



Caring for the Sandwich Range since 1892

Well Deserved Recognition

GEORGE ZINK: A WILDERNESS CHAMPION

George Zink, who has long and wisely served WODC and its mission, has been honored by the U.S. Forest Service with its Wilderness Excellence Award. Recognized as “An Individual Champion of Wilderness Management,” George received the award in a ceremony at the regional headquarters of the USFS in Milwaukee on November 30, 2000.

That ceremony coincided with George’s 82nd birthday and recognized a lifetime of active and productive work on behalf of wilderness protection and effective management in the White Mountain National Forest.

George first came to the Whites as a 12-year-old Boy Scout in 1931. Both during and following his career as a science teacher at Groton School, he has been a devoted and effective leader in a remarkable array of wilderness initiatives for more than 40 years. He served as president of WODC, and with the able collaboration of his wife Sally, he was editor of – and a frequent writer for – this newsletter for nearly 20 years.

He played a major role in the addition of the Sandwich Range to Congressionally designated status as a Wilderness management area in 1984, and went on to assist the Forest Service in developing its forest management plan for the WMNF in the years immediately following. That plan, approved in 1986, still serves, and George continues as an active participant in its current process of revision.

George’s work, and that of others like him in national forests throughout the country, has been critical in establishing the goal of a healthy ecosystem as preeminent in USFS management of our forests. Whatever the forest’s multiple human uses, policy that George has been instrumental in defining and defending demands that such uses maintain – or at least not endanger or degrade – the diverse well being of the forest’s natural life. As Aldo Leopold taught us more than a half-century ago, that is the keystone of a living wilderness ethic.

WODC joins the Forest Service in celebrating George Zink’s life and work. Two young members of the USFS staff here recently wrote: “Above all, George has been a mentor on wilderness issues to people within and outside of the Forest Service. His writings,

his involvement in management issues and his love for the land all work to preserve wilderness for many generations to come.”

John Boettiger



photo courtesy of **The Mountain Ear**

“Awash in awards” is how WODC President John Boettiger phrased it. In the past six months three club members have received national honors for their contributions to the betterment of the Sandwich Range and White Mountain National Forest. Evelyn MacKinnon, Fred Lavigne and George Zink

exemplify the tradition of activism established by our founders and maintained by WODC for over a century. See related story on Page 2.

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Lucy Larcom, poet and namer of mountains, page 6.

Meet the 2001 SCA-WODC Trail Crew, page 4.

Why hikers visit the Sandwich Range – an informal survey, page 5.

“...George has been a mentor on wilderness issues to people within and outside of the Forest Service.”

WILDERNESS SOCIETY HONORS LAVIGNE & MACKINNON

On February 15th The Wilderness Society presented two committed and energetic WODC members, Evelyn MacKinnon and Fred Lavigne, with the Olaus and Margaret (Mardy) Murie Award in recognition of their tireless efforts to protect the Sandwich Range and other special places. The presentation ceremony took place in Washington, DC, at a meeting of The Wilderness Society's Governing Council.

The award is given annually to a person, usually unheralded, who has shown dedication to protecting the nation's natural heritage. "Evelyn and Fred are inspirational," said Wilderness Society President William H. Meadows. "They have put in more time than anyone could measure working with fellow conservationists, the U.S. Forest Service, and others to make sure that

future generations will have the same opportunity all of us have today to enjoy the White Mountain National Forest. We are honored to work alongside them."

"We take special pleasure," Meadows said, "in paying tribute to a husband-and-wife team since this award is named for another exceptional couple." Olaus Murie, an acclaimed naturalist, was president of The Wilderness Society from 1945 to 1962. He and his wife, Mardy, spent years promoting legislation that would protect wild places from development. President Clinton presented Mardy Murie with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in January 1998.

Julie Wormser, The Wilderness Society's Northeast regional director, said of Evelyn and Fred, "So much of their lives revolves around the

national forest, whether they are taking Forest Service employees out on hikes to discuss their concerns, or doing volunteer trail maintenance in the Sandwich Range, or participating in forest planning meetings, or heading out for a week at a time to go camping and exploring. They are extremely effective advocates for the forest, and are able to, in the nicest way, encourage dozens of their neighbors to also get involved. And anyone who has had a chance to get to know Fred and Evelyn knows how incredibly funny and kind they are. They're just terrific people and I'm so glad to know them."

WODC couldn't agree more.

**Compiled from TWS press release
and contributing staff**

ACTIVITIES REPORT

The winter potluck gathering on January 20 at the Benz Center was well-attended by nearly 40 people. It was great fun, as always, to get a chance to talk together and catch up on news. After dinner, everyone was tempted to head for Runnells Hall, where Dr. Robert Newton was giving a talk to the Green Mountain Conservation Group. (To prevent this type of schedule conflict in the future, we are now exchanging our schedule with the Green Mountain Group.)

Of those who stayed, quite a few asked questions about the status of the White Mountain National Forest plan revision, which were answered by those who have been attending monthly public meetings at various ranger

districts. Then the discussion turned to memories of Wonalancet in earlier days. Each person described what had brought him or her to Wonalancet, which made for a warm and fascinating evening, one we will try to create again in the future.

The February 3 snowshoe trip to Big Rock Cave, Whitin Brook Trail, and Cabin Trail was very pleasant, with good snow conditions, and seven people attended. We found only a few types of animal tracks on that route, but had lots of good conversation, while walking at a leisurely pace for about six and a half hours.

