
WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB

Newsletter



April 2011

CARING FOR THE SANDWICH RANGE SINCE 1892

The Start of the Tamworth Rescue Squad An Interview with Dave Bowles

All of us who entertain ourselves by climbing up and down mountains -- unless we are extremely young or extremely stupid -- occasionally wonder what would happen if we were hurt or ill or lost in the woods.

Suppose you slipped and broke your leg. Suppose you were up on a peak, with a long, rough trail between you and the nearest hospital, and you started to have chest pains. Nowadays you'd hope for cell or satellite phone service (and, of course, a cell or satellite phone). If you didn't have signal (like Jack London's hero, running out of matches), or before cell phones existed, you'd either hope a companion could get down the trail and find help before you froze to death or went into cardiac arrest, or curse yourself for hiking alone -- one of the time-tested best ways to die in the mountains. But if you did reach help, what would happen between your call or your companion's breathless arrival, and your actual rescue, and how would that rescue be carried out?

Sometime around 1970, Dave Bowles (long-time WODC member; Tamworth Fire Chief, and much much more) and several fellow fire department members and friends, decided to organize a (semi-) formal Rescue Squad to replace the casual pickup squad that had existed earlier. In order to do so, they dug into their own pockets, getting a loan to purchase a used school bus, buying their own

hard hats and first aid kits. They were equipped with Plectron receivers (a massive early version of the pager), so they could respond to fire calls or hiking emergencies. "Red" Smalley -- Nancy Stearns' dad -- who lived directly across from Squirrel Bridge was not only pretty much the first telephone that someone

coming down Blueberry Ledge or Dicey's Mill would reach, but he was willing to do the job -- a big plus. If Red was out, or if the frantic messenger was coming out of Old Mast Road, Ed French (who owned the cottage where the Hurleys now live) was the telephone of choice. The Squad had the kind of stretcher that would have been appropriate technology in the Revolutionary War: some canvas sewn onto two poles for carrying. It was heavy, clumsy and the victims tended to slide around a bit, especially on the downhill tilt. (Dave hastens to add that they never lost a victim out of it, however.) But it was cheap and the Tamworth Rescue Squad (henceforth to be referred to as the Squad) was still operating on its own nickel. (In 1972 they made their first application to the town



Dave and Betty Bowles

for funding and were granted \$2,000.) That didn't mean that Squad members were happy about the litter, and neither were those victims who were conscious as they were carried out, slipping and sliding. What the Squad wanted, but couldn't afford, was a Stokes: a light weight

basket which holds the victim strapped in and secure. (Current versions have a single ATV-type wheel to take the weight off the carriers on smoother ground, which can be removed when going over boulders.) Dave fondly remembers one of their early rescues who suffered a broken leg about two-thirds of the way up the Blueberry Ledge trail. A captive audience for the guys' complaints about how much better off they'd all be with a Stokes, she finally asked how much it would cost. Her thanks for her rescue was a check that paid for their first one.

Not all Dave's memories are so fond, nor were all parties so appreciative. The Rescue squad captain, Randy Hayford, got a call from Dispatch one winter evening from a fellow saying that his father, brother, and friend hadn't come back from their hike. It was getting dark; there was about five inches of snow with a hard crust, and the guy was worried. Dave went to Ferncroft, found their car parked there, and plowed it out to 113A so that they could drive out when they came down, but early next morning when he checked, the car was still there. So, despite the fact that it was his birthday, Dave joined the others rounded up, and three of them followed the tracks up Dickey's Mill Trail. They didn't bother with snowshoes; a few inches of snow didn't seem worth it. (Unhappily, by the time they got to Camp Rich, those few inches were up to their waists.) Meanwhile, they were joined by the hiker's son, who'd driven up from Connecticut, picked up a friend in Boston, and caught up with them, taking turns breaking trail. Up over the ridge they went, to the peak of Passaconaway. Now Dave, as fire chief, had a sophisticated piece of equipment -- a two way radio -- and he always carried it with him. At this point, he called Randy who was standing by near Ed French's house, and Randy announced that the three men were just coming out Old Mast Road. There was nothing the Squad members could do but turn around and go back down Dickey's Mill. They were soaked, cold, hungry and exhausted, and the hikers not only didn't stop to thank them; they didn't even stop to see the son who'd driven up and climbed with the Squad to try to help his dad and brother. It wasn't Dave's best birthday, but he recalls that a couple of the neighborhood women had baked him a cake, and that helped some.

