

TRAIL CLUBS

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE MOUNTAINS



Museum of the
WHITE MOUNTAINS

PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

TRAIL CLUB PUBLICATIONS

1 REGISTER FOR THE SPUR CABIN (1900–1929) ALONG THE SPUR PATH ON MT. ADAMS. COURTESY OF THE RANDOLPH MOUNTAIN CLUB.

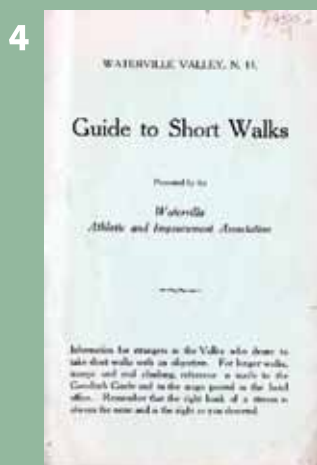
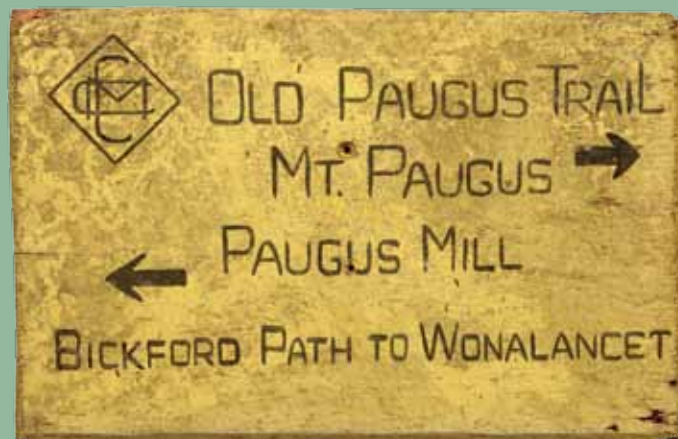
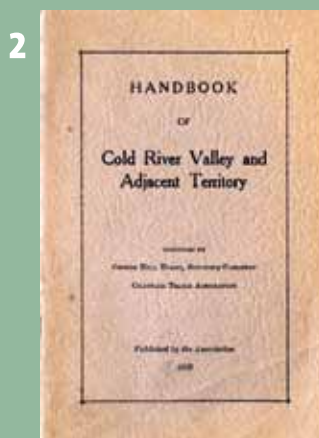
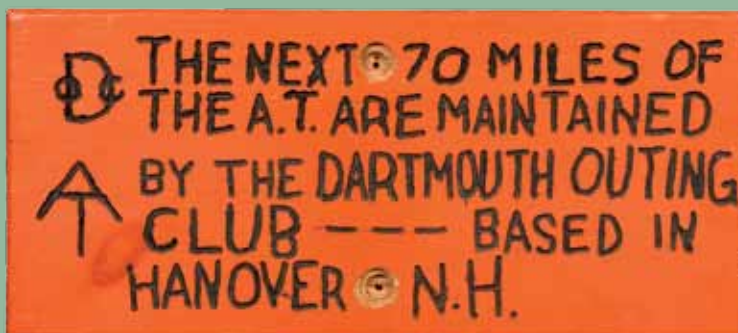
2 BOOKLET PUBLISHED IN 1932 BY THE CHATHAM TRAILS ASSOCIATION PROVIDED A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AREA ALONG WITH MAPS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF CLUB-MAINTAINED TRAILS. COURTESY OF DAVID GOVATSKI.

3 THE NORTH WOODSTOCK IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION PUBLISHED SEVERAL EDITIONS OF THIS CONCISE TRAIL GUIDE. COURTESY OF DAVID GOVATSKI.

4 GUIDE TO SHORT WALKS IN WATERVILLE VALLEY PUBLISHED BY THE WATERVILLE ATHLETIC AND IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, CIRCA 1950S. COURTESY OF WVAIA.

5 GUIDE TO WONALANCET AND THE SANDWICH RANGE PUBLISHED IN 1901 BY WODC. COURTESY OF MIKE DICKERMAN.

TRAIL SIGNS (FROM TOP) COURTESY OF SHELBURNE TRAILS CLUB, DARTMOUTH OUTING CLUB, CHOCORUA MOUNTAIN CLUB, AND APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB. JOHN HESSION PHOTOGRAPHS.



Museum of the White Mountains
Plymouth State University

TRAIL CLUBS

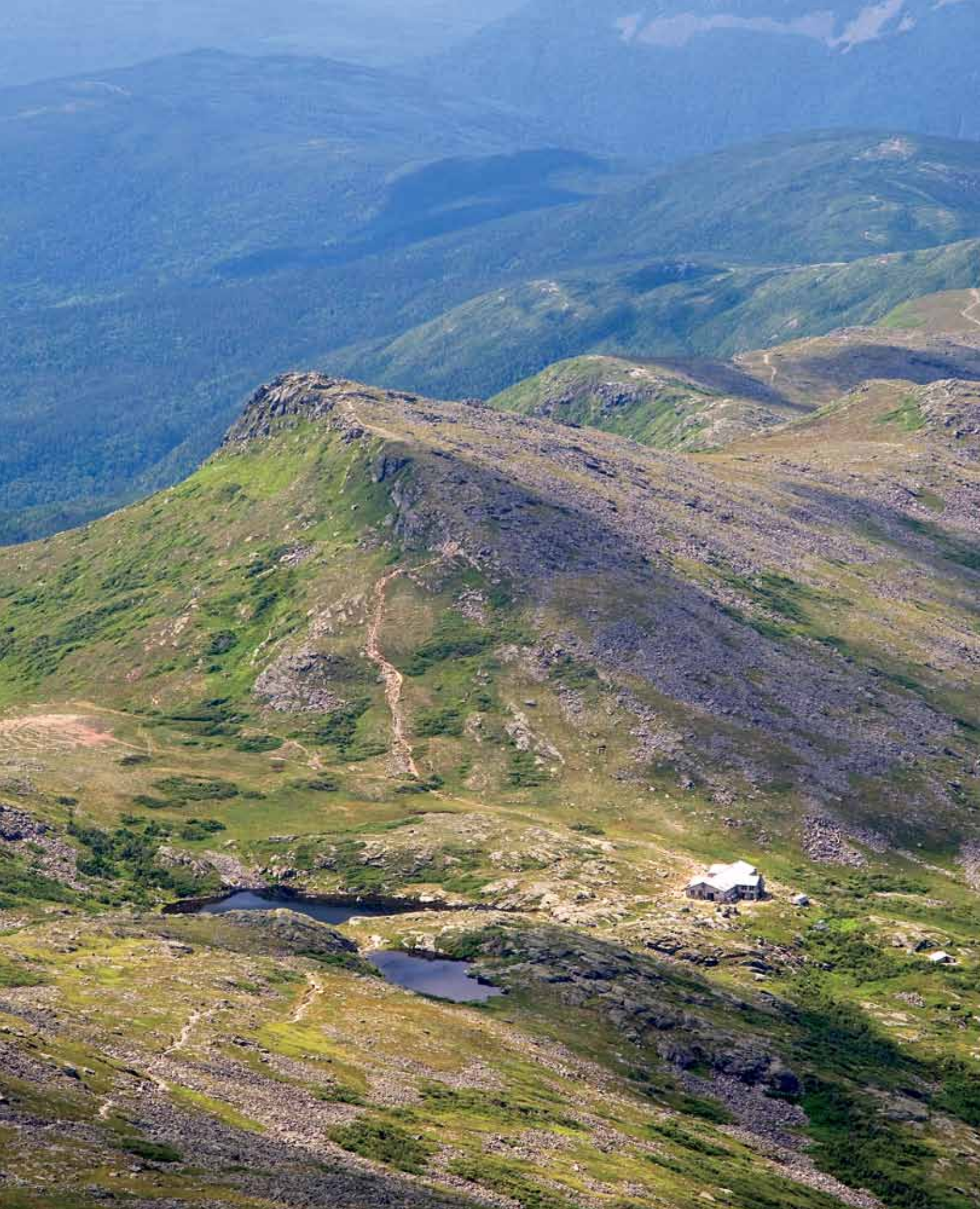
CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE MOUNTAINS

March 31, 2015–March 6, 2016

Curated by
Steve Smith, Mike Dickerman, and Ben Amsden

plymouth.edu/museum-of-the-white-mountains

ON THE COVER: FRANCONIA RIDGE TRAIL. CHRIS WHITON PHOTOGRAPH.



