteer help with this vital task allows us to concentrate the SRCA crew on more time-consuming trail restoration projects.

If you're interested in these (or other) opportunities, please contact the Trails Committee. We do ask that new adopters join us on a scheduled work trip so that we have a chance to compare notes on some of the vital issues of trail maintenance. We'll also try to set up an initial trip on your trail to give you a good start.

New Partnerships

We're very excited to report that SRCA will be working together with **AmeriCorps** trail crews this summer, enabling SRCA to complete much more work than would otherwise be possible. In addition to the scheduled WODC projects, SRCA and AmeriCorps will be working together throughout the Saco District. This is especially important now that the Saco District has been given responsibility for trails in the Evans Notch District, and its trail budget is spread even thinner than usual. We presently expect that the combined SRCA/Americorps trail crew will be spending 3-4 weeks on WODC trails over the summer.

In addition to week-day work with SRCA, some of the more devoted AmeriCorps members have also been joining us for weekend projects. This infusion of energy has been fantastic on early work trips (see details below) and we look forward to an ongoing partnership over the summer. Our very special thanks to all the AmeriCorps volunteers who have joined us, and especially to **Mash Alexander** for coordinating this effort.

Recent Work Trips

As of early July, there had already been twenty-three reported trips and over 900 hours of volunteer work on WODC trails. Here's a summary of what's been accomplished so far.

The first reported trip of the year took place on March 26th when **Fred Lavigne**, **Judith Reardon**, and **Peter Smart** patrolled the lower section of the **Blueberry Ledge Trail**. We enjoyed a great hike on a solid snow pack, descending by **Tom Wiggin Trail** after clearing several large blowdowns.

On April 2nd, **Chris Conrod** returned to his adopted **Lawrence Trail** for a day of brushing and blowdown removal. He also scouted several erosion-control projects that are scheduled for a special work trip later this summer. Chris also cleared blowdowns on **Old Mast Road** and **Kelley Trail** during the hike in and out.

On April 8th, several WODC members helped build bog bridges on the **Bearcamp River Trail** along with volunteers from the **Sandwich Land Trust Committee**. Free of insects, the group completed two topped-log bridges across a boggy section below **Bearcamp Pond**. Volunteers included **Fred Lavigne**,

Evelyn MacKinnon, Beth & Alex Brunell, Susan Bryant-Kimball, Chip, Margaret, & Amelia Kimball, Judith Reardon, and Peter Smart.

On April 15th, adopter **Andy Thompson** cleared brush and blowdowns on the **Bennett Street Trail**, along with **Dennis Vandermeer**. Unfortunately, deep snow high on the mountain kept them from reaching the top, as well as making it difficult to prune flush with ground.

Jim Mykland worked on the beautiful **Wonalancet Range Trail** on April 18th, clearing new blowdowns and brush. Jim has also suggested that work be done on the steep sidehill above the brook at the start of the trail. Just a few days after Jim's trip, **Peter Smart** and **Judith Reardon** installed two new arrows at abrupt turns in the trail, plus a replacement sign for one of the outlook side trails. Three new outlook signs were also placed at side-trails on the **Walden Trail**. These are important to keep hikers from taking the wrong turn at these junctions. On May 4th Jim returned to complete brushing and blowdown removal on the trail. Thanks for all the work Jim, and for keeping us informed with your reports.

Also on May 4th, **Jon Burroughs** and **Doug McVicar** cleared brush and blowdowns from the **Blueberry Ledge Cutoff**. We are somewhat embarrassed to learn that **Jon and Ann Rogers** have both been working on this trail for many years, each believing he/she was the sole adopter. Since they both have a special attachment to this trail, we hope to work out a solution that will suit them both and acknowledge their devotion to the trail.

On April 27th, three members of the Trails Committee scouted the **Bennett Street** and **Gleason Trails**, flagging about 20 locations where drainage work was badly needed. This turned out to be essential preparation for our first scheduled work trip on May 6th, when fifteen people turned out for our second-annual joint trip with the **AMC Wonalancet Cabin**. The excellent turnout was due partly to

seven **AmeriCorps** volunteers who joined us on their day off. Our thanks to **Mash Alexander, Jennifer Stevens, Alison Chase, Suzanne Weil, Jeff Fournier, John Cooley, and Erik Hamilton**. **Mitch Silverman** and **George Vania** also joined us from the **Wonalancet Cabin**, along with five **WODC** regulars, and a hiker who had seen the posted schedule and was waiting for us part way up the trail. Many thanks to **George** for a great day's work before continuing on his hiking trip!

