



Grand Traverse Hiking Club

A Chapter of the North Country Trail Association

Volume No.10 Issue 6 Dec. 2003

Notes from the Board

John Heiam

The club recently received some great news from the DNR. They approved our reroute of the NCT from the old US 131 campground north. Currently the trail crosses US 131 and goes north, east of the highway, and then crosses back about five miles north. There are several problems with this section of trail. It is not very scenic, it shares part of the Shore-To-Shore horse trail, and it requires crossing US 131 twice. Since the highway will soon be made limited access this created some major problems for us. Dick Naperala and Arlen Matson have been working for years trying to get the DNR to allow us to reroute the trail and stay west of US 131. After many meetings, and a lot of work by Dick and Arlen, this reroute was finally approved.

I always look forward to the first snow. As soon as we have a thick blanket of white, Lois and I go out into the woods on skis or snowshoes. Not only does snow cover the trees, but the ground is covered with tracks from all the unseen animals. Winter is truly a magical time in our north woods. This year the club will offer outings many weekends in December, January, and February. If you already own cross country skis or snowshoes, dust them off and join us on one of our outings.

Let me offer one word of advice. When you are snowshoeing on our local trails, please avoid the cross-country ski tracks. If you walk on a cross-country ski track with snowshoes, you ruin the trail for everyone who tries to ski the trail from then until the next snowfall. It is much easier to walk off-trail with snowshoes than with skis; trust me, I use both.

Special Event

Sun., Feb. 1, 2004 -9:00AM

The Subaru Women's Ski Tour

(Note: Although this event is not sponsored by our club, I thought it would be of interest to our members.
-John Heiam)

The sixth annual Subaru Women's Ski Tour is scheduled for Sunday, February 1, 2004.

This women's only event will take place at Timber Ridge Nordic Center on Super Bowl Sunday morning. Participants may choose to ski 3K, 5K, or 15K loops on groomed trails, or snowshoe on separate designated trails. This noncompetitive event benefits TART Trails, the Grand Traverse Area Women's Resource Center and Madeleine's House. Registration starts at 8:45 a.m. Skiers may start anytime between 9 am and 12 pm.

Although men are not permitted to participate, they are welcomed as volunteers. Having volunteered for the past two years, I can say that I've never been to an event that was more fun. For more information please visit:

<http://www.womensskitour.com/>

Volunteers Needed!

Please consider volunteering your time to the Club. There are many opportunities for you to help.

- Lead a hike or outing
- Bring treats to a monthly meeting
- Write an article for the newsletter

If you are able to lend your time, please contact a board member or come to our next board meeting; Thursday, Dec. 11th at 7:00 PM in the basement of Horizon Books - Traverse City.

Programs & Meetings

A new feature of our monthly meetings is a swap table where club members may sell their old equipment. Just bring all that stuff you are not using anymore, mark it with a price, and your name, and leave it on the table. Remember people are looking for a bargain, and that stuff is just taking up room in your closet!

Due to the holidays, there will be no regular meeting on the third Thursday of December. Instead, on Sunday, December 14, we will have activities at Muncie Lakes, followed by a potluck at Mike Schaeffer and Debby Page's house. See the outing section of this newsletter for details.

Thurs., December 11, 2003 -7:00PM GTHC Board Meeting TC Horizon Books – Lower Level

This is the place where the business of the club gets conducted.

Everyone is welcome!

Thurs., January 15, 2004 - 7:00PM "Mount Assiniboine Lodge" Oleson Center NMC – Traverse City

Lois and John have gone to Mount Assiniboine Lodge numerous times. This backcountry lodge is located on the continental divide at the base of the "Canadian Matterhorn", and can only be reached by helicopter. All skiing is off trail, and is led by experienced guides. The presentation will include slides taken during Lois' and John's trips and an exhibit of the equipment used for skiing in the backcountry. Come and see that you don't have to be an expert skier to enjoy backcountry skiing in the mountains.