INTRODUCTION

Doug Mayer

DURING THE SUMMER OF 1982, while still in high school, I worked as an intern at the Mount Washington Observatory. I had hoped for a job with the venerable Appalachian Mountain Club, but they insisted on a season spent in the valley at Pinkham Notch Camp. Eager to get into the mountains, I saw the Observatory as a direct path to the alpine zone. During that first of my two summers at the “Obs,” my new friend and Observatory colleague Albie Pokrob spent a stint filling in as a caretaker for a little organization on the north end of the Presidential Range, the Randolph Mountain Club (RMC). “You’ve got to get over there and check this area out,” he said. “It’s ... different.”

On my next set of days off, I left the summit and instead of walking down to my car at Pinkham Notch, I headed north over the Presidential Range and into new terrain. What I found caught me off guard: in the rough and less-frequented ravines at the far end of the range was an entire mountain club, with paths, cabins, shelters, and almost a century of unique traditions, tough climbers, and quirky characters. I had only vaguely heard of mountain clubs other than the Appalachian one, and I felt as though I had stumbled into my own Shangri-La.

My path was unfolding before me, and the next stop came after college, as summer caretaker for the RMC. From there, I moved south to Sandwich, where I volunteered for a second such group, the smaller Wonalancet Out Door Club. My interest in trails was growing, and I spent several years as trails chair and co-chair for WODC. Next, RMC offered me a spot on their board of directors. I wore through a set of tires driving north to meetings and, when a chance to settle at the foot of my favorite range arose, I seized it. I haven’t looked back.

As a caretaker for RMC, I spent my days wandering the rugged trails of the Northern Peaks. My interaction with other aspects of the club was minimal. I heard of RMC paths that connected the town like a spider’s web, and of events like the annual picnic and charades, the Fourth of July Tea, and the Gourmet Hike. My RMC was found elsewhere, however, as I followed faint paths in Castle Ravine or crawled through the Subway in King’s Ravine. I didn’t quite know what to make of the tales of this other part of the club. It sounded vaguely cult-like and felt somewhat impenetrable.

LEFT: LAKES OF THE CLOUDS HUT SEEN FROM CRAWFORD PATH, MT. WASHINGTON. SCOTT ORR PHOTOGRAPH.

Three decades later, I have a much fuller sense of RMC, WODC, and the role trail clubs play in the White Mountains. In intervening years, my mountain roaming expanded to include climbing, hiking, and trail running in ranges from the Cascades to the Alps. This exposure led to a greater perspective and appreciation. It has led me to understand just how rich our local trail club history is, here in the White Mountains. It rivals any mountain range in the world.

Some clubs, such as Sub Sig, have left the scene. (Massachusetts-based Sub Sig was an interesting outlier in the history of White Mountain trail clubs. Formed by employees of the Submarine Signal Company in 1947, it endured even as the company behind it failed a year later. The club was responsible for a number of White Mountain trails, until 1993.) Most clubs have had their share of lean times. But a remarkable array of them remains healthy and vibrant. Their numbers include the Appalachian Mountain Club, Chatham Trails Association, Chocorua Mountain Club, Cohos Trail Association, Dartmouth Outing Club, Randolph Mountain Club, Shelburne Trails Club, Squam Lakes Association, Trailwrights, Waterville Valley Athletic & Improvement Association, and the Wonalancet Out Door Club.

This variety brings enormous strength to the enduring work of mountain stewardship in the region. The past century has shown the value of such diversity. In the early 1900s, the clubs (or, in some cases, their predecessors) worked together to support the very creation of the White Mountain National Forest. A variety of organizations, each expressing the voice of its members, showed political leaders that on the heels of the destruction wrought by the timber barons, support for national-level protection was both broad and deep.

More recently, clubs coordinated their on-the-ground work during the great ice storm of 1998 and again after Hurricane Irene, sharing valuable suggestions and experience with each other during crises that lasted months. Today, both formally and informally, they share policy ideas, trail maintenance skills, and host gatherings. The exchange happens at all levels, from trail maintenance volunteers, to seasonal employees, to experienced backcountry hands and long-time managers. It is a woven fabric that both evolves and endures in a thousand small ways every year.

It might not have been this way. The west shows how culturally different the experience can be, where there are few clubs and often just one, monolithic land manager—usually, the Forest Service, National Park Service, or Bureau of Land Management. Here in the White Mountains, the abiding sense of ownership by the clubs, and their long histories, has created a strong land ethic. The White Mountain National Forest is akin to the farmer whose land is filled with a variety of crops. Out of the diversity arises stability.

It's more complex than that, of course. I well remember a meeting of National Forest Cooperators in Laconia, where the supervisor's office was based for many years. Managers at the White Mountain National Forest had proposed a unifying set of trail sign standards. Uproar ensued. Trail signs, of course, are one of the main means through which a club can show its responsibility for the trail to hikers, skiers, and snowshoers. To reduce the awareness of which club's paths one was using was perceived by club managers as devaluation of their role. The government bureaucracy backed down. I can only imagine the explanation of the rebellion forest managers in Laconia gave to their bosses at the regional office in Milwaukee. The natives were restless, sir.

Fortunately, that's not usually the norm. The relationship between the Forest Service and the clubs remains one of mutual respect and deep cooperation. When the politics of Washington filter down to the land and monies to



CAIRNS BUILT BY THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB ON MT. WASHINGTON'S ALPINE GARDEN TRAIL. STEVE SMITH PHOTOGRAPH.

maintain White Mountain trails are scarce, the clubs are there to carry on the work. In better times, the National Forest provides the structure and guidance to carry out new and larger projects that no club by itself could undertake. The Forest Plan provides an invaluable structural underpinning as the guiding document that weaves the protection of the resource, multiple demands of various user groups, and the interests of trail clubs into a cohesive whole. That's not to say it's always pretty. But it's necessary and, to this day, it works.

The diversity among trail clubs expresses itself culturally, too. Each organization has its unique events, traditions, and legends. When the calendar turned to August and my days on the side of Mount Adams dwindled to a precious few during that summer of 1987, I decided to wander down to see what this vaunted RMC Annual Picnic was all about. Off to one side, I stood wide-eyed as what seemed like the entire town gathered at Mossy Glen, an amphitheater in the woods. Charades went on for most of the afternoon, while ten-year-old volunteers clambered the steep hillside, pouring lemonade for attendees. It was a scene that had played out, largely unchanged, for more than seven decades. In 2013, RMC celebrated a century of charades.

Across the White Mountains, in peaks and valleys from Wonalancet to Waterville, Chocorua to Chatham, Ravine Lodge to Randolph, the traditions and work of the trail clubs endure. The land and those of us who love it are better for it.