The March 3 snowshoe trip found even deeper snow and, as we climbed, two of us took Fire Road 337 for a loop back to Wonalancet; one broke trail down Kelly Trail, and four of us took Square Ledge Trail, which was also untracked until our arrival. There were lots of opportunities to tromp and slide downhill through ample snow and to enjoy the wildness of the Square Ledge area. We hiked over Square Ledge Branch to Oliverian Brook Trail, finding lots of moose tracks. When we got to Kelly Trail, we enjoyed following in our colleague's footsteps and returned to Wonalancet after about seven hours.

Upcoming Events

Summer activities will include FOUR potluck dinners (see the Trails and Crew articles and the calendar in this newsletter): May 19 after our spring trail clearing day, June 8 to greet our SCA trail crew, July 21 for New Hampshire Trails Day, and August 19 for Annual Meeting. Please remember that everyone is welcome, including non-members, regardless of whether you do trail work.

On Saturday, July 28, we will hold a family-

oriented brook walk that will leave at 10:30 AM from the Ferncroft kiosk and will end by 1:00 PM. Bob Craycraft from the UNH Cooperative Extension will talk about watersheds, aquifers and the brook. Bring water and a lunch. Please note that this trip does not leave at the crack of dawn and does not use up the whole day and an enormous amount of energy, so we are hoping that this will interest members who have not come on earlier trips.

On Saturday, August 4, we will hold a Wonalancet History evening at the Benz Center at 7:00 PM. Everyone is requested to bring some copies (or originals) of historical items they may have regarding Wonalancet. Roy Hammond will present reminiscences of interesting Wonalancet people, including Arthur Walden.

The Green Mountain Conservation Group is holding interesting activities throughout the summer, including its third annual Watershed Weekend on July 14-15 and a forestry workshop on May 19. For more details, see its newsletter or call Blair Folts at 539-7926.

Judith Reardon



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Wonalancet, NH 03897
Or,
Articles@wodc.org

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ANOTHER BUSY TRAIL SEASON PLANNED

On June 30, 1997, a four-person trail crew arrived at the "Four Way," where the Walden Trail begins its meandering route towards the summit of Mt. Passaconaway. Run by the Sandwich Range Conservation Association, the crew spent several weeks each year on a selected WODC trail. For the next three weeks they would work to restore the badly eroded treadway of Walden Trail, hoping to reach the summit of Wonalancet-Hedgehog, or even the deep col that lies beyond. Although substantial work was completed during the crew's stint on Walden Trail, it only scratched the surface of what lay ahead. Most of the time was devoted to rock steps in just the first 100 yards, with a smattering of work over the next half-mile.

Three years later we've realized the full magnitude of the task we began with such innocence. When completed this summer, three more WODC trail crews will have spent an additional 33 weeks on Walden Trail. If the work continues as planned, they will arrive at the summit of Passaconaway in mid-August, having completed over 500 rock steps, water bars, retainers, and other restoration measures. The completed project will encompass about 10,000 hours of trail work, planning, coordination, and support services, mostly by volunteers.

For the crew members and the Trails Committee, the experience has often been exhausting but ultimately rewarding in the knowledge that we've helped to preserve a special part of the Sandwich Range Wilderness.

The coming season

For the third summer, our trail crew consists of volunteers recruited through the Student Conservation Association (SCA – not to be confused with the previous SRCA trail crew) and led by Trails Committee member, Chris Conrod, who will again be employed by the Club for the 11-week season.

On June 7 the crew will arrive at the Mead Conservation Center (aka Mead Base), which the US Forest Service is again making available for our summer crew. On Friday, June 8, we invite all WODC members and other interested parties to welcome the crew at a special potluck supper hosted by John and Cathy Mersfelder.

The following week will consist of intensive orientation, training, and preparation for the work to come. After a weekend of rest, the crew will be off to its backcountry home for the first week of work.

Other activities

We'll start the regular WODC trail season on May 19th, with the first annual Spring Trail Clearing Day. In order to clear all major obstacles before the Memorial Day onslaught, we encourage all adopters and other interested

volunteers to turn out for this important day. Although we'll be working on several trails, everyone should meet at the Ferncroft trailhead at 8:15. Following a fun day (with probably a fair amount of snow) we'll gather at John and Nancy Boettiger's for a great potluck BBQ supper.

The second trails day will be on July 21 (New Hampshire Trails Day) when we'll mount a similar effort to clear as many water bars as possible. Once again, all hands are needed to help clear the hundreds of water bars that help protect WODC trails. Meet at Ferncroft at 8:15. As usual, a great potluck meal will cap the day, this time hosted by Dick Daniels at his backyard pond. This will also be a great chance to catch up with the Walden crew, so everyone is encouraged to attend. And don't forget your swim suit!

Our annual Sleeper Trail weekend is scheduled for September 28–30. Brushing, general clearing, and a dozen rock steps are on the agenda, so we hope you'll join us for this fun event.

We'll wrap up the official season on October 13 with an "open" trail day, working on whatever project has the highest priority. A pizza supper will close out the day and the season. As usual, we'll meet at Ferncroft at 8:15.

Adopter News

The Trails Committee is very pleased to welcome several new trail adopters to our ranks. Garry Gerossie will be adopting the Bennett Street Trail, performing much of the work from the Waterville side of the range, where he hikes frequently. Garry has also offered to keep an eye on the Kate Sleeper Trail, giving us a mid-season condition report and alerting us to any special problems.

