

# WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB

Newsletter

November 2005



*Caring for the Sandwich Range since 1892*

## Creating a New WMNF Wilderness Bill: 1997-2005

Fifteen years have passed since the most recent area of designated Wilderness was established in the White Mountain National Forest. Between 1964 when the Wilderness Act was passed by Congress and 1990 when the Caribou-Speckled Mountain Wilderness was designated by the Maine Wilderness Act, five areas, totaling 114,000 acres in the 800,000-acre National Forest, have been declared Wilderness. The 23,155 Sandwich Range Wilderness was established by The New Hampshire Wilderness Act of 1984.

That's where things have stood ever since. Although timber harvesting has continued and snowmobile trails and other recreational uses have expanded in the WMNF, not one additional acre of NH wilderness has been designated since 1984.

### Beginnings of a Plan

In 1998, twelve years into the current WMNF Forest Plan, a group of WODC members, many of whom are still active on the trails and committees, began to realize that the time had come to protect more of the Sandwich Range as Wilderness. The effort began in 1997 when Fred Lavigne and Evelyn MacKinnon happened upon a timber sale near the Algonquin Trail in an area of the WMNF abutting the Sandwich Range Wilderness. It seemed to them that this area should be off-limits to timber harvesting. These relatively low elevation stands of timber had, however, been excluded from Wilderness in 1984. Shortly thereafter, through the efforts of Fred, Evelyn and others, the Friends of Sandwich Range was born in an effort secure permanent protection as designated Wilderness for areas such as this. A proposal was put together for extending the Sandwich Range Wilderness by an additional 33,000 acres around the original 23,000-acre core.

At about the same time, the Forest Service was beginning the initial phases of revising the Forest Plan. Public meetings and calls for comments were issued. (see WODC Newsletter, Nov. 1997). Other groups were also beginning to explore possibilities for adding wilderness to the new WMNF plan (see WODC Newsletter, Dec. 1998). Among the areas proposed was the Wild River region that had also been excluded from the 1984 Act. This attracted the interest of Dan Yetter. Dan had been on a winter overnight in the Wild River area a few years before and was impressed by its size and remoteness. Fellow backpacker Tom Merrick also had ties to the area that went back many years. After attending many meetings with the Forest Service and others, Dan, Tom and a few colleagues organized a Friends of Wild River group and began preparing a proposal for a new 70,000 acre Wild River Wilderness.

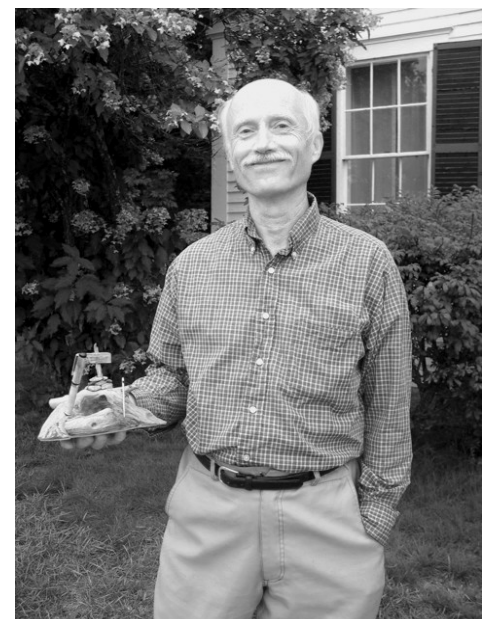
Almost immediately the two Friends groups combined their efforts to expand the Sandwich Range Wilderness and create a Wild River Wilderness. The details of the proposals are strikingly presented at the Friends web site: [www.whywilderness.org](http://www.whywilderness.org) created and maintained by Peter Smart.



Friends of Sandwich Range and Wild River journey to Washington, DC to discuss new Wilderness with our representatives. Photo: H. Dowey

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Dick Daniels displays the WODC Tireless Hero Award presented to him at the 2005 Annual Meeting. Photo: C. Miller

***Wilderness, Page 4***

# TRAILS REPORT

Last year the trail crew worked mainly on Lawrence Trail. After that work, we anticipated that this year we would again have a crew on Lawrence, since much work remained to be done. However, at the joint FS/WODC spring planning meeting, we all concluded a section of Lawrence needs rerouting, and it was premature to do further work there. We decided that Dicey's Mill Trail would be the focus of the 2005 trail crew.

In the past we have shared a 12 week crew with Squam Lakes Association, WODC having the crew for 8 weeks, and SLA for 4. This year, SLA opted not to have a summer trail crew so we had the crew for the entire 12 weeks. This cost us proportionately more, but it was money well spent since the same amount of training and camp site preparation is necessary for a 12 week crew as for 8 weeks. Thus we got almost twice as much accomplished with the 12 week crew as we would have with an 8 week crew.