Because of the geographic spread of mountains that Dave and his squad got called to cover, other towns had to be involved, and the phone tree spread accordingly. But most of the calls for hiking rescues were for either the Wonalancet web of trails or Mt. Chocorua, with the Blueberry Ledge and Jim Liberty Trails logging the most calls. One call came in for a hiker hurt on Chocorua near the Jim Liberty cabin. Folks came from a couple of nearby towns, but Dave, his son Jim, and Jim's friend, Luke Smith, were up ahead of the others, because they were in better shape. (At this time ('79-'80), Dave was working, building the Cannon Mountain Tramway.

Having climbed Cannon innumerable times -- although never on a trail -- he was, he recalls, "in wicked good shape".) The damaged hiker turned out to be somewhat ahead of the obesity trend, weighing in at between 250 and 300 pounds. Turns out that there's a trail behind the Liberty cabin (who knew?), that leads down to a spring, via a slanted rock ledge. This fellow had thought it would be fun to slide down the ledge but, as Dave tactfully put it, "he bounced a bit". He got tied into the Stokes and they looped some rope around a tree at the top of the ledge, with a bunch of people hauling, and Dave and Jeff Dickey (who was then Rescue Squad Captain) walking alongside to guide the basket up over the ledge instead of trying to carry him around. They got him into the shelter, and they might have carried him down, but he was in bad shape and it would have taken too long -- they needed an airlift. They called the National Guard but it was getting dark, and a rescue helicopter landing would require light. So a small helicopter from North Conway, piloted by Wylie Apte, Jr., picked up a generator and some floods from a field on Depot Road, and was able to land just before dark at the Cabin. Once the lights were rigged up to the generator and working, the big helicopter landed and took the guy off, and Dave and the other rescuers walked out (in the dark, of course). Dumb as this particular victim was, he was smart to have hurt himself by the Cabin, since there aren't many other places on Chocorua where a helicopter could have landed.

(Dave told us that it took a really good pilot to have landed there at night, but in a sad postscript to this story, when that pilot went for his physical two years later, they put the wrong drops in his eyes and he never flew again. Doug McVicar, who's an M.D. when he isn't hiking or doing historical research, recalls that the eye drops then were in a container that looked like that of guaiac developer, which contained alcohol that would have caused scarring. The containers have been changed since, but too late for the pilot.)

Either Dave made a specialty of rescuing big guys, or those are more likely to damage themselves, or perhaps they're just more memorable since there's more of each one to stick in the mind, but he remembers another 200 pound-plus fellow who had managed to impale his midsection on a stick on the Lawrence Trail. It was early spring and there was no snow on Old Mast Road when they started up, but by the time they reached the victim (and his boy scout troop), there was a good three feet of wet snow. They pulled him out in the Stokes, again coming out in the dark. It must have been a memorable trip for the Scouts.

Each rescue required a slightly different approach. For a heart patient on the Brook Trail, they took a paramedic and oxygen. For a patient with a broken leg halfway up the Liberty Trail on a winter hike, Dave and his son went

up on their snowmobiles and fashioned a splint out of snowshoes. Winter rescues could be the toughest or -- if they could use snowmobiles -- somewhat easier. (Not always easier, since they often had to get out and shovel to smooth out the trail.) Winter hikers often resented snowmobiles on the trail until they got sick or injured, and then they were (and are) delighted to ride down on one.

And here we'd like to insert a little digression into snowmobilers and hikers/skiers. Dave has been an avid snowmobiler (as well as hiker and skier) for a long time, and many hikers and skiers have a knee jerk negative response to snowmobilers. But there are snowmobilers and snowmobilers, and Dave is clear in his response to the overpowered speeders we see too often today; some of whom he's had to rescue after they misjudged a curve or sped into trees. For a long time, Dave's machine of choice was a Motor-Ski Zephyr (now regarded as a vintage classic); a motor perched on skis, and a body pretty much amounting to a front fender with headlights, that he took everywhere at a average speed of ten to fifteen miles per hour. He speaks fondly of going up to the ridge between Paugus and Chocorua with a few other snowmobilers, and just sitting there and enjoying the view. It was the old way to snowmobile -- on little machines, going slow, brushing out the trail, building bridges where needed, and enjoying the woods and the view.