Doug Mayer
Randolph, NH



SENSE OF PURPOSE: STEWARDS OF THE TRAILS AND MOUNTAINS

Steve Smith

EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF HIKERS set foot on the vast and varied trail network in the White Mountains. Whether trekking across the airy crest of Franconia Ridge, or wandering past waterfalls on the northern Presidentials, mountain enthusiasts reap the benefits of dedicated work by the trail clubs of the White Mountains.

Each of these twenty or so clubs— many still active, others faded into oblivion—was, from its beginning, imbued with a sense of purpose. Two primary missions of the clubs have been to build and maintain trails, and to advocate for the protection and appropriate use of the mountain backcountry.

The pair of clubs founded in the 1870s— the White Mountain Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)— were largely focused on exploration. Even then, though, the AMC’s originating document included a reference to “the opening of new paths ... and other improvements.”

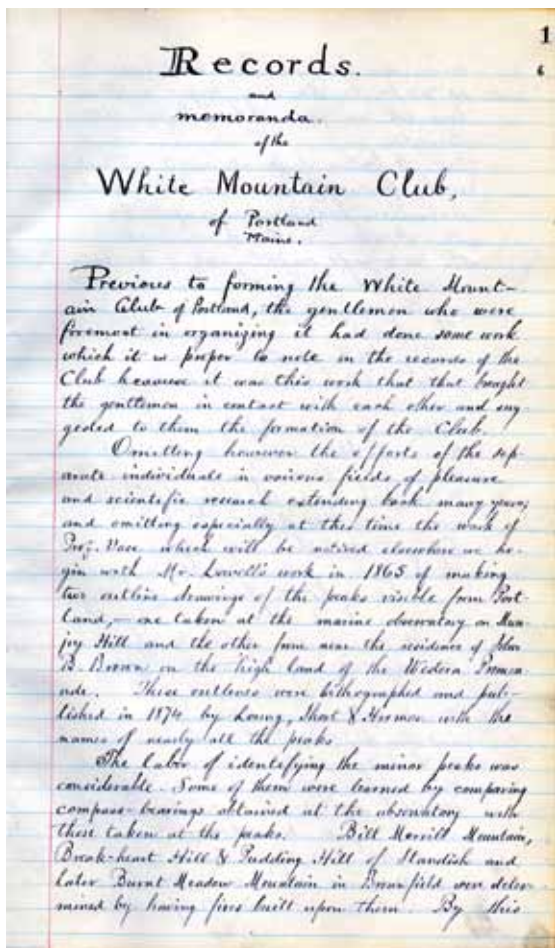
In the ensuing decades the Whites were thoroughly explored, and mountain “tramping” became an increasingly popular pursuit. As more clubs were organized, their *raison d’être* was largely the creation and upkeep of trails.

The first purpose listed in the bylaws of the Wonalancet Out Door Club (WODC, founded in 1892) was “the building and maintenance of paths and camps.” Similar goals were espoused when the Chocorua Mountain Club (CMC) was born in 1908, and the Chatham Trails Association in 1922.



LEFT: THE OFF THE BEATEN PATH PRO CREW, WITH HELP FROM VOLUNTEERS, CONSTRUCTED THIS ROCK STAIRCASE ALONG THE WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB’S BLUEBERRY LEDGE TRAIL ON MT. WHITEFACE. STEVE SMITH PHOTOGRAPH.

ABOVE: THIS ATTRACTIVE LOGO DRAWN BY CLUB MEMBER FRANCIS BLAKE ELLIS ADORNED THE COVER OF A TRAIL MAP PUBLISHED BY THE WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB IN 1951. COURTESY OF THE WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB.



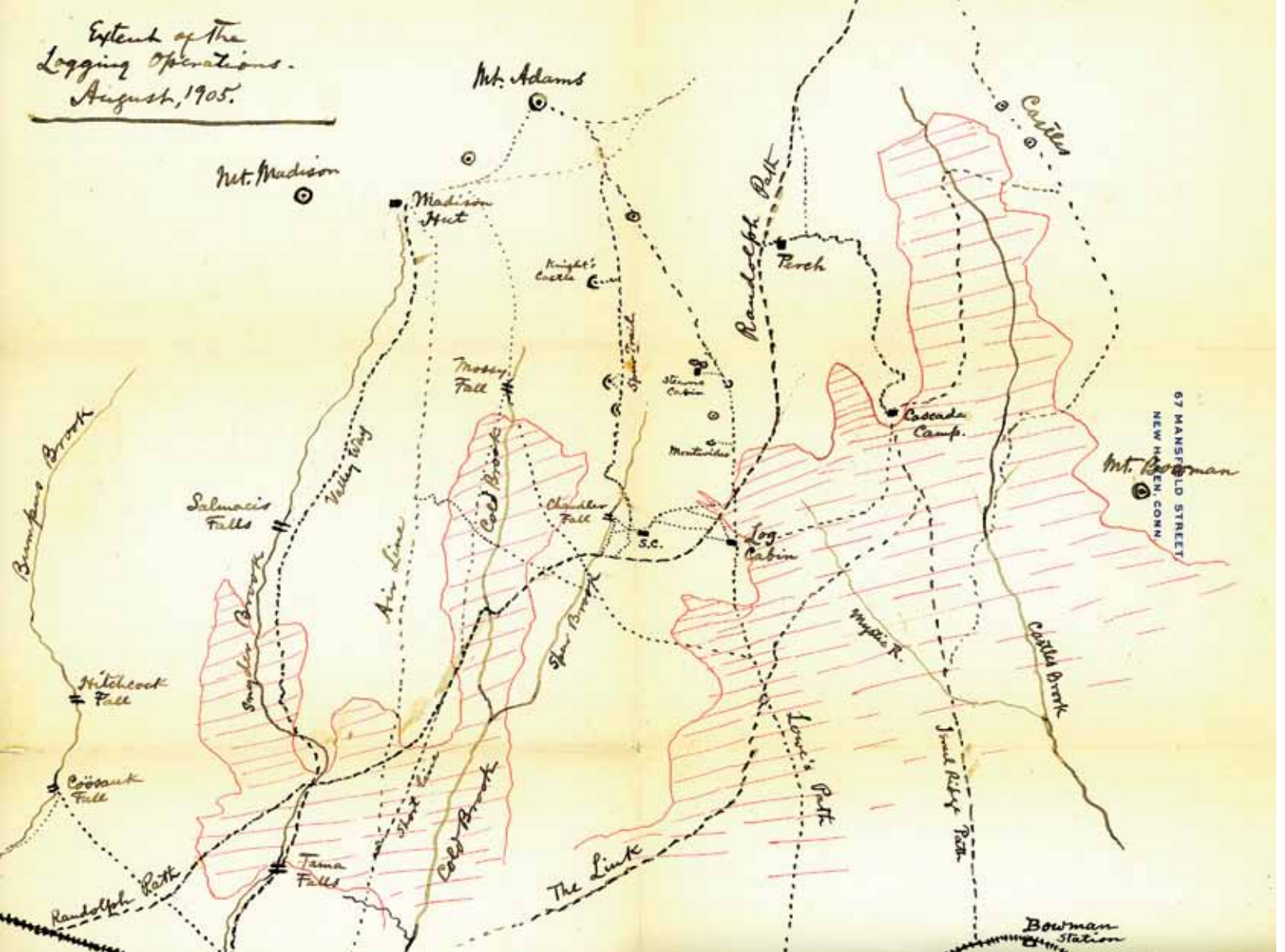
ABOVE: JOHN RAYNER EDMANDS, AN EARLY AMC MEMBER AND MASTER TRAIL-BUILDER, IS KNOWN FOR HIS GRADED PATHS INCLUDING THE NAMESAKE EDMANDS PATH ON MT. EISENHOWER. COURTESY OF MT. WASHINGTON OBSERVATORY'S GLADYS BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY. GUY SHOREY PHOTOGRAPH.