Since we did not share a trail crew with SCA, that meant WODC was responsible the crew expenses for the 12 week season, but also potentially responsible for hiring a crew leader. Fortunately, the Forest Service stepped up and agreed to supply the crew leader if we supplied the crew. This was a great deal for the FS since they got a 4-person crew for the expense of a summer employee. And it was a great deal for WODC since we were able to afford a crew for 12 weeks.

It was also a good experience for our four Student Conservation Association volunteers (Tyler Sapp, Tom Hite, Tim Padilino, and Jonathan Lauffer). The FS crew leader was Eric Geib, a recent college graduate, who was thus their own age and very in tune with their needs. He stayed with them at Meade Conservation Center, took them to the trail head with a Forest Service truck, and gave them some insight into working for the Forest

Service. Eric was not only hardworking, he was a great leader.

This was the first time we have had a combined crew with the FS and it worked out extremely well. In spite of an unusually rainy spring, the trail crew accomplished our ambitious goals for the 12 weeks.

The first few weeks with the crew was spent cleaning waterbars, brushing, and clearing blowdowns. This work was done on most of the WODC trails. The rest of the 12 weeks was spent doing trail reconstruction work on Dicey's Mill Trail: 120 rock water bars were installed, and 11 rock steps. Reconstruction work on Dicey's Mill Trail was completed in one summer! It was a very successful summer, and we look forward to having a shared operation with the Forest Service next year.

## McCrillis Path

Perhaps the most important article on the

season. Theirs was a paid position, but they also put in additional volunteer time. Without their help, there could not have been a trail crew this summer.

In addition to the accomplishments related to the trail crew, we had the standard trail days. On our Annual Spring Trails day there was a good turnout of adopters and other volunteers to help clear away winter debris. On NH Trails Day we had a fun project – a bridge was constructed along the Brook Path. Sleeper Weekend did not happen because of rain.

**Dick Daniels**

*Trail Committee Chair*

when necessary, we should not shy away from legal redress.

After considerable discussion, a motion was made and unanimously passed that the Executive Committee, in the name of the WODC, be authorized to insure the right of public access to McCrillis Path, including



Tom Wessels directs everyone's attention skyward during an outing near Mead Base. Photo: C. Miller

Annual Meeting agenda was McCrillis Path – its current status and what action, if any, the club should take to insure unfettered access by the hiking public.

As was detailed in a recent WODC newsletter, McCrillis Path is a historical trail/road that has been used by the general public for hundreds of years. Under New Hampshire law, because of this usage, the public has a legal right to hike the entire length of the trail. Apparently a land owner at the Whiteface Interval end of the trail contests this right and in the past has discouraged hikers from using a section of the trail that is on his land.

The hope was expressed at Annual Meeting that McCrillis Path and other trails have their existing access rights protected without having to resort to legal means. But

While I occasionally worked with the crew on the trails, my contributions as Trail Committee Chair were mostly administrative. So the crew assistance provided by Fred Lavigne and Dave White was much appreciated and crucial to the successful

initiating legal procedures, if necessary.

Funds were included in the 2006 budget for costs that may be incurred in protecting public access to McCrillis Path. Also, John Chandler has generously offered to do legal work on a pro bono basis. Other legal volunteers may also be available. If expenses are anticipated to exceed the 2006 budget allocation, the Executive Committee has been authorized to augment the legal defense funds by donations and grants that specifically support this cause.

We will keep you apprised of the developments as this situation is resolved.

**Dick Daniels**

*McCrillis Path Committee*

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## WODC ANNUAL MEETING 2005

The 2005 Annual Meeting was held on the morning of Saturday, August 20 in the Wonalancet Chapel, following a delicious brunch which, due to inclement weather, was held in Nancy Boettiger's barn in Ferncroft. Twenty-five members attended the meeting.

Club President, Chris Conrod, reported that the club is currently in very good shape. The Treasurer, Tom Rogers, in his report, concurred with this observation. The 2005 year-to-date financial figures mirror the entire year of 2004.

Jack Waldron, Chair of the new Advocacy Committee, gave a summary of his committee's work. They have given testimony at hearings in Concord, representing the club; they are working on setting up an advocacy link on the WODC website; they are sponsoring the showing of an informative film on the history of the Forest Service ("The Greater Good," at Cook Library on September 19); and they try to be in communication with other groups with interest in similar issues—like the Friends of the Sandwich Range and their current proposal to the Forest Service that Wilderness be expanded by 30,000 acres.

Mike Bromberg reported that progress is being made on the new WODC trails map. 135.4 miles of trails had been "GPSed" by Mike as of mid-August, representing about 85% of the work. Mike hopes to expand the map to the east, thus showing the trails up Chocorua Mountain and their links to our Sandwich Range trails. The new map should be ready for marketing within two years.

