

## Weekday Hikes, Board Highlights

### President's Report



By Werner Veit

When I polled the membership about its interest in day hikes during the week — we have traditionally held them on weekends — a surprising interest turned up.

Therefore, for this season you'll find we have scheduled some outings, all on the North Country Trail, on weekdays as well as some on Saturday and some on Sunday afternoons. They are listed elsewhere in this issue.

Dave Goodman, one of our veteran members, volunteered to schedule and coordinate the hikes. If you have any questions about them, please contact him at [davehiker2@aol.com](mailto:davehiker2@aol.com). He will lead some of the hikes; others will be led by Lisa Symonds and Roger Meyer.

These hikes, of course, are in addition to the longer events led by Andy Mytys, Matt Hahnfeld and Tom Learmont. Dates and particulars are in the schedule.

At its January board meeting, your Board of Directors agreed to look into the possibility of substituting an electronic version for some of the issues of *Due North*. That would save some money, but more importantly be more up-to-date and give quicker and more notice of upcoming events.

An examination of our membership rolls shows that two-thirds of our members have e-mail. An even higher percentage of those members who attend any of our events have e-mail. That would leave only a handful of active members who would not receive the electronic newsletter for which some other arrangement might be worked out.

Aaron Phipps, our communications co-

*continued on page 3*



*Finally, a group was able to use snowshoes at the annual snowshoe day rather than just hiking in boots due to lack of snow.* PHOTO BY JOANNE BARON

## Snowshoeing Birch Grove Trail

By Paul Haan

Saturday, February 23, nine members of the Western Michigan Chapter North Country Trail Association went snowshoeing up on the Birch Grove Trail near the Chapter's schoolhouse north of White Cloud, Michigan. We gathered at 10:00 AM for danish and coffee, and were on the trail by 10:30.

Temps were in the low twenties, and a half foot of fresh powder over almost two feet of old snow made for great snowshoeing conditions. As Dick Bolton would have pointed out if he had been there, it was a perfect "bluebird" day, with a few crisp white clouds setting off the deep blue sky.

We entered the woods on the south side of Five Mile Road east of the schoolhouse and walked southerly. It took at least 20 minutes before hikers started shedding coats, scarves and hats due to the aerobic activity. Shortly thereafter we came across a wide variety of fresh tracks in the snow, most of them coyote. We also saw squirrel and deer tracks, and followed some belly-dragging tracks over to a hollow porcupine tree. Down in the frozen bog at the south end of the trail we found more coyote tracks and wandering bird tracks.

*continued on page 2*

*Wandering bird tracks.* PHOTO BY PAUL HAAN



## Western Michigan Chapter Mission

The major purpose of the Western Michigan Chapter of the North Country Trail Association is to promote the North Country National Scenic Trail and to build and maintain the Trail in the counties of Kent and Newaygo in the State of Michigan.

### Board of Directors

- President** Werner Veit (616) 776-1630  
ww12@aol.com
- Vice President** JerriLynn Osmar  
(616) 560-7029 osmarjer@charter.net
- Past President** Chuck Vannette (616) 456-9725  
cvann30643@aol.com
- Secretary** Roger Meyer (616) 975-1937  
rogmey@aol.com
- Treasurer** JoAnne Baron (616) 677-3598  
jlbaron@charter.net
- Communications** Aaron and Sharon Phipps  
(616) 897-0417 asphipp11@yahoo.com
- Events** Open
- Membership** Kathy Carlile (616) 453-4085  
skyeeyes05@aol.com
- School House** Len Baron (616) 677-3598  
jlbaron@charter.net
- Trail Manager** Paul Haan (616) 363-3342  
paulhaan@sbcglobal.net

### Board Members at Large

- Stephanie Black (616) 675-7237  
stephblk@iserv.net
- William Endres (616) 361-2956  
be\_nct@comcast.net
- Lisa Locke (616) 451-3051  
llocke@sustainableresearchgroup.com
- Sharon Schaafmeyer (616) 636-8587  
lkmeyer@iserv.net