We also welcome Dave and CC White as co-adopters on the Walden Trail. Survivors of our 1998 ice storm clean-up crew, Dave and CC have continued to be devoted trail stewards, and we're pleased to welcome them as caretakers of the newly restored Walden Trail. After all, someone has to clean all those new water bars!

George Bates, an avid backcountry skier with a vacation home in Whiteface Intervale, joins us as co-adopter of the McCrillis Path. George will maintain the lower section of the trail from the USFS boundary to the trailhead parking lot, which also serves the Flat Mountain Pond Trail.

All current WODC adopters are listed in the accompanying table. Please contact the Trails Committee if there are any corrections or additions. It wouldn't be the first time we discovered that a trail had a secret co-adopter!

Peter Smart

WODC Trails Chair

603-323-8827; trails@wodc.org

<u>Trail</u>	<u>Adopter</u>
Bennett St.	Garry Gerossie
Bickford	David Bowles
Big Rock Cave	Over the Hill Hikers
Blueberry Ledge	Doug McVicar & Jon Burroughs
B.L. Cutoff	Ann Rogers
Brook Path	Roger & Susan Korpi
Cabin	Ralph Weymouth
Dacey's - Lower	Larry Labrie
Dacey's - Upper	Paul King
East Loop	Paul King
Gordon	Denny Morton
Kelley	Peter Smart & Judith Reardon
Lawrence	Chris Conrod
McCrillis - Lower	George Bates
McCrillis - Upper	Ted & Barbara Sidley
Old Mast	John Boettiger
Pasture	John & Martha Chandler
Red Path	John & Martha Chandler
Rollins	Fred Lavigne & Evelyn MacKinnon
Short Cut	(open)
Sleeper	Trails Committee
Square Ledge	John Mersfelder
Tilton Spring	Jean Chester
Wiggin	Steve Harris
Walden - Lower	Dana Steele, David & CC White
Walden - Upper	Paul King
Wonalancet Range	Jim Mykland

WODC WELCOMES THE 2001 TRAIL CREW

From east, west, midwest and south-east, four Student Conservation Association volunteers will arrive in early June to work with crew leader Chris Conrod as WODC's summer trail crew. Mary Anderson, Stephanie Gayvert, Daniel Nafziger and David Straw will work through August 19 to complete the final phase of a three-year restoration of Walden Trail.

SCA volunteers throughout the United States work with national and state forests and parks and with private organizations such as WODC. Students select desired types of work and locations, clubs are notified and matches are made. All indications are that Trails Chairman Peter Smart has a great crew. In their own words, they "love to do trail work," "have a strong passion for the outdoors," "can tolerate and adapt to the environment," "like hard work" and "living out of my backpack".

Mary Anderson is from Montgomery Village, Maryland, and plans to attend Allegheny

College of Maryland in the fall. She has worked with SCA in Virginia, works regularly as a swimming instructor and lifeguard and organized a high school outdoor club. Mary hopes to be a forest ranger for the State of Maryland.

Stephanie Gayvert's home is in Billings, Montana. She is a student at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas where she is studying for a career in wildlife and habitat conservation. Her experiences include volunteering as a Big Sister and animal care on her family ranch, with SPCA, and at ZooMontana. Stephanie has training in survival skills including bear, fire and wilderness safety.

Daniel Nafziger, from Mapleton, Illinois, is a student at Western Illinois University. His major is recreation, parks and tourism. He is a member of the Illinois National Guard as an assistant recruiter and is an expert marksman on his college rifle team. Dan has extensive backcountry experience, including a hundred mile

hike on the Appalachian Trail.

David Straw hails from North Carolina where he is studying wilderness education at Louisburg College. He has worked on the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and as a camp counselor. Dave has a wide range of outdoor interests, including mountain biking, maintaining botanical gardens, canoeing and sailing.

Not only does this crew have specific trails and outdoor skills, their collective talents include accomplishments as a storyteller, a corn detasseling crew leader, a state senate page and a zoo assistant with Sika deer and Siberian tigers.

We welcome them to Wonalancet and invite all readers to meet the crew Friday, June 8, 5:30 PM at John and Cathy Mersfelder's on Old Mail Road.

Martha Chandler

Birdwatch link at wodc.org or contact Dan

NEWSLETTER INDEX

Since 1972 WODC has sent biannual newsletters to all members on the club's mailing list. Over the years writers have provided valuable information about upcoming programs, trail work, US Forest Service policies, and feature articles on locations and individuals central to WODC, the Wonalancet area, and the Sandwich Range.

The club has recently completed an index to facilitate the search for a topic of interest. The index is available on the website: www.wodc.org.

Back issues of the last twelve newsletters can be purchased by using the order form inserted in this issue. Copies of other back issues can be obtained for a nominal fee by contacting the newsletter editor at 284-6686 or articles@wodc.org.

We are missing a few early issues. Please let the editor know if you can provide him with any of the following: any newsletter prior to November 1972, spring 1973, spring or fall 1976, spring 1980, fall 1983, and fall 1987.

Nancy Boettiger

Be a Mountain Birdwatcher

The Northeast's high-elevation forests face increasing risks from the effects of climate change, recreational development, telecommunications tower construction, and acid rain. Of particular concern is Bicknell's Thrush, the only songbird endemic to New York, northern New England, and adjacent portions of Canada.

