



## Walden Reconstruction Completed

In mid-August, the WODC trail crew finished its last week on Walden Trail, marking the completion of the five-year restoration of the entire trail. During their ten week internship with the WODC, the crew members built approximately 150 rock steps, five water bars, 100 feet of side-hill trail, and uncounted finishing touches, all designed to restore the illusion of a simple path through the woods. In fact, foot paths are rarely simple (or cheap), particularly those that receive as much traffic as the top mile of Walden, which provides access to the summit of Mt. Passaconaway, a popular "four thousand footer."

The Walden project began in 1997 with 28 rock steps built by the Sandwich Range Conservation Association. This first year served largely to illustrate the magnitude of the project, so a full season crew was planned for 1998 but was delayed until 1999, in large measure because of the efforts required to clear trails after the '98 ice storm. Despite excellent progress in 1999, much remained to be done. Fortunately, the season's progress, together with a detailed log of the remaining work, allowed an accurate estimate of the remaining work: two more years.

Although the pace of work can vary greatly from week to week, the overall average proved to be consistent, allowing the crew to complete the project with a few days to spare. This allowed for a little extra bonus work -- replacing the rotted puncheons at Camp Rich with stepping stones and cleaning all the water bars from there to the summit of Mt. Passaconaway.

This year's crew followed the same model as the previous two years: a four-person crew recruited through the Student Conservation Association with an experienced Trails Committee member (Chris Conrod) as the leader. The crew worked five days each week, camping in the woods about ½ mile below Camp Rich and staying at Mead Base each weekend. Although they serve as volunteers, the crew members do receive free housing, a weekly subsistence allowance and a modest educational grant. The grant helps to offset the summer income that college-age crew members would normally require.

The table opposite page 5 summarizes the funding and accomplishments of this lengthy project. Had the WODC been paying a nominal rate for all crew time, as well as for planning and support by the Trails Committee and other volunteers, the project would have cost approximately \$130,000. Thanks to support from the National Recreational Trails Funds, the US Forest Service, and 8,366 volunteers hours, the total cost to the WODC was only \$14,150 over five years.

While each of us will draw our own conclusions from these numbers, one thing is clear. We need to be alert to the early signs of trail erosion and take prompt action. Although the location and soil conditions on Walden Trail made it particularly vulnerable to erosion, proper trail tending and early intervention could have greatly reduced the magnitude and cost of the required work. When detected at an early stage, a simple water bar or a few rock steps can avoid the need for more expensive repairs in the future.

With the restoration of Walden Trail essentially complete, the key responsibility for its ongoing health is now in the hands of its new adopters, David and CC White. Although David and CC have another major project completing their new homestead in Sandwich, they bring high standards and devotion to their important role as WODC adopters. Walden trail is in good hands, especially because David and CC know they can call for help whenever they need it!



**The Mead Base Gang**

Mary Anderson, Christine Scheele, Dave Straw and Dan Nafziger comprised the WODC Walden Trail Crew. Tom Okie researched and published a report on the history of Mead Base for the Sandwich Historical Society.

### CREW HOUSING NEEDED

Although Mead Base might be available for housing next year's trail crew, WODC would like to find quarters in or near Wonalancet. Such an arrangement would reduce the crew's daily commute and more easily allow them to participate in community affairs. We need housing for a crew leader, May 16 - October 3; and four crew members, May 30 - August 14. We ask anyone who can offer a suggestion regarding local housing to contact Trails Chairman Peter Smart at 323-8827 or [trails@wodc.org](mailto:trails@wodc.org). To learn more about our summer trail crew program, visit [www.wodc.org](http://www.wodc.org) and click on "Trail Maintenance" or either of the crew photos.

### Trails, from page 1

The Trails Committee welcomes new adopters on three other trails. Kevin and Karen Coffey, from Madison, are the new adopters on the wonderful Bennett Street Trail. George and Jean Hurley, now living in the Wonalancet home of the late Phyllis French, join us as co-adopters on the Wonalancet Range Trail. Tom and Athena Holtey, living at "Green Shutters," are co-adopters on the Square Ledge Trail, raising the hopes of long-time adopter John Mersfelder that the war on hobble bush might actually be winnable!

### Other Activities

May 19 was a very successful trail-clearing day, with 31 people helping to clear blow-downs and brush as a prelude to a wonderful potluck supper hosted by Nancy and John Boettiger.

On New Hampshire Trails Day (July 21) a good turnout of 24 folks made excellent progress cleaning water bars and cutting brush, followed by a great swim and cook-out at Dick Daniels's pond.

On September 28 seven volunteers participated in the annual "Sleepermania" weekend, cutting brush throughout the trail and building 13 rock steps to stabilize an eroding pitch on East Sleeper. Entertainment was provided by Chris Conrod in the form of an exploding Svea stove.

Fourteen people attended the final trail day on October 13, with half the group doing brushing on Old Mast Road and Square Ledge Trail while the others built four rock steps and two water bars on Blueberry Ledge Trail. The day (and the season) were officially closed with a traditional Pizza Barn supper.