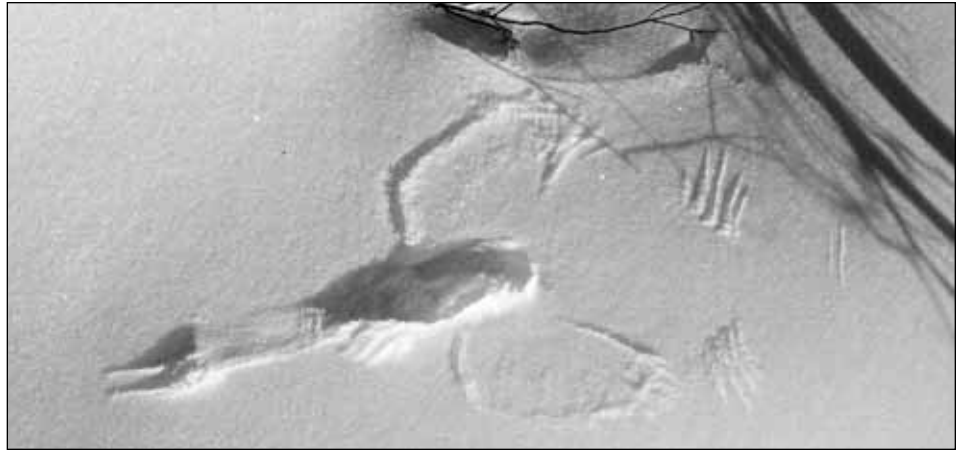


### due north is published quarterly

Materials for July edition due  
June 1, 2008.

Please submit your news and dates in writing, photo prints and electronic images are welcome. All material may be edited for content or space constraints.

Newsletter Co-Editors  
Aaron and Sharon Phipps  
(616) 897-0417  
asphipp11@yahoo.com  
3350 Pratt Lake Ave.  
Lowell MI 49331



*A bird left its autograph in the freshly fallen snow.* PHOTO BY JOANNE BARON

*continued from page 1*

We signed in at a trailside register, then headed back north.

Just north of Five Mile Road, six of the nine decided to head back to the schoolhouse, making for a 2.5 mile loop.

A few of us decided to go further north, exploring the odd pits left over from the logging town of Park City. Then we followed abandoned narrow gauge rail lines to the Loda Lake area. The contrast in the mature woods north of Five Mile Road with more white pines was interesting following the walk south of Five Mile Road through a woodlot that was managed for oak timber.

After crossing by the south side of Loda Lake, we headed back to the schoolhouse, arriving just in time for the 2:00 PM potluck. Overall, we hiked a little more than four miles ... a leisurely pace of darn near one mile per hour.

The potluck provided the perfect finish, with great stews and chili, crusty bread, garlicky guacamole, and some found red wine.



*Trail register station along the Birch Grove Trail.*

PHOTO BY JOANNE BARON

## Help Build the Trail This Spring

There are various opportunities to help build the North Country Trail in western Michigan this spring. By the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox, volunteers will have likely completed building a spur trail from the North Country Trail to the Highbanks Lake Campground in northern Newaygo County (just south of 16 Mile Road).

On April 19, a variety of opportunities will be available. First, many volunteers will be needed to help mitigate stream bank erosion caused by the trail in Newaygo County between Pierce and 11 Mile Roads. On that same day, assigned maintainers and their helpers will also be encouraged to spruce up their adopted sections of the trail for spring hikers, bikers, birders and wild flower fans and mushroom hunters. If you want to join us, plan on meeting at the Birch Grove Schoolhouse no later than 9:00 AM. A free and fabulous dinner follows at Long Lake County Park for all who volunteer.

The stream bank mitigation continues on May 3 and May 10.

On all work days, on-the-job training is provided. Don't worry if you have no experience. If you have the motivation, we'll provide the tools and training. If you would like to help with any of these projects, contact Paul Haan at (616) 734-9443 or email paulhaan@sbcglobal.net (email preferred). RSVPs are exceptionally helpful for our work day planning.