LEFT: TITLE PAGE OF RECORDS AND MEMORANDA OF THE WHITE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF PORTLAND MAINE, AUGUST 30, 1873.

FOUNDED IN 1873, THE WHITE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF PORTLAND WAS THE SECOND MOUNTAINEERING ORGANIZATION IN NORTH AMERICA AND THE FIRST SUCH CLUB DEVOTED SOLELY TO EXPLORING THE HIGHLANDS OF NORTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE AND WESTERN MAINE. THE CLUB WAS OFFICIALLY ORGANIZED NEAR CARRIGAIN BROOK, ON THE LOWER SLOPES OF MOUNT CARRIGAIN, BY SIX PORTLAND MEN ACCOMPANIED BY TWO GUIDES. COURTESY OF THE BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BETHEL, MAINE.

OPPOSITE: THIS MAP DRAWN BY RANDOLPH TRAILBUILDER CHARLES C. TORREY SHOWS THE EXTENT OF HEAVY LOGGING ON THE NORTHERN PRESIDENTIALS AS OF 1905. THE DESTRUCTION OF TRAILS BY LUMBERING LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE RANDOLPH MOUNTAIN CLUB IN 1910. COURTESY OF THE RANDOLPH MOUNTAIN CLUB.

Extent of the
Logging Operations.
August, 1905.



When the spectacular AMC-built trails threading the crags of the Northern Presidentials were obliterated by indiscriminate logging, the tramping-oriented community of Randolph responded in 1910 by forming the Randolph Mountain Club (RMC), “its first task to restore the trails.”

The Dartmouth Outing Club (DOC) formed in 1909 “to stimulate interest in out-of-door winter sports” among the student body, but by the early 1930s its interests had expanded to the construction of a series of trails, cabins, and shelters extending from Hanover north to Mt. Moosilauke.

Other clubs coalesced around the building and stewardship of trails for the benefit of guests at local hostleries: the Waterville Valley Athletic and Improvement Association (WVAIA, founded in 1888), the North Woodstock Improvement Association in the Franconia Notch region (1890s to 1920s), and the Passaconaway Mountain Club in the Albany Intervale (1920s and 1930s).

PLANK BRIDGES INSTALLED BY THE
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB ON
MT. HALE'S LEND-A-HAND TRAIL.
STEVE SMITH PHOTOGRAPH.



The newest clubs in the Whites were also formed primarily to work on trails. The Cohos Trail Association (CTA) was created in 2000 by visionary Kim Nilsen with the express goal of creating a new long-distance hiking trail in New Hampshire's North Country. The Shelburne Trails Club (STC) was organized in 2010 by local residents to restore an historic trail system in the lower Mahoosuc Range.

In the first few decades of the twentieth century the trail network in the Whites expanded and matured. Connecting "trunk" routes were opened by AMC trailmasters Nathaniel L. Goodrich, Paul R. Jenks, Charles W. Blood, and Karl P. Harrington. The AMC's chain of high-country huts grew under the guidance of the legendary Joe Dodge.

Henceforth, club work focused less on the creation of new routes and more on the maintenance of existing paths. Many of the early trails were not designed with heavy use in mind. When hiking activity boomed in the 1960s, many steep trails deteriorated into washed-out gullies. Brown swaths of trampled turf spread across the alpine tundra. In response, clubs devised new techniques—drainage control, bog bridging, rock steps, trail definition in the alpine zone—to combat erosion and lighten the tread of thousands of Vibram-soled feet.

In cooperation with the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF), several clubs have employed professional crews for heavier trail construction. One club, the Trailwrights, was organized in 1987 to take on professional-level trail projects across New Hampshire. Their volunteer crews have restored several footways in the White Mountains, most notably, perhaps, on popular Artist's Bluff in Franconia Notch.

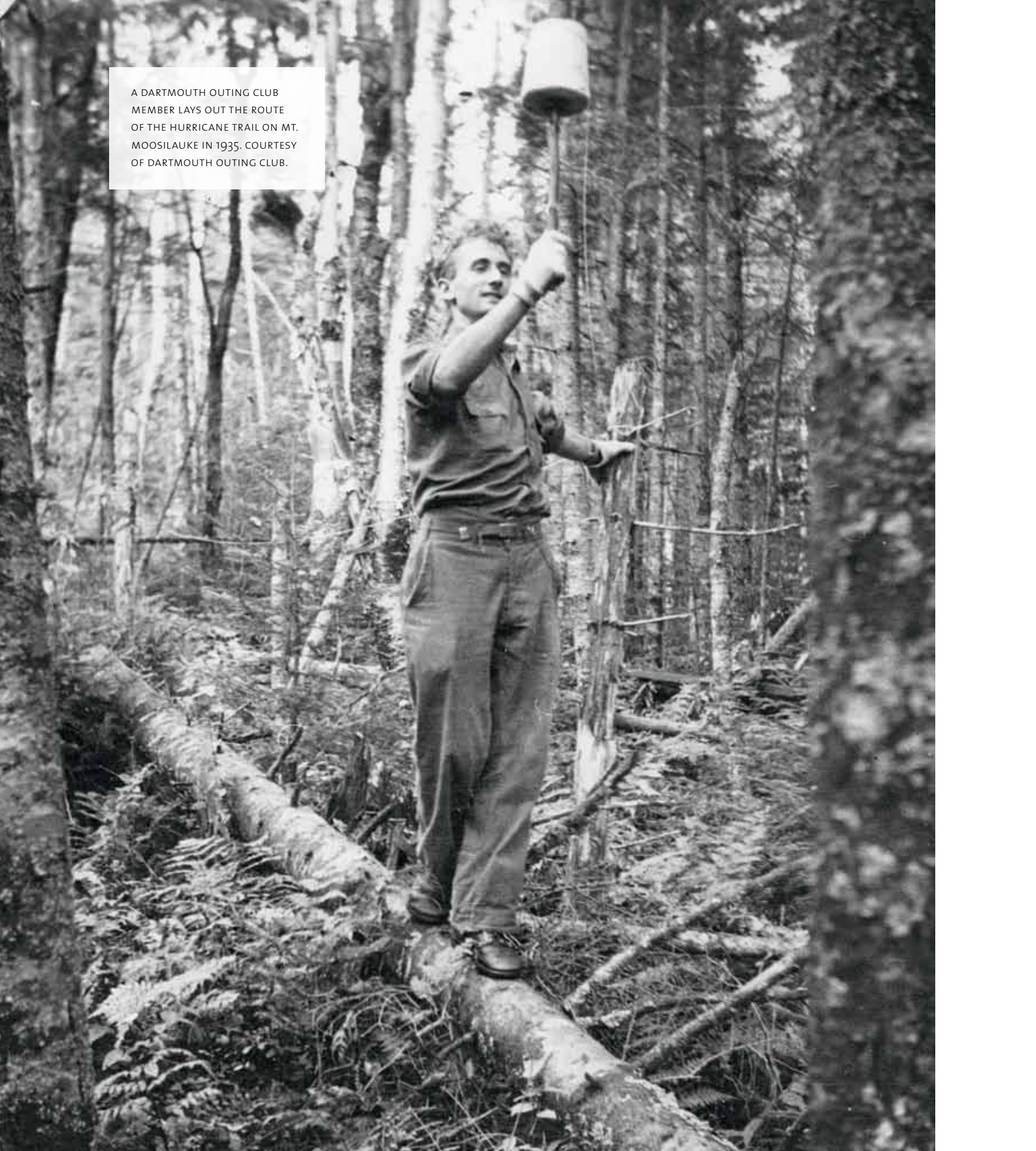


ABOVE: VOLUNTEERS FROM THE WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB AND CHOCORUA MOUNTAIN CLUB TEAMED UP FOR A WORK TRIP ON THE WHITIN BROOK TRAIL IN THE 1990S. PETER SMART PHOTOGRAPH.