Doug McVicar, Chair of the Archives and Historical Activities Committee, informed us that the new history and genealogy room at the Cook Memorial

Library in Tamworth is now open. We can place materials there where they will be secure. The WODC will retain ownership of all materials placed at the library. The club voted to give the committee permission to negotiate the terms of agreement with the library and to sort through the items we own to determine which materials should be placed in the library.

Dick Daniels, chair of the Trails Committee, reported on this year's Trails Crew's work, mainly on Dicey's Mill Trail. The crew was with us for twelve weeks and was a very hard-working group of four young men, part of the Student Conservation Association, and a capable Crew Leader who was an employee of the Forest Service. Fred Livigne and Dave White were also involved, adding crucial assistance to the crew throughout the summer. The Trails Committee is in hopes that in 2006 we can again have a combined crew with the Forest Service, hopefully working on the rerouting of the Lawrence Trail. A couple of grants are being applied for to help fund this operation.

The McCrillis Path was discussed at length. Doug McVicar gave a history of this trail, indicating that it was originally a public access road dating back to the 1780's and '90's. There were farms along this road from about 1820-1850. Today, the remains of walls, cellar holes and wells give evidence of these farms. There is a lot of evidence of the continued use of this road by the public through old public road maps and USGS maps, town records, and private organization maps and guides by the WODC and the AMC. It is obvious that the public continued to use this road/path over the years. There has been an ongoing challenge in recent years

to the right of the public to hike on this trail as it crosses one piece of private land. In the effort to clarify current use of the McCrillis Path, a motion was made and passed that the Executive Committee, in the name of the WODC, be authorized to insure the right of public access to McCrillis Path, including initiating legal procedures, if necessary.

The club elected the following officers for 2006: President: Jack Waldron, Vice President A: Tom Holtey, Vice President B: Chris Conrod, Treasurer: Dick Daniels, Secretary, Sharon Nothnagle.

Tom Rogers presented the 2006 budget proposal of \$43,450. His proposed budget was passed unanimously.

John Mersfelder presented a proposal to create an Endowment Fund for the Club, thus giving us added protection for the future. (This is possible now that the club has achieved 501 c 3 status.) The club voted to give the Executive Committee authority to investigate the feasibility of having such a fund and to set it up if they deem this to be advantageous.

The meeting ended with a tribute being given to Dick Daniels in appreciation of the many years of work he has given to the club. He was presented with a hand-turned wood pen (created by Chele Miller) and a desk set pen holder (made by Chris Conrod). The desk set depicts a trail leading up to a summit—the highest attainable level possible. Metaphorically, this suggests Dick's accomplishments, focus, and commitment on behalf of the WODC through the years.

*Sharon Nothnagle*  
WODC Secretary

### Sunday in the Woods with Tom

This summer WODC offered an enriching Sunday afternoon with Tom Wessels, professor in the Department of Environmental Studies at Antioch New England Graduate School and author of two books of local interest and importance; *Reading the Forested Landscape: A Natural History of New England* and *The Granite Landscape: A Natural History of America's Mountain Domes, from Acadia to Yosemite*. Both are must-reads for curious and observant mountain climbers and woods walkers.

A sizable group joined Tom at the Sandwich Town Hall on August 21st and were drawn in by his two-hour slide presentation richly narrated with detail and discovery. Each feature of the landscape depicted in the slides gives insight into prior use, and Tom puts the subtle pieces together with the skill and simple logic of a detective convincing his listeners that they, too, can read the forested landscape.

Following the presentation, a smaller group with reserved spots joined Tom for an interpretive hike to see his skills applied and

to try their hands at it. Mead Base and the Bearcamp Trail in to Beede Falls provided a rich experience. With Tom's eye sharpening each participant's perspective, the group was able to pick out the once cultivated areas, pasture lands and woodlots of the Mead Farm by picking out, for example, plateaus at the base of plowed fields, fragments of barbed wire extending the height of stone walls, and multiple-trunked trees regenerated as stump sprouts from cut trees. In the nature of their construction and the size of their stones, the walls themselves offered clues to the former function of the enclosed area; as in the case of a top layer of fist-sized stones, clearly those which, to every New Hampshire farmer's consternation, "grow" during the winter and must be dispensed with in the spring before planting.

Long lasting remnants of past weather events also whisper the history of the land when the knowledge and logic of seasonal winds are applied to the observable facts of their fall. Even after the tree has disappeared back into the earth, the pillows and cradles left by the upturned roots belie the culprit

storm; a winter blow from the north, a thunderstorm from the west or a hurricane from the south.