*A brilliant day for snowshoeing on the Birch Grove Trail.* PHOTO BY PAUL HAAN



*JoAnne Baron with some really big feet.*

*continued from page 1*

chair and present co-editor of Due North; Vice President JerriLynn Osmer and Membership chair Kathy Carlile are serving on a committee to look at the issue. I'll be a member ex-officio who will receive opinions from the membership regarding the proposal. If you want to weigh in, please write to me at [wv12@aol.com](mailto:wv12@aol.com).

Roger Meyer, our Secretary, was appointed chair of the nominating committee at the meeting. We will need to elect a President, a Treasurer and a member at large of the Board of Directors. Please pass your suggestions, ideas and nominations on to Roger at [rogmey@aol.com](mailto:rogmey@aol.com).

The Board also wants to remind members to look for opportunities to car pool when traveling to events, a particularly important activity given today's high gasoline prices. Those in charge will make attempts to set up meeting places. It's also important to keep track of your mileage. Remember the Internal Revenue Service allows deductions for driving expenses to our work and maintenance events.

The work already began last month and

## Financial Balances

Western Michigan Chapter NCTA  
January through December 2007

### Income

Dues Share from National .....	\$2,645.35
Collections for Events	
Maintenance Day .....	\$126.55
Trails Day .....	\$81.35
Fun Day .....	\$203.92
Member Meetings .....	\$80.00
Holiday Party .....	\$555.00
Contributions .....	\$725.00
Schoolhouse Rental .....	\$805.00
Interest .....	\$680.52
<b>Total Income .....</b>	<b>\$5,902.69</b>

### Expenses

<b>Communications</b>	
Due North .....	\$786.54
Brochures .....	\$75.00
All Other Postage .....	\$212.18
Total Communications .....	\$1,073.72
<b>Events and Outings</b>	
Booth Fee-Lowell .....	\$100.00
Maintenance Day .....	\$219.86
Trails Day .....	\$61.07
Fun Day .....	\$145.44
Member Meetings .....	\$427.65
Holiday Party .....	\$533.24
Snow Shoe Day .....	\$12.22
Total Events and Outings .....	\$1,499.48
<b>Schoolhouse</b>	
Snowplowing .....	\$20.00
Utilities .....	\$404.10
Supplies .....	\$108.36
Rental Brochures .....	\$50.00
Stove and refrigerator .....	\$968.00
Map panel .....	\$558.56
Total Schoolhouse .....	\$2,109.02
Trail Building and Maint. ....	\$397.21
Misc. - Plaque for Member .....	\$60.00
Donation - Grace Church .....	\$200.00
Total - Miscellaneous .....	\$260.00
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$5,339.43</b>
<b>Balance as of 12-31-07 .....</b>	<b>\$17,486.41</b>

continues all Spring and don't forget our annual clean-up day, scheduled this year on Saturday, April 19. Besides clean-up work along the trail, we also will need volunteers at the schoolhouse. Schoolhouse Manager Len Baron will expect them there at 10:00 AM. See story on page two for Trail Manager Paul Haan's schedule and meeting place.

As usual we will gather at the Long Lake Park Lodge afterward for one of Stephanie Black's delicious dinners.

# Hard Core Camping

By *JerriLynn Osmar*

Ten hardy souls from our membership met on a cold, snowy weekend in mid-February for a winter camp out at Yankee Springs. Most of us managed to make it all the way to the parking lot at the lodge. (Nancy and Gina missed a turn, became lodged in a snow bank, and had to walk at least a mile.)

Our host, "Doc", was very hospitable

in his own way, helping to rescue Nancy and Gina, offering repeatedly to let us stay in the warm lodge, and even lighting a red candle in the women's outhouse.

The setting at Yankee Springs was lovely. The lodge had white lights strung across the windows and a crackling fire in a huge stone fireplace. We hauled our gear down the hill and through the woods using sleds and backpacks to a picturesque ring of

cabins overlooking the lake. Unfortunately the cabins were in disrepair and none had working furnaces. We had rented one in case there were people who didn't want to tent out in the cold. (And it *did* get cold. It was about two degrees when we crawled out of our tents on Saturday morning and a cold winter rain began about 1:00 AM on Sunday, lasting until we left.) Luckily our host eventually found us a space heater and Gina and Nancy were able to warm up after their ordeal.