Wonalancet Out Door Club, in partnership with the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, seeks your help monitoring this rare species and four other montane forest-dwellers: Swainson's Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler, Winter Wren, and White-throated Sparrow. Results from this annual survey will be used to improve stewardship of our region's most prominent peaks.

Mountain Birdwatchers receive training materials and survey instructions, climb a mountain once or twice during the first half of June, and count birds at dawn along a 1-km section of trail. Don't miss this opportunity to experience nature in a new way and contribute to the conservation of mountain ecosystems. Previous experience with bird identification is not required. To adopt a mountain near you or to learn more about the project, click the Mountain



Bicknell's Thrush

copyright Dan Busby

Lambert at (802) 457-2779 / dlambert@vinsweb.org.

Compiled from VINS press release and contributing staff

Drop in for a Visit

Sure, WODC trails are used by a few thousand hikers each year. It's not as if we need to encourage more use. But of these thousands of visitors, only about six hundred are club members and it's usually the same thirty or forty people who are brave enough to attend a club function.

Perhaps it's our reputation as die-hard trail work fanatics that scares many away. But rest assured, our new club President has demanded that the practice of shanghaiing unsuspecting guests and shackling them to trail tools must stop.

If you're reading this, chances are good that

you will visit the Wonalancet area some time during the coming summer. We invite you to schedule your visit around one of our many events.

You'll find the conversation at our social gatherings goes well beyond trail work to include forest policy, local history and just plain having fun.

And when the discussion turns to *"If you were stranded on a desert island, what one trail tool..."*, * you can always grab a dish of John and Martha's famous homemade ice cream and head for your car. That's what I do.

* anyone in their right mind would choose a root mattock.

How this is supposed to work: Cut along the line, mail the order form with lots of money to WODC, and post the summer schedule in a conspicuous place.

WODC SUMMER SCHEDULE

TRAIL WORK EVENTS

Saturday, May 19; 8:15 AM. Annual Trail Clearing Day

Help our trail adopters clear the winter blowdowns in preparation for another busy hiking season. Expect lots of snow at higher elevations. Meet at Ferncroft parking lot.

June 11 - 15. Crew Training Week

Our SCA crew "Boot Camp" covers training in trail maintenance, grip hoist and rigging, low-impact camping and wilderness first aid. These workshops are open to a limited number of interested trail volunteers. Call 323-8827 for more information.

June 18 - August 17. Walden Trail Reconstruction

Come see, or even help, a well trained, energetic trail crew do state of the art work. Mondays thru Wednesdays are the best times to visit, or call 284-6686.

Saturday, July 21; 8:15 AM. NH Trails Day

The most important work we can do to protect our trails and mountains is to maintain our drainage structures. Meet at Ferncroft for a day of waterbar cleaning.

September 28 - 30. Sleepermania Weekend

Three days on the most remote trail in the Sandwich Range. We'll do the usual maintenance and maybe have time to re-arrange some rocks. Come for a day or the whole weekend. Call 323-8827 for details.

Saturday, October 13; 8:15 AM. Open Trail Day

Each year there's always some maintenance "emergency" arising that doesn't fit into our set schedule. What better time than a crisp, sunny (cross your fingers) autumn day to wrap up the trail season? Meet at Ferncroft.

NON-MASOCHISTIC EVENTS

Saturday, May 19; 5:30 PM. Potluck BBQ

Nancy and John Boettiger will host this new addition to our social calendar in the scenic and historic yard of the Bradbury Jewell homestead. Call 323-8812 for details.

Friday, June 8; 5:30 PM. Welcome the SCA Crew

Don't pass up this chance to show our trail crew how much we appreciate their donating their summer to caring for club trails. Cathy and John Mersfelder will host a potluck cookout at Mack Hill Farm on Old Mail Road. 323-7793

Saturday, July 21; 5:30 PM. Potluck at Dick's Pond

This has quickly become an annual favorite. Bring your bathing suit. Sweaty, dirty, trail workers will be dipped and rinsed in the pond before being allowed to mingle. There's a fair chance a ping pong tournament will develop after the outdoor festivities. Call Dick Daniels at 323-8078.

Saturday, July 28; 10:30 AM. Brook Walk

A nice family-oriented excursion, this is an easy two or three hour walk with Bob Craycraft, a watershed expert with UNH Cooperative Extension. Bring food and drink for a brookside picnic. Meet at Ferncroft. Call 323-8827.

Saturday, August 4; 7:00 PM. History Evening

At the Benz Center, Center Sandwich. Bring a piece of Wonalancet history, if you have one. Roy Hammond will reminisce on times gone by. 323-8827

Sun, August 19. Potluck in the Grove & Annual Meeting

At the chapel, as always. Festivities begin at 5:00 PM to allow for socializing before the annual WODC business meeting at 7:00

Wonalancet Out Door Club – Merchandise & New Member Order Form

Please mail completed form and payment to:

WODC Member Services
HCR 64, Box 248
Wonalancet, NH 03897

Phone: () -

Email:

Name:

Street:

City, State, Zip:

Qty	Description	Price	Amount
	WODC Trail Map & Guide	\$5.00	
	WODC Flat(unfolded) Trail Map & Guide	\$7.00	
	WODC Patch	\$3.00	
	WODC Newsletter Back-issues	Q issue _____ Q full set	\$2.50 \$10.00
	WODC heather grey cotton T-Shirt	Q Medium Q Large Q X-Large	\$14.00
	WODC navy blue Coolmax T-Shirt	Q Medium Q Large Q X-Large	\$16.00
	New Membership	Q Pathfinder Q Steward Q Trail Blazer	\$15.00 \$25.00 \$50.00
	Additional Contribution (tax deductible)		
	All prices include shipping		Total Enclosed

you can do better...