BELOW: VOLUNTEERS FROM THE TRAILWRIGHTS USE A WINCH, CABLE, AND BARS TO GUIDE A ROCK STEP INTO PLACE ON THE MT. KINSMAN TRAIL. A CREW OF FOUR SPENT A TOTAL OF 40 HOURS ON THIS DAY INSTALLING FIVE ROCK STEPS NEAR A STREAM CROSSING. BRUCE RICHARDS PHOTOGRAPH.



A DARTMOUTH OUTING CLUB
MEMBER LAYS OUT THE ROUTE
OF THE HURRICANE TRAIL ON MT.
MOOSILAUKE IN 1935. COURTESY
OF DARTMOUTH OUTING CLUB.





Fine examples of club work may be seen throughout the mountains, as featured on the field map, “Step Stones and Switchbacks” that accompanies the exhibition. Hikers who relish challenging climbs can tackle the rock “staircases to heaven” on WODC’s Blueberry Ledge Trail and the RMC’s Spur Trail, or the pin steps and rebar along the DOC’s cascade-rich Beaver Brook Trail, where a sign urges hikers to “take special care ... to avoid tragic results.”

For a smoother stroll, the WVAIA recently bypassed a steep pitch on Irene’s Path (formerly Kettles Path) with a quarter-mile of well-crafted bench-cutting. Mahoosuc Range hikers can enjoy the unique experience of crossing Austin Brook in a cable car on the STC’s Yellow Trail. The classic example of trail definition in the alpine zone is seen on AMC’s Franconia Ridge Trail. Pick just about any path in the Whites, and the guiding hand of a trail club is likely behind it.

ABOVE: LEFT, IN 2012 THE CHOCORUA MOUNTAIN CLUB AND TRAILWRIGHTS REPLACED SEVERAL ROCKS SWEEP AWAY BY TROPICAL STORM IRENE. RIGHT, A WOODEN LADDER CONSTRUCTED BY THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB TRAIL CREW ON THE MAHOOSUC TRAIL. STEVE SMITH PHOTOGRAPHS.



WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB VOLUNTEERS, USING ONLY HAND TOOLS, CLEARED HURRICANE BLOWDOWNS ON THE KATE SLEEPER TRAIL IN THE SANDWICH RANGE WILDERNESS. DOUGLAS MCVICAR PHOTOGRAPH.



FAR LEFT: HIKERS VISITING THE BEAVER BROOK SHELTER ON MT. MOOSILAUKE ARE PRIVY TO DARTMOUTH OUTING CLUB OUTHOUSE ETIQUETTE. STEVE SMITH PHOTOGRAPH.

LEFT: CAN PITS AND OTHER TRASH RECEPTACLES WERE COMMON AT SHELTERS UNTIL THE LATE 1960'S. COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY, DURHAM, NH.

Several clubs have fashioned “Adopt-a-Trail” programs in which volunteers take on the basic tasks for their chosen trail: cleaning drainages, cutting blowdowns, painting blazes, and clipping back the ubiquitous hobblebush. Others run volunteer maintenance work trips each year on club trails. For sheer magnificence in volunteer work, witness the hundreds of hurricane blowdowns cleared by WODC stalwarts on the Kate Sleeper Trail—using hand tools only, in compliance with Wilderness standards. Members who toil thus on the trails can take great satisfaction in furthering their club’s “sense of purpose.”

Clubs that maintain huts and shelters—AMC, DOC, RMC, and the Cohos Trail Association—have the unenviable task of managing a copious amount of human waste. In recent decades creative solutions such as composting toilets have emerged; fine examples are found at several AMC huts and shelters and the RMC cabins. Humor often accompanies DOC waste management, exemplified by the two-holer privy with facing seats at Great Bear Cabin near the Glenclyff Trail.

Educating hikers on proper use of the backcountry, including human waste disposal, has been a core purpose of the clubs for many years. The CMC was ahead of its time, distributing a “Code of the Woods” booklet to hikers in the 1920s when slovenly camping practices were rampant in the Chocorua area. The AMC has long been a regional leader in managing backcountry impact and promoting the concept of “Leave No Trace.” Today’s LNT-conscious hiker would shudder at the sight of the overflowing “can pits” once used at Liberty Spring Shelter and other backcountry sites.

Today, the clubs promote appropriate hiking and camping practices through a variety of media: websites, newsletters, trail guides and maps, brochures, and on-site signage, and through personal contact with site caretakers and trip leaders. In these ways, as the RMC words it, they can share “the collective knowledge of their members.”

Conservation advocacy has been a cause taken up by many clubs, dating back to protestations about the abusive logging practices that desecrated the mountain forests at the turn of the twentieth century. Several clubs were strong supporters of the Weeks Act and the establishment of the WMNF.

The AMC has long been at the forefront of White Mountain conservation issues, and is the most visible advocate in the twenty-first century. But the smaller clubs have been steadfast guardians of their particular regions, as well. In 1914 the WODC’s Katherine Sleeper Walden negotiated the addition of “The Bowl” to the WMNF, saving its old-growth forest from imminent lumbering, and in more recent times the club, led by George Zink, was a driver in the creation and later expansion of the Sandwich Range Wilderness. When the iconic skyline of Mt. Chocorua was threatened by a proposal for a fire tower in the 1920s, the CMC and WODC were among the voices raised in full-throated opposition. More recently, the CTA raised funds to protect a trail corridor to the Baldface Range in Evans Notch, and RMC members have been deeply involved in the management of the 10,000-acre Randolph Community Forest.

The next time you hit the trail in the Whites, tip your cap to the untold number of club members who have stewarded these pathways to adventure. And rest assured that in the years ahead the clubs will continue to pursue their “sense of purpose,” to the benefit of all who love the mountains.

Steve Smith

Author and co-editor, *White Mountain Guide: AMC’s Comprehensive Guide to Hiking Trails in the White Mountain National Forest*



ABOVE: THIS WOOD FRAME SHELTER NEAR THE LAKES OF THE CLOUDS WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1901, A YEAR AFTER TWO APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB MEMBERS PERISHED ON MT. WASHINGTON IN A FIERCE JUNE STORM. COURTESY OF MT. WASHINGTON OBSERVATORY'S GLADYS BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY. GUY SHOREY PHOTOGRAPH.



SENSE OF PLACE

Mike Dickerman

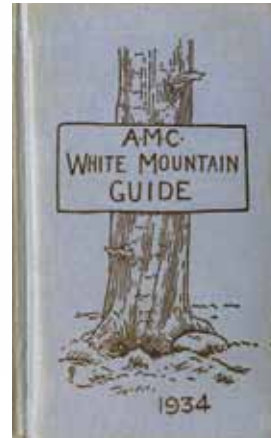
IF THERE'S ONE THING that trail organizations like the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Chatham Trails Association, and the fledgling Shelburne Trails Club have in common, it's that all are deeply rooted in the soil and bedrock granite of New Hampshire's White Mountains region.