The best essay on snowmobiling versus Nordic skiing is by Noel Perrin, and can be found in his elegant, earthy and funny book, (which we recommend unreservedly): "Third Person Rural". Noel points out that if you're a country person, working hard with your muscles, the idea of getting out of the house on a machine is awfully appealing, while if you're basically a city person (even if you now live in the country), and work or used to work in an office, the idea of getting out of the house and using your muscles is equally appealing. Since he did both, he was able to write about the schism without any snide favoritism or at least without too much. (The favoritism he did show was towards the snowmobilers since they were less eager to ban skiers than vice versa.) And he couldn't help writing about "the sheer pleasure of . . . winding up in places one might otherwise never have reached in a lifetime. A cliff top two towns away, say, known to no one but the snowmobilers and an occasional hawk or owl. The damned skiers think we don't notice nature, because we're too busy steering our machines. What they don't realize is that we're usually going somewhere -- a further place than *they're* likely to get -- and when we reach it, we stop and dismount. Then we see everything. Especially the good views, since we go up a lot of hills. We know their landscape better than they do, . . ."

That goes for Dave, in spades. He knows trails and non-trails all over these mountains. He and his friends *created* some of these trails, for goodness' sake. One rescue up over the last, rough part of the Kelly Trail was effected by pulling the guy up with ropes to get him past the more vertical bits and then switching to a road they'd brushed out earlier to connect with logging roads, thus avoiding either the Lawrence Trail or Old Mast Road. More than forty years ago, they brushed out the old bridle trail on Jim Liberty (about a hundred feet above where the Hammond enters) to avoid a hump that the (then) main trail went over, and that's the trail we've been hiking on ever since. Dave can't help cleaning up trails. He dutifully bought a hunting license each year until the moment when he realized that carrying a rifle was just interfering with his trail clearing. Just like he can't help building bridges. When we asked him how many he'd put up for the sake of local snowmobilers and skiers (who benefit more than the hikers, who are expected to ford most streams) he counted them up for the first time, and came up with 66. He might have forgotten a few, though. And we're not talking about a plank thrown up over a brook. In his professional life, Dave was a civil engineer who built massive highways, bridges, tramways, etc. So his busman's holiday bridges are high quality and -- in some cases -- 50 or more feet long.

But back to rescues. Having hiked a lot, we've always wondered just how the victim was carried down our narrow, rocky, precipitous trails, some of which we've had a hard enough time just getting ourselves down, under good conditions and daylight. Well, here's how. First of all, unlike a winter snowmobile rescue where as few as two or three people might do it, a rescue where the victim is carried down by foot, in a stretcher, takes a minimum of twelve people, and sometimes more than twenty. Typically, six people would carry the stretcher, with three on each side, and trade off frequently with another six. Obviously, if the rescue route is down Old Mast Road, with the wheel on the Stokes, even two teams of four might be able to do it. But who breaks a leg on Old Mast Road? (And no, we don't really want to know, having hiked it recently on glare ice.) When a section of trail is so treacherous that they simply can't carry down, the entire group stands along both sides of the trail, passing the stretcher from hand to hand. If required, they'll stop to take the wheel off the Stokes for that portion. This is also how rescue teams cross a river -- with all the carriers in two lines, facing each other, and the Stokes passed along between them. Understanding the difficulty of mounting a rescue makes us more sympathetic to the groups that simply lend crutches to hikers who've sprained their ankles.

Because most of our hikers stay on trails, we have few searches and, as more hikers carry GPS units, searches

will be even simpler. Still, technology is always a double-edged sword. One of the reasons why rescue groups like NHF&G want reckless hikers to pay, is that we now have hikers who assume that the only requirement for safety in the mountains is a cell phone. (It's difficult not to hope that when they do run into trouble, it will be in an area without cell phone service .)

After all this, what's the bottom line for hikers who would prefer to stay alive and finish the hike on their own steam? Dave offers three rules, distilled from years of experience:

1: Be prepared! Carry extra food, extra water, extra clothing, a space blanket, a headlamp, one of our superb WODC maps, and a cell phone. (And now, you call 911.)

2: Although a heart attack might be most likely to occur on the way up, most accidents occur on the way down.