After a thoroughly engaging exploration of the Mead Farm, the group walked the Bearcamp Trail toward Beede Falls finding aspects of interest every few steps. Pointing out among other things the thick bark on the hemlocks in the heavily shaded woods, Tom described the area as being very close to old growth; and when Cow Cave rose along the right side of the trail, the author of *The Granite Landscape* was duly impressed offering insight into its glacial formation.

An afternoon is not nearly enough time to spend in the woods with Tom Wessels. Though the perfect, simple sense of his evidence and conclusions is reassuring to those who aspire to acquire such skill, the background information and facts upon which he draws with easy alacrity are mind boggling. How many of those who had this opportunity will not leap to sign up when he is again in the area?

*Chele Miller*  
WODC Summer Program Coordinator

## *Wilderness, from page 1*

### **The Forest Service Response**

In the early Fall of 2004, after nearly 7 years of periodic public meetings and calls for comments, the Forest Service issued a draft revised Forest Plan and supporting Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). By the end of the 90-day comment period the drafts had generated 6,100 responses from 49 states. The comments were to be taken into consideration in formulating the final Forest Plan. Details of the draft plan, presented as three alternative revisions, are available at the WMNF web site: [www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white\\_mountain/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain/).

Revised management Alternatives 2-4 would include 33,600, 96,900, and 18,100 acres, respectively, of recommended wilderness to WMNF. All three alternatives would create a Wild River Wilderness varying in size from 26,600 acres (Alt. 3) to 18,100 acres (Alt. 4). Although Alternative 3 proposes designating 13,000 acres to the Sandwich Range Wilderness, the preferred Alternative 2, would decrease the extension to 10,000 acres, and Alternative 4 would designate nothing at all. (Alternative 3 would also increase designated Wilderness acreage in the Pemigewassett Wilderness and create new Wilderness in the Kilkenny and Dartmouth areas. Details may be

obtained at the WMNF web site.)

Significantly, all three alternatives fall short of the proposals made by the Friends groups. In particular, critical areas eligible for wilderness missing from the Preferred Alternative Sandwich Range recommendation are:

- The rugged, forested southern slopes of Flat Mountain,
- The Wonalancet extension, with its historic streamside trails and spectacular Big Rock Cave, and
- The remote, trail-less expanse of Scar Ridge.
- More protected acres in the lower-elevation forests along the Algonquin Trail.

Critical areas missing from the Wild River recommendation are:

- The valley bottom land on either side of the river and the campground road, which would complete the self contained watershed and which holds ecologically valuable low elevation forest.
- The east side of Mount Hastings and East Royce Mountain, which would create a corridor to the Caribou-Speckled Mountain wilderness.

### **Why Should We Establish as Much Wilderness as Possible?**

Each of the nearly 800,000 acres of WMNF is assigned to one of 15 Management Area (MA) categories. Activities that can take place in each category are detailed in the Forest Plan. By far the largest number of acres is in General Forest Management (MA 2.1). This category allows the most development of the land, including timber-harvesting, construction of roads of all classes, and motorized use. Land in MA 2.1 is therefore at greatest risk of losing the unspoiled character that would make it eligible for Wilderness designation. Although the Semi-primitive (MA 6) categories are managed for less development, the two categories differ critically in that only the Wilderness (MA 5.1) designation is preserved by act of Congress. The Forest Service (part of the Executive branch of our government) may interchange all of the others. For this reason Wilderness designation represents the best hope for long term preservation of public lands in an unspoiled condition.

### **Why More New Hampshire Wilderness Now?**

The appeal for wilderness designation comes with a sense of urgency. We Easterners have a tiny percentage of wilderness and a high percentage of the population. Over its entire history, NH has never experienced a decline in population. During recent decades, the population increase has accelerated to make our state the fastest growing in the entire nine-state Northeast region. According to a 2005 report by the Forest Society, NH is now losing nearly 18,000 acres of forestland every year, an area almost three times as large as Squam Lake. The northlands, once considered remote, are undergoing a continuous increase in road building and development. As a consequence, the WMNF is rapidly becoming an island in a sea of heavily roaded and developed private land. It now provides the best opportunity in the region to preserve substantial blocks of land as wild forest. Wilderness is the best way to keep this land "like it is" and to free up these wild places from the pressures of development.

With the WMNF being within a day's drive of 80 million people, and over seven million visiting it each year, our forest is a treasure not only for NH but also for the



Flat Mountain Pond

Photo: P. Smart

entire region. Wilderness will preserve these lands in perpetuity for people to hunt, fish, hike, climb, camp, and tour.