### The Svea's Final Moments

This photo was taken by Larry Labrie just seconds before the Editor's stove suffered an explosive death, resulting in a posthumous renaming to "Vesuvius". Evelyn is proudly displaying some new toilet paper she received as a gift; Fred is enjoying a little extra something in his Postum; Doug, the psychic emergency guru, senses impending doom; Peter shows off a stew pot addition he snared on the hike up; Judy apparently has already had enough spiked Postum; and the Editor cooks his last meal on an old friend.

The accompanying **2001 Work Summary** gives an overview of the time devoted to each trail, including the independent work reported by adopters. Walden Trail leads the list with over 2700 hours, and an additional 825 hours were spent on other trails.

### Plans for 2002

Although Walden Trail was the single largest trail project we faced, there are other trails-in-trouble (like Lawrence), and numerous smaller projects, such as the replacement of rotting log water bars on Dicey's Mill Trail, new erosion problems on Blueberry Ledge Trail, and the completion of new water bars on Old Mast Road. These are above and beyond the regular maintenance required just to clean the hundreds of water bars on WODC Trails.

Based on strong support and full funding from the 2001 Annual Meeting, the Trails Committee is working on a new trail crew model consisting of SCA volunteers *and* an SCA leader. Although the leader would ideally be a prior crew member or WODC volunteer, we've encountered very few candidates over a five-year period. Instead, we'll be recruiting an SCA Conservation Associate (CA) with the experience and aptitude required for the job. Unlike the 11-week crew positions, the CA position can be up to six months, and provides additional benefits commensurate with the experience and responsibility that the position entails.

The crew leader will tentatively start in mid-May, allowing him or her to participate

in early trail days and develop a working relationship with the WODC. The leader may also conduct a complete trail inventory, thereby becoming familiar with the trails and helping to identify projects for the crew later in the season. When the full crew arrives they'll start with a range of basic maintenance, such as water bar clearing and major brushing projects, and gradually progress to more ambitious erosion control tasks, such as rock steps and water bars. Other projects may also be included as suggested by WODC members or by the crew itself. The full crew will depart just before Annual Meeting, with the leader staying an additional six weeks to assist with other projects.

### We need your help!

Anyone with suggested crew projects is encouraged to send them to Trails Chairperson Peter Smart at [trails@wodc.org](mailto:trails@wodc.org) or 603-323-8827. If you have ideas for more general (non-trail) projects for the final weeks, please contact WODC president John Boettiger at [info@wodc.org](mailto:info@wodc.org) or 603-323-8812. We would also like to hear from anyone with ideas for crew housing in the Wonalancet area. Although we hope that Mead Base will remain a viable housing option, we would also like to explore options closer to Wonalancet that would immerse the crew more fully in the day-to-day activities surrounding our trail system.

**Peter Smart**

WODC Trails Chair  
323-8827, [trails@wodc.org](mailto:trails@wodc.org)



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Or,  
[Articles@wodc.org](mailto:Articles@wodc.org)

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## ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

The Club's 110th Annual Meeting at the Wonalancet Chapel on August 19 was preceded by an unusually sumptuous potluck supper and social gathering. Attendance estimates hovered in the range of 50 to 70 people.

An exhibit on the history of WODC maps and related photographs and watercolor paintings accompanied the potluck supper in the Chapel Grove, and is described elsewhere in this issue.

By meeting time some had departed for other occupations, but 40 people, a reputable number of stalwarts, remained for the business of the evening, including Terry Miller, ranger for the Saco district of the White Mountain National Forest. Longtime active members of WODC were recognized for national awards they received earlier in the year: George Zink from the U.S. Forest Service, and Fred Lavigne and Evelyn McKinnon from The Wilderness Society.

Peter Smart, WODC's Trails Chair, offered a well-documented summary of the past year's work on the trails, highlighted by completion of the three-year restoration of Walden Trail. Chris Conrod's exemplary tenure as summer crew chief for three years was roundly applauded. Two general WODC-sponsored trail work days were held and drew a fine turnout of trail adopters and other Club volunteers: the first an early-season occasion on May 19; the second our traditional mid-summer work on New Hampshire Trails Day, this year on July 21. A third trail work day is to occur on October 13.

These three trail work days, which have

typically drawn about twenty-five or more people, are of enormous value to the ongoing work of our trail adopters, co-adopters, Trails Committee members and summer trail crew. As Peter emphasized, there is great need for added volunteer labor to sustain WODC's high (and widely recognized) standards of trail maintenance. As the number of hikers increases, erosion control becomes a larger issue. The prolific spread of hobble bush and other undergrowth after the ice storm has also dramatically increased the need for effective trail brushing.

Shannon Spencer reported that the Club's membership had grown over the past year to 347, from 308 the previous year. In addition to new members, renewal rates are encouragingly high.

The Club's Treasurer, Tom Rogers, distributed the final report for FY 2000, a year-to-date balance sheet for 2001, and the Executive Committee's proposed budget for 2002. It was noted that membership income is at an all-time high, thanks to increasing dues levels of returning members, to the membership growth, and in no small measure to a generous gift from Al and Gail Gerrish of Center Harbor and Boulder, Colorado. The proposed budget for FY 2002 was discussed, amended to allow the Executive and Trails Committees more discretion in hiring a trails crew chief next summer, and approved.