Some of us set up camp near the cabins and some went back into the woods farther behind a ridge. Our guru, Andy, showed us the technique of using big sticks instead of tent stakes. You can still see them in the morning if there is a big snowfall overnight. And it's no problem if they get frozen into the ground. Just break them off and your tent is free. Andy also explained that we should store our water bottles upside-down in the snow. They freeze from the top down. Having ice in the bottom of the bottle is less of a problem than when it is blocking the opening.

The weather was cold enough that propane/butane stoves were ineffective. I was able to hold my finger against the bottom of my pot the whole time that my dinner was "cooking". The more experienced folks had white gas stoves.

One secret to staying warm is to keep moving. Paul, Andy and Doug Boulee went on a moonlight snowshoe hike with me tagging along on my skis. The woods were still, the night was crisp and clear, and the snow conditions were perfect.

Andy suggested we fill our water bottles with hot water and throw them into our sleeping bags to keep us warm. (It works!) Paul showed us all up. He didn't even bother with a tent but just slept in a sack in a snow bank. (He did sleep under a tarp the second night as we knew it was going to rain.) Doug Boulee tried his tarp tent the second night. The only pole that tent has is Doug's hiking stick! Andy was testing a tent for the manufacturer.



Top row: Gina Kuizema, Andy Mytys, Carl, Paul Haan, Nancy Olsen, Nancy VanNest, Tim VanNest. Bottom row: Kristi, JerriLynn Osmar, Doug Boulee. Not pictured: Doug Wood and Christie Jensen. PHOTO BY GINA KUIZEMA



Andy Mytys uses an umbrella to protect his "kitchen" from the rain. PHOTO BY JERRILYNN OSMAR



*Pushing out for the drive home.* PHOTO BY JERRILYNN OSMAR

He earns free equipment that way.

Saturday was an absolutely beautiful day. We hiked most of the day, some on snowshoes, some on skis, and some in their hiking boots. Tim's wife, Nancy, wore a pair of snowshoes that Tim had made himself. Doug Boulee and Andy took turns pulling Andy's pulk, a sled used in place of a backpack in the winter. It is made from a child's plastic sled with PVC pipes over the ropes. The puller wears a climbing harness so his hands are free. Andy replaces the PVC pipes with longer ones when he is wearing skis instead of snowshoes. Our hike started and ended on the Hall Lake Trail. Highlights included Graves Hill and Devil's Soup Bowl. We stopped midway for lunch in a sunny clearing. That's where the group shot was taken.

A couple from Chicago joined us for



*Nancy Olsen and Gina Kuizema warm up in the cabin.* PHOTO BY JERRILYNN OSMAR

our hike. They had found Yankee Springs on a website and arrived late in the night to a cold cabin. Their impression from the website was that it was a winter retreat where they would have a cozy cabin and could rent skis!

Sunday morning was quite wet, but we had all slept warm and dry. With our cars full of wet gear, we pushed them out one at a time. (Our host didn't think plowing was a priority.) We met at a café for a hot breakfast before heading home. Amongst our conversation: The proximity of Yankee Springs to Grand Rapids and the huge number of hiking/skiing trails makes it an ideal destination for some future NCT outings!



*Doug Boulee is pulling Andy's pulk on our hike.* PHOTO BY GINA KUIZEMA



*Paul Haan warms a meal with a white gas stove.* PHOTO BY JERRILYNN OSMAR

# Events Calendar

## Sign Up If You Go

Occasionally, outings have to be cancelled because of unexpected events so outing leaders strongly urge you to sign up for all events with your e-mail address, or phone number if you do not have e-mail, so you can be notified if plans change. It is also possible to check our website, or the website listed with the event, for updates and further details. E-mail updates will be sent out as each event approaches.

