

WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB NEWSLETTER

At long last the good earth of Wonalancet seems to be emerging from the last real snowstorm, and, with Spring, WODC's fancy turns to thoughts of hiking and trail conditions.

And at long last come messages of activities past, present, and future to keep you up-to-date with WODC.

At the 1976 Annual Meeting new officers were elected: President, Ralph Weymouth; Vice-President-Trails Chairman, Ted Sidley; Secretary-Treasurer, Barbara Sidley, and new positions were created as follows: Inter-Club Coord. George Zink, and Newsletter Editor, Martha Chandler.

For some time the Forest Service has been urging WODC to make long term decisions concerning our role as a cooperator with the White Mountain National Forest in trail shelter maintenance. Our shelter and sanitary facilities have had little care for many years while use of them has increased greatly with the rapid growth in the hiking population.

The decision to improve, rebuild, or redesign is an expensive one, both for club funds and members' energies. Several choices presented themselves.

Let the shelters be reclaimed by forest growth and abandon such improvements as shelters, toilets, springs.

Relinquish our role as a cooperator to the WMNF or some other group

Continue our work of trail clearing and leave the she one else.

Keep up the trail work and upgrade facilities to meet new design standards and some increase in usage.

Abandoning both facilities and trail work is by far the cheapest solution. However, the increase in the hiking public makes it somewhat unrealistic to consider having no sanitary facilities and no simple arrangements at some logical camping sites. It is better to be prepared for the campers and encourage them to spend the night at selected spots than to allow them to choose areas which may be too fragile to bear much camping usage; limited, well designed facilities and regulations for their use allow us the best opportunity to preserve our resources.

To turn our trail chores over to WMNF or some other agency would mean that WODC's deep involvement in sharing the care and planning of our area of the Sandwich Range would be effectively terminated. At present, we are a limited partner with the WMNF, and, as such, we have a strong voice in the future of Wonalancet and vicinity. This partnership dates back to the time of the acquisition of tracts in Wonalancet by the Forest Service, for it was at the urging of Katherine Sleeper Walden and others that purchases in Wonalancet were made.

This long history of our involvement seemed too much to give up, and at a meeting in the early summer of 1976 the members present voted to commit the club to the following course of action.

1. Continue current trails maintenance. This is about 38 miles of trails running from the Bickford Trail in the east to the Bennett Street Trail in the west.
2. Continue the three Special Use Permits for the maintenance of the three shelter sites at Heermance and Shehadi (on Whiteface) and Rich (on Passaconaway).
3. Undertake relatively long term efforts to upgrade all these facilities to meet the much increased use of these sites. This will mean trail and shelter site improvement with proper toilet facilities and water supply.

As a first step in this direction, a new toilet facility was placed at Camp Rich - a prefabricated structure made and set in place by "Deke" Nickerson of Chocorua. With the help of WODC families and heroic efforts by campers and counsellors from Cragged Mountain Farm Camp all the lumber and other materials were carried to the site. It was quite a task to carry several hundred pounds

of odd-shaped things up the Dicey's Mill Trail!

Late in the season attempts were made to repair Camp Rich. The task proved too much for a short trip. Drainage problems, rotten foundations, a roof weakened by the fall of a large tree, all have made replacement as likely a possibility as repair.

All trails were cleared last summer, signs marked, and new signs are being prepared on this spring. Heavy late winter winds this season have created many blowdowns. Clearing them plus high priority trail work and relocation in soggy areas will keep us busy in Summer '77.

Efforts are being made to obtain a college student through a Federal study program to assist us with our summer work load.

We need lots of volunteer help, too. The Forest Service spends between \$100 and \$500 per mile to maintain trails, let alone reconstruction, and we have about 38 miles to do each year. Please communicate with Trail Chairman, N.T. Sidley, Wonalancet, N.H. if you can give a bit (or a lot) of assistance next summer.

Bowl Natural Area

The original Forest Service action on the Bowl set aside some 510 acres on the western side of the Bowl as a "natural area", a study site. An increase had long been considered since the studies were increasingly aimed at an unspoiled watershed. Winter news from the Service, spurred no doubt by Members queries and then comment on a new environmental analysis, reports that an enlargement south to the Forest boundary and east to Dicey's Mill Trail, some 500 more acres, will shortly be confirmed. The WODC has gone on record with The Forest Service in support of extension of the Bowl Natural Area to include the full Wonalancet/Swift River watershed within the Forest, perhaps another 800 acres beyond this newest extension.

Winter Use of Trails

There is increasing use of trails in the winter for camping, hiking and skiing. This seems to require some change in trail maintenance and marking so that winter users can be assisted.

Ferncroft Parking Area

In connection with the forest road constructed under the Spring Brook timber sale, the Forest Service has constructed an automobile parking area on Old Mast Road adjacent to the cemetery. This will go far to alleviate the parking problems that have attended the increase in hikers on WODC trails. A kiosk is located at the parking area with both Forest Service and WODC information. The most recent AMC Guide has been edited to include this new trail starting point.

From the Secretary-Treasurer

Dues are always welcome - the usual ^{3.00} per person and \$5 per family. The 1976 Annual Meeting voted to consider family memberships as covering all children up to age 18. All current members will be allowed voting privileges.

Contributions are always most welcome. Expenses were very high last summer and will continue to be for years to come as a result of our commitment to trail and shelter work.

Dues may be mailed to Barbara Sidley
2 Rogers Road
Lexington, Mass (Summer Address Wonalancet, N.H.)

Note As asterisk below means that your 1976-1977 dues have not yet been received

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