
Tittabawasse News

Tittabawasse Chapter of the North Country Trail Association

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Hope Everyone is having a GREAT Holiday Season and that your New Year is better than ever!

A Message From Our Trail Coordinator:

The year 2006 has seen a lot of changes in the Tittabawasse Chapter (TBW) of the North Country Trail (NCT). It is exciting to be a part of such a great trail that is moving forward. It is important to preserve a corridor of woods for hiking and for the respite it gives to the hectic life styles we find ourselves caught up in.

We're never happier than when we're out wandering in the woods or working on the trail. It doesn't seem like work, because we enjoy it so much. That said, we ought to be just ecstatic this next summer if the four miles of trail reroute that our chapter has been working on is approved. Our NCT director of trail management, Clare Cain, has been working with us to gain the necessary permissions from the managers of the state land where our NCT was temporarily routed on 2-track roads when it was first put on the ground in the 80's. When we get permissions for these reroutes we will have several work/camp weeks and everyone is invited. We always schedule the 3rd week of June for our work/camp meeting, so be sure to keep that date open and join us.

This year TBW has welcomed several new

members. Some of them live up north near the trail and have the opportunity to hike the NCT more often than the members who live a 2 hour drive or more from the trail. We need members who are willing to partner with TBW trail adopters to hike and report on sections of trail. We also need members who live in the Petosky area to hike and report on the sections that go through Petosky and by Round Lake.

If there is anyone willing to serve in this capacity, please E-mail us at tbwchapter@northcountrytrail.org. Please put "To Cora" in the subject.

TBW chapter elected a new president this year and it is encouraging to see the new ideas he is directing our chapter toward. Our May and September TBW chapter meetings have been relocated to Gaylord at the University Center, to give the members that live up north a chance to attend. We also have scheduled our spring and fall walk-thru of the trail after the meeting, thus saving on gas money for those of us traveling long distances. It is our hope that hikers in the area will be interested in joining us to hike and maintain our great trail.

Our new president has taken on the job of placing road name stickers on the back of the carsonites at all the places where the trail crosses a road. In the past he has compiled a TBW chapter brochure with a map of our 80 mile section and been responsible for designing and having a chapter patch made up.

We look forward to the new year with plans to develop, maintain, preserve and promote our great North Country National Scenic Trail.

Cora, TBW trail coordinator

Winter Trails Day - 2006

January 7, 2006

The North Country Trail Association and the Tittabawasse Chapter were again a part of Winter Trails Day held at the CCC Museum in Roscommon. This is the 6th consecutive year that we have answered questions, passed out literature and led guided snowshoe walks around the grounds for those who are afraid of getting lost. Glory even donated three NCTA ball caps to be used as door prizes.

This year the day started out quite miserable, several of the expressways were completely closed due to black ice and numerous accidents. Even so, over 250 people registered for the event and had a fantastic day. Some years have had as many as 500 people registered.

Once the freezing rain subsided the snow started - huge, fluffy flakes that make for a gorgeous "Greeting Card" scene! Plus the temperatures were the warmest any of the participants could remember. This is an outdoor activity, with no access to heated buildings, but a large bonfire and plenty of good food keeps everyone's spirits high.

If you aren't familiar with Winter Trails Day, let me explain. It's a national event, much like Trails Day in June, but obviously limited to the northern states. Snowshoe vendors like Tubbs, Atlas, MSR, Crescent Moon, Redfeather and Little Bear bring all kinds of snowshoes and poles, help fit anyone who wants to try them out, and let the participants take a walk in the woods. There is no limit on how long they can try them or how many different types they can try out. No sales are made at the event so there is no pressure, just a lot of relaxed comparison shopping. It's a great way to see if you might be interested in expanding your hiking into the snowy months. And it's a fantastic outing for families of any age. There is no charge for the event, in fact, the DNR waves the parking fee for the day!

The event at the CCC Museum is sponsored and organized by the great folks at the Michigan Snowshoe Center in Roscommon. Each year Ben and Pam Carr go all out and it shows. The Snowshoe Center event is designated an "anchor" event, meaning it is one of the largest and consistently successful Winter Trails events in the nation. Be sure to check it out next year, it's a perfect match for promoting the NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL!

NOTE: Next year's event will be on January 6, 2007 - Mark your calendar to help out or just enjoy the day!

LWOP Visits Michigan

Bob Coveney, a friend of Dennis Mashue (TBW Member), stopped at the Chippewa Nature Center in Midland on November 11th. This program was hosted by the Midland Hiking Club and the Tittabawassee Chapter of the NCTA.

Bob, with the Appalachian Trail name of "LWOP" shared his experience hiking the entire AT in 2004. He had a number of photographs of the AT that he commented about. Of course he got the usual questions about thru-hiking, weight, water, etc. However, I liked his approach:

LWOP hiked to enjoy the experience. It may take a little longer or require carrying a little more weight. It was a very enjoyable presentation.