Many people appreciate the vision of a traditional New England town at the base of a large, wooded, unbroken, peaceful landscape. They also expect, and deserve, healthy air to breathe and clean water to drink. Wilderness supports this quality of life. Studies of the economic impact of wilderness have also shown that in surrounding towns, residents and businesses are sustained, which in turn promotes more stable employment and private property values than before designated Wilderness existed.

### Current Status of the Revised Forest Plan

As this issue of the Newsletter was being prepared, the Forest Service had not yet publicly released the final Forest Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. It is expected, however, that the documents, if not already available at the WMNF web site or by mail by the time you read this, will appear shortly.

If, as seems likely, the final Forest Plan includes additional recommended wilderness, the implementation of the recommendation then will require the introduction of a Federal Wilderness Bill as the first step in obtaining permanent protection for those areas as designated Wilderness. It is expected that the Bill will be drafted in Washington by the New Hampshire Congressional delegation in consultation with interested citizens. It is important to emphasize that the wilderness areas recommended by the Forest Service are advisory, not mandatory. Time after time Congress has separately protected more Wilderness than recommended by the Forest Service. However, inclusion of critical areas not recommended by the Forest Service will require working persuasively with our congressional delegates, beginning immediately after the release of the Forest Plan.

### How can the WODC Help Produce a New Wilderness Bill?

The WODC has had a proud tradition of protecting the Sandwich Range, extending over more than a century. Jack Waldron's front-page article in the May 2005 Newsletter reporting on the Advocacy Committee includes a recommendation that the WODC be actively involved in the next stage of the wild White Mountain Wilderness saga. The NH Congressional

delegation needs to receive as many expressions of support for additional wilderness as WODC members can muster. Anyone interested in helping should consider doing the following:

1. Get informed about the details of the Friends' proposed wilderness extensions either by consulting the web site [www.whywilderness.org](http://www.whywilderness.org) or contacting the Advocacy Committee chairman Jack Waldron who can put you in contact with Friends' members.

2. Obtain a copy of the final Forest Plan revision and Environmental Impact Statement. This can be done by contacting the Forest Supervisor's Office, White Mountain National Forest, 719 North Main St., Laconia, NH 03246; Tel: (603) 528-8721; or by submitting a request electronically by going to [www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white\\_mountain/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/white_mountain/) and following the links to "projects" or "plans".

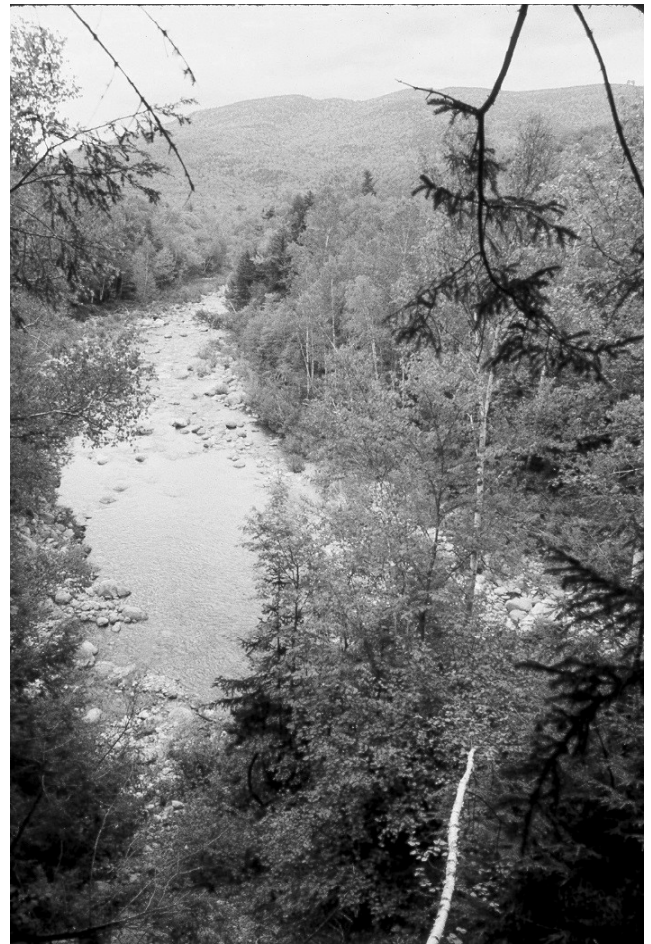
3. Voice your support for the Friends' Wilderness proposals in the critical areas of the Sandwich Range and Wild River by contacting the NH senators and congressmen. Mail should be sent to the state office shown below and include a note asking that the letter be shown to the Congressional leader.