Since 1873, when the region's first such group—the White Mountain Club of Portland, Maine—organized fun and adventurous excursions deep into the heart of New England's best-known mountain region, trail clubs have forged an unmistakable identity with not only their very localized sphere of influence, but also the White Mountains region as a whole. The resulting bond between the clubs' individual members and the respective domains of each organization continues to this day, and in many instances has carried on from one generation to the next.

In the case of the White Mountain Club of Portland, whose founders included tireless explorer George L. Vose, well-known railroad builder John Anderson, and Abner Lowell, early promoter of the carriage road on Mount Washington, club members will be forever linked to their two favorite haunts in the Whites. The club is best known for its many trips into the Mount Carrigain region in the central White Mountains region, and for a campfire incident involving one member's fedora that resulted in one prominent landmark being dubbed “Burnt Hat Ridge.” It's probably apropos that the Portland-based club's other principal area of interest in the Whites was the rugged Mahoosuc Range, which straddles the New Hampshire-Maine border.

In the half-century after the White Mountain Club's formation (and its short-lived existence, for it was gone from the scene by 1885), and as mountain travel became easier and the tourist business boomed, trail clubs large and small emerged in virtually every corner of the Whites. And while the missions of these clubs varied from one sector of the Whites to another, the common thread among all was their respective kinship to the geographical regions they served. This was especially the case with the smaller resort-based clubs that grew out of the need to provide recreational opportunities for summertime guests.

LEFT: PACKING FULL LOADS IN JULY 1953 ARE TRAIL CREW MEMBERS AL FOLGER, DON SESSIONS, DOUG RANKIN AND “STRETCH” HAYES. THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB WORKERS ARE SEEN HERE AT LAKES OF THE CLOUDS HUT. COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY, DURHAM, NH.



FAR LEFT AND ABOVE (DETAIL): THIS GOAT SKIN REGISTER WAS PINNED TO THE WALL OF THE RMC'S CRAG CAMP FROM 1925-1934. AMONG THE GUESTS WHO SIGNED IT WAS ALAN T. WATERMAN, FATHER OF WILDERNESS ADVOCATE AND HISTORIAN GUY WATERMAN. COURTESY OF THE RANDOLPH MOUNTAIN CLUB. JOHN HESSON PHOTOGRAPHS.

LEFT: AMC WHITE MOUNTAIN GUIDE: A GUIDE TO PATHS IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS AND ADJACENT REGIONS, 9TH EDITION, 1934. COURTESY OF THE JOHN W. AND ANNE NEWTON COLLECTION.

Two of the best examples of these latter types of clubs were the Waterville Valley Athletic and Improvement Association (1888) and the North Woodstock Improvement Association (1897), both of which were instrumental in developing and promoting viable trail systems to dozens of natural attractions in their immediate vicinities. For the WVAIA, the amphitheater of mountains surrounding the upper Mad River valley in Waterville provided innumerable opportunities for tramping enthusiasts like longtime valley summer resident Arthur L. Goodrich, architect of many of the area's most popular footpaths. Likewise, the NWIA lay close not only to the Franconia Notch area and the famous Old Man of the Mountain, but also to the intriguing caverns of Lost River Gorge near Kinsman Notch, and the imposing peaks of the Franconia Range, the Kinsmans, and nearby Mount Moosilauke. Among this group's most ambitious members were summer residents Frank O. Carpenter, author of an early (1898) guide to the North Woodstock region, and Karl P. Harrington, who oversaw the construction of a number of new trails and shelters during his long affiliation first with the NWIA and later with the Appalachian Mountain Club.

In can be argued, however, that no trail club in White Mountains annals has fostered a better relationship with its domain than the Randolph Mountain Club, which was established in 1910 with its primary mission to re-open local mountain trails obliterated by logging activities in the early part of the last century. In its first century of existence, the RMC has done more than build and maintain a local network of paths unrivaled in the New England mountains. It has also helped foster an unmistakable identity that permeates throughout the community, and which has long bound its year-round residents to its many seasonal occupants. This bond is evident in the many well-attended social functions hosted by RMC each year, such as their annual Gourmet Hike, August Picnic and Charades, and the club's Fourth of July Tea.

Other trail clubs intimately linked to specific areas of the Whites include the Wonalancet Out Door Club and the Chocorua Mountain Club in the southern White Mountains, the previously mentioned Chatham Trails Association and Shelburne Trails Club in the eastern Whites, and the Dartmouth Outing Club (DOC), whose reach extends from the Hanover, New Hampshire, area north to Mt. Moosilauke in the southwestern Whites. Indeed, few peaks in the entire White Mountains area are so closely linked to one entity as Moosilauke is to the DOC.



THE JIM LIBERTY CABIN ON MT. CHOCORUA IS PREPARED FOR THE WORST. STEVE SMITH PHOTOGRAPH.



Of all the trail organizations that have existed in the White Mountains over the last 150 years, none are as deeply rooted, or have exhibited such influence over the region, as the Boston-based Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). Founded in 1876 by a group of university-affiliated faculty members and mountain enthusiasts, AMC's initial focus was on gathering scientific data on the mountains of the Northeast, and preparing detailed maps of the same. Its membership rolls, which began with less than three dozen individuals, tripled by the end of its very first year of existence, and numbered in the hundreds by 1880.

Though not specifically linked to the White Mountains, it was here that the club exerted its greatest influence. From its de facto summer headquarters in Randolph, New Hampshire, AMC members cut new trails up to the most prominent peaks of the region, ventured to hitherto unvisited corners of the mountains, and began an advocacy for the Whites that continues unabated to this day. (It was partly through the advocacy of AMC leaders that the White

LEFT: TRAIL CLUBS SUCH AS THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB HAVE BEEN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING BACKCOUNTRY SHELTERS FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY. HERE, A REPLACEMENT SHELTER IS SEEN UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT GARFIELD POND IN 1940. COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY, DURHAM, NH.

Mountain National Forest came into being in the early 1900s, as the club was one of several that strongly backed federal legislation that led to passage of the 1911 Weeks Act, which authorized the first forest preserves in the eastern United States.)

Another of AMC's important legacies to the region has been the club's publishing arm, which over the last 100 years has produced not only accurate topographic trail maps to the area, but also the revered *White Mountain Guide*, the so-called "hiker's bible" to the region. This comprehensive guide, currently in its 29th edition, has long served as one of AMC's most visible and accessible links to the area and has been a staple for White Mountains hikers since 1907, when the club published its first such volume.

Indeed, guidebooks have been commonly used by many of the region's trail clubs through the years, and early editions of these guides offer today's historians an accurate glimpse back to the day when the region's extensive trail network was still a work in progress. More importantly, however, the preparation of these guidebooks has been an essential service provided by the various trail clubs and has broadened their outreach and further tied the clubs to specific geographical sections of the White Mountains.

AMC's early scientific-related work has been dwarfed over time by the club's many other activities, including trail building and maintenance efforts, the establishment of its world-famous chain of backcountry huts, and its ongoing conservation efforts. But these activities, like those of other like-minded trails clubs—both large and small—have only further cemented the club's longstanding relationship with the region and strengthened the roots that have bound AMC (and other trail organizations of its kind) to the Whites for nearly 150 years.

Mike Dickerman

Author, publisher, and co-editor, *White Mountain Guide: AMC's Comprehensive Guide to Hiking Trails in the White Mountain National Forest*

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ABOVE: CLUB OUTINGS LIKE THIS ONE TO THE REMOTE PEAK OF MT. HANCOCK WERE SPONSORED IN PART BY LOCAL LOGGING RAILROAD INTERESTS. COURTESY OF MIKE DICKERMAN.

