





**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Saturday, November 3**

Bald Mountain from the Island Pond side. 4 hours, moderate.

**Saturday, January 5**

Field snowshoe at Jon and Cynthia's house, easy, afternoon, followed by 5 pm potluck and section meeting at 6 pm (Burke Mountain Club, East Burke).

**Saturday, February 9**

Bald Mountain Snowshoe, depends on weather, moderate hike at brisk pace, led by Michael Chernick.

**Saturday, March 2**

Trip leader wanted for tracking and natural history hike at Victory Bog.

For all trips, please preregister by contacting Jean Haigh at 586-9637 or <jeanhaigh@stowe.k12.vt.us>

**SECTION LEADERS**

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**How Many Ways Up?**

By Beth Dugger, NEKGMC Director

I've spent much of the past two years in meetings about trails, as we've struggled with the places for trail hiking in the former Champion Lands. Hiking this half-tamed landscape with small groups to evaluate and plan has been a great way to get acquainted with the possibilities.

Meanwhile, I've kept sane and balanced through making a deeper connection with one mountain just outside the Champion Lands that offers a view of almost half of them. It's a firetower-topped peak with an established trail and two more trails in need of loving care. If you've been hiking with us, you know already that I mean Bald Mountain.

Approaching Bald from Westmore is the perfect foliage or early winter hike, rambling up the switchbacks, and saving some energy for the final steep climb. It's about a two-hour hike up no matter which approach I use (and I'm a slow hiker). The reward of the firetower vista is a great incentive.

Although the top of this mountain is recently established public land, the trails are mostly on private land. The Westmore approach is well maintained except for a patch of logging that's torn up a bit at the start of the trail. (Watch for signs to help you choose between log landings and the peak route.) I saw a lot of deer tracks on this side.

Climbing from the Tower Road, off Hinton Road (which connects Westmore and East

Charleston), there's an immediate confrontation with the damage that hurried timber harvesting can bring. Much of the initial erosion has been repaired, but slash piles along the route leave me ambivalent — I know they are great for wildlife, but they're ugly to my woods-oriented eye. I took this route on a snowy early winter day, with nearly a foot of powder, and saw so many moose tracks that I started to get a feel for how this gangly critter uses its independent four-leg suspension to handle rocks and gullies better than I can. I needed all three pairs of mittens with me: two got soaked on the way up, and the peak is cold and windy when you're hot and sweaty!

As this summer turned to fall, I finally explored the approach from the Mad Brook Road (also off Hinton Road, well toward East Charleston). Thanks to a dedicated private landowner, this trail is recovering well from a lot of ATV use. There's even a marked parking area. After a mellow mile of gentle woods the trail rises, the rocky outcrops are tantalizing, and there are narrow views down the trail, but no vista until the firetower. Here a wide variety of trees and shrubs adds interest to the ramble.

I look forward to when we'll be able to develop the same kind of relationship with a peak and vista on the former Champion Lands. So far, I vote for West Mountain as a great spot for a view, provided that we can find an ecologically appropriate way to blend with the level of protection being called for. What a great time to be a GMC hiker!



**Green Mountain Club - Northeast Kingdom Section**

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**Newsletter editor needed.** Contact Jay Collier <collier@thecompass.com> for more information.

**Save a tree!** If you receive this newsletter by U.S. Mail and would prefer to receive future newsletters and meeting notices by e-mail, please notify Cynthia at <joncyn@sover.net>