LWOP and his wife

The Chippewa Nature Center allowed us to use their auditorium at now cost. They are very friendly folks and it is a great place to meet. They have several hiking trails on their property. The Chippewa River goes right by the Visitor Center.

Gary

Annual Meeting Houghton Lake

In order to encourage a larger turnout of TBW volunteers our January meeting will be at Houghton Lake at Coyles Restaurant. This is approximately half way between Sanford and Gaylord. Please bring your spouse, significant other or invite a friend. They are putting us in the bigger room that will accommodate up to 75 people. We need 40 people in attendance to get the meeting room free.

Coyles is noted for their buffet. Since we are meeting at noon, their luncheon buffet is \$5.99 and pop is \$ 1.20. A sample menu can be seen at their web site - <http://www.coylesrestaurant.com>

Since our term of office is two years, we will not have an election of officers this year. However, we will be giving an NCT vest to a deserving TBW volunteer. Also, there will be certificate appreciations awarded. In addition, John Richter, President of the Friends of the Jordan will be our guest speaker. He has compiled a book about the Jordan River Valley. Of course, we will have some door prizes.

Some members have expressed an interest to go snowshoeing. Lyle B. will help us to do that after the meeting. He knows some locations nearby.

Please post this so you won't forget the date:

Saturday January 13th, noon
At Coyles Restaurant, Banquet and Gift Shop
9074 Old US 27
Houghton Lake, MI 48629



Located off US 127 Houghton Lake, M-55 exit, go east about 2 miles turn left on Sandpiper Ave.

A Taste of the High Sierra

In September, 2005 I made my first visit to Las Vegas to visit my nephew. Not being one for the bright lights and casinos, we immediately headed west from Vegas, driving through Death Valley (elevation 85 feet below sea level) to Lone Pine, California. We car-camped in an area of BLM land a few miles outside of Lone Pine known as the Alabama Rocks. The next morning, after a hearty breakfast back in Lone Pine, we headed up Horseshoe Meadow Road to it's end at the Cottonwood Lakes Trailhead (elevation 10,040 ft). Having come from Michigan (elevation 520ft.) just the day before, I could definitely feel the difference! I guess I should let you in on who the "we" is that I keep referring to. There is my nephew Matt, his brother Adam (who lives in Vegas), and Adam's girlfriend Gretchen. I am definitely the "OLD MAN" of the group, at about twice their age!

We left the vehicle on a flat, dusty footpath through a pine forest heading west, then north along Cottonwood Creek. After crossing the creek several times, we entered the John Muir Wilderness and began a steady, 400 ft climb to the Cottonwood Basin and Lakes #1 and #2. This basin is a beautiful alpine meadow, dotted with numerous small lakes and surrounded by snowcapped peaks. We continued hiking and gently climbing through

these alpine meadows until we reached Long Lake (elevation 11,135 ft) where we decided to make our first camp. This was a very beautiful lake, but very windy, with the wind coming over the pass and rushing around the ridge to our west. This will be a great test for my new lightweight gear - I'm carrying only a sylnylon tarp for my shelter.

The tarp performed beautifully, I slept warm and comfortable! In the morning there was a thin layer of ice on the lake and a beautiful hoar frost on the trail itself. We really hated to step on it and shatter the intricate crystals. Our hike continued to climb to the west, much more steeply than yesterday. We passed another beautiful alpine lake, High Lake, then continued on toward the imposing



gray granite walls that ring this basin. We began the thigh-burning (not to mention lung-burning) ascent, via numerous switch-backs, to New Army Pass (elevation 12,385 ft.). High above treeline, we chose to have lunch and take in

the fantastic 360 degree views of this rocky moonscape. Luckily, no one has developed any altitude sickness, but Matt and I both get out of breath just tying our boots! After a nice break, we head down the west face from the pass. The trail is covered with about two or three inches of snow, but is easy to follow. After loosing most of the altitude we had gained in the morning, we head south on a trail which heads towards Siberian Outpost. This is a very pleasant trail, again through a forested area. After a couple of miles we join up with the Pacific Crest Trail. We continue south on it, eventually leaving the Sequoia National Forest, and entering Inyo National Forest. We continue a gentle climb to the southeast and eventually

decide to camp in a small cirque below Cirque Peak. We have fantastic views of Big Whitney Meadow far below us. We have a very pleasant evening, and built a small fire in an existing ring. The warmth was very



welcome! Having just started using a hydration system, I learned a valuable lesson. Before going to bed on nights when you expect freezing temperatures, blow the water out of your hydration hose, it will save you a lot of effort melting the ice the next morning.

During a leisurely breakfast, Matt, Adam, and Gretchen thought it was quite hilarious when I told them



of my adventure during the night. As part of my new ultra-light gear, I was carrying a sleeping bag rated at only 35 degrees. To supplement this, I had a silk liner which adds about 10 degrees of warmth and only adds 5 oz of weight! The liner has no zipper, it's just an extra large pillowcase that you have to slide into. Well, during the night I had to extract myself from my cocoon in order to take care of a nature call – no problem. Trying to get back into my bag, in the dark, under my low-pitched tarp, was another story. After lying on my back and doing a series of leg lifts while attempting to slip the bag opening over my feet I would get completely out of breath (remember, tying my shoes was a workout) and have to take a rest. It took multiple attempts followed by rest breaks to finally make it back into the bag. Luckily the workout I was getting, kept me from freezing.