Thurs., February 19, 2004 - 7:00PM "Great Divide Mountain Biking" Oleson Center NMC – Traverse City

In August of 2003, Dick Naperala, Roger Raehl, Dan Mixer, and Gary Olson mountain biked 650 miles of The Great Divide Mountain Bike Route, starting at the Canadian border in Montana and ending at Dillon, in southwestern Montana. Their exciting adventure biking along the Continental Divide took them along remote mountain gravel roads where they encountered incredible waterfalls, forest fires, historic mining districts, tourist towns, great restaurants, and wonderful people. Come and see their great slides and hear their personal stories about this challenging trip.

Thursday March 18, 2004 - 7:00PM "Imagery in Nature" Oleson Center NMC – Traverse City

Kimberli A. Bindschatel, publisher of "Whisper In The Woods", Michigan's Nature Journal, is also a professional wildlife photographer. She will share a slide presentation of her images as well as talk about her journey to help others find meaning in nature. She lives in Traverse City with her husband Ken and their two dogs. Kimberli's presentation will include scenes from the Grand Traverse area, Alaska, New Mexico, Colorado, and Florida.

Last Minute Outings

Our web site now has a link to the NCTA bulletin board! If you would like to have some company on a hike, you can post a notice on the bulletin board. You should also get in the habit of checking this bulletin board to see if others are leading a hike you would be interested in. The latest URL address is:

<http://www.northcountrytrail.org/phpBB2/>

Club Outings and Activities



Note: Please consider leading a hike or backpack. We can only have a full program if everyone contributes. Contact me if you are interested and I can help you with the newsletter write-up. **John Heiam**; email: johnheiam@charter.net or phone 938-9655.

Saturday, December 13

**Hike at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
Meet at the Maritime Museum near Glen Haven
10:00 am**

Leader: Barbara Vockel

This hike is on a three mile loop trail. We will be walking on sand dunes for much of the way, followed by a forested area near the end of the hike. There are some nice views of Lake Michigan along the way. A SBDNL use permit is required for each vehicle. Those interested can meet for lunch afterwards in Glen Arbor or Empire. Call Barbara Vockel (941-1680) if you have any questions.

Sunday, December 14

Muncie Lakes Trail, Noon - 3:00 pm

Leaders: Mike Schaeffer and Debby Page

(note: this event is shared with the bike club)

Hike, mountain bike, snowshoe, or cross country ski at the Muncie Lakes Trail. Who knows what the weather will be like this year and what type of activity we'll be able to do. With skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking and hiking activities available, we'll definitely be able to do something. We'll even wear our rain gear if necessary. Bring your skis, bike, hiking boots, snowshoes or whatever the conditions call for. The weather might determine what we can do on the trail, but it can't get bad enough to cancel the event. The important thing isn't what we do on the trail, but what happens afterward. After we ski, bike, hike or whatever on the trail, we'll go over to Mike and Debby's house, a very short drive from Muncie, for a potluck. Mike and Debby will provide the brats and a grill. Bring a dish to pass, and your own beverage. We should have a real feast. If you aren't interested in hitting the trail and would rather go shopping or something else, you can still come join us afterward. We

should be back at the house around 3:00 p.m. for lunch.

Directions to Muncie Lakes: The trailhead is located on the north side of Ranch Rudolf Road, one mile east of the intersection with Rennie Lake Road.

Directions to Mike Schaeffer and Debby Page's house: The house is located at 1431 Hobbs Hwy. at the intersection with Harold's Road, 3.5 miles south of Supply Road. If you need directions to either the trailhead or the house, call Mike or Debby at 947-9379.

Saturday, December 20

**North Country Trail along the banks of the
Manistee River**

Leader: Dick Parks

Join us on an expedition to some scenic views of the Manistee River valley from bluffs along the North Country Trail. Hiking distance along the NCT will be approximately five miles. If there is sufficient snow, we will use skis or snowshoes. If there is too much snow to access the NCT via seasonal roads in vehicles, we will ski / snowshoe the roads (and reduce the NCT distance accordingly). Bring a pack, lunch, beverage, and layers. Call Dick Parks (946-7098) for time and meeting place.

Friday, December 26

Cross-country skiing at Sand Lakes Quiet Area

Leaders: John Heiam & Lois Goldstein

Forget about going to the mall! Come try out some of your presents! We will ski the long loop (about 8 miles) at a casual pace, and then go out for lunch afterwards. Call John or Lois at (231) 938-9655 for meeting time and directions.