Doug McVicar distributed a descriptive sheet and questionnaire concerning possible re-publication of WODC's historically significant 1901 Guide to Wonalancet and

the Sandwich Range. The Guide has two end-paper maps and is richly illustrated with period photographs and reproductions of watercolors by William Paskell. Vividly written, it offers a fascinating sense of the community of Wonalancet, the origins and early development of the Club, and the mountains and trails as they existed a century ago. The Executive Committee is actively exploring the prospects for its reproduction, and we expect to offer it for sale at a modest price in a few months.

Judy Reardon described the past year's Club activities, including hikes in winter as well as summer, several potluck suppers after trail work days and in honor of the summer crew, and two particularly successful and well attended events, a Winter Potluck and discussion in March and a Wonalancet History Night in early August.

The slate of officers for the calendar year 2002 presented by the Executive Committee was approved: President, John Boettiger; Vice-Presidents Doug McVicar and Judy Reardon; Secretary, Sharon Nothnagle; and Treasurer, Dick Daniels.

The evening concluded with an informal report on "the state of the forest" by USFS district ranger Terry Miller, including information about the recent fire on Mt. Paugus, the forthcoming dismantling and memorialization of the shelters, clarification of camping policy and policy concerning rock climbing in Wilderness areas.

**John Boettiger**

## ACTIVITIES REPORT

By popular demand, another Winter Potluck and WODC History Night will be held at the Benz Center on Saturday, January 19. The potluck dinner will begin at 5:30 pm, and the history discussion at 7 pm. Many topics of WODC history have not yet been explored, including past feats of trailwork and shelter work.

On February 9 at 10:00 am, Rick Van de Poll will lead a snowshoe walk to observe animal tracks and discuss their winter activities and habitats on one of the SPNHF land tracts near Wonalancet. This walk is sponsored jointly by WODC and SPNHF. The meeting place will be publicized by both organizations during January, or for more information contact Judith Reardon at 323-8827.

WODC members do many impromptu excursions on skis and snowshoes during the winter, all of which depend on the right snow conditions and weather conditions to make them appealing. Therefore, rather than planning them for a fixed date, we urge everyone to email the WODC website ( if you are planning (or looking for) a winter trip and want company. Thursday or Friday night we will try to list destinations and meeting times that people have told us about for the upcoming weekend. It might help people get together for some enjoyable expeditions.

Other winter events not sponsored by WODC but of interest to our members are: Green Mountain Conservation Group's

annual meeting on Saturday evening, January 26, the Lake Chocorua sled dog races on January 26 and 27, the Wellinghurst cross-country ski races at King Pine ski area on February 10, the Sandwich 60 sled dog race on February 16, and the Great Glen-to-Bretton Woods ski racing and touring event on March 10. Also, the Tamworth Outing Club is sponsoring the Wonalancet Wander on February 23: an 11 km "flat and fast" freestyle race, starting from the Steele's field near Wonalancet Chapel. Starting times are 10 am for ages 13 and under, and 11 am for ages 14 and over. For more information, contact Paul King at 603-323-7450 or kinghome@landmarknet.net.

**Judith Reardon**

## SHORT STUFF

### Vandalism in Wilderness

Hikers and campers in designated Wilderness areas of the Sandwich Range are typically well informed and respectful of USFS regulations and “leave no trace” practices. It is painful to find exceptions. As we were doing additional trail work this fall on Blueberry Ledge Trail, it became clear that someone has again – within the past year – been cutting down live trees alongside the trail, near the ledges. This is vandalism, manifestly inconsistent with the wilderness values to which WODC is committed and clearly illegal under regulations long established by the Forest Service. It has occurred on several occasions over the past few years in the same general area along the blueberry ledges. The motivation may have been to improve a view, but whatever the reason and whoever is responsible, it must be publicly clear that WODC regards such action as unauthorized and destructive.

### Honor and Respect

*Good friend and invaluable trail worker Larry Labrie suggested that we print the following quote by Wolf Song, an Abenaki. We feel that it is especially appropriate in light of the preceding piece. – Ed.*

“To honor and respect means to think of the land and the water and plants and animals who live here as having a right equal to our own to be here. We are not the supreme and all-knowing beings, living at the top of the pinnacle of evolution, but in fact we are members of the sacred hoop of life, along with the trees and rocks, the coyotes and the eagles and fish and toads, that each fulfills its purpose. They each perform their given task in the sacred hoop, and we have one too.”

### Winter Calendar

**January 19:** WODC Potluck and History Night, 5:30 pm at the Benz Center, Sandwich.

**January 26:** Green Mountain Conservation Group, fourth annual meeting. 6:00 pm at Runnells Hall, Chocorua.

**January 26-27:** Tamworth Outing Club sponsors the Lake Chocorua sled dog races.

**February 9:** A snowshoe hike with ecologist Rick Van de Poll, co-sponsored by WODC and SPNHF. 10:00 am at Peter Pohl's in North Sandwich.