Senator Judd Gregg  
125 North Main Street  
Concord, NH 03301  
(202) 224-3324  
[mailbox@gregg.senate.gov](mailto:mailbox@gregg.senate.gov)

Senator John E. Sununu  
1589 Elm Street, Suite 3  
Manchester, NH 03101  
(202) 224-2841  
[mailbox@sununu.senate.gov](mailto:mailbox@sununu.senate.gov)

Congressman Charles F. Bass  
142 North Main St.  
Concord, NH 03301  
(202) 225-5206  
[cbass@mail.house.gov](mailto:cbass@mail.house.gov)

Congressman Jeb Bradley  
1095 Elm Street  
Manchester, NH 03101  
(202) 225-5456  
[www.house.gov/bradley/contact.html](http://www.house.gov/bradley/contact.html)



Wild River

Photo: D. Yetter

Personal letters or other messages that deal with specific areas of the proposed wilderness are best.

All of us in New Hampshire who favor preserving as much of our forests as possible, for as long as possible, must now look to our Congressional delegation to implement the FS recommendations and to add the missing critical wilderness areas in the Sandwich Range and Wild River. We need their leadership and they need all the help we can give.

Thanks to Dan Yetter, Fred Lavigne, Evelyn MacKinnon and George Zink for background information.

**Ronald Lawler**  
*Friends of Sandwich Range*

# Lawrence Trail: Options for the Future



Lawrence Trail

Photo: M. Bromberg

The relocation leaves the old trail about 50 feet before the climb up to The Overhang starts. It descends slightly and contours below the base of the cliffs (but not close enough to see them well) on the same kind of sandy loose ground that the old trail sees, but without the steepness. After it passes over and through a few boulders that have fallen from the cliffs (no significant views), it switchbacks up alongside a stream, then follows the stream up to the saddle and the junction with the former trail.

The main concerns are erosion, trail construction work, difficulty of maintenance, expansion of trail mileage in Wilderness, effects on the coyote vs. lynx balance, and quality of hiker experience. Here are five options:

1. Leave the trail in the same location, and do whatever maintenance is necessary to harden it for hiker use.
2. Build the relocation as presently marked and abandon the current trail.
3. Build the relocation as presently marked and keep the western part of the current trail open as a side trail up to The Overhang, abandoning the eastern part.
4. Build the relocation as presently marked and keep the eastern part of the current trail open as a side trail down to The Overhang, abandoning the western part.
5. Build the relocation as presently marked and keep the old trail open as an

A scenic, challenging, and historic stretch of the Lawrence Trail is being considered for oblivion. Here are descriptions of that stretch and its proposed replacement, with several options.

The present trail continues on the level from the proposed relocation junction for about 50 feet, then starts to climb steeply up a loose, sandy slope. After a challenging scramble to surmount a boulder, the trail gets even looser and more eroded. (This stretch is remarkably similar to the climb to the viewpoint on Square Ledge.) At the top of this couloir is a welcome flat rest area with a nicely-framed but restricted view. The trail continues rising, but at a gentler grade and with much better footing, as it follows along the cliff (Wall Street). It reaches The Overhang, where the remarkably stable footway runs across a shelf right on the cliff face and there is a good view toward the "shaggy" part of Paugus. The trail now continues to climb on generally good footing (rocks, roots, and packed dirt rather than loose sand and gravel), except for a short repeat of the initial loose, sandy climb that ends in a set of memorable natural steps in the red rock. The trail crosses a height-of-land and drops slightly into a small saddle where it meets a stream and the eastern end of the relocation.

alternative, difficult through-route. The "Subway" and "Elevated" in King Ravine are an example of two parallel routes being maintained on a single trail, one difficult and challenging and the other easier.

Another choice: Change the alignment of the relocation with the goal of improving variety and interest to the hiker (really a variation of options 2 through 5 above). The trail might be routed a bit higher to traverse along the base of the cliff, providing a lower "Wall Street" experience, and it could be routed over and among more of the fallen boulders in an attempt to provide views.

## How do these options affect our concerns?

**Erosion:** It's tough to tell whether hiker's feet or natural forces caused more erosion of the two steep sandy pitches, but they're clearly washing away. Both of these slopes will need to be at least stabilized against runoff even if the trail is completely closed (Option 2). All the other options would require stabilizing the old trail and also hardening at least a part of it to withstand hiker traffic, although Options 3 and 4 as dead-end spurs would have less traffic.

**Construction:** Option 1 requires no new trail construction but major trail hardening. All other options require new trail construction and stabilization of the old trail; all but Option 2 also require hardening of the old trail.

**Maintenance:** Even if the old trail were hardened, it would likely require more maintenance than the average trail. Only Option 2 promises a low-maintenance result, although the sandy character of the sidehill

section may result in even this relocation requiring constant maintenance.

