



CTA Newsletter

Chatham Trails Association

Maintaining hiking trails in the Evans Notch area of Maine and New Hampshire since 1922

Trail Signs Auction

Another chance to buy a CTA Trail Sign

**10 more retired CTA Trail Signs
go up on eBay for auction on December 4.**

The auction will last 7 days. For a direct link to the auction, go to the CTA website or Facebook page on December 4. You will also find a report there on the April auction. Thanks to Mark Weston for managing this auction. And good luck on winning the sign(s) you want!



Gathering stones for new steps
on the White Cairn Trail

In 2011 we began a project to replace and update all signs on our trails. Eighty-nine new signs were installed over the past three seasons. All signs have been updated. We will be monitoring the signs during spring patrols and replacing any damaged or missing signs as needed.

We maintain a list of trail improvement projects from the assessments done by the trail crews and needs that were reported by hikers. All these proposed projects are being evaluated to determine what resources (volunteer hours and funds) will be required to complete the work. Projects are prioritized so we can make the best use of our work weekends.

Trailmaster's Report

THANK YOU to all who contributed to our trail stewardship work. Without the commitment of our volunteers we would not be able to continue our stewardship work and maintain quality trails for hikers.

2017 accomplishments

The majority of our work is performing the basic maintenance tasks of cleaning drainage on the trails, cutting back brush to keep the trail corridor open and easy to follow, and ensuring that trail marking (blazes, cairns, and signs) are in good condition.

Sixty-six members invested 769 hours of trail maintenance. Not included in the total are the hours for support tasks and helping in the kitchen. The hours this year are about 25% below our typical level of 1100 hours.

The Officers and Board members spent many hours throughout the year on administrative and planning responsibilities without which our stewardship would not be possible.

Memorial Weekend: 29 volunteers, 388.5 hours

Crews of 2-4 deployed to trails for spring patrol, basic maintenance and assessment of trail condition and need.

National Trails Weekend: 19 volunteers, 147.5 hours

Crew completed spring patrols and basic maintenance. Twelve new signs installed in the area of Blueberry Ridge Trail and White Cairn Trail

Fall Weekend: 26 volunteers, 233.0 hours

Constructed rock steps on White Cairn Trail, refreshed blazes on Conant Trail, cleaned waterbars on Horseshoe Pond Trail, constructed new water bars and blazed Mine Loop Trail



New steps on the White Cairn Trail

In January Jim Boros, Don Devine and Mike Zlogar attended the annual partner meeting with the Saco District staff to review accomplishments during 2016 and to look at our priorities for the next two seasons. This is an important step since most work beyond basic maintenance is required to undergo a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) review by USFS staff. The biologists, hydrologists, soils, wildlife and foresters all review the proposals and provide comments and guidance. The process can take some time but the reviews provide us information that will result in a trail that will not impact endangered plants, animals and wetlands.

After several years in planning, the Stone House Trail improvement project is ready to go. CTA was awarded cost-share funds to enable us to hire a contractor to make a significant improvement to the steep, eroded section of the trail. We will be requesting proposals from trail contractors and expect the work to be completed in the 2018 season.

Training. Our members participate in a variety of training that helps us maintain quality trails. Our partnership with the USFS has helped incorporate skill training into the work weekends activities. Members have the opportunity to learn about the USFS trails program and standards and to learn best trail work practices. A member of the Saco District staff joins us on Memorial weekend to lead a crew for a training experience. Several members attended the ax and crosscut saw training offered by the Forest Service.

Looking ahead to the 2018 season.

We have a lot of work planned for the next season. We encourage you to invite others to join us to further our stewardship work and to make new friends at Cold River Camp.

Memorial Day weekend, May 26-28, 2018. We look forward to fifty volunteers gathering to patrol all 40 miles of trails to clear drainages, remove blow downs, open the corridor and assess needs for work on the trail.

National Trails weekend, June 2-3, 2018. Once all the basic maintenance is complete we will undertake trail improvement projects.

Fall Weekend, September 29-30, 2018. Crews will work on trail improvement projects including bringing corridors and drainage to the USFS standard and working on some needs for better trail marking and correcting some perpetually wet areas of the trails.

Please join in our stewardship work. Our trails vary from easy to strenuous so volunteers of all ability and experience can help. We provide training, coaching and the tools.

Thank you for your support.

Mike Zlogar, TrailMaster@ChathamTrails.org

Major Trail Remediation About to Start

In 2016, the Forest Service granted CTA \$20,000 under a Challenge Cost Share Agreement, which required CTA to raise a matching \$8,000, all to be used to hire a professional trail crew to complete major projects on trails in the WMNF maintained by the CTA.

The Forest Service has approved the first project, which is re-routing a steep and eroded section near the top of the Stone House Trail.

Don Devine spoke to potential donors this summer, seeking a few major contributions toward our required \$8,000 match, which we call our **Major Projects Fund**. Several folks agreed to donate, and we have already received \$500 from Roberta Kaufman. Thank you, Roberta.