RESCUE TODAY is both different and the same. It's the same in that the rescuer still has to get to the person in trouble, no matter the weather, when and where, and get that person stabilized and down the trail, and it's different in that the point man is a Fish & Game employee, and you reach him by dialling 911 on your cell phone. His job is made a little easier by the fact that the last ten years of cell phones have had a chip implanted that gives a lock on your location (who knew?), and he has access to more helicopters, but it's made harder by the fact that he's covering all of the White Mountains, including the big ones with the worst weather in the world -- comparable to Antarctica's. The F&G professionals are still aided by local volunteers (including canines), and they're expected to enforce wildlife regulations, and criminal law in woods or remote areas, in between rescues. They're exposed to great danger -- more from the terrifying weather than from armed lawbreakers -- and they experience great trauma; **Brad Morse**, the F&G guy who has carried out more rescues than he can count, all over the Whites, tells me that he recovers six to eight bodies per year either of suicides who made it, or hikers who didn't. Like the old Tamworth Rescue Squad, F & G is underfunded, their support coming solely out of hunting, fishing, snowmobile and ATV licenses. That sounds like a lot but since they get only \$1 out of each license, it isn't. A major rescue, which can take days, up to fifty rescuers and a helicopter (and NH's National Guard charges for helicopter time), is very expensive to mount, so it's not surprising that F&G has started charging for rescues where the hiker is judged to have been reckless. (The fees have rarely been paid, but see the WODC website for the tale of one dramatic rescue, headed by Brad, where the fee was paid.)

In addition to his other talents (tough, smart, nice and good in the mountains), Brad is also a paramedic and, reading through the rescue stories he sent me, I could see how important that is. One case involved two hikers who had summited Mt. Whiteface and were now somewhere," lost and disoriented, on the

Don't assume that because you made the peak, you're home free. Trails are far more treacherous on the downhill trek, so tread carefully and don't run!

3: Don't hike alone, and -- if you are with a group or a friend, don't leave them. And don't let them leave you.

And if there's anything else we learned from all this it's that the WODC is incredibly lucky to have had Dave Bowles as a long-time member, and to have him still. We can't even imagine how many hours of volunteer labor he's put in over forty years of service, climbing our mountains in all weathers and seasons to get someone down, building bridges, clearing trail or organizing SAR teams. He's never gotten paid; he hasn't even always gotten thanked. He did it because it needed to be done.

Thank you, Dave!

Blueberry Ledge Trail with no lights, food, water or warm clothing. One of the subjects was a diabetic and his insulin pump had become dislodged." In this case, Brad and his supervisor found the subjects' parked jeep which held "two lights, a couple of jackets and some food, including diabetic specific items. I loaded all the items into my rucksack and included a Glucometer, some glucose paste, a bag of IV solution and an injection of Glucagon. We turned on our headlamps and headed up the trail, packs full. After approximately 1.5 miles we stopped every ten to fifteen minutes, yelled their names and blew a whistle and then waited a few minutes for a reply. Another mile and we heard a faint reply on the east side of the ledge. Another twenty minutes of bushwacking through some dense spruce and we located them -- cold, hungry, scared and awfully glad to see us. I gave them their lights, jackets, food and water. Realizing that I was giving them their own items they explained that they had lightened their load to make a quick summit and felt that they would return long before dark." They were able to hike out after eating and drinking, but felt they wouldn't have survived the night on their own.

In another case, an 81 year old man had gone snowshoeing alone on the Kelly Trail the day before, and hadn't returned. When found, he "was suffering from mild hypothermia and prostration. He had become disoriented and had hiked through the night. He had fallen into a brook several times but had kept walking to keep warm. His mittens had become saturated and his hands had superficial frostbite. We added layers of warm dry clothing and a hooded parka. We replaced his mittens with insulated mittens with hand warmers inserted and gave him some hot liquid jello and a candy bar. After about 20 minutes he regained his strength and was able to walk with assistance to a snowmobile that transported him to an ambulance at the trailhead."

Each story ends with Brad giving the rescuees HikeSafe literature (see hikesafe.com website). But for me, the bottom line was: **Don't Go Light! Hike Heavy!**

Tales From the Trails: the Rescue Issue

It was my hope that we'd hear from at least one of the folks who'd experienced the Stokes from inside the basket. But maybe that was naive on my part. Upon mature consideration, I realize that of course, WODC members would rescue themselves (or others), being the tough, brave and resourceful folks that we are. We're also trendy, since Aron Ralston's book, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place", describing a pretty extreme self-rescue involving amputating his own arm, taking a memorial photo of said arm, and then walking out, spawned the Oscar-worthy film: "127 Hours". So here, without loss of body parts, are our tales.