We got a good response to the last issue's shameless plea for purchasing our merchandise. Patch sales tripled! (We sold three.) But that's not enough. Rumor has it that if we can't unload at least five more patches this summer, the newsletter budget will be cut.

Come on, folks, just five little patches! In case any of you didn't get the message last time, we've moved the order form to the top of the page. It is, after all, the most important piece of the puzzle.

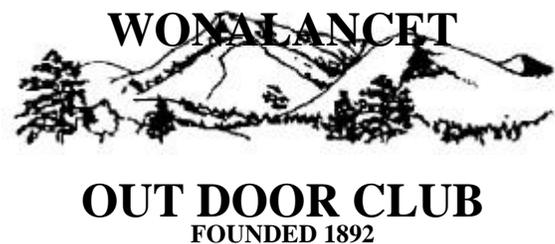
And because Evelyn has used up all our membership application forms by sticking them in copies of newsletters and handing them out to anyone she can corner, we've decided to add a "new member" line to the order form.

Current members would be wise to use the dues renewal form mailed out in February. It has codes and stuff that make it easy for Shannon to keep the records straight.

If you do decide to use this form for reenlisting, don't think we won't try to double charge you. We'll keep this newsletter afloat somehow!

That darn Trails Committee gets all the pork and we're stuck peddling patches...

Our not-popular-enough logo -



But we have more than patches to unload:

WODC Trail Map and Guide. The ultimate authority for hiking in the Sandwich Range.

Folded, with tyvek pouch: **\$5.00**
Flat, for mounting: **\$7.00**

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Heather grey cotton: **\$14.00**
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WODC Newsletter Back Issues. The last twelve issues available as a set: **\$10.00**

And **FREE!**, all the club info you would ever need or want to know, available at your fingertips, any time, night or day:

www.wodc.org

RESULTS OF AN INFORMAL HIKER SURVEY

What draws hikers to the Sandwich Range? Are they lured here by special qualities that may not be found in other areas of the White Mountains? Does the Wilderness status play a role in selecting this locality, or is the general hiking public even aware of the presence and implications of Wilderness?

These are questions I have often pondered. I decided to exploit my good fortune of spending last summer in the backcountry as WODC crew leader by conducting an informal survey.

I should first confess that I went into this project with preconceived notions. Namely, that (a) most hikers on WODC trails are there to bag a four thousand footer and (b) most hikers have, at best, only a vague idea of what designated Wilderness is. I make no claims for the scientific veracity of this survey.

The survey consisted of asking a series of questions of every hiking unit encountered on the trail or at the trailhead over an eight week period from June 17 to August 10. For purposes of this study, a hiking unit is defined as a solo hiker or a group hiking together. I collected seventy-one responses representing one hundred fifty-eight hikers. Unit size ranged from twenty-six solo hikers to two groups of ten.

Most encounters were on Dicey's Mill Trail and Walden Trail. Those on Walden Trail were split between below Square Ledge Trail and above it, with most being above it. This indicates that the majority of hikers polled were headed to or coming from the summit of Passaconaway, with a substantial number accessing the mountain from the Kancamagus Highway.

The first question asked was: "Why did you choose this area for your hike?" Depending on the answer, I would follow up with: "Did the fact that Mt. Passaconaway is over four thousand feet in elevation have anything to do with choosing this hike?" And finally, if I still felt their answer needed clarification, I would ask: "Are you doing the four thousand footer list?"

I posed the questions in this manner for two reasons. First, I wanted to give respondents the opportunity to state as many reasons as they wished as to why they were hiking on Mt. Passaconaway. Second, I derive a perverse pleasure from watching people squirm. Most peak baggers are comfortable in proclaiming their chosen pastime, as well they should be, but it is also true that many are reluctant to admit that their main reason for climbing a particular mountain is to add it to their personal list.

Forty-one units (58%) stated that they were climbing Mt. Passaconaway because it is on the four thousand footer list. Of these, my own

biased reasoning determined that eight units probably would have been climbing Passaconaway even if it were not on the list, and the other thirty-three were there solely for peak bagging reasons.

Personal biases aside, the results show that the Appalachian Mountain Club's four thousand footer list has had a significant impact on WODC trails. Reportedly the list was devised at least in part to encourage hikers to explore less traveled mountains, thereby relieving congestion on the more popular peaks. On that count it can certainly be deemed a success.

With the New England hundred highest list having been given "official" status and a slightly less sanctioned three thousand footer list gaining in popularity, chances are good that peak bagging will spread and increase on other WODC trails. The Sleepers, Nanamocomuck and Paugus have already been impacted by increased activity.

But what of the other 42%? What draws them to our mountains? After peak bagging, the two most popular reasons were convenience and tranquility.

The breadth of the meaning of "convenience" seems to be directly proportional to the distance the respondents live from the White Mountains. A number of people from central and southern Carroll County answered that it was a nice day, they decided to take a hike and the Sandwich Range is close by. But somewhat surprisingly, there were a number of hikers from southern New England who also cited convenience. Apparently our mountains pay a price for being the southernmost range in the Whites.