The trail continued with a gentle climb, but with much loose sand as footing. The PCT is open to horse travel, so it can be quite torn-up in places. We continued skirting Cirque Peak, eventually switchbacking down a spur ridge that overlooks Chicken Spring Lake, another beautiful lake situated at the north end of a hummocky dell. The trail continues through this dell, eventually climbing above treeline again. In a couple of more miles we reach Cottonwood Pass (elevation 11,000). From this pass we can look southwest for another view of Big Whitney Meadow, or east for a fantastic view of Horseshoe Meadow. We choose to take in the eastward view while we enjoy our lunch. You can't get a table with a view like this in the best restaurant, no matter what you pay! After lunch we leave the PCT and follow the Cottonwood Pass Trail for a very leisurely hike down to Horseshoe Meadow. About 1000 ft decent, then a level mile across Horseshoe Meadow and we are at the Horseshoe Meadow Campground (an equestrian camp). After a ¾ mile roadwalk back to our vehicle, we are on our way to Lone Pine for an authentic Mexican dinner!



This was my first trip to the High Sierras but it won't be my last! The high country of the west coast and the Rockies is truly spectacular and worth a visit. Although the altitude adds a challenge for us low-landers, we do eventually adapt and become more comfortable.

Lyle

Minutes – TBW Chapter – NCTA

November 6, 2006

The meeting was held at Alex's Railside Restaurant in Sanford, MI. President Gary Johnson opened the meeting at about 7:30 pm. Seventeen people attended.

Gary introduced Dennis Mashue from the Midland Hiking Club. They held their first meeting this past July. Dennis talked about their website on Yahoo and said all were welcome to review it. The address for the site is:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/midlandhikingclub/>.

On November 11th, they were to hold a meeting which would include a presentation about hiking the AT. That meeting was held at Chippewa Nature Center in Midland.

Stella Thelen gave the Treasurer's Report. We have \$1510.17 in our account. We discussed buying a weed-whacker. Vern Killinger will look into the cost of a good one and let us know. We agreed this would be a good addition to our tools.

Stella also mentioned the names of 5 people who did not renew their membership. A few of our members will contact those they know to see what the reason might be. Per NCTA records, we have 61 members. Our "contact" list, which has members and non-members, has 143 entries. It would be great if all the non-members would consider joining!!!

Cora Killinger gave a report about a rerouting of one of our sections. The reroute is being flagged and necessary permissions are being pursued to make it a beautiful trail that will be off the 2-track road and into the woods. Also there are two separate trail sections, about 20 miles apart.

Here is the estimated schedule of events/meetings for most of the next year:

- **January 11, 2007:** Meeting with DNR in Gaylord (Gary will attend)
- **January 13, 2007:** Annual Meeting in Houghton Lake, 12:00 pm at Coyle's, off US 127. John Richter, President of the Friends of the Jordan River will be our speaker. Snowshoeing or Hiking to follow for those interested.
- **March 1, 2007:** Meeting 6:30 pm at Alex's Railside Restaurant in Sanford
- **March 3, 2007:** Quiet Waters Symposium (Bob Schrems will attend)

- **May 5, 2007:** Meeting, 10:00 am in Gaylord at the University Center, Meeting to be followed by our Spring walk-through
- **June 2, 2007:** National Trails Day - Planning still in process – do you want to help? Let Gary know!
- **June 16 -17 OR 23 -24, 2007:** Work weekend, location TBA
- **August 2-5, 2007:** National Conference, Bemidji, Minn – A GREAT time!
- **Sept 15, 2007:** Meeting 10:00 am in Gaylord at the University Center, Meeting to be followed by our Fall walk-through
- **November 1, 2007:** Meeting 6:30 pm at Alex’s Railside Restaurant in Sanford

The Friends of the Jordon River Valley have put together a very nice calendar with some of their beautiful scenery. They are also putting NCTA information into their newly remodeled building in East Jordan.

Gary received a nice thank you letter for all the trash we picked up during our clean up weekend this year. Gary had a nice gift for our past President. We briefly discussed the Ridge Runner program.

Stella and Lyle mentioned the National Conference which was in Pennsylvania this past August. Next summer’s conference is in Minnesota. It is always an enjoyable few days. If you’ve never gone, you should try it!

Lyle discussed the Lower Michigan Trial Council meeting.

Don’t forget to enter your volunteer hours!! The meeting was adjourned at about 9:00 pm.

Stella Thelen, Secretary/Treasurer

Check This Out:

If you have a high speed internet connection, log on to www.youtube.com Search for North Country Trail to access a 9-minute video about a volunteer high school group improving the NCT in Pennsylvania. You will see some people that you know.

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