RIGHT: APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB TRAIL CREW MEMBERS DICK WALDRON AND DICK SLAUER PREPARE A MEAL AT RESOLUTION SHELTER IN JULY 1938. COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY, DURHAM, NH.



A SENSE OF BELONGING

Ben Amsden

TRAIL CLUBS MEAN MANY THINGS to many people. To some, a trail club cultivates a sense of purpose, a calling to create and maintain trails, educate visitors, and advocate for natural spaces. To others, a trail club can be a key ingredient in their sense of place, representing past experiences, shared meanings, and personal histories. But to others still, the clubs that support and maintain the hiking trails of New Hampshire help develop *a sense of belonging*—the sense that one is a “member” who developed a sense of community based on special places, meaningful activities, and a shared experience.

How is a sense of belonging constructed? For starters, a sense of belonging is a complex cognition that is strongly held, but not often easily described. In other words, we often know that we love a particular activity or place, but we aren't always sure why. Our deep connections to places like trails and activities like hiking are created in multiple ways, through our interactions with the place itself and through activities either alone or with others.

Researchers¹ have suggested that our interaction with special places has four ingredients. The first is the setting itself, or the actual physical characteristics of the special place. We love peaks above tree line, for instance, or remote backcountry lakes. The second ingredient consists of our experiences in a particular place. Does a particular trail or shelter represent a special moment with family or friends? Was a marriage proposal offered at the base of that waterfall? The third ingredient involves meanings—we may think of a certain trail as our place to escape the daily grind, or where we go for physical and spiritual growth. The fourth ingredient is our evaluations, or judgments, of the places that are important to us. This place is too crowded. The privy is in great shape.

Trail clubs can facilitate these interactions with special places either directly or indirectly. For example, trail clubs and managing organizations can have a direct impact on our experience by implementing backcountry camping policies, deciding where trails will be built or relocated, or placing interpretive signs that inform observers of what it is they ought to be seeing. Even the familiar “iron ranger” placed at a trailhead to collect money is a source of interaction with a club or managing agency that influences how we connect with a place.

1 Stedman, R. (2003). Is it really just a social construction? The contribution of the physical environment to sense of place. *Society and Natural Resources*, 16(8), 671-685.



Trail clubs also provide indirect opportunities for people to develop connections to special places over time. One example emerges from the work that club members do, and the skills they develop. Members who are active within a club, either through volunteering or participation in club activities, develop a skill set and understanding of the organization that is similar in scope to the paid professional employees. Researcher and scholar Robert Stebbins described this phenomenon as “Serious Leisure,” and defined it as a connection to recreation pursuits that are ultimately more than just the provision of labor². Stebbins suggested that people pursue leisure activities in which they develop job-like skills because they strongly identify with their chosen pursuit and deeply appreciate “membership” in the unique subculture of their organization. In practice, research has illustrated just how the connection between serious leisure and a sense of belonging works. For example, a study of Canadian community volunteers found those whose activities could be defined as serious leisure felt empowered to make change and contribute to the well-being of their community³. Other research involving clubs described how volunteers in a natural resource management program in Alaska reported a sense of belonging related not just to visitor satisfaction and ecological quality, but to social landscapes as well.

In total, our interactions with special places and the connections we develop through work and interactions with others help forge a sense of “community.” As we know, the term community is often broadly conceptualized. For many, a community is simply the town one lives in and the people they live with, all geographically contained by the existing boundaries on a map. Other definitions describe community more broadly, perhaps consisting of groups of people who share some common affiliation of either spatial or social significance (an online community or an alumni community). The place is important, as are the people. Everyone has come together around some common purpose, either to enjoy the resource or work together in some way to maintain it. These small collective interactions, based on place, suggest a sense of membership, partnership, and ultimately, community⁴.

On the trail, the development of community is no different. More than a decade ago, I was being interviewed for a job with a trail club as a summer caretaker at Stratton Pond in Vermont, one of the most heavily used overnight spots on the Appalachian Trail. “Tell me about through-hikers” the interviewer asked. “How would you engage someone who has been hiking for four months straight?” The answer, I explained, had to do with the idea that through-hikers see themselves as a community—a group apart from the day-to-day hiking public. This community is forged through their shared connection to the trail, the meanings they develop hiking it, their interactions with clubs and managing agencies, and the work they do to protect it. Because through-hikers experience the trail in ways that day hikers can’t begin to imagine, they see themselves as a sort of community. Through-hikers are noteworthy when we stop and chat at a shelter or trailhead. We read about their commitment to their hike, the trail, and each other in trail logs. We hear stories from those who have completed some or all of their ultimate adventure.

A sense of belonging is ultimately constructed around what a particular place *means*. It is a complex recipe that includes settings, behaviors, interactions with others, and evaluations of complicated personal and social contexts. A sense of belonging is highly personal, yet socially driven. What’s more, a sense of belonging, even if it is built upon similar places, people, or events, will be felt and understood differently among different people.

Ben Amsden

Director, Center for Rural Partnerships, Plymouth State University

2 Stebbins, R. A. (1992). *Amateurs, professionals, and serious leisure*. London: McGill-Queen’s University Press.

3 Arai, S. M., & Pedlar, A. M. (1997). Building communities through leisure: Citizen participation in a healthy communities initiative. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 29(2).

4 Wilkinson, K. P. (1991). *The Community in Rural America*. Middleton, WI: Social Ecology Press.



Acknowledgments

HOW OFTEN ARE MAPS OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS used or browsed, with their incredible range of trails and routes, without a thought of the generations of trail club members who have worked to make the diverse terrain so accessible? Careful trail work and evolving techniques and technologies have helped to conserve and protect the White Mountains and surrounding regions for hundreds of years.

The area is distinguished by its legacy of recreational use. The Crawford Path (1819) was the first continually used trail created in America. The efforts of one man—Abel Crawford—first served a group of hikers when Captain Alden Partridge brought a party of students and recreational hikers to the summit of Mount Washington in 1821; this was the first recorded group to use a trail.

After the Willey disaster in 1826, tourism became an increasingly important part of the regional economy. As hikers started using the trails more frequently, first inn owners and residents, then hiking clubs (since the founding of the White Mountain Club of Portland in 1873) began building and maintaining paths. From explorers to trampers to backpackers, each generation has brought more enthusiasts. So, too, it has brought more need for trails and trail work.

Today hiking and trail clubs continue the almost 200-year-old tradition of trail work. From professional trail crews to thousands of volunteers, countless hours are spent every year making and maintaining the trails.

Trail Clubs: Connecting People with the Mountains is based on the themes of *the sense of place, purpose, and belonging* fostered by clubs that create(d) and maintain(ed) the paths that have become a developed network of trails. Curators Steve Smith, Mike Dickerman, and Ben Amsden have spent years of study and writing about hiking in the White Mountains and human behavior in the region. Their expertise, knowledge, and enthusiasm for educating about clubs and trails have driven this project. Their photographs, network of contacts, and numerous books are the foundation to the extensive research needed to bring *Trail Clubs* to fruition. Each wrote a compelling essay on one of the three themes; Doug Mayer draws these essays together in the introduction.



Trail Clubs: Connecting People with the Mountains is the third exhibition in the Museum of the White Mountains (MWM) since its opening. These exhibitions and the museum itself have been made possible by the dedicated oversight of President Sara Jayne Steen. Her commitment to creating this museum at Plymouth State University has resulted in a gift that will continue giving for generations to come. To enter the MWM is to see and feel the ambitions of President Steen and Steve Barba, vice president for university relations, another solid supporter of the museum project. Both PSU senior administrators step down at the end of the 2014–2015 academic year, leaving a legacy for the university and the region.