Tranquility was just as popular a reason as convenience. Typical responses in this category were "I try to avoid the crowds," and "It's just so peaceful here!" One has to wonder if tranquility would be the major reason if this question were asked on trails such as Sleeper and Lawrence. Judging by my own experience, it would be.

Other answers were given only once or twice. These included "recommended by others," "I like a challenge," and from one summer camp group, "This is where they told us to hike." It is interesting to note that many people commented on the beauty of the area after answering all the questions but no one stated it as a reason.

Peak bagging, convenience, and tranquility – they are disparate and, some might argue, conflicting motives.

The second set of questions started with: "Are you aware you are in federally designated Wilderness?" Sixty units (85%) answered yes.

This figure by itself would be encouraging were it not for the fact that nine respondents immediately volunteered that they knew only because they saw the brown signpost. Assuming there were a few respondents who didn't bother to reveal their new and sudden awareness, that means that two thirds or fewer started their hike knowing that they would be in Wilderness.

But wait, it gets worse. The second question was: "What comes to mind when you hear the term *designated Wilderness*?" Forty people (56%) had no answer. Of the thirty-one who did respond, five gave answers that were inconsistent with fact. These included "not really national forest," "200' camping rule," "fewer people;" and two hikers answered, "parking fees".

That leaves about one-third of the respondents who could show that they had at least a minimal understanding of designated Wilderness. From these people there was no one popular response. Answers included "no motorized vehicles," "protection and respect," "no man-made structures," "no chain saws" and "don't cut down the trees," among others.

There was no attempt by me to solicit value judgments, but a half dozen respondents volunteered their opinions or gave answers that I interpreted as opinion. It was evenly divided between Wilderness supporters and detractors. Supporters would append a statement at the end of their answer, such as, "no dirt bikes – and thank God for that!" The detractors stated their opinion as the answer; "damned meddling government" and "packaged nature" were my two favorites.

It seems obvious that the USFS and WODC both need to make a greater effort to inform the public what "Wilderness" means in terms of management and use.

Chris Conrod

A Poet Romanticizes Our “Low Ragged Mountains”

As we climbed the backside of Whiteface one bright, warm day last fall, the editor of this newsletter and I discussed the common belief that poet Lucy Larcom named Mount Wonalancet. Perhaps, it is said, she did the same for other local peaks. But history often whispers lies with nearly the same voice as it tells us the truth. What makes a poem stick to a mountain?

Club historian George Zink also felt that this is a story untold in the telling. He went so far as to contact Lucy Larcom’s biographer – and was informed simply that he must not underestimate that poet’s popularity in her day. Are there poets of such stature that their ethereal dreamings actually take physical form? Not in this world, we decided. So I have undertaken an extensive study of this puzzle, including the examination of nearly two hundred documents in the poet’s own hand, and now I submit this report to the club.

Doug McVicar

Most mountain names in the Whites are either folk names of early date, given by anonymous farmers, or commemorative names bestowed more recently, typically by organizations. But there was a time in the mid-nineteenth century – the Romantic Age – when poets really could name mountains. Remote, awesome, dangerous and mysterious, the White Mountains became a powerful symbol for the Romantic soul of a young country. Painters, poets, pastors and, of course, tourists flocked to the mountains seeking not recreation – but inspiration.

One such poet was Lucy Larcom, former Lowell “mill-girl,” later editor of *Our Young Folks* magazine. Beginning in 1867, she and her friend John Greenleaf Whittier and Whittier’s entourage made summer sojourns at the Bearcamp River House in West Ossipee. Strategically sited on a knoll above the flood plain where the stagecoach road from Center Harbor to Conway made a sharp curve, this hotel provided an extraordinary view of the Ossipee mountains rising just across the river, and of the Sandwich Range stretching to Chocorua against the horizon.

Larcom, like Whittier, found that both her health and her poetry improved in the mountain air. They left behind a significant

corpus of poetry set in Bearcamp country. One such piece is Lucy Larcom’s 1875 blank verse narrative *An Idyl of Work*. It is dedicated “To Working-Women . . . by one of their sisterhood,” and tells of the lives of several Lowell mill girls. Inspired by the mighty river that drives the looms, two of the girls eventually make a pilgrimage to the mountains where rivers are born. There they find a kindly grey-headed woman who keeps an inn in the Bearcamp valley. This innkeeper loves the mountains, of course, but deplors the uninspiring common names that burden them:

“Why nickname all this grandeur? ‘Ragged,’ ‘Bald,’ ‘Toad,’ ‘Snout,’ and ‘Hunchback,’ – so you hear them called Among the farmers roundabout.”

The heroine, like Lucy Larcom herself, is not content to stop at mere protest.

“One day We went out on a christening-tour, two girls And I; we said the red man should receive His own again . . .”

Accordingly this “christening tour” dubbed our peaks “Wannalancet” and “Paugus.”

In spite of Lucy Larcom’s popularity, *An Idyl of Work* never sold well. Her words might have died on the page except for a remarkable confluence of historic trends that occurred in 1875 and 1876, as the Romantic era began to fade and a new wave of hikers swept into the mountains.