**February 10:** Wellinghurst cross-country ski races at King Pine Ski Area.

**February 16:** The Sandwich 60 sled dog race.

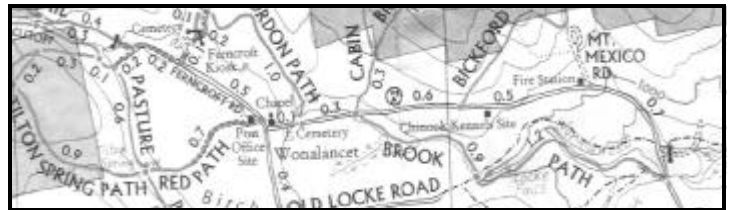
**February 23:** Tamworth Outing Club sponsors cross-country ski races in Wonalancet. Start times: 10:00 am for 13 and under, 11:00 am for 14 and over.

## MAP HISTORY PROJECT

Annual meeting attendees enjoyed a special bonus this year. Not only did we have the usual fine food and sparkling conversation but there in the shelter of the grove stretched a row of bulletin boards, twenty-five feet in length, adorned with photographs, maps and other documents depicting ninety-five years of the Club's service in guiding the hiking public through the local mountains.

This collection was the product of John Boettiger's efforts in foraging through the scattered WODC records and visiting every local resident he thought might have some memorabilia, either affectionately displayed in their home or long forgotten in an attic trunk (most likely the impetus for his article on page 5). John's crusade paid off, for the display not only edified many current members, it jogged the memories of the veterans. Recollections abounded and anecdotes freely flowed as we admired the array of Wonalancet artifacts.

Not satisfied with this laudable feat, John assembled the collection and a considerable amount of research into a thirty-two page booklet, *Trail Maps of the Wonalancet Out Door Club – A History: 1901 - 1995*. Therein lies a concise but detailed account of WODC's century-long venture in publishing ten maps and two guides. Including two schematics from the Watermans' *Forest and Crag*, the volume contains eight reprints of area maps, numerous pages from the WODC 1901 Guide and other illustrations.



Wrapped around these graphics is a textual interpretation recounting the various people and circumstances that effected creation of the maps. The chronicle spans the entire period from Kate Sleeper's first visit to Birch Intervale to the ultimate product of Mike Bromberg's response to George Zink's 1987 plea for a new map. It includes accounts of the efforts of local cartographers such as McKey, Childs, Walker and Ellis.

*Trail Maps of the Wonalancet Out Door Club* is available for the remarkably low price of five dollars, post paid. Copies can be ordered by using the merchandise order form in this newsletter, by downloading an order form on the internet at [www.wodc.org](http://www.wodc.org) or by contacting WODC Member Services, HCR 64 Box 248, Wonalancet, NH 03897.

So, what's next, you ask? Executive Committee member Doug McVicar is looking into the possibility of publishing a reprint of the 1901 *Guide to Wonalancet and the Sandwich Range of New Hampshire*. This is the Club's first known publication and, in addition to twenty striking illustrations, contains two maps of the immediate area. The Guide's text describes many local attractions – some that no longer exist, some which have become largely forgotten secrets, and many that are familiar to today's reader.

Doug's initial reports are promising. The task now before us is to further define and consider the various publishing options before making a final decision. We hope to be able to announce a publication date in the next newsletter.

**Chris Conrod**

# 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 Trail Map History, 1901-1995	\$5.00	
	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

## Gift Memberships

Phone: (     )     -     .....

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Name: .....

Street: .....

City, State, Zip: .....

Phone: (     )     -     .....

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## Do your holiday shopping here.

It's a quick and easy way to fill stockings and support the care of the Sandwich Range trails. Please consider gift memberships to WODC. They are the perfect way to show both your holiday spirit and advocacy of public land stewardship.

**Trail Maps of WODC - A History: 1901 - 1995.** New, an illustrated history by John Boettiger with many reprints of past club trail maps. Excellent for history buffs and "lost trail" seekers. **\$5.00**

**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**

## WONALANCET



**WODC Patches.** Perfect for packs, shirts and hats. **\$3.00**

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

Don't forget to visit our web site:

[www.wodc.org](http://www.wodc.org)

2001 WODC Trail Work Summary		
Trail	Hrs. YTD	Notes
Bennett St	22.5	New adopters Kevin & Karen Coffey
Bickford	5	Accelerated brush growth in logged areas
Big Rock Cave	40	Erosion work (rock steps) needed below cave
Blueberry Ledge	72.5	Preliminary erosion control done between Ledges & Rich outlook
B.Ledge Cutoff	15.5	
Brook Path	9	
Cabin	29.5	
Dacey's Mill	62.9	Many old log waterbars need replacement
East Loop		East end relocated to new junction with Walden Trl
General	37	(Admin work not related to a specific trail)
Gordon		
Kelley	32	Ongoing erosion in upper trail. Accelerated brush growth in top 1/2 mile.
Lawrence	43.5	MAJOR erosion work (steps or relocations) needed on Paugus
McCrillis Path	12	Ongoing access issues outside WMNF
Old Mast	65	Additional water bars required to stabilize recent erosion problems
Other trails	20	(Misc. work on non-WODC trails)
Pasture Path	3.75	
Red Path	13.75	
Rollins	40	
Shortcut	10.5	New adopters George & Jean Hurley
Sleeper	124	Ongoing erosion work during annual WODC work trip
Sq. Ledge	80	New co-adopters Tom & Athena Holtey join the hobble bush wars!
Tilton Spring	9	
Trailhead	7	Encroaching brush & trees cleared next to Ferncroft kiosk
Walden	2727.9	New adopters are David & CC White
Wiggin Trail	42	Moderate erosion needs work. New signs may have reduced traffic.
Won.Range	28	New co-adopters George & Jean Hurley
<b>Total All Trails</b>	<b>3552.3</b>	(This table includes all work reported to the Trails Committee.)