Sunday, January 11

Cross country skiing at Hanson Hills

Leaders: John Heiam & Lois Goldstein

Come and ski with us at this delightful trail system just west of Grayling. There is a small trail fee and a warming house. Bring a lunch and we will spend the day there. We can meet in Acme and form car pools if that is convenient for you. Call John or Lois at (231) 938-9655 for meeting time and directions.

Saturday, January 17

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Leader: Dick Parks

Join us for an outing to the northern reaches of SBDNL. We will ski or snowshoe old two-tracks, game trails, foot trails, and off trails; hike if there is insufficient snow cover. Bring a pack, lunch, beverage, and layers. A SBDNL use permit is required for each vehicle. Call Dick Parks (946-7098) for meeting time and place.

Sunday, February 8

Snowshoe the North Country Trail

Meet at the US 131 Campground at 9:30 am

Leader: Betsy Duede

Snowshoe along the NCT above the Manistee River. The group will walk west for an hour or two, and then return to the cars. Afterwards the group will have lunch at the Lone Pine Restaurant in Kingsley.

Directions: The campground is located 19 miles south of Kalkaska on US 131 on the west side of the road, just north of the Manistee River. From Kingsley, take M-113 east to US 131. Turn right (south) and go for 2 miles and turn right at the sign for the State Forest Campground. This road is plowed and will dead end shortly at old US 131 which is not plowed but may be navigable to the campground entrance due to snowmobile traffic. If not, park here and hike in the rest of the way (about 1/3 miles)

The road to the campground is not plowed but last year snowmobiles packed it down some and most of us were able to park at the entrance. Those who do not have four wheel drive can car pool with Betsy leaving at 8:45 from the Lone Pine Restaurant in Kingsley. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Steve or Betsy at 946-4524.

Sunday, February 15

Cross country skiing the Mason Tract (east of Grayling)

Leaders: John Heiam & Lois Goldstein

You may have paddled the South Branch of the AuSable River, now come ski along its banks. Although this outing requires a drive of about an hour and fifteen minutes from Acme, it will be fun to explore a new area. Bring a lunch and we will spend the day. We can meet in Acme and form car pools if that is convenient for you. Call John

or Lois at (231) 938-9655 for meeting time and directions.

**Get your GTHC Newsletter
Faster & Cheaper via the web**

In a cost savings effort, we are looking at lowering mailing and printing costs for the newsletter. We can substantially cut expenses by partially eliminating printing and US postage. **We are looking for members who are willing to receive the newsletter via the web only, and be removed from the US postal mailing list.**

We will provide you with email notification and a web link each issue so that you merely point, click, and enjoy the newsletter as always in either MS Word or Adobe Acrobat format. **HELP US SAVE!** Please contact Betsy Duede, at 231-946-4524 or Email at: pedalpushers272@cs.com and leave your email address.

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As a member of the NCTA and Grand Traverse Hiking Club, you're entitled to advertise free in this newsletter. Submit your items (Less than 50 words per ad please) to Brian Cox at (231)275-9833 or email at: tcbrian@chartermi.net

FOR SALE: Two pairs of Sherpa Khumbu Climber snowshoes. Both pairs are 9 inches wide and 30 inches long so they fit people who weigh between 150-225 lbs. The Lotus Comfort bindings are very easy to use. These snowshoes are one year old, and have seen little use. New cost \$200 /pair, but we are asking \$100/ pair. We will sell both pairs for \$175. **Call John Heiam or Lois Goldstein at (231) 938-9655.**

FOR SALE: Mad River solo canoe, ash gunwales & decking, caned seat, knee pads, compass, lining rope attached, and laminated paddle. Beautiful teal color. Used three times. \$785 OBO. **Contact Arlen at (231) 941-4152.**

FOR SALE: Eureka Mountain Pass XT-2 tent in excellent condition. Full cover fly, 2 vestibules, 2 doors with screens, screened roof vent. Weight-5 lbs. - \$80. **Contact Bob Fitch at (231) 941-0268, rfitch@traverse.net**

2003 Annual Trail Report

Arlen Matson



In general our chapter of the NCTA continued its primary objective of maintaining the North Country Trail, and maintaining the four Grand Traverse County DNR trails. We also continued to negotiate with the Traverse City DNR our recommendation of a reroute west of US 131 and the Shore to Shore Trail. The addition of more signage, building of 2 new bridges, and maintenance of the NCT

in the UP was realized. Only the negotiation with private property owners for egress of the NCT was not pursued.