Iccapades: One Sunday afternoon in January 2000, my dog Molly pled with me to take her for a walk. It was very cold but I could see hikers through the trees, headed up the Blueberry Ledge Path, and others were passing on the road next to our house. So I bundled up, put "mushers' wax" on Molly's feet, and filled my backpack with extra warm clothes for me, a dog coat, water, snacks, and my cell phone.

It was a beautiful day—blue sky, white snow—so I decided to climb to the Blueberry Ledges, and off we went. I realized it was a little icy on the rocks as we climbed higher, but felt happy to hang onto convenient branches, swing around those rocks, and continue on up the path. Other people's tracks were like an invitation to "come on up," and I had no trouble. It was lovely to be out!

In a little under an hour, we reached the Ledges. I stepped onto a boulder I knew very well, felt a surge of happiness—and at that very moment slipped on ice hidden under the snow covering. I went down hard and—of course—made the mistake of putting out my hands to break the fall. As I got back on my feet, I said to myself, "OK, sister, you've never broken a bone before, but you've surely done it this time! Just don't fall down again!" And, as you can guess, before I'd taken three more steps, I was down again, and this time it was the other wrist that I knew I'd broken.

It was cold, getting late, and all the hikers I'd seen earlier were nowhere in view. Because I'd broken both wrists, I couldn't get the backpack off my back and had no access to anything in it. So it was important to lose no time in getting down before it got colder, and I knew I couldn't swing around those trees on the Blueberry Ledge Path and return the way I'd come. Fortunately, the Blueberry Cutoff Path was familiar, as our family had helped to keep it clear over the years. It's steep, but that meant I could sit down on the snow and slide a good part of the way. So, I put my wrists down in snow to chill them and, with Molly always encouragingly nearby, slid on the steep parts and walked very carefully on the rest, arms folded in front. The descent went well. But when I reached the narrow part of the trail that's just over Wonalancet Brook, close to the end, I took a deep breath and prayed I wouldn't slide into the water. And I didn't. Molly stayed right with me, and at the bottom of the trail, where it joins Squirrel Lane, I could see a light shining from a house close to our family's. Our neighbor John was working in his study but heard me call, gave me a Bufferin, returned Molly to our house, and drove me to Memorial Hospital in North Conway.

By the time we got inside the hospital, I was in a bit of shock, but managed to stay coherent. As the casts went

on, I suddenly remembered a poem my mother regaled my brother and me with long ago: "Up on the mountaintop, slick as glass/down came a billy goat, sliding on his . . . overcoat!"—and this time, that was me!

Although I told our Newsletter editor that this wasn't a true "rescue story," I was actually rescued afterwards, as family, friends and the Tamworth Nursing Association took care of me until the casts came off and I could care for myself again. Please remember that ice can be anywhere -- wear Yaktrax!
Ann Rogers Carman

A Perfect Rescue:

Mountain rescues require lots of organization. After an accident is reported to Fish & Game, calls are made to those volunteers who are trained in first aid and can carry a litter. It takes time for the rescuers to organize their gear and come together, time to travel to the trail head, be briefed by and registered with Fish and Game, and then get to the accident site.

When I think back over forty years of mountain rescues, one stands out as having had instant response and flawless execution. Fifteen of us were taking a Wilderness First Responder first aid course at SOLO (Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities, just south of Conway). We had completed the course work and the practical exams with simulated victims, and were taking the written exam on the final afternoon of the course, when a call came in saying a real victim had fallen at Champney Falls, fracturing his femur and suffering other injuries. Besides the fifteen freshly trained WFRs there were three instructors--two EMTs and a doctor. Our gear was organized, and transportation was right out the door. We were with the injured man within an hour.

The victim was in pain, but also angry and combative (and big). When an EMT asked permission to cut off his pants, the injured man offered to fight anyone who tried. He did give permission for the doctor to give him a shot to relieve the pain. Once the morphine took effect, the victim thought the world was a wonderful place and of course we could cut off his pants. (*What luck that an MD was present to administer morphine! The alternative scenarios boggle the mind.*)

His injuries were much less dramatic than the realistic simulations we had dealt with earlier in the course. By late afternoon we were back at SOLO finishing our final exam. We all passed.
George Hurley

There's a tail to this tale, which is that very early in his forty year career of rescuing people, George rescued a rock climber who later became his wife. This romantic tale does, however, have two sides; Jean claims that she didn't need rescuing. Knowing her, she's undoubtedly right, and I expect that a lot of guys on white horses have heard some variant of this. Still, it seems a lot more dramatic than meeting at a singles bar or online. (Although rock climbing really is "On Line".)