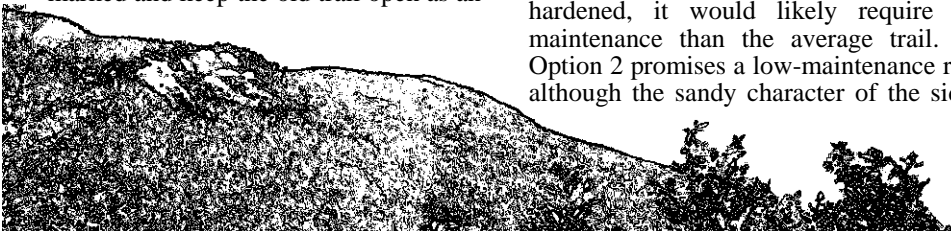
**Wilderness:** Options 1 and 2 result in no net increase of trail mileage in Wilderness. All of the others increase the trail mileage.

**Cats vs. dogs:** All options except 1 and 2 increase the open trail mileage likely to be tracked in winter, thus giving an unfair advantage to the coyotes over the lynx.

**Hiker experience:** Option 1 keeps the trail as a wild and scenic route, with numerous challenges and rewards to the hiker. Option 2 results in a rather bland trail, eliminating all the challenges. But it would be easier to hike, particularly on snowshoes (still not recommended for skiing). Options 3 and 4 preserve some of the challenge and rewards, with Option 3 keeping the best parts. Option 4 is awkward, since hikers are willing to climb to an outlook and descend to return to the trail, but going downhill to visit an outlook and having to climb back is likely to be unpopular. Option 5 gives the best choice to the hiker, but limited signing in Wilderness may make the choice of route confusing. Any of Options 2 through 5 could have the alignment altered to improve the hiker's experience.

I recommend Option 1 (keeping things as they are now): it provides the best hiker experience with minimal disruption of Wilderness trail mileage and wildlife habitat, and no building of new trail. But significant trail work is required on the existing route to address the erosion issue and make future maintenance reasonable. Option 3 is a distant second choice, reducing foot traffic on the eroded parts, but would require as much or more work than Option 1 and increases overall trail mileage. If these are not possible, Option 2 with an improved alignment would appear to be the next best choice. Options 4 and 5 seem to have too many negatives.

*Mike Bromberg*  
WODC Cartographer



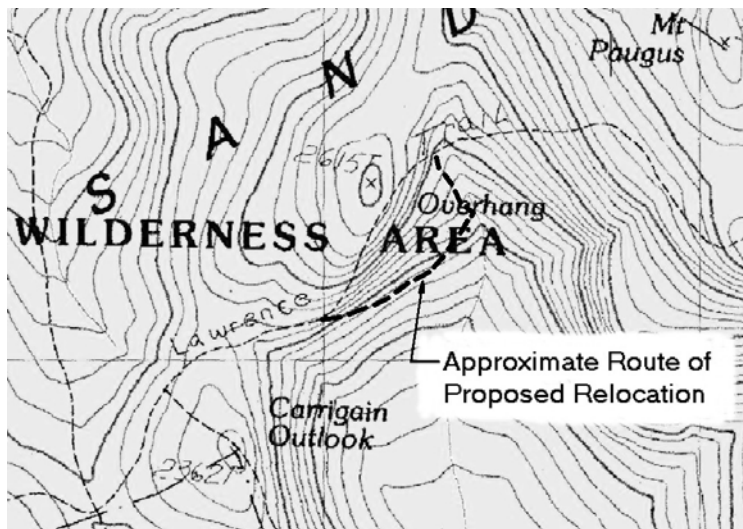
# Lawrence Trail: The Adopter's Perspective

It was a long-awaited happening, and mostly a joy in spite of the constant rain: six days of living and working on the Lawrence Trail with a group of four SCA volunteers. With the most urgent needs of WODC's more popular trails met, we could afford to spend a week picking away at one of the numerous problem areas on "my" trail. The spot chosen was a severely eroded section – a hiker-created 3'-deep gully, actually – on the steep and gravelly pitch east of the col between The Overhang and Mt. Paugus.

Because of unreliable water sources near the work site, we were camped in Paugus Pass and made a daily commute back and forth over The Overhang. I can't recall on which of those many hikes it happened, but I distinctly remember being at the tail-end of the single file of weary workers headed back to spike camp and looking forward to a generous helping of Annie's mac 'n cheese seasoned with black fly corpses. Jesse was in front of me and, as he stepped off a fair-sized boulder, a barely perceptible movement occurred in the rock and surrounding soil. Well, I'm of a curious bent and couldn't resist jumping up above the boulder, bracing against a tree and giving it a good nudge with my foot. The 200+-pound rock and a fair amount of

dirt slid down the slope and were saved from plunging down a shear rock face only by a small red spruce precariously perched on the brink. Over time, the steeply sloped underlying ledge has become more and more exposed as hikers skirt the slippery bare spot by scrambling over the uphill edge, knocking more dirt and stones free.