This exhibition was made possible by funding from the membership of the Museum of the White Mountains, with special thanks to Michael Mooney for additional funding assistance.

Exhibitions, events, and educational programs by the MWM are made possible through the generous donations of friends, members, and granting agencies. A special thank you to Ed Rolfe of Wilderness Map Company, for creating the “Step Stones and Switchbacks” map of the White Mountains; it is a piece that helps to maintain our role as a gateway to the White Mountains. People stop, learn, and get information from a map, and go into the National Forest better informed.

This is our first exhibition with important business support. The exhibition includes a full-scale, handcrafted log shelter donated by John Nininger, owner of the Wooden House Co., Ltd., in Newbury, Vermont. Following the exhibition, it will be dismantled and rebuilt by the Cohos Trail Association along their long-distance trail in northern New Hampshire, continuing the age-old tradition of trail clubs bringing volunteers together to benefit the hiking community. The “Neil Tillotson” shelter has been temporarily built in the MWM thanks to Cohos volunteer Sally Manikian’s work finding trained shelter and “Trail Croo” members from the Appalachian Mountain Club.

I would like to thank the Museum Advisory Council for their ongoing guidance and support that is so critical during our first years of operation. This includes members Woolsey Conover (Chair), Dick Hamilton, Rebecca Weeks More, Ed Roberts, Michael Mooney, Jessica Hoffmann Davis, John Small, and Bryant Tolles. Most active on this exhibition were MWM advisors Dave Govatski, Andy McLane, and Ben Phinney. They are the council's three selected consultants to the project who leveraged their contacts, knowledge, and years of experience with the area and trail clubs to strengthen content, partnerships, and educational opportunities.

I would also like to thank the many clubs that helped with the exhibition, and individuals associated with those clubs who were particularly helpful, including the Appalachian Mountain Club (Sara Delucia, Becky Fullerton, Walter Graff, Sally Manikian, Christopher Thayer), Chatham Trails Association (Don Devine, Zachary Porter, Michael Zlogar), Chocorua Mountain Club (Howard and Nancy Mathews), Cohos Trail Association (Kim Nilsen), Dartmouth Outing Club (Eli Burakian, Rory Gawler), Meetup Mountaineering, Climbing & Backpacking (Jay Briscoe), Randolph Mountain Club (Randolph Meiklejohn, Michelle Cormier, Al and Judy Hudson, Doug Mayer, W. Tad Pfeffer, the Sandin family, Edith M. Tucker), Shelburne Trails Club (Larry Ely, Ginger Lawson, Dick Lussier, Sally Dinsmore Baldwin), Squam Lakes Association (Brett Durham), Trailwrights (Hal and Peggy Graham, Bruce Richards, Ray Jackson), Waterville Valley Athletic & Improvement Association (Brenda and Preston Conklin, Dan Newton), Wonalancet Out Door Club (Chris Conrod, Lawrence Labrie, Fred Lavigne, Douglas McVicar, Peter Smart, Jack Waldron), White Mountain National Forest (Cristin Bailey, Tiffany Benna, Tom Giles, Jenny Burnett, Mary Ann Leberman, and Justin Preisendorfer).

This exhibition would not have been possible without loans, image rights, and input, from individuals and institutions including Anonymous, Appalachian Mountain Club Library & Archives, Adam Jared Apt, Ben Amsden, Bethel Historical Society, Chatham Trails Association, Chocorua Mountain Club, Chocorua Mountain Club Collection at Cook Memorial Library, Lawrence Coburn, Cohos Trail Association, the grandchildren of Louis F. Cutter, Dartmouth Outing Club, Mike Dickerman, David Govatski, Peggy Graham, Stanley R. Howe, Lawrence Labrie, Douglas McVicar, John W. (Jack) and Anne Newton, Mount Washington Observatory's Gladys Brooks Memorial Library, W. Tad Pfeffer, Randolph Mountain Club, Bruce Richards, Eric C. Sandin, Shelburne Trails Club, Peter Smart, Steve Smith, Christopher Thayer, Edith M. Tucker, University Archives, University of New Hampshire Library, Capt. Robert B. Watts, USN (Ret.), Waterville Valley Athletic & Improvement Association, Chris Whiton, Rick and Celia Wilcox of International Mountain Equipment (IME), and Wonalancet Out Door Club. These loans would not be possible without the exhaustive site visits by Steve Smith and Mike Dickerman.

Gigapan image by Joe Klementovitch of Klementovitch Photography.

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Rachelle Lyons from the Center for Rural Partnerships helped with enhanced outreach to north central New Hampshire to increase our educational work in those areas.

From loan forms to bids and installation, MWM collections assistant Rebecca Enman and administrative assistant Kevan Ouellette strayed far from their job titles and regular work hours to get it all done to ensure "the show goes on."

Catherine Amidon,
Director, Museum of the White Mountains





ALONG THE FRANCONIA RIDGE TRAIL.
CHRIS WHITON PHOTOGRAPH.

1. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB TRAIL CREW MEMBERS IN THE EARLY 1940S WERE DRIVEN AROUND THE WHITE MOUNTAINS IN THIS 1935 FORD PHAETON DUBBED "SYLVIA." COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY, DURHAM, NH.



2. IN AN EFFORT TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS FOR A PLANNED CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AT CRAG CAMP, THE RANDOLPH MOUNTAIN CLUB RESORTED TO POSTING THIS ENTICING NOTICE. COURTESY OF THE RANDOLPH MOUNTAIN CLUB.

2 A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY TO GET RICH*

Again this year the Randolph Mountain Club will provide the community with a magnificent opportunity to get rich*. Several hundred pounds of building materials will have to be carried up to Crag Camp before July 26th. The R.M.C. will pay the carriers six (6) cents per pound carried, with a raise to EIGHT (8) cents per pound after the first 200 pounds. Everyone is invited to participate in this magnificent opportunity!!! So come and join the happy crowds which climb daily to Crag, loaded down with awkward loads, panting, perspiring and swatting black flies.

You WILL join us, won't you!!!

All those interested, please line up at the C.J. Frubell check-in station, at the Fruchs' house.

* the hard way

3. GUESTS AT THE SWIFT RIVER INN COULD EXPLORE THE ALBANY INTERVALE ON TRAILS MAINTAINED BY THE PASSACONAWAY MOUNTAIN CLUB. COURTESY OF DAVID GOVATSKI.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WALKS

Trails maintained by the Passaconaway Mountain Club and beginning at Swift River Inn (time and mileage one way):

	mi.	hrs.	min.
River Path	1.5	1	45
Ledges	1		45
Church Pond	1.5		45
Birch Hill	2.5	1	15
Sabbas Day Falls	2	1	45
Mt. Potaah	2	1	45
Mt. Hedgehog via Una Path to Summit	1.8	1	30
Mt. Hedgehog via Cliffs to Summit	2.6	1	30
Square Ledge	5	2	45
Owl's Cliff	4	4	30
Mt. Passaconaway via slide	4	4	30
Mt. Tremont	6	4	30
Mt. Tri-Pyramid	7	4	30
Mt. Hedgehog via Una Path to Summit and return via Cliffs	4.4	3	
Square Ledge via Oliverian Brook, return via Passaconaway	10.1	6	
Cut-off	10.1	6	
Mt. Passaconaway via Slide, return via Passaconaway Cut-off	9.25	7	

4. SIGHTS SUCH AS THIS AT THE LIBERTY SPRING SHELTER IN 1962 ENCOURAGED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "LEAVE NO TRACE" MOVEMENT. COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE LIBRARY, DURHAM, NH.