Even our esteemed President has misjudged trail conditions (although not recently). Here's his saga.

Beginner's Luck: Many years ago, when my enthusiasm for winter hiking outstripped my knowledge, I heard that the White Mountains were going to experience record low temperatures. Who could resist hiking in those conditions?

Parking at the old Crawford Notch Hostel, I saw folks well equipped with snowshoes, boots, and many layers. I was hiking lighter: Sorel boots, wind pants, long underwear, a hooded jacket, sweatshirt, gloves, wool hat, and one cross country ski pole. I made up in enthusiasm for any lack of gear, and headed up the Avalon Trail to hike Tom, Field, and Willey -- peaks without much exposure to the chilling winds. The Avalon Trail was well packed and I enjoyed warming up in the shelter of the trees. My first surprise was at the junction with the A-Z Trail, which was postholed but not broken out. Not to worry -- I didn't have snowshoes anyway.

Going up the half-broken, postholed A-Z was exhilarating. I was comfortable -- actually somewhat hot, and the day was gorgeous -- sunny and frigid. About half a mile below the junction with the Mt. Tom Spur, the postholing stopped. I now needed to find the trail in knee deep powder, a refreshing challenge. Unfortunately, the Mt. Tom Spur was not broken out and I was getting tired. Scratch Mt. Tom. I was sure I'd find a packed trail when I reached the Willey Range Trail. Wrong again -- thigh deep powder; and no sign of other hikers.

The hike across to Mt. Field progressed slowly. Downed trees and other irregular objects obscured the trail once, but after a few minutes I found a blaze and trudged on. Another complication came from the gorgeous softwoods laden with snow -- barely breathing on one of these beauties resulted in an avalanche of cold white powder onto my head and down my neck. Reluctantly I pulled up my hood and zipped my jacket, despite sweating heavily.

Success at last! The summit of Mt. Field! Wonderful views to the north, but the stinging wind sent me back down to the junction with the Avalon Trail which was well packed. What a high I was on -- forget about Mt. Willey! I'd enjoy some food and drink and then saunter down the packed trail. Winter hiking was even better than I'd imagined.

I broke out some granola and my water bottle which now contained ice water. As I ate and sipped I started to feel chilly, which quickly progressed to cold. All that perspiration was freezing. My hands were really, really cold. I stuffed my food and water in the pack -- I knew I had to move and move fast. My hands felt like icicles. I headed down the trail, balling one fist inside my mitten while the other held my ski pole. Postholing was slowing me down. I tried glissading but that just pushed snow up my jacket. Back upright, I kept switching hands to try to warm them. It was fifteen minutes of stumbling downhill before my hands started to feel better, and another fifteen minutes before my body felt comfortable again. I had dodged the bullet. What a delicious hot shower at Crawford Notch Hostel that evening! **Jack Waldron**

Courage is . . . The Sorlien family—Roger, Sue, Rachel, Molly, and Roger's 75-year old dad, Robert "Sparks" Sorlien, hiked up to the Blueberry Ledges for lunch on a beautiful summer day. Sparks was in fine fettle and had never been to the summit of Whiteface, so the family decided to go for the peak. They made it in good time but it was getting late and on the descent Sparks's thighs started locking up. Being a masters level track and field participant, Sparks refused any assistance and pole vaulted from every spruce and fir branch he could grab hold of. This was slow going, so Sue and the girls headed for home in North Sandwich and called us for help. Luckily, we were home, and Evelyn and I quickly packed up a tent, sleeping bags, and food. Evelyn stayed

behind while I drove right to the foot of the Blueberry Ledge Trail to save time, since it was beginning to get dark. I met Roger and Sparks about a mile and a half beyond the junction with the Cut Off, where Roger had a small fire going in the middle of the trail to brighten up the situation. We managed to find a place for the tent, had some food, and listened to stories from Sparks that even Roger had never heard.

After a pretty good night we headed down, helping Sparks as much as possible. Near the bottom of the trail we met Sue, who is a nurse, and she had just what we needed for medical attention—coffee and food. All turned out well, and we got to spend a night in the woods and hear some excellent stories.

Some weeks later I saw Ginger Heard at a Sandwich Democratic event. She mentioned her friend Elizabeth Tollman, who had a summer place at the foot of Blueberry Ledge Trail, exactly where I had illegally parked my truck. Having little patience with the lazy sorts who bypassed Ferncroft for a closer parking spot, she called the police to find out whose vehicle it was and would have had it towed away except for my bumper sticker: "Courage is a Carroll County Democrat". **Fred LaVigne**

Fred also recounted a joint rescue effort. This one is transcribed by me from our phone conversation.