Walden Trail Restoration Work Summary											
Year	Crew	Rock Steps	Water Bars	Feet of Sidehill	Volunteer Hours	Paid Hours	Total Hours	WODC Funding	NRTF Funding	USFS Funding	Total Funding
1997	SRCA	28	8			500	500	\$3,150		\$1,600	\$4,750
1998	(ice storm)										
1999	WODC/SCA	190	20	42	2806	390	3196	\$4,000	\$9,734		\$13,734
2000	WODC/SCA	144	19		3217	385	3602	\$3,000	\$10,460	\$750	\$14,210
2001	WODC/SCA	150	5	100	2343	385	2728	\$4,000	\$9,380	\$750	\$14,130
<b>Totals</b>		<b>512</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>8366</b>	<b>1660</b>	<b>10026</b>	<b>\$14,150</b>	<b>\$29,574</b>	<b>\$3,100</b>	<b>\$46,824</b>
Approximate volunteer value (8366 hours at \$10.00/hr.)											
<b>Total Project Value \$130,484</b>											
Total value represents about \$200 per step or water bar, or \$8.82 per foot of trail.											
<b>Notes:</b>											
SRCA=Sandwich Range Conservation Association											
SCA=Student Conservation Association											
NRTF=National Recreational Trails Fund (from gasoline tax)											
USFS Funding for 2000-2001 represents use of Mead Base for crew housing											
Earlier log steps & water bars by the USFS not included in above totals											

## A WALK IN THE FOREST WITH TERRY MILLER

Who'd have thought we would be talking about fire in the wilderness here in what is often referred to as an "asbestos forest", the White Mountains? Actually there were two wilderness fires this summer, one on Mt. Madison, literally right on the Great Gulf Wilderness boundary, and one on Mt. Paugus, a quarter mile into the Sandwich Range Wilderness. Both were lightning strikes during the August drought.

The Paugus fire burned in deep duff and threw up a lot of smoke that was visible from Chocorua Lake and Route 16, hence generating a lot of public concern. Although it burned for a week before being detected, its size at containment was less than ¾ acre. In the end, our fire suppression actions were probably based more on allaying public concern than preventing resource damage. The fire never constituted a real threat to life or property and it is arguable that the fire was perhaps even beneficial to the forest ecosystem, of which fire is a natural component.

All this is prompting a worthwhile dialogue on the role of fire in the wilderness, an interesting topic to consider in the Forest Plan revision and whenever we get around to updating the Sandwich Range Wilderness Management Plan. I have appreciated the interest and advice of WODC members on the Paugus fire. Should we look at fire differently in the wilderness? What do you think?

As you read this, a significant chapter in the Sandwich history book comes to a

close. Our trail crews are at work dismantling and removing shelters at Camp Heermance, Camp Rich, and Camp Shehadi this fall. When I visited with the State Historic Preservation Officer in Concord last month, she was pleased with efforts made to work with interested parties on a balanced solution for removing the shelters while recognizing their historical value.

Shelters will be dismantled and removed, the sites rehabilitated, historical documentation compiled, and interpretive signs installed to memorialize the shelters and Wonalancet valley and promote primitive camping skills. My thanks to the many interested people, especially George Zink and Louise Tallman, who helped us to resolve historical and wilderness issues in a way that respects both.

Another issue that has cropped up is rock climbing and fixed anchors in wilderness. A ticket was issued to one climber this summer who installed fixed anchors on a ledge using an electric drill within the SRW, prompting us to look more closely at the overall issue of fixed anchors in the Wilderness.

The new Chief of the Forest Service, Dale Bosworth, visited New Hampshire in September and briefly stopped at Russell Colbath House on the Kancamagus Highway. On very short notice, John Boettiger and other WODC members were able to meet him during his brief stop and, in a note to me after his visit, his secretary noted how impressed the Chief was with

volunteer and partner participation in the White Mountains.

Forest Plan revision goes on and this winter will see us working with local public planning groups to begin developing alternatives for the Environmental Impact Statement. For more information about these monthly meetings, visit the Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/white/>.

We were pleased to be able to construct a new "bin-batch" composting toilet system at Flat Mountain Pond this summer to facilitate more efficient management of waste at that shelter site. I know that Dean Yoshina and Dave Neely of the Saco Ranger District were pleased with the interest and cooperation of WODC members and local landowners in the airlift of materials needed for that improvement.