Goal 1: The maintenance of the NCT from the Manistee NF boundary south of Mesick to the SST north of Walton was accomplished in May and September. A total of approximately 126 hours was contributed by our adopters. These leaders are as follows along with their sector assignments:

- Manistee NF>M-115 - Bob Rudd;**
- M-115>No. 10 1/2 Rd - Jack & Sandy Wilsey;**
- 10 1/2 Rd>No. 8 Rd - Barb Maue & Steve Novak;**
- M-37>No. 17 Rd - Jerry Freels;**
- No. 17 Rd>Anderson Cr - Fred & Kathy Sabel;**
- Anderson Cr >No 23 Rd - Larry & Donna Dodd;**
- No 23 Rd >Highbanks Rollway - Bill Stellema & Karen Guelandi**
- Highbanks Rollway >Baxter Bridge Rd - Dick Parks;**
- Dell Rd >Townline Rd - Mike Schaeffer & Debby Page**
- Townline Rd >E to 2nd foot bridge - Jim Heffner;**
- Old US 131 SFCG >W to 3rd foot bridge - Pete Ostrowski;**
- Old US 131 SFCG > County Line Rd - Bob & Marty Johnson;**
- County Line Rd >US 131 SST - Bill & Bonnie Mathias**

Goal 2: The maintenance of the Grand Traverse County DNR trails is in our 8th year. These are patrolled twice each year similarly to the NCT, but with a different report. A total of 50 hours was contributed this year. The trail leader/teams are as follows:

- Lake Ann Pathway.....Jerry Heiman**
- Lost Lake Pathway.....Fred & Kathy Sabel, Larry & Donna Dodd**
- Muncie Lakes Pathway.....Betsy Duede, Mona Liska & the team**
- Sand Lakes Quiet Area.....Bud Ward**

Goal 3: The relocation of the NCT from the east side of US 131 to an area west of US 131 has been an effort of two years in the waiting stage. This year we resubmitted the reroute proposal with detailed documentation to the Traverse City DNR (Dave Lemmien). The route would begin about a half-mile west of the Old US 131 SFCG near the National Trails Day bridge building project and proceed north crossing an east-west railroad, than north to M-113 and then funneling in at Forrest Road adjacent to M-186.

MDOT is closing all roads which cross or egress US 131 by fencing them in this next spring. That means our new swan song would have to be "Don't Fence Me In!" Their plan and that of the state DNR, without any coordination with our chapter, the NCTA or NPS, is to put us under the bridge crossing the Manistee River.

By this time most of you have heard about the Shore-to-Shore "gully" Trail which we feed into just north of Walton. This is not in keeping with the legislative mandate for a national scenic trail. This is the second time we have been relegated to an arbitrary decision by the Michigan DNR without due process.

After numerous attempts to solve this problem with the Traverse City DNR, we now have moved up the chain of command to Roger Hoeksema of the Cadillac DNR. We are encouraged by his decision to view on site our proposal. We have also enlisted the aid of the NPS, NCTA, and Joan Young, the NCTA Lower Michigan Trails Coordinator. Our new goal is to reroute this spring.

Goal 4: The building of 2 bridges west of Old US 131 SFCG was completed as scheduled.

In May, a group led by the adopter of that section, Pete Ostrowski, built an 18' bridge across a drainage gully. We were able to use dead evergreens as stringers. This is always a unique experience to use materials on site, and marks our second experience. Total hours this project, 56.5.

In June, National Trails Day, Dick Naperala supervised the construction of our longest bridge to date. This is such a picturesque spot with the confluence of two unnamed creeks. While Dick Parks and his helpers cleaned up the old slippery planked affair, Rick Halbert led a hike for others interested in viewing the NCT. The Record Eagle's was on site and wrote up a fine article complete with large photograph.

Our chapter contributed 140 hours of work on that Saturday.