To work effectively (and adhere to Wilderness group limits) we split onto three work parties. We worked up the **Gleason Trail**, improving drainage in several muddy sections. Our primary target on **Gleason Trail** was a very wet section where the trodden area had become nearly 20 feet wide. Several hours were

spent ditching, grading, and building rock steps to provide a single, more durable route through the surrounding mud. In the meantime, another group had advanced to clear blowdowns higher on the trail, and then bushwhacked across to the **Bennett Street Trail** along a section of old logging road.

Work continued on **Bennett Street Trail**, clearing drainage at several points where water crosses the old logging road. The mud

was plentiful at these sites and serious trail widening had already occurred. By clearing ditches, placing stepping stones, and brushing in side paths we were able to greatly improve these hard-to-maintain spots.

By this time one crew had already headed down the **Bennett Street Trail** and was working on the final drainage ditches we had flagged the week before. Despite unscheduled delays on several morning projects, we completed *all* the work we had flagged on both trails. It was a great pleasure to descend the trail and find each of twenty-one drainage jobs neatly completed, and our blue flagging removed. After recharging on potato chips and soda at the trailhead, we headed off to the **AMC Cabin** for a festive spaghetti dinner, once again prepared by our host, **Melinda Lyon**. **Melinda** also made the Cabin



Clearing the Kelley Trail. WODC adopters are vital in keeping our trails clear of brush and blowdowns.

available to AmeriCorps members on Friday and Saturday nights, thus saving them a long drive to and from Gilead, Maine, where they are based. A few WODC maps and patches were given to the participants as a "thank you" for a great day's work, but the real reward was the work we had accomplished and the comraderie we all enjoyed.

On May 10th, representatives of the Trails Committee conducted a preliminary inspection of a proposed relocation of the southern end of the McCrillis Path. Almost all WODC trails cross private property, and the Club is always concerned to minimize any inconvenience to the landowners. In this instance we are working with Townsend Thorndike to address his concerns about the section of the trail that has crossed his property for many years. We regret that this section was not adequately signed and blazed in the past, since this would probably have reduced accidental intrusions by passing hikers. We expect the new parking signs placed by the USFS at the request of the WODC will help to prevent future problems.

May 13th was the annual Chocorua Mountain Club Trail Day. The CMC does most of its trail work on this single day, and usually gets a turn-out of at least 30 people. Four WODC regulars turned out to help the CMC, as well as AmeriCorps members Mash Alexander and Suzanne Weil. Together with Bob Lanou we cleared all blowdowns from the Whittin Brook Trail, as well as a fair amount of brush. We also installed about ten new drainage ditches, and are pleased to report that the entire length of this trail is now in uniformly good condition. Afterwards we enjoyed an excellent dinner hosted by the CMC.

On May 20th, Peter Smart cleared blowdowns on the Kelley Trail and finalized plans for the rock cribbing to be done by volunteers on July 1-4.

On May 23rd, representatives of the SRCA, AmeriCorps, USFS, and WODC inspected projects that we've contracted to SRCA on the Blueberry

Ledge and Dicey's Mill Trails. Present were Wes Crane (SRCA crew leader), Jeff Zens (AmeriCorps coordinator), Jake Wellinghurst (USFS crew leader), and Peter Smart. Together we reviewed the substantial amount of erosion control and restoration work that is needed on both trails between the Blueberry Ledge Cutoff and the Tom Wiggin trail. (Work on the Blueberry Ledge Trail began during the week of June 26th.)

On May 26-29 we held the third-annual overnight work trip on Kate Sleeper Trail. During last year's trip we noted serious erosion along a section of old logging road just west of East Sleeper. Due to the broad, flat nature of the road, water was running down for hundreds of yards, rather than draining off to the side. The project began on May 26th when Fred Lavigne and Peter Smart hiked up Downes

Brook Trail to patrol the eastern end of the Sleeper Trail, which now extends up to the Rollins Trail. We cleared a few blowdowns, plus 20 water bars and drainages. Several severely eroded sections of trail were noted, which may be candidates for next year's trip. At an elevation of about 3750' we discovered a beaver den in the side of the trail, complete with the tell-tale

gnawed sticks and twigs. This is the highest sign of beaver activity we've see in the Sandwich Range, and quite surprising since there is very little water nearby.

At Camp Shehadi we cleaned up a considerable amount of trash and partially burnt wood. The fire pit was also cleaned out, and rebuilt in much smaller proportions so as not to encourage large fires. Five more water bars were cleared towards Camp Heermance. Returning to our packs hidden at the top of Downes Brook, we located a secluded spot near East Sleeper to spend the night.

On Saturday we hiked over East Sleeper to begin planning the work for the crew that would (hopefully) arrive later that day. We became discouraged as we discovered the extent of the problems we had



WODC and Trailwrights volunteers gather by their tool trailers after a successful trail project in 1994.

reviewed only briefly a year ago. We hiked ½ mile down towards the col, and then flagged the necessary work on the way back up. A minimum of 24 water bars would be needed to address the problems, and we had only two partial days to get it all done.