## April

**19** Annual Clean-Up Day, Dinner, Long Lake Park, see story on page two, Paul Haan, paulhaan@sbcglobal.net

**26-27** WMI Spring Fling Backpacking Trip: Manistee National Forest. Join us for an early spring backpack along the Manistee River from High Bridge to Beers Road. This hike will cover about 22 miles, with about 12 miles planned for Saturday's portion of the hike. Our route will be relatively flat, but covering double-digit miles so early in the season is sure to test your level of fitness - a nice reality check for use in planning those lofty summer trips. For more information, contact Andy Mytys at amytyes@gmail.com or (248) 935-6486 or visit the website for this event at <http://www.northcountrytrail.org/wmi/events/SpringFling.html>

**26** A 6 to 7 mile hike along the Fred Meijer Flat River Pathway in Greenville, MI. This is a black top path which circles the city of Greenville with about 4 mile of it being along the Flat River. We will meet at 9:30 AM near the Big Boy restaurant on M-57 in Greenville. Following the hike we can have lunch there or you can pack your own, as you wish. I will try to schedule a Grand Rapids car pool if possible. For more details contact Tom Learmont at [tlearmont@yahoo.com](mailto:tlearmont@yahoo.com) or by phone after April 15th. at (616) 984-5917.

## May

**3** Trail Work - Stream Bank Mitigation, Meet at Birch Grove Schoolhouse, Paul Haan, paulhaan@sbcglobal.net

**10** Trail Work - Stream Bank Mitigation, Meet at Birch Grove Schoolhouse, Paul Haan, paulhaan@sbcglobal.net

**15-18** This will be a car camping outing in the U.P. near Grand Marais in which

we will hike some of the North Country Trail while assisting the local chapter with some of their trail maintenance. For maximum flexibility each person is to arrange their own food. If you are interested in participating, please contact Tom Learmont at [tlearmont@yahoo.com](mailto:tlearmont@yahoo.com) or by phone after April 15th at (616) 984-5917. Travel arrangement and other details will be coordinated between those participating.

**21-26** WMI Memorial Day Backpacking Trip: Lake Superior Provincial Park. For those members looking to get deeper into the backcountry of Lake Superior Provincial Park, we are offering a backpacking alternative to the LSPP Memorial Day dayhiking trip that some of our members will be on. We will spend five days hiking along the Coastal Trail, a 40-mile trail along the eastern shore of Lake Superior. Forty miles in five days sounds pretty easy, but on this trail five days is the minimum number of days the park recommends tackling this trail in - some sections of trail are filled with slick, algae covered boulders where hikers can expect to cover less than 1-mile per hour. The trail can be very treacherous in places, demanding characteristics such as surefootedness, patience, and careful planning. While there are a few beautiful white sand beaches found along this trail, much of our route has hikers squeezing between or under large boulders, clinging to the sides of sheer rock cliffs, or hopping from rock to rock - not to be attempted when the rocks are wet! This hike is DIFFICULT even in the best of conditions. For more information, contact Andy Mytys at amytyes@gmail.com or (248) 935-6486 or visit the website for this event at <http://www.northcountrytrail.org/wmi/events/LSP-PPBackpack.html>

**24-26** WMI Memorial Day Day Hiking and Camping Trip: Lake Superior Provincial Park. Get away from the Memorial Day crowds and join the chapter for a weekend of hiking and camping in beautiful Northern Ontario! We'll meet in Sault Ste Marie Friday evening and camp near the Voyageur Trail. Saturday morning, we'll drive along the Lake Superior coast up to the park. On Saturday and Sunday, we'll explore some of the park's impressive waterfalls, mountains, coastline, and ancient Ojibwe pic-

tographs. Camping will be at the Agawa Bay campground, directly on the Lake Superior shoreline. On Monday, we'll return to Michigan, maybe stopping along the way to explore a couple of Canada's other Provincial Parks. Car camping costs will be shared between participants, and carpooling will be organized from West Michigan. This is NOT a backpacking trip, and many different day hike options (ranging from easy to strenuous) will be available. Space is limited; register by May 16. Call Matt Hahnfeld at (616) 363-0368 or e-mail [matth@everysoft.com](mailto:matth@everysoft.com) (with subject line "Lake Superior") for details or to sign up. The website for this event is <http://www.northcountrytrail.org/wmi/events/LSPPDayhike.html>

## June

**7** National Trails Day, Birch Grove Schoolhouse, Lisa Locke, [llocke@sustainableresearchgroup.com](mailto:llocke@sustainableresearchgroup.com)

**14** Lowell State Game Area NCT Day Hike, 5.5 Miles. Meet at Fallsburg Park at 9:00 AM. For more information, call Matt Hahnfeld at (616) 363-0368.