Goal 5: Bob Rudd led his crew on a fine new approach up from the railroad crossing. This work was also complete on NTD. The old access was extremely steep and eroded. Signage and blazing took place, and the old rutted access down the slope eliminated and brushed in.

Goal 6: With the agreement we had with the Newberry DNR (Paul Gaberdiel) from last July, we sent four teams up to the UP to maintain the NCT from the Mouth of the Two Hearted River to Muskellunge State Park. This was a time consuming job. Many trees down in some sectors and reblazing at the Mouth of the Two Hearted begun.

The time spent work on this section of adopt-a-trail is 87 hours. The following adopters covered their sectors at least once and some twice:

Section A34, 33, 32.....Carol Smith & Bev Zelt
Section A31, A6,1,2.....Bob Otwell
Section 4, A3, B4.....Marty Johnson & Margaret Nielsen/Barb Kennedy
Section 5, B5, 6, 1.....Larry & Donna Dodd

With the formation of a new chapter at Grand Marais, the NCT from that town to the Mouth of the Two Hearted River is now under their jurisdiction. We have informed them that we are willing to help. Their president acknowledged with gratitude all of our trail work.

Goal 7: This goal did not materialize due to the work load on other projects. We have reestablished it again for the next year. We wish to remove the NCT from both No. 8 Road and Baxter Bridge Road (29 1/2 MI Rd) to Dell Road. To do this we need to negotiate with private land owners.

Other trail details included the following: Installation of 2 North Country Trail and 2 Highbanks Rollway sign on the new information stations erected by us last year at that site.

Measurement of reroute away from power line south of No. 16 Road, and application for certification to the NPS. (6)

Short reroute at the end of Townline Road away from cabin. (35)

Signage placement of 15 new NCT signs at M-115 Roadside Park, M-37 Trailhead, carsonite markers at Highbanks, replacement of damaged sign at Dell Road, carsonite markers at Townline Road, one 4x4 post sign near clear cutting and the first bridge site, two 4x4 post signs at new reroute near railroad crossing and NTD project bridge, carsonite replacement at Old US 131 NCT crossing, and a 4x4 sign at intersection of SST & M-186. (16)

Jerry Freels and I are currently working on a new reroute just east of the Wheeler Creek old railroad bed away from the wet rutted 2trac.

Goals for the year 2004 are listed below:

Goal 1: Continued maintenance & improvement of the NCT from the Manistee NF boundary to the SST north of Walton.

Goal 2: Continued maintenance of the four DNR trails in Grand Traverse County.

Goal 3: Complete the negotiations with the DNR of the reroute west of US 131.

Goal 4: Construct the new 5 mile reroute linking the NCT into the SST near Forrest Road.

Goal 5: Repaint all of the blazes in both directions by the adopters.

Goal 6: Reroute ca 1/3 mile off from 2trac near east of Wheeler Creek.

Goal 7: Begin to add signage at all major SST crossings.

Goal 8: Pursue with the state DNR the status of 2 reroute proposals in the area of Sheck's Place on the Boardman River.

Goal 9: Negotiate with private landowners the placement of the NCT away from No. 8 Road and Baxter Bridge to Dell Road segment.

The Grand Traverse Hiking Club contributed a total of 516 hours of labor in trail projects this year.

My personal time to date is an accumulated total of 216 hours. Beginning in January, we will need a new Administrative Trails Coordinator as I take a leave of absence. That is the month I begin my 70th year, and my wife and I will celebrate our 50th anniversary in April. It's time for a rest.

I know that Dick Naperala, the Field Trails Coordinator has over a 100 hours just on the reroute proposal, plus all of his personal time on other projects. We need another person to assist Dick with his work.

This years Silver Saw Award is presented to Roger Raehl and Dan Mixer. Both of these outdoorsman have led in the construction of many of our bridge building projects. They have contributed their tools, time, knowledge and leadership beginning with our first bridge at Wheeler Creek to our last major bridge completed on National Trails Day. They would be the first to say that bridge building is a team effort, and to all who worked with them the award in the larger sense is shared by all of you, our trail workers.

To all of you who are a part of this trail report, who hike the North Country Trail, or

contribute financially to the membership of this chapter; we thank you for your stewardship in making this a better place in Northern Michigan. Well done my friends.