Finally, I want to congratulate the WODC, particularly Chris Conrod and Peter Smart and the Trails Committee for the completed trail work by SCA on Walden Trail. This was an outstanding project involving many people and considerable effort. Great work!

In this time when our lives and the world seem to be changing so rapidly, isn't it reassuring to know that timeless places like the Sandwich Range exist? My thanks to you all for your tireless dedication to preserving this magnificent area. I welcome your thoughts and can be reached by e-mail at: [twmiller@fs.fed.us](mailto:twmiller@fs.fed.us).

**Terry Miller**, Saco District Ranger

## Wonalancet and WODC Archives: Discovery, Organization and Care

They are all over the place, in more homes, nooks and crannies than we know or imagine: in attics and closets, under beds, in sheds and barns, in living memories; sometimes framed and mounted or carefully organized on shelves or disks or in file cabinets, more often in cardboard boxes or old trunks behind hip walls; sometimes well preserved, sometimes damp and moldering.

I write of the history of Wonalancet and WODC, the people, the Intervale, the Chapel, the farms and inns, the Post Office and the surrounding mountains and trails. Minutes, guides, maps, reports and other formal documents are necessary, but as important are letters, books, diaries and journals, pamphlets, photographs and paintings; personal accounts of trail work and legislative advocacy, life on the farms; the stories of those who explored, sustained, threatened, protected and nourished the community, the valley and the forest.

We need to collect and organize the interwoven archives of Wonalancet, WODC

and the Chapel, to find a place for them that is secure, climate controlled for preservation, and supervised for appropriate use. Some of that material has been collected, and has a home in local libraries and historical societies. So to a degree the task is to learn and systematize, to come to know what we have already, more or less, in hand.

But the larger and more difficult job is to find, collect, preserve and organize what we don't have, or one might say optimistically, what we don't know we have (and more ominously, what may be disappearing). There are individuals and families who want to offer such material, others surely who don't even know they have it.

My own recent work on the history of WODC maps and map-making brought home to me what should have been obvious. If one wants to find, one has to search (and prepare to recognize the significance of what one finds). We need people to

undertake that larger project, people with enthusiasm and a keen nose. We need to be able to assure those who would offer access to their shelves, boxes and barns that whatever they would give or loan would be cared for properly, used responsibly and permanently preserved.

The stuff of Wonalancet and WODC history is here, or rather here and there and God knows where. The Executive Committee of WODC is discussing the employment and/or the availability of a volunteer archivist or two. We have begun conversations with Bob Cottrell of the Remick Museum; George and Sally Zink, who have long collected and worked on a local history; and leaders of the Tamworth and Sandwich libraries and historical societies. Please consider this article an invitation to join that conversation. Call me at 323-8812 or Doug McVicar at 323-7302, or write a note to [info@wodc.org](mailto:info@wodc.org).

**John Boettiger**

## Our Federal Eagle Spreads Its Wing over the Flat Mountain Country

Firstly, *The Stand of Spruce on Sandwich Dome*. It is late morning of a September day in 1912. There is a note of autumn on the air even in the dimness of the stand of tall spruce that rises above the path up the mountain. We are standing by a spring that rises gently, without a bubble, from the very root of a mast-high tree, a spring that rises secretly, steadily, a delight to the eyes and a refreshment to lips dry with the climb. All around us are first-growth spruce, hundreds on hundreds of them, their great trunks all purplish brown in the shadowed woods. – “Seven Wonders of Sandwich” Old Home Day Address of Cornelius Weygandt, August 20, 1930.

Sequestered on a high plateau suspended between Sandwich Dome and the stout West Spur of Whiteface, the Flat Mountain forests enclosed a jewel-like string of ponds, home of legendary native trout. By the time of the Civil War most of the trout had been fished out, but the towering virgin forest remained to thrill the occasional visitor. The Appalachian Mountain Club’s 1916 *Guide to Paths in the White Mountains and Adjacent Regions* invited hikers onto the slopes overlooking Flat Mountain Pond: “The chief charm of this region is the fine virgin forest.”

Yet even as the 1916 *Guide* went to press, the moment had come for the deep woods to feel the impact of events around the world. Europe had set itself on fire; and Europe’s war was pushing prices rapidly upward in the United States. In New Hampshire, the price of spruce lumber more than doubled by the end of the war.

Clear, fine-grain spruce was a critical war material. The aircraft of World War I were built almost entirely of this strong yet light wood. The Parker-Young Company must have seen an opportunity on the slopes around Flat Mountain Pond. They bought the entire tract from Publishers Paper Company in 1917 and hastily built a sawmill at Beebe River in Campton, alongside a major rail route to Boston. From this strong foothold they drove a logging railroad up the Beebe River valley, plowed across Sandwich Notch, spiked the virgin forest and began clearcutting. By 1918 the rails reached the West Spur of Whiteface, eighteen miles from Beebe River and one-third of a mile above it.

When the war ended, this mill claimed to have cut more than one quarter of all the airplane stock produced in New England.