**TBA** Trail Building School, Newaygo Sports Park, Paul Haan, paulhaan@sbcglobal.net

## August

**15-17** 6th Annual Sleeping Bear Dunes Trip: North Manitou Island. Note the date change. This year we're going backpacking! Participants should be able to carry their own packs/food and hike up to 7-8 miles per day. North Manitou Island is a primitive wilderness area in Northern Lake Michigan. The terrain is mostly level and forested, with a number of old farms, sand dunes, and views of Lake Michigan. We'll be taking the ferry over Friday morning, returning Sunday, and (optionally) camping at Leelanau State Park Thursday night before the trip. Space is limited; register by August 8. You must also make your own ferry reservations in advance of the trip. Call Matt Hahnfeld at (616) 363-0368 or e-mail [matth@everysoft.com](mailto:matth@everysoft.com) (with subject line "North Manitou") for details or to sign up.

## Late August or early September

Canoe Outing - Tom Learmont would like to do a week long Canoe and Camping outing in Canada or the U.P. Currently he is considering doing the Sand River in Lake Superior Provin-

cial Park, however, the water level may be too low at that time of the year. A back packing outing is another possible option. So if you are interested in such an outing contact Tom Learmont at [tlearmont@yahoo.com](mailto:tlearmont@yahoo.com) with your ideas and/or suggestion. Phone after April 15th at (616) 984-5917.

## October

**11** This will be an 11 mile long day hike on the Manistee River Trail. The hike will begin at 9:00 AM. You can car camp the night before or drive up in the morning as you wish. Hike details will be available closer to the hike date. If you wish to participate contact Tom Learmont at [tlearmont@yahoo.com](mailto:tlearmont@yahoo.com) or after April 15th by phone (616) 984-4917.

**9-13** Fall Colors Backpacking Trip NCT Whitefish Bay to Mouth of Two Hearted River, Andy Mytys, [amytys@sbcglobal.net](mailto:amytys@sbcglobal.net)

---

## Day Hikes

### Flat River Views

**Date:** Sunday, April 13, 1:30 PM

**Hike Leader:** Dave Goodman, [davehiker2@aol.com](mailto:davehiker2@aol.com)

**Parking:** McPherson Street, W. side of Flat River, Fallasburg Park, Lowell

**Distance:** About 5 miles round trip

**Hike:** South to Flat River Drive

**See:** River views, 0.5 mile road walk down dirt lane, unique sand blow-outs, jack and red pine forest, phlox in June.

**Best Season:** Spring and winter

### Flat River Views

**Date:** Wednesday, May 7, 10:00 AM

**Hike Leader:** Lisa Symons, (616) 942-6549 [greensymons@yahoo.com](mailto:greensymons@yahoo.com),

**Parking:** McPherson Street, W. side of Flat River, Fallasburg Park, Lowell

**Distance:** About 5 miles round trip

**Hike:** Lowell State Game Area

**See:** River views, 0.5 mile road walk down dirt lane, unique sand blow-outs, jack and red pine forest, phlox in June.

**Best Season:** Spring and winter

### Bigelow Creek

**Date:** Saturday, June 28, 10:00 AM

**Hike Leader:** Dave Goodman, [davehiker2@aol.com](mailto:davehiker2@aol.com)

**Parking:** 56th Street east of Basswood

**Distance:** 4-6 miles, depending on route

## Unstoppable Team “Goes For The Gold”

By Sharon Phipps

By the time you read this article, fellow chapter member Gail Lowe will be hiking on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) somewhere in California. The PCT is a 2,650 mile national scenic trail that runs from Mexico to Canada through California, Oregon, and Washington. Gail will start at Soledad Canyon sometime during the first week of April. She plans on doing the entire trail but would like to get the Mojave section done before it gets too hot. She hopes to finish the trail by September 4, 2008. Gail is no stranger to long distance hiking. She did a thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail in 1991. Gail says that long distance hiking not only makes her happy, it makes her strong, sure-footed, excited, awe-struck, reverent, irreverent, humble, confident, competent, clear and whole.