We ate lunch while awaiting the arrival of the rest of the crew, and then began cutting logs for the uppermost water bars. While we would have preferred only rock bars, particularly in Wilderness, we decided that preventing further erosion was the top priority, and using at least some logs was the only way to meet our goals. We cut and peeled several logs, and then carried, pushed, and dragged them to the trail. As we started to dig a trench for the first log we were greatly relieved to see our co-workers arrive. WODC members **Judith Reardon** and **Evelyn Mackinnon** arrived first, followed by Americorps members **Jeff Fournier**, **Kurt Roland**, and **Lewis Garrison**, and WODC member **Doug MacVicar**. In addition to their overnight gear they carried the extra hoes, mattocks, and shovels needed to complete the job, plus an all-important 18-pound crow-bar. They rested briefly after their 6 mile hike, grabbed some lunch, and the work began in earnest.

By Saturday evening 8 of the 24 planned water bars were complete. Late Sunday afternoon (when most of the crew had to leave) the last (and largest) log water bar was set in place. In just over 24 hours we had built 19 log water bars, 5 rock water bars, 5 drainage dips, and 5 rock retainers.

Four of us stayed on till Monday, giving us time to pin the final logs, touch up the grading, and remove the wood chips from the trail. Despite the rain that fell that night and during the hike out, we enjoyed the extra time it gave us to enjoy this remote area. We look forward to returning next year to make sure our work has had the intended effect.

Despite a small crew of three, much work was accomplished on the **Blueberry Ledge Cutoff** on June 17th. **Judy Reardon**, **Chris Conrod**, and **Ann Provenzano** created several drainage swales, placed stepping stones, and removed two LARGE old blowdowns. Chris also installed several new signs in the area.

July 1-4 was another weekend project, this time on the **Kelley Trail**. In addition to four WODC regulars who camped near the worksite, we were joined by a number of day volunteers including **Ed Minor**, **Chip Kimball**, **Larry & Sandy Labrie**, and **Amelia & Susan Bryandt-Kimball**. In one of our most ambitious volunteer projects to date, we built 170 feet

Upcoming Trail Projects

July 15 NH Trails Day: Clear water bars on **Dacey's Mill Trail**. Depending on turnout, we'll also do maintenance around **Camp Rich** and address drainage problems on the lower part of the trail. The **Annual WODC Barbecue** will follow at 6 PM at the **Sidley's**.

July 26 Drainage work with **Tin Mountain Conservation Center**. Meet at **Ferncroft kiosk**.

Aug 5-6 Overnight trip to repair water bars and steps on the **Lawrence Trail**.

Aug 20 4:00 Trails presentation at **Wonalancet Chapel**. 5:30 Potluck supper at **Wonalancet Chapel**. 7:00 WODC Annual Meeting

Aug 26 Drainage and rock work on **Bickford Trail** with **Chocorua Mountain Club**. Potluck supper to follow at **George and Sally Zink's**.

Sept 9 Drainage work and trail hardening on upper **Brook Path**. A nearby project suitable for those with limited time.

Sept 23 Hoist workshop with **Trailwrights**. Pizza to follow. Trail. Pizza to follow.

Oct 14-16 Overnight trip to repair water bars & steps on **Rock Cave the Lawrence Trail**. (new date) to be decided.)

of rock cribbing and steps to restore collapsing sections of the trail.

Although rocks abound in this steep-sided gorge, great care was taken to select rocks that would not diminish the rough beauty of the area. In most cases this meant moving them as much as 150 feet from off-trail locations using an *overhead* steel cable. (See articles on page 1 concerning new tools and Hoist Workshop.) The rebuilt treadway will allow hikers to continue to enjoy this unique trail, and proper ongoing maintenance by adopters should prevent similar deterioration from occurring in the future.

Upcoming Events & Future Plans

Why not join us for one of the many trail events scheduled throughout the Summer and Fall? Whether you want an easy half-day project or a more ambitious weekend, there's something to suit all interests and abilities. See the calendar on page 5 for details.

Tools and guidance will be provided. Full-day volunteers should be ready to leave the respective trailhead at 8:30 AM. Please arrive early to allow time for planning and distribution of tools. Bring work gloves, a good lunch, and plenty of water. If you arrive later please hike up the trail to the work site. Prior arrangements are needed only for overnight trips. Please call 603-323-8666 for additional details on any activity.

See you on the Trail!

Peter Smart
Trails Chairman

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Initial repair work on the upper Walden Trail.
Poor trail layout and inadequate drainage
have resulted in serious erosion.

WODC Trails Committee
P.O. Box 350
Chocorua, NH 03817