Aesthetic reaction against common names was energized by the Romantics. Back in 1859, Rev. Thomas Starr King had sounded a trumpet for action against names that “insulted” the mountains: “What a wretched jumble!” He offered a ready solution in the beloved Romantic figure of the vanished Indian: “How much better to have given the highest peaks . . . the names of some great tribes or chiefs, such as . . . Passaconaway . . . Wonalancet . . . Weetamoo . . . Kancamagus.”



Bearcamp River House in Lucy Larcom’s day. Note the stagecoach parked beside the building. Courtesy of the Ossipee Historical Society.

Practical objections to the common names came from mountain lovers of a new generation who began flooding this area when the railroad reached West Ossipee in 1870. Not content to absorb mountain vistas from afar, these athletes sought physical, not spiritual, closeness to the peaks – so they needed good maps and unambiguous geographical information.

On January 8, 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club was formed in Boston. Four days later, a “Committee upon the Nomenclature of the White Mountains” was appointed to deal with three problems: different peaks known by the same name, a single peak known by several names, and peaks with no names at all. Most of the Sandwich Range fell into this last category. In Hitchcock’s famous *Geology of New Hampshire*, published one year before *An Idyl of Work*, he could be no more specific about the mountains that are the heart and the home of the Wonalancet Out Door Club than to say, “The space between [Passaconaway] and Chocorua is occupied by low ragged mountains.”

The AMC committee returned a report in record time. One part of that report was a list of recommendations for “unnamed or doubtful summits” which included both

"Mt. Paugus" and "Mt. Wonalancet." The members accepted it immediately.

The chairman of this committee, a hard-driving twenty-eight-year-old writer, Moses Foster Sweetser, had his own interest in establishing an authority capable of proving mountain names. At this very time, he was busy putting the finishing touches on the first true hiking guidebook ever written for the White Mountains.

Generating a 436-page guidebook from scratch might seem like a daunting task, but it apparently did not slow Sweetser down. He had already written a 431-page guide to New England, a longer one for the Middle States, and *Europe on \$2 a Day*. In the course of a rather short career, he ran an oil company in West Virginia, coauthored eleven books, and wrote at least 39 of his own – totaling more than 8000 pages. Researching his *White Mountains* in 1875, Sweetser climbed nearly eighty peaks, most of them trailless at the time, and according to Laura and Guy Waterman "covered more high elevation ground in the White Mountains . . . than anyone else had up to that time."

Sweetser, though an avatar of the new passion for hiking, still held many of the older Romantic ideals, among them an aversion for mountain names that bespoke "narrow horizons and starved imaginations," and a strong preference for Indian designations. Sweetser was undoubtedly pleased to be able to include in his guidebook Mount Paugus and Mount Wonalancet alongside Larcom's sonnets "Chocorua" and "Clouds on Whiteface," and to list *An Idyl of Work* in his "Authorities Consulted."

Sweetser's *White Mountains* remained the dominant guidebook for the next 40 years, but

there were many others. Having approved the new names, the AMC began showing Paugus and Wonalancet on its maps as early as 1876. *Eastman's Guide* followed in 1881. By 1886 the Boston & Lowell Railroad's *Winnepesaukee and About There* was listing Paugus as one of the peaks of the Sandwich range panorama. In 1901 the young Wonalancet "Out-Door" Club produced its own guide, and by the time of the first *AMC Guide*, in 1907, the names "Wonalancet" and "Paugus" were fixtures of the mountain landscape.

One piece of this puzzle is still missing: I could find no record of how Sweetser and Larcom first became collaborators. They shared the same Boston publisher: J. R. Osgood and Company. The publishing business, even at the nation's most prestigious firm, was a remarkably personal enterprise in those days. James Osgood or one of his small circle of assistants may have made the connection. Or Sweetser may have independently discovered *An Idyl of Work* as he obsessively accumulated source material for his guide.

The most intriguing possibility is that Larcom wrote the "christening-tour" into *Idyl of Work* in Sweetser's invitation. That section does seem pressed into place with a shoe horn. This is not strong evidence, however, since the whole book is a jumble and Larcom herself later admitted, "I was trying to do two things at once when I wrote it."

But we do know that Sweetser was not above making such requests. While at work on the first edition of his *White Mountain Handbook*, he sent a copy of his *The Maritime Provinces*, just out, to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, accompanied by a

flattering letter pointing out "How often . . . am I indebted to the genius of the poet who has consecrated even the new shores of our young continent. In my present work I have often wished that you had written some 'Hiawatha' saga about the wondrous wight Passaconaway."

More likely Lucy Larcom sent a copy of *An Idyl of Work* to Sweetser. Her letters make clear that she was a woman of bulldog determination, who had learned by this stage in her life how to move her agenda forward forcefully.

