

North Country Trail Association:

The North Country Trail goes through 7 states, North Dakota to Maine, but recently acquired a section to go through the Adirondacks, making us 8 states which will include Vermont.

- We have a new Executive Director
- We are close to filling the Director of Trail Development position.
- Our Annual Celebration in Marquette, MI was our largest ever with 400 attendees. 2018 is planned for the end of April in Hocking Hills Ohio.
- Launching a new website by the end of the year.
- Next year is the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act so we'll be celebrating that all year.

ANF Chapter:

Allegheny 100 Hiking Challenge – 150 spots filled up in less than 8 hours when registration opened. Here's part of a news release about the event, "The Allegheny National Forest (ANF) Chapter of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) held its eighth annual Allegheny 100 (A100) Hiking Challenge this past weekend from June 9th-11th. The A100 is an unsupported endurance hiking challenge with no timekeepers, no aid stations, and no finish line other than the one hikers set for themselves. The event challenges hikers to traverse 25, 50, 75, or 100 miles along the North Country Trail (NCT) through the ANF in 50 hours, beginning at 6pm on Friday and ending at 8pm on Sunday. This year the event started in the north at the Willow Bay trailhead and ended at Route 66 in Vowinckel, PA. The direction changes from year to year to give hikers a chance to see the whole trail. A record number of 152 hikers signed up to hike the various distances, with 77 signed up to attempt the 100-mile trek. Most hikers are from the local area, Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio, but some came from as far away as Florida, Colorado, and Texas. Seventeen people completed the 100 miles, including two people who originally signed up to only hike 75 miles! Three people finished 75 miles, 67 people completed the 50 miles, and 58 people completed at least 25 miles. All participants should be proud of themselves no matter what distance they covered."

Routine Trail Maintenance – Group work days are held about twice a month. 65 trail work day participants and trail adopters worked to clear and maintain 100 miles of trail

Construction – Rebuilt the Red Bridge Informational Kiosk and will be building a new Informational Kiosk at Minister Rd next month.

Constructed 21 bog bridges.

Staircase at Red Bridge and Fox's Dam.

Steel Mesh on Bridges – The project to cover over 200 bridges and walkways along the 100 miles of trail was completed this year. The mesh provides traction on slippery surfaces. The chapter laid down almost 3000 feet of mesh, quite an accomplishment and a great trail improvement!

Campsites – 33 campsites were set up and marked along the trail and will be maintained by the chapter. These complement our 4 shelters.

Road Signs – 73 signs were purchased to mark trail/road intersections. Information is provided to the hiker about the name of the road and the distance to the next major road crossing. Two thirds of the signs have been put up so far.

Clarion Chapter:

The Clarion Chapter had a banner year - In addition to our monthly hike our members assisted with KTA week long trail work sessions. We also had members assisting with Friends of Inyo in California, and The Florida Trail. The Boy Scouts completed an Eagle Scout project with a 26 foot bridge near Gravel Lick on the Clarion River. Additionally the chapter volunteers constructed a 20 foot span across a creek near the Clarion River; no sooner had the bridge been completed when a 6 inch rain fall deposited 10 feet of debris against the upper side of the structure. The second Thursday Cooks Forest work crew removed the debris. The Thursday crew will be working on the NCT in Cooks Forest adjacent to Route 36 this Thursday. The Clarion Chapter recently completed a trail on the Clarion University property. It includes a mile and a half loop and a leg from the campus down to the Toby Boat Launch. The monthly get together include a shuttled hike this month from Brenniman Road to Highland Drive, a hike and picnic at the Doe Run shelter, and a Christmas party at the Gherings on the second Sunday in December. Due to the excessive down pours the chapter had do complete a few minor reroutes. This summer, chapter volunteer Ed Scurry was awarded a 10,000 hour plaque from the National Park Service.

Butler Chapter:

Our year began on Jan 1 when we co-lead with the Butler Outdoor Club a 6 mile First Day Hike in Moraine State Park on the NCT from the Bike Rental Trailhead to Burnside Rd. and back. The weather was mild and there were 300+ hikers participating.

February 25 - We joined Washington 1753 and Jennings ELC to host our annual Washington 1753 Cherry Pie Hikes. Jennings staff led 3 mile nature hikes every hour; Washington 173 volunteers led short history hikes and we led 6 mile long NCT hikes from the 528 bridge back to Jennings and provided shuttles back after folks had their cherry pie and drinks and a short talk about the NCT and George Washington's 1753 trip to Fort LeBoeff. Period re-enactors setup displays and an Indian shot at GW as groups of history hikers walked by. There were 400+ attendees throughout the day.

Also in February we had a table with the BOC at the Moraine Winterfest event.

Mid-May - The Glacier Ridge Trail Ultra-marathons are run mostly on NCT trails; members participated or helped volunteer to setup and run the race. This is a fundraiser for Moraine State Park's MPF and 3MJC organizations which use the funds to improve the park trails and for park projects.

May-June - The KTA trailcare crew stayed at the Davis Hollow Cabin and completed trail and drainage improvements at McConnells Mill State Park between the Old Mill and Eckert Bridge on both sides of the gorge and at Moraine State Park on the Pleasant Valley Trail.

June - We helped BOC volunteers put on the Muddy 5k at the annual Bantam Jeep Festival at Coopers Lake Campground. This is a fundraiser for the BOC and they donate funds back to the Butler Chapter.

Throughout the year we held monthly hikes and helped shuttle hikers from the Old Stone House to McConnells Mill.

In October - We attended the Washington 1753 Summit, a meeting of organizations and folks promoting the potential for a Washington 1753 Heritage Trail from Mount Vernon Va. to Fort LeBoeff, Pa which follows Colonel Washington's trip to warn the French to leave the area.

Butler Outdoor Club Report:

We work closely with the Butler Chapter with trailwork, hikes, and their projects. We sponsored the Annual Outdoor Extravaganza as we have been for over 20 years. About 200 people attended, enjoyed the event whether they attended workshops or outings. Joyce Appel, who has spear-headed the event since it began, has decided she needs to spend more time with family in the future. As of now, no one has volunteered to take over, so we thank Joyce for her many years of service and wish her well. Time with family will be well spent. The Butler Outdoor Club hopes to replace this event with something on a smaller scale, possibly begin an Annual Campout at a State Park, where people can chose whatever activities are available at the campground.