But Parker-Young had a bigger vision than just war profits. The best butt logs of spruce could be sent around to their mill in Lisbon, a major producer of piano soundboards. Lesser spruce was sawn into lumber needed for the house construction boom of the 1920s. When choice hardwoods fell under the ax, those were sawn too. Within the forest products industry the Beebe River operation must have been a winner, because while the price of pulpwood dropped sharply after the war and stayed down for a decade and a half, lumber stuck near its highest value.

The logging methods of Parker-Young were no better and no worse than the abysmal standard of the industry. A U.S. Forest Service circular described it this way: “When the logging is complete, the slope has been shaved as by a razor, and the debris is left in inextricable confusion. . . . [Fire] almost invariably follows.”

By the summer of 1923 most of the slopes in Flat Mountain country had been mined clean of lumber. With spruce prices spiking up and wages slightly lower, perhaps it was enhanced profits that motivated Parker-Young to cut close to the railway tracks and heap the slash within range of sparks from the engines – a violation of New Hampshire law. The telephone line that had been put in for emergency communication was not repaired when it broke down. And even during June and early July, when no rain fell for six weeks, the company ran its trains under the blazing sun instead of following the preferred practice of operating at night when the mountainsides were cool.

Under these conditions, a fire was almost inevitable. Yet when it struck early on the afternoon of July 12, it was oddly unexpected. Company managers quickly gathered men from the mill to form a “posse” of impromptu firefighters. But without a functional telephone the men had no way to call down a train to take them to the fire site. Arriving hours later, they worked all night and managed to save Camp 10 at the southern tip of the Flat Mountain Ponds.

The next day was Friday the thirteenth. Management directed that all the horses in camp be harnessed and led down the trail to Sandwich and safety. Meanwhile, the men cleared a fire line to protect Camps 11 and 12. Apparently unaware of the danger, they went back into the camps over the noon hour for their dinner. After eating, they



Camp 7 today.

returned to the fire line and observed that the breeze, which had been gently restraining the flames, was gone. Dead calm. Then the wind suddenly rose up with gale force and – as it often does in the mountains – blew from the opposite direction. Within minutes the wind-whipped flames had jumped the fire line and transformed the whole “protected” area, including the two camps, into an inferno. Walls of flames encircled the men.

At least one hundred men had been on that fire line. Some ran. Some plunged into the ponds. Some pressed themselves down to the ground trying to find a breathing space beneath the impenetrable mass of smoke. Saturday’s *Concord Monitor* ran the fire as its top story: “Mountain Fire Rages. Reported Loss of Life Unconfirmed – State Alarmed.” A helpless company official told the press, “. . . the fire could not be considered under control and . . . the only thing which could check the flames was rain.”

Meanwhile residents of Waterville Valley and Sandwich watched anxiously as the conflagration loomed nearby. Appalling tales were told by the routed firefighters who were stumbling out of the woods. Fear-filled rumors swirled around the forest.

Then a miracle happened. Early Sunday morning an unforecast shower began to fall. By afternoon the rainfall had become heavy; two inches poured



down on the mountains, extinguishing the fire at last. Nature saved the company that had abused it so vilely. Every firefighter escaped, except one. Thirty-five hundred acres were immolated – but the monetary loss was minimal because the company had already stripped this land of all merchantable timber. Apparently unrepentant, Parker-Young plunged ahead. Even another major fire the next summer did not deter them from their goal of removing the last stick of spruce and getting out for good – which they did in March 1925. A correspondent from the *Boston Herald* who rode the Beebe River Railroad one month later reported a disheartening vision of “mile after mile of pathetically denuded mountain side” and “a wilderness of stones, charred logs and blackened rubbish.”

Meanwhile personnel of the United States Forest Service, whose land

surrounded this devastation on three sides, must have been looking on in horror. Nothing of this sort had happened – or would ever happen – on land in the White Mountains while under Forest Service administration. In 1930 a U.S. Forest Ranger met with a representative of the new owner, Draper Corporation. Draper had purchased the land with the intention of harvesting remaining pockets of virgin hardwoods, but the Depression had sent their woodland operations into a state of economic suspended animation. Draper suggested a price of \$25 per acre. The government made a preliminary survey and concluded the land was worth only \$5. But even at the government price there was not enough public money appropriated to make the purchase.

Forest Service land buyers had always been on a Spartan diet. For several years after the passage of the Weeks Act in 1911

Congress had appropriated \$2 million per year for National Forest acquisition in the entire eastern United States. Funding temporarily ceased during the World War, and then resumed at a greatly reduced rate. Under President Harding, notorious for his mismanagement of natural resources, and President Coolidge, notorious for his parsimony and antipathy toward public enterprise, annual appropriations were reduced to as little as \$450,000. President Hoover, a more competent manager, restored appropriations to the original level of \$2 million.

By election day 1932, the American people, sapped by ever-worsening economic conditions, were looking for a change. Franklin Roosevelt offered a whole New Deal of changes. One of the very first was a change in forestry appropriations. To get the unemployed back to work, he proposed a sweeping program of

reforestation and timberland improvements.

Roosevelt took pride in his knowledge of forestry. As Governor of New York he had fostered state conservation programs. He enjoyed managing his own timberlands at Hyde Park. A few weeks after his election he requested the director of the New York Division of Lands and Forests to prepare a plan of forest land purchase on a scale never before contemplated. Three days after Christmas the plan was submitted. It identified acquisitions in 24 states, totaling more than \$17 million. Roosevelt was ready.