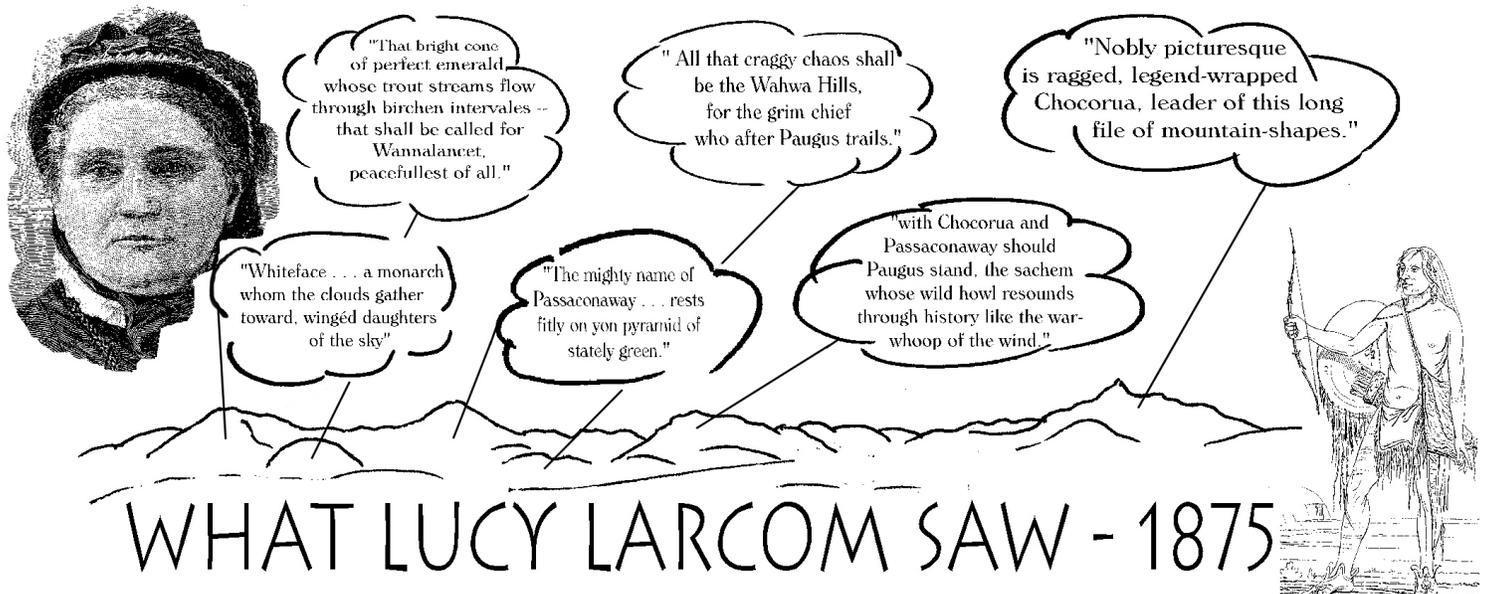
The following incident demonstrates the vigilant energy with which Lucy Larcom defended her vision. On Feb 9, 1881, the Appalachian Mountain Club held its twenty-seventh Corporate Meeting. President Fay read two letters received from eminent American poets. The first was from John Greenleaf Whittier, generally "expressing interest in the work of the Club." The other was from Lucy Larcom. No pabulum plaudit here; Larcom had a pointed message for the ladies and gentlemen of the Club – the name of Wonalancet was "incorrectly located on all maps."

Certainly she should know. Mapmakers had been routinely placing the name of Wonalancet on what we now call Mount Mexico, directly south of Paugus. Perhaps in a certain light Mount Mexico might appear to be "perfect emerald." But it is hard to imagine anyone so unpoetic as to mistake its squat shape for "that bright cone."

In 1885 the AMC elected Lucy Larcom a Corresponding Member for life.

On May 3, 1893, the AMC voted to name a peak in the Ossipees "Mount Larcom."

And they *did* fix those maps.



LEAVE WELL-ENOUGH ALONE

That settles it. I am not a romantic. Doug McVicar's fine article on the naming of Mounts Wonalancet and Paugus confirms my fear that the graphic and practical names the settlers gave their mountains were usurped by the quixotic musings of a summer visitor.

Don't misunderstand me. Miss Larcom wielded a gifted pen. I gladly let her sweep me along in her deft melding of mountain and sachem. I just wish that after publishing her tribute, she had acted as an honorable, humble poet and allowed the reader to take the next step, rather than deciding to "move her agenda forward forcefully." Given the opportunity, my steps would have led in another direction.

Though her eyes are keenly observant and her words are moving, Larcom's perspective is that of only one imagination, most likely basking on a sunny knoll miles distant from the objects of her study. One could argue that the names were born of acute self absorption rather than intimate knowledge of the landscape.

On the other hand, the farmers knew the mountains in all four seasons. These hills were an intricate part of their daily routine. Names settlers chose for their backyard hills were not bigger than life. They were descriptive. They were utilitarian. They fit.

The romantics missed their chance. If they were truly interested in honoring the vanished native, they should have restored the genuine aboriginal names. What could be more romantic, more spiritual, than *Agiocochook*? And what would be more fitting than to rededicate that name, originally given by a people we decimated, to the mountain we have most defiled?

But this is all just preamble to my true intent. You see, Doug did more than submit an articulate, informative report. He laid the groundwork necessary for the reader to comprehend the following verse – a verse that until now I thought was too esoteric to be included in this newsletter:

*Before the poets seized the peak
and claimed their rights of nomenclature,
settlers gazed at craggy heights
of gravel slides and granite slabs,
of rugged cols and ragged crests
and christened it "Old Shag."*

*Praise the bard who understands,
who savors vernacular wisdom;
but pity the scribe whose vanity
sheds essence in favor of flowery fluff.
"Old Shag" the settlers named it.
"Old Shag" it is to me.*

Ed.

The Outlook is available to all readers who wish to respond to articles or address any issue relevant to WODC, the White Mountains, or trails and hiking in general. Prose, poetry, art – any communication that can be expressed in ink on paper – are welcome. Rules: 500 word maximum; no slander; submissions may be edited for length. See sidebar on page 2 for mailing address.



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