Recently, the Forest Service simplified our agreement. We can begin spending the Forest Service grant before we complete raising our matching funds. CTA will issue a Request for Proposal in the late winter and plans to award a contract for work to begin on the upper Stone House Trail this spring.

This first project should not require the entire \$20,000. We have a number of other sites that need such work, and we will be proposing additional projects to the Forest Service.

To make the best use of funds, we're considering whether CTA volunteers can assist on some of the easier aspects of each project. If practical, we may arrange an additional volunteer trail work project outside of our usual three trail work weekends each year.

All of this is a first step and a new activity for the CTA. We hope to get additional grants from the Forest Service and raise additional funds from our donors to remedy some of the other major challenges on CTA trails

We hope you'll consider sending a special donation to the Major Projects Fund.

Send donations to Steve Fink, CTA Treasurer, 2062 Main Road, Chatham, NH 03813. Make your check out to Chatham Trails Association and mark it Major Projects Fund.

Visit the CTA Website

www.ChathamTrails.org

Visit the CTA website for the latest news, to register for a volunteer event, to make a donation via PayPal, to communicate with CTA leaders, to read past newsletters, to review CTA financials, to see CTA bylaws, to explore CTA archives, etc. **You can also order the new CTA Trail Maps on the website.** We plan to enhance the website to allow hikers to report trail problems and see reported problems. Send comments and suggestions to Jim Boros at Webmaster@ChathamTrails.org.

CTA Contact List

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Mike Arnott (3) Grants@ChathamTrails.org

- (1) Merritt manages the CTA tools
- (2) Michelle assists in recruiting volunteers, including college outing clubs, etc.
- (3) Mike assists in evaluating possible grants and in drafting grant proposals

Get Involved in CTA Leadership

In addition to trail work volunteers, we need a few folks to help manage the CTA. Each job is well defined. **If you'll agree to take on a job, we promise not to expand that job or press you to do even more.** That way everyone will know what's expected.

There're two openings on the **CTA Board of Directors**. We need five directors, but as of today, we only have three. Everyone on the Board should also have some leadership role.

The Board usually meets face-to-face only once a year, during our Memorial Day work weekend. We transact most of our business by email, and typically we deal with only one or two new matters a year. Even our budget is pretty cut and dried.

Here are the open jobs and what we're looking for:

Vice president: to back up the president, help recruit volunteers, and become the future president.

Secretary: to keep the minutes of our face-to-face and on-line meetings and generally makes sure that our records are preserved.

Assistant Trailmaster: to assist the Trailmaster to organize and train volunteers on trail work weekends, and fill-in when the Trailmaster is absent.

Contact Don Devine to explore any of these jobs, or, if you have some specific project that you'd like to get started and run for the CTA.

To receive future CTA Newsletters only by email, send a request to the webmaster@ChathamTrails.org

Volunteer for 2018 Trail Work Weekends

May 26-28, Memorial Day weekend
June 2-3, National Trails Day weekend
September 29-30

Register at www.ChathamTrails.org.

Accommodations in the comfortable cabins at A.M.C. Cold River Camp, with centralized showers and toilets. Meals are professionally prepared and served in Conant Lodge.

You are welcome to arrive for Friday dinner.

No charge for volunteers.



Clearing a Blow-down on the September work weekend

Conant Trail Rehab

Last year that there was extensive logging on private land crossed by a short portion of the Conant Trail. This section, going counter-clockwise, is shortly after you leave a woods road for the first time and make almost a U turn around an abandoned cellar hole. This portion is re-opened and re-marked, but keep a sharp eye out for trail markings through that next tenth of a mile or so.

Looking for a Trail Project?

There are lots of easy trail maintenance projects near Cold River Camp that can be accomplished by one or two people in half a day. CTA tools are handy and Don Devine, who lives just north of Camp, May through October, can show you the projects. Also, as you are hiking some longer trails a little further from Camp, there are some other things you could do, all without requiring tools, which will add only 15 or 20 minutes to your outing, while making a worthwhile improvement. If you're interested, ask Don.

Consider a Bequest to the CTA Endowment

The CTA Endowment started in 2010 when Jack Harrington left a bequest of \$94,000 to the CTA. The fund is professionally managed. Distributions cover operating deficits and capital projects. The balance, as we go to press, is about \$118,000.

Each year, CTA policy permits us to spend up to 4% of the fund balance, averaged over the previous 20 quarters. The first priority is covering any operating deficit. The remainder is available for capital projects like the new tool shed, purchasing tools and supplies, etc.

*The Endowment is an important feature of the CTA. As it grows, it will support an increasing number of volunteers and Major Projects that require professional help. **Please consider including the CTA Endowment in your will.*** For info. contact President@ChathamTrails.org.

It's Time to Renew Your Support for the CTA

It cost us almost \$50 to put one volunteer out on the trail for one day.

Our annual goal is for dues and donations to cover our Operating Expenses. Although donations have been going up, we continue to have an operating deficit.

We hope you'll send a generous donation. Please make your check out to Chatham Trails Association and **mail it to Steve Fink, 2062 Main Road, Chatham, NH 03813.**

You can also make a donation by credit card or using PayPal at our website, go to ... www.ChathamTrails.org.