The Couch Potato Rescue. At the end of a cold wet day in late fall, when the thought of relaxing with a drink was starting to sound good, I got a call from Fish & Game officer, Brad Morse. He'd gotten a cell phone call from two hikers, who'd been out all day looking for Flat Mountain Pond, but got tangled up in a web of private trails and logging roads. Brad said, "I don't know if you can help locate them, but they're in the Whiteface Intervale area, near a gravel pit and a trail sign, and I don't recognize the trail sign."

"Boy", I said, "I know that sign and this is going to be great. You can drive right up and get them." It was on the Bates' land and there was a gate, but I knew Brad would have the keys. He called back a couple hours later to let me know that sure enough, he was able to drive right to them. They were hypoglycemic and near hypothermic, but Brad was equipped with hot drinks and food. I guess they were some glad to see him. And I never had to get off my couch.

Fred gives credit to WODC here. Seems we responded to an earlier plea from Brad, by donating 17 of our maps to Fish & Game. Not only have these helped F&G to navigate trails, but having Fred and Brad looking at the same map really helped communication in this instance.

The next Tales from the Trail: The topic of rescue got a great response (after a certain amount of nagging and arm-twisting, but hey -- what are editors for?) In fact, it got such a good response that we're continuing the theme (with a slight change of topic) in the next (fall) issue, whose topic will be "**Lost on the Trail**". Are there any among us who *haven't* ever been lost? If so, please don't write in. You've probably never hiked. But I'd love to hear from the rest of you. Just email your adventures, no matter how embarrassing, to me: susangoldhor@comcast.net. And, if you're having trouble with the small print on this, email me and I'll send you a pdf file that you can zoom in on. Or go to wodc.org and click!

Outreach Program and The Weeks Act: March 1, 2011 marked the 100th Anniversary of the passage of the Weeks Act which authorized the creation of all the National Forests east of the Mississippi, including our own White Mountain National Forest. There will be celebrations of this anniversary throughout 2011, especially the "8 Days of Weeks" which will be held on the four weekends of August. In honor of this anniversary WODC will host 2 Outreach Days at the Ferncroft Parking Lot during the "8 Days of Weeks". Our Outreach Program consists in setting up a tarp and table beside the Ferncroft Kiosk and chatting with the passing hikers. Normally we accomplish a number of objectives: 1) provide advice and hydration to passing hikers, 2) raise their awareness of WODC and our trail work, 3) sell WODC merchandise, and 4) have a great time talking with hikers about the trails and environment we love. This year we will also focus hiker awareness on the Weeks Act. Outreach stints under the tarp are typically in two hour blocks. This year's **Outreach Days** are Saturday **August 6** and Saturday **August 27**. If you are curious about Outreach Days or want to sign up for a stint, contact Jack Waldron at jkw@jackw.mv.com or 603-323-8913. And, if you want to start celebrating the Weeks Act right away, go to WeeksLegacy.org for a year's worth of events.

Trails Report: The trails are currently under a deep blanket of snow. (Maybe not by the time you read this.) Snowshoeing off trail last week was more like postholing. Snowshoes provided very little flotation in the deep unconsolidated snow. Some critters do well traveling on top of the snow, and we've recently confirmed the presence of Pine Martens on the trails and compost piles of Wonalancet. Pine Martens have been slowly expanding their range south throughout the WMNF. When the snow melts and Pine Martens again enjoy the anonymity of travel on forest floor duff, we'll host four **Volunteer Trail Work days**. All will be held on Saturdays: **May 21**, Spring Trails Day; **June 4**, National Trails Day; **July 16**, NH Trails Day; and **September 24**, National Public Lands Day. On each of those Saturdays we'll meet at Ferncroft at 8:30 AM. Bring water, food, gloves, and clothing appropriate for the weather. Most of all, be prepared to spend a day outdoors, deriving satisfaction from a job well done.

We'll undertake two significant trail projects this season. Jed Talbot and his crew from Off The Beaten Path will return for another summer of rock steps on both the Blueberry Ledge Trail and the Dicey's Mill trail. This year's work is again sponsored by a Forest Service Grant under the Stimulus program. Jed's work over the last two years is pretty impressive -- take a hike up the Blueberry Ledge Trail to check it out.