On March 4, 1933, he gave his famous inaugural address, boldly calling forth the courage of the American people: “. . . let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” The speech is a model of oratory and of leadership, but it contains very few words about specific programs. One exception is a crystal clear promise to undertake “greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of natural resources.” On March 31 Congress passed Roosevelt’s public works law. Under this authority he issued an executive order releasing \$20 million for purchase of forest lands. A few weeks later, back in New Hampshire, we find Forest Supervisor James E. Scott writing to Draper Corporation, “We are now in a position to deal with you for all of your lands within our boundary. . . .”

The officers and directors of Draper Corporation were eager to sell, and soon agreed on a purchase price of \$5.40 per acre. Forest Service staff guided them through the complex but thorough acquisition process. The pile of paperwork they left behind could easily obscure the passionate sense of mission that drove the building of national forests. Buried in a routine business letter from Scott to Draper is this gem-like summation of the public land credo: “I believe . . . that no individual or corporation can afford to own this class of land. . . . [Yet] Somebody must own it; and the people as a whole, through their Federal Government, can afford to own it, – first, because their carrying charges are very much less, – second, because they can think and figure in terms of perpetual ownership and long-time benefits rather than reasonably prompt returns, – and finally, because they can take into account many aesthetic and other intangible values which are decidedly worth reckoning from the public standpoint but which bring no rewards whatever to investments of private capital.”

Amen.

**Doug McVicar**



WHILE THE WATCHMAN SLEEPS

During the 1920s the feeling was widespread among American conservationists that the government was not doing enough to protect forest lands. May 1928 issue of *Nature Magazine*.

## REWILDING

I'm halfway along the almost mile-long pond. Open-eyed dozing, my mind is a blank. Ten steps ahead, Luna, my half yellow lab-half greyhound, halts a second and looks out into the next little bay, walks forward a few steps, then stops again. I'm musing that Luna sees as much beauty here as I do. Still walking, I look out onto this piece of water. The surface is still, gun-metal blue, opaque. Labrador tea runs almost to the pond's edge, then sphagnum mosses, wet, brilliant green velvet that extend out into the water. My eyes drift over the surface to a dark brown stump fifty feet out. The stump has a big oval coming off each side at its top where branches had been sawed off. My gaze lingers on the stump. With a jolt I feel the stump looking back at me.

Slowly the stump rises, heaving up heavily, water cascading off. It hobbles up onto its knees, then lifts first one and then the other long front leg, unfolding them out forward, and then back down into the water.

The stump articulates into a cow moose. I Snap Luna onto his lead – there could be a calf close by – and we both watch the moose look us over, then turn and splash a couple hundred yards across the pond and head up into the hillside mix of white birch and spruce.

This is Flat Mountain Pond, and it is held in the hollow of three hills. One is unnamed, the second is named Flat Mountain, and the third, directly across from it, is named Flat Mountain. Yankee frugality extends to names.

The hike up had commenced with a mile and a half through private timberland, then crossed the Whiteface River which was running strong, even in July, with its memories of snowmelt. Once over wet boulders, the trail turned left and climbed up, tracking the river. A fiberglass post with the words "Wilderness Area" spelled out in vertical black letters marked simply what had been a great change in course by the ship of state. Wilderness: Is there any more exciting word in the English language? An impulse seized me and I yielded to it. I walked over to the sign and I kissed it. I bet I had not been the first to do so.

Flat Mountain Pond and much of the trail up to it is in the Sandwich

Range Wilderness, 25,000 acres that will no longer feel the bite of the saw. But the Sandwich Range was almost denied the protection it now has as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The original Wilderness Act, passed by Congress in 1964, contained language which defined wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." That was laudatory language, but it was used by the Forest Service to limit consideration of lands for wilderness designation to the remaining large tracts of roadless areas in the western U.S. Adopting what became to be known as the "purity standard," the Forest Service, and even some conservation groups, argued that the intention of congress had been to exclude any area whose timber had been cut, or which had otherwise been historically impacted by man, from protection as Wilderness.

Part of my hike had been a sidetrack up the drainage of Flat Mountain Pond to another, smaller pond and the stream that fed them both. The trail, not shown on my map, turned out to be much wider than the main trail, and nicely graded as it climbed higher. In places, flattened logs of a like size had been set into the soggy ground. Some of these logs sported the heads of iron spikes. But it wasn't until I saw the ten-foot long steel rail that I realized I had been walking up the long abandoned railroad spur that had taken the timber out of these hills so many years back. So no, this was not land "untrammeled by man." It had been trammed pretty hard.

The eastern wilderness advocates eventually prevailed here. And though they protected less land than they set out to, the Sandwich Range Wilderness was established as part of our federal system. In doing so, these advocates also put forth a more hopeful vision of the forest's future and, indeed, our own future. Given enough time the land can heal its wounds, the rapacious engines of the past can disappear forever into the mud, and we humans can change how we value a small mountain pond and the life that surrounds it.

**Kevin Coffey**