



Hogback Mountain
Conservation Association

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Hogback Mountain Newsletter

News and Events at Hogback Mountain

New Trails Open

Two new trails have been officially opened this month in the north sector of the Hogback Mountain Conservation Area: Little Hogback Loop (orange rectangle blazes), and Hogback Summit Trail (orange rectangles with white dots). These new trails form the farthest sections of the “stacked loop” trail



system on the north side, comprising White’s Loop, MES Cut-off, Douglas Trail, Little Hogback Loop, and Hogback Summit Trail. A stacked loop system allows trail users a variety of trail lengths and degrees of difficulty which they can choose to fit their time schedule and/or fitness level. The loops in our system increase in difficulty from White’s Loop/MES Cut-off/Douglas Trail to Little Hogback Loop/Hogback Summit Trail; however, even the most difficult would be rated “moderate.” The entry and exit point for this loop system is the White’s Loop trail head on Old Hogback Road.

A hike to the Hogback Summit and return is a little over three miles; assuming an average pace, the journey would take about two hours with a short stop on the Hogback summit to take in the great views and have some refreshment.

Before heading out you may wish to print a copy of the updated trail map or load one onto your smart phone; maps are available in both color or black-and-white on the HMCA web site www.hogbackvt.org/maps.

Our email address is hogback1@sover.net. If you prefer not to receive future Newsletters please let us know. Suggestions for improvement are always welcome as are articles and pictures for future publication

Maps are also available at the Hogback Mountain Gift Shop at the 100-mile overlook on Vermont Route 9.

Our new trails offer some wonderful natural features. As you travel the Little Hogback Loop Trail, the mixed hardwood forest that dominates White's Loop and the Douglas Trail transitions to a dense, marvelously fragrant Montane Spruce-Fir forest at the summit of Little Hogback Mountain. As you leave Little Hogback Mountain and traverse the saddle leading to the base of Hogback Mountain, the mixed hardwood forest returns and you cross a quiet little brook before heading up to the Hogback summit. Upon reaching the summit you will immediately note the open expanse and the impressive "wolf trees" that are growing there.

The summit is a great place to picnic. Please pack out any refuse since there are no trash containers in the Conservation Area. Also, a reminder that overnight camping and campfires are not permitted.

Trail Crew Volunteers Needed for Summer Work

As the summer approaches, there are many trail projects in the offing for which volunteers will be very welcome. In addition to ongoing trail monitoring and maintenance, some more concentrated activities warrant gathering a trail crew at a designated time and place. This summer these activities include:

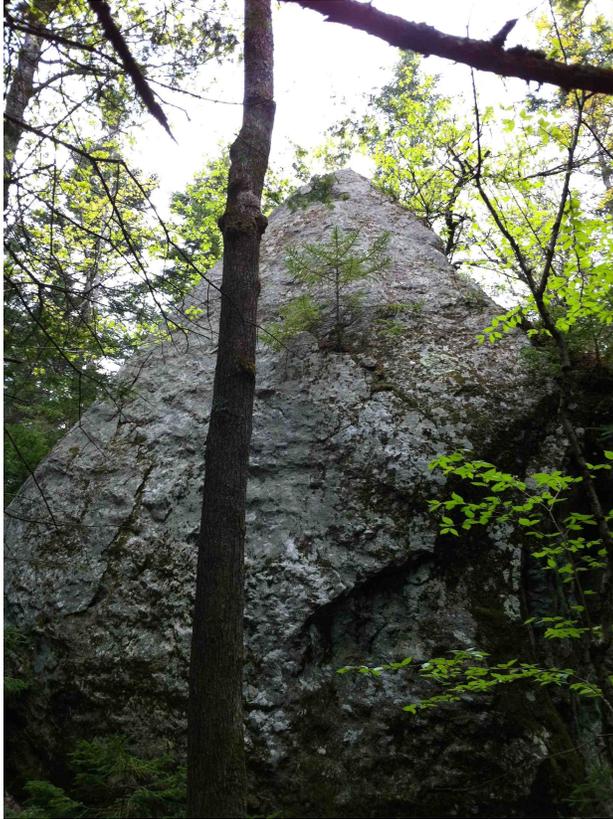
- brush cutting to open up the northeast section of White's Loop, which has become overgrown with stump sprouts;
- constructing a small bridge over a stream crossing on the Douglas Trail;
- armoring wet areas in the western section of White's Loop and the Douglas Trail just off White's Loop

Announcements for these projects will be distributed by e-mail. Please consider joining us for some very healthy (and safe) exercise and fellowship as we seek to continually enhance this wonderful resource.

Art. by Hal Himmelstein

Marlboro Elementary School Day, 2014

Everyone was pretty excited - we were going to hike to Conehead Rock, a known hideout for porcupines and Nancy and I were invited to accompany some MES youngsters to this special place. We had never been there and a good chance existed that we'd see signs of habitation by these largely nocturnal creatures.



Conehead Rock

Before setting off, our group assembled for a brief introduction to porcupine ways by teacher Tim Hayes. He quickly dispelled the widely-shared myth that porcupines “shoot” their quills. They are there for the taking, however, if one gets too close to a porcupine.

Soon we set off down an old logging road on the north side of Rte. 9. The overcast day made our trek through a dense balsam thicket seem dark and a little mysterious. Our cohort of 15 youngsters moved deeper into the forest, soon arriving at a small stream. Nary a foot sank in the water as everyone stepped nimbly across, watched over by teachers, Judy Jarzombek-Lang and Erica Morse. Our band trekked on and soon Tim pointed up the hill and announced we’d arrived at “Conehead Rock”. This moniker, derived apparently from an MES contingent entirely too familiar with SNL reruns, turns out to be entirely appropriate. (Oh yes, Millicent, Beldar lives.)



It’s a magnificent and towering rock, perhaps 25 feet in height. Clustered nearby are modest rock formations that form small, moss-encrusted grottoes. It wasn’t long before some of the youngsters found signs of recent porcupine habitation in the form of scat and quills. Exciting stuff.



Lunchtime found our group beside the still waters of an enchanting little stream right at the foot of the mighty Conehead Rock.

This perfect place combined with predicted showers that didn't materialize, no mosquitoes and a great bunch of youngsters turned a perfect place into a perfect hike.

Art. by Bob Anderson

Tick Talk

The summer months now stretch out, beckoning us to hike our splendid forests and fields. While ticks are always with us, they are particularly active during the summer months. It's smart to remember to check ourselves for ticks at the end of a walk or hike.

Vermont's Department of Health says "Ticks have become quite abundant in many parts of Vermont. Thirteen different tick species have been identified in Vermont, but only four are known to carry pathogens such as bacteria, viruses and parasites that cause disease in humans."

The Department has an excellent, well-organized website <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/zoonotic/tickborne/ticks.aspx> with some good information about tick types, diseases, habitat, protection and removal. We urge you to take a look.

Ed.- b.a.