The second project will be an opportunity for members to do some real trail construction work. We'll relocate a half-mile section of trail lower down on Blueberry Ledge Trail. This relocation will bypass a wet section of the trail. We are going to do this relo with volunteer labor as part of our volunteer match for our 2011 Stimulus funds. This will certainly be a challenge but we think that our membership (that's you!) will rise to the occasion. Contact Fred or Jack for more details.

Last year we only managed to complete one Wilderness Monitoring Stint. We hope to do better this year. On these stints volunteers monitor hiker traffic for 4 hours at specific locations. This information is part of the Sandwich Range's Wilderness Management Plan. We need your help to improve our contribution to the management of the Sandwich Range Wilderness. Maintaining that wilderness environment and spiritual refuge requires dedication and effort on our part.

If you have any questions or are interested in any of these opportunities contact Fred at 284-6919, or Jack at 323-8913, jkw@jackw.mv.com.
Jack Waldron, Trails Chair

The WODC Annual Meeting date is Sunday, August 21 at 6:30 PM in the Wonalancet Chapel. Potluck in the Grove at 5.

WODC ORDER FORM

PLEASE MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:

**WODC MEMBER SERVICES
HCR64, BOX 248
WONALANCET, NH 03897**

NAME.....
STREET.....
CITY, STATE, ZIP.....
TELEPHONE.....
EMAIL.....

SPECIAL! If you like our map, check out cartographer Mike Bromberg's new trail map & guide to the Grand Monadnock. It shows every hiking trail on Monadnock and neighboring Gap Mountain, with GPS accuracy. All trailheads and surrounding roads are shown, with winter access indicated. Trail descriptions and other useful information on the back. Folded to pocket size, on waterproof Tyvek, it may be purchased at the State Park Store, or viewed in color and ordered online via a link at www.3rc.biz/map.php. If you hike Monadnock, you need this map!

QTY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	TOTAL
	1901 Guide to Wonalancet (Reprint)	\$10.00	
	WODC Map & Guide (3rd edition) Members Non-Members	6.00 8.00	
	Unfolded WODC Map & Guide	9.00	
	3 or more unfolded Maps - each	7.00	
	WODC Historical Collection (CD)	25.00	
	WODC Patch	3.00	
	Coolmax T-shirt <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> gray <input type="checkbox"/> Large <input type="checkbox"/> blue <input type="checkbox"/> X-Large	18.00	
	New Memberships (not for renewals!) <input type="checkbox"/> Pathfinder <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input type="checkbox"/> Trail Blazer <input type="checkbox"/> Five Year	15.00 25.00 50.00 250.0	
Additional Contribution (Tax Deductible)			
<i>All prices include shipping</i>			TOTAL:



Editor's Ramble . . . There's been a lot of fanfare for the human genome recently, the sequencing of which celebrated its tenth anniversary last year. (although one sequencer noted that it was like "being given the best book in the world, but it's in Russian, and it's incredibly boring to read.") There's been somewhat less PR for the more recent sequencing of the human biome: all the microorganisms that call us home. It turns out that there are more of them and more kinds of them than anyone thought -- more than a thousand species. Each of us is home to about three hundred species, but the zoo in and on each of us has a somewhat different set of inhabitants. They're teeming in our every crevice and on our every surface, inside and out. If you could take a picture of just them, you'd see each of us outlined inside and out in microbes. It would be an image of us, but missing everything that we think of as us. And, if you analyzed all the cells that make up any one of us, only about one in ten of those cells would have that much-hyped human genome. The other nine cells would be those of bacteria, fungi, mites, and other tiny cohabitants. So here's what I've been thinking. . . if only ten percent of our cells are human, what are we? We're not simply humans; we're not just individuals -- we're ecosystems. Just like the forest or the meadow, we're the sum of all the species that compose us. And, just like the forest or the meadow, we need all those species. Without them, we'd be vitamin-deficient; malnourished, and sitting ducks for every pathogen and auto-immune disease that came our way. So toss out all that anti-bacterial soap, and spare a thought for our support systems and those of the places we love: all the bacteria and algae and fungi that are in the brook, in the soil, in, on and around every tree and animal. Without them, there would be no wilderness. No prairie; no tundra; no forest -- no us. They are the basis of life. Instead of limiting our protection to the megafauna or flora; we need to extend protection to the millions of microbial species that underlie us all. But first we'd better learn their names. **Susan Goldhor**



Wonalancet Out Door Club
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