Gail Lowe

Gail will not be hiking alone. She will be hiking with her favorite hiking partner, Ori. Ori is a 3.5 year old purebred Maltese. His full name is Orionis Kometes Lowe and weighs all of ten pounds. Ori is no stranger to hiking. You might have seen him hiking with Gail at various chapter events. Ori has a new trail name for his PCT hike, it is K9DOG. Gail's trail name is Wheeew (pronounced Few). So, it'll be Wheeew and

K9DOG together on the PCT, and they are an unstoppable team.

When Gail was asked what she would like to say to fellow chapter members, she sent the following:

“You can say to members, on my behalf, that the Western Michigan Chapter of the NCTA helped keep my spirit alive until I could be out on the trail again ... that I so much enjoyed getting to know other people with the same passion for hiking. And of course, that I hope they'll sign my guest book on my Trail Journal site and follow along as I “go for the gold.” After this? I have aspirations to hike the Continental Divide Trail next year. That would make me a “Triple Crowner” in the hiking world, having done the three major long distance trails in the country. But until then ... one trail at a time, please!”

You can follow Gail's progress on her PCT thru-hike at:

[www.trailjournals.com/wheeew](http://www.trailjournals.com/wheeew)

After finishing the PCT, Gail plans to write a book about her journey.



Ori ready to hit the trail. PHOTO BY GAIL LOWE

**Hike:** East on NCT across Bigelow Creek and into loops of the Coolbough Natural Area (TNC)

**See:** Oak forest, huge white pines, Bigelow Creek, oak savannah being restored by TNC

**Best Season:** Year round

### “Chuck's Prairie”

**Date:** Wednesday, July 9, 10:00 AM

**Hike Leader:** Roger Meyer, [rogmey@aol.com](mailto:rogmey@aol.com)

**Parking:** Pierce Drive (8 Mile) west of M-37 (along road)

**Distance:** 4.5 miles round trip

**Hike:** South to second two track (just south of prairie openings)

**See:** Beautiful oak savannah, including National Forest prairie restoration.

**Best Season:** Summer

### “Chuck's Prairie”

**Date:** Saturday, July 19, 10:00 AM

**Hike Leader:** Dave Goodman, [davehiker2@aol.com](mailto:davehiker2@aol.com)

**Parking:** Pierce Drive (8 Mile) west of M-37 (along road)

**Distance:** 4.5 miles round trip

**Hike:** South to second two track (just south of prairie openings)

**See:** Beautiful oak savannah, including National Forest prairie restoration.

**Best Season:** Summer



Western Michigan Chapter  
229 East Main Street  
Lowell, MI 49331

Nonprofit  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Grand Rapids MI  
Permit 340



*A thick layer of snow on the ground does not reduce the utility of this bench as a rest stop along the trail at Loda Lake. JerriLynn and Ken enjoy a brief sit.* PHOTO BY PAUL HAAN

## **Volunteers Needed to Pull Invasive Species Along the North Country Trail In Lowell**

In partnership with the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, the Western Michigan Chapter NCTA has the opportunity to stop the invasion of invasive garlic mustard in the Lowell State Game Area along the North Country Trail. In this area, invasive garlic mustard is choking out native wildflowers such as hepatica, trillium, pink lady slipper, and more.

The Land Conservancy is looking for volunteers to help lead a “garlic mustard pull” event in late April or early May in this area. The Land Conservancy can work with leadership to secure the necessary training, as well as permissions from the Michigan DNR. If you are interested in *leading* this activity, please contact Paul Haan at paulhaan@sbcglobal.net or (616) 734-9443 and he will get you connected to the appropriate staff person at the Land Conservancy. Act soon! Garlic Mustard season is coming and leaders will want plenty of time to recruit volunteers.