This episode begs the question: Why were we bypassing problem areas to perform maintenance far up the slopes of Mt. Paugus? Why didn't we start at the bottom and work our way up as normal, sane trail crews do? (I believe there's an oxymoron in that last sentence.) The answer to that query speaks directly to today's question: Why would anyone want to abandon one of the most exhilarating and ruggedly beautiful half-mile sections of hiking trail in the Sandwich Range?



Mountains erode. They all do. The Overhang and Mt. Paugus are just better at it than most. The combination of brittle Conway granite pocked with seams of foliated gneiss creates a bedrock that is highly susceptible to weathering. There's good reason why Mt. Paugus was once called Old Shag.

With or without the added impact of Vibram soles, The Overhang is sliding down toward Whittin Brook at a measurable rate. There is an active slide near the second couloir. Hike to the apex where two shear walls meet at a right angle (sort of a reverse Square Ledge) and look downslope. You'll see scars on the uphill sides of tree trunks where stones have bounced off them at a height of up to 8 feet. One of my adopter's chores during spring cleaning is to push the occasional talus contribution off the trail.

The sloped shelf that serves as the road base of "Wall Street" is subsiding faster than the wall's lichen can keep up. The bottom foot of the wall is free of lichen and the grey weathering patina is absent. This is not entirely due to trail traffic. In some places the trail isn't directly next to the wall (or wasn't; in this area, hikers' choices of preferred treadways seem to react to movement of the mountain).

These are just some of the reasons why I love this trail. It's so



A few years back on Lawrence Trail: Chris guides a rock for a new waterbar while Judy and the griphoist do the heavy lifting. Photo: P. Smart

cool to be a steward on an active mountain with its own mind; a landscape which embodies the relentless free will of nature. And then there's the beauty, the ruggedness, the remoteness. It's one of the few spots where I can truly measure my "personal space" in square miles. Sit on the balcony (sorry Mike, but until someone supplies documentary evidence to the contrary, The Overhang is that huge chunk of bedrock at the first couloir; the one that *overhangs* the talus slope below) and time a peregrine falcon as it swoops down Whittin Brook valley and disappears behind the south spur of Paugus. Or stand in the first couloir on a late-April morning and watch as the sun peeks over the ledge and the ice clinging to the walls sparkles until the rock warms up; sending icicles at first, and then mini-glaciers, tinkling and crashing down the steep granite walls. Now that's exhilarating. I – and many others I know – will continue to visit this special place whether or not a maintained trail leads us there.

But as a trail worker, I'm stumped. It will take a lot of material to stabilize and harden the treadway. We don't want to use the trees. Their roots are providing the most stability. We can't quarry the stones on-site without losing the soil around them. How do you transport a few (quite a few) tons of stone up a trail that is a challenge to a day hiker with a light pack? How do we set the stones in a thin, loose soil overlying sloped ledge at the top of a cliff? How long will they stay there? I don't know how to build a trail on a moving mountain.

**Chris Conrod**  
Lawrence Trail Adopter



# The Outlook

Ideas and Observations

## What?! No Order Form?

This is a first for me. Twelve issues of *The Newsletter* and this is the first without any shameless promotion of WODC merchandise. Martha isn't going to be happy. I can see those T-shirts with the ever-popular WODC logo emblazoned on the left breast spilling out onto the floor every time she opens her closet door. And no orders coming in. She's gonna be steamed!

But what can I do? Too much goin' on with the Club. It's a miracle I was able to jam all those articles into an eight-page newsletter. . . Oh, what the heck. Maybe if I tear the top off the form and squish it sideways it will fit in the box to the right.

There! Job done. Now, as long as there's room for the disclaimer at the bottom . . .

Opinions expressed in *The Outlook* are those of the individual and not necessarily the views of WODC. We invite reader participation in this forum. Submissions of 600 words or less may be sent to: WODC News Editor, HCR 64 Box 248, Wonalancet NH 03897.

Name:.....  
 Street:.....  
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 Email:.....

Qty.	Description	Price	Amount
	WODC Trail Map & Guide	\$5.00	
	1901 WODC Guide to Wonalancet (Reprint)	\$10.00	
	WODC Patch	\$3.00	
	Coolmax T-shirt (grey) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> X-Large</li> </ul>	\$17.00	
	Coolmax T-shirt (blue) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> X-Large</li> </ul>	\$17.00	
	New Membership (Do not use for renewing existing memberships.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pathfinder</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Steward</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trail Blazer</li> </ul>	\$15.00 \$25.00 \$50.00	
Additional Contribution (tax deductible)			
<i>All prices include shipping.</i>			Total Enclosed:



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**Wonalancet Out Door Club**