



Northeast Passages

From the Green Mountain Club's Northeast Kingdom Section

Vol. 7, No.1

Summer 2007

Visit our website:

www.nekgmc.org

Or GMC at:

www.greenmountainclub.org



2007 Meeting Dates:

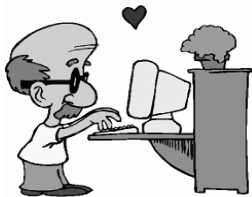
*(unless otherwise noted,
NEK Section meetings
begin at 6pm with
potluck dinner at 5pm)*

**NEKGMC Fall
Quarterly Meeting**

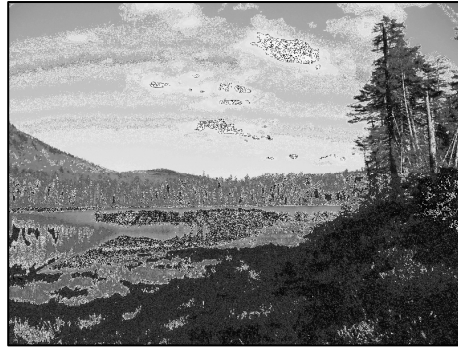
Saturday, October 13 @
Burke Mountain
Clubhouse (tentative)

**NEKGMC Winter
Quarterly Meeting**

Saturday, January 5 @
Wheeler Pond Camps
(tentative)



Want to receive your copy of
Northeast Passages by email?
Contact Luke O'Brien at
luke@northwoodscenter.org



Champion Trails: From Vision to Reality

By Luke O'Brien

The Green Mountain Club's plans for developing hiking trails on the former Champion Lands took a step closer to reality recently with a public meeting held at Lyndon State College Thursday, March 1. The meeting, facilitated by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, provided a forum for GMC to present its plans for trails in northern Essex County and was a key step towards being designated Corridor Manager for hiking trails on the Champion Lands.

The process for being designated Hiking Corridor Manager has been a long one for GMC, who originally signaled interest in the role way back in 2001. In the subsequent years, Green Mountain Club volunteers from the Northeast Kingdom Section, working closely with GMC Director of Field Programs, Dave Hardy, have spent countless hours exploring portions of the former Champion Lands and developing a number of draft proposals.

GMC finally received the go-ahead for public involvement from Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Jonathan Wood, after a high level meeting among the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Stewardship Team – consisting of the Directors of State Lands, Forestry, Parks, Fisheries, and Wildlife. Correspondence from ANR states: *"GMC's proposal for Phase I and Phase II trail development... is not inconsistent with the long-term access plan or public access easement for the Essex Timber lands and, with minor modifications, should be released for public review and comment"*. The letter goes on to state that *"the Lands Team did not come to this recommendation lightly"* and outlined several key modifications to the plan. Similarly, GMC does not take the ANR recommendations lightly and has subsequently made a number of changes to address Agency concerns.

The GMC proposal, titled Former Champion Lands Hiking Corridor Management Proposal, provides a detailed yet conceptual outline for trail development in northern Essex County and focuses on a multi-phased trail network extending north from Bluff Mountain in Island Pond to Gore Mountain in Avery's Gore. The proposal includes two phases of trail development as well as a third 'potential' phase that outlines possible future trail opportunities.

Continued on page 2

Visit our website:

www.nekgmc.org

Or GMC at:

www.greenmountainclub.org



**NEK Green Mountain Club
Executive Committee**

Elected Officers:

Director, Jean Haigh

wolfdog@sover.net

President, Luke O'Brien

luke@northwoodscenter.org

Vice President, Joe Anastasia

vtjoe@kingcon.com

Secretary, Michael Chernick

chernick@adelphia.net

Treasurer, Ed Guest

enkguest@charter.net

Appointed Officers:

Publicity, Patty Aubin

pattyaubin@hotmail.com

Outings, Patty Aubin

pattyaubin@hotmail.com

Membership, Jerry Phillips

jerryclyde10@hotmail.com

Programs, Daisy McCoy

daisymccoy@lyndonstate.edu

Trails & Shelters, Luke O'Brien

luke@northwoodscenter.org

Trail Adoption, Kevin

Williamson (802) 222-5951

Newsletter, Luke O'Brien

luke@northwoodscenter.org

Webmaster, Lara Fors

kahja@surfglobal.net

Green Mountain Club

Headquarters

4711 Waterbury-Stowe Rd,

Waterbury Ctr, VT 05677

Tel: 802.244.7037

Fax: 802.244.5867

Email:

gmc@greenmountainclub.org

GMC Mission:

The mission of the Green Mountain Club is to make the Vermont Mountains play a larger part in the life of the people by protecting and maintaining the Long Trail System and fostering, through education, the stewardship of Vermont's hiking trails and mountains.

Champion Lands (Continued from page 1)...

Phase I of the GMC proposal calls for the development, over time, of a hiking trail to Unknown Pond, over Middle Mountain and connecting with the lower Gore Mountain Trail. Initially this phase of trail development will focus on formalizing an existing, but unimproved trail to Unknown Pond. Eventually the route will continue over Middle Mountain and link with the existing Gore Mountain Trail. While GMC volunteers have spent a number of days exploring this area and scouting potential routes, a great deal of work is required before we break ground.

The second phase of the proposal would connect the Unknown Pond Trail outlined in Phase I with the existing Bluff Mountain Trail in Island Pond through the gradual development of a Bluff Mountain Ridge Trail. This 8-mile route passes over a series of knolls in the Bluff Range and would include a primitive campsite located on adjacent private lands.

Other potential future trail opportunities include establishing an East (or Headwaters) Trail to connect the summit of Gore Mountain with the Nulhegan Basin and managing a variety of existing and proposed trails throughout the 130,000-acre Champion Lands complex as future needs dictate. Many of these future trails provide short destination hikes or create linkages to additional proposed corridors. While many of these projects, if completed, would be far off in the future, one intriguing aspect of the plan explores a possible link between the Champion Trails system beginning in Island Pond with the Westmore Trails system extending from Bald Mountain to Wheeler Pond.

Initial reactions to the plan were generally positive at the public meeting, however there were concerns about the proposed trails' impact on the rugged nature of the Champion Lands. This feedback was specifically focused on trail signage, route placement and concerns from camp leaseholders. GMC is very receptive to these concerns and will make every effort to minimize the impacts of its activities on the land and other users of this outstanding region. GMC feels it has made a good-faith effort to limit its trail proposal within the Champion Lands and will continue to work closely with Essex Timber, the Agency of Natural Resources and local stakeholders to monitor progress and address any concerns that may arise.

New Privy at Wheeler Pond

The Wheeler Pond Camps have provided a rustic 'lodge' experience on the outskirts of Willoughby State Forest for decades. Last Fall, GMC completed a long planned up-grade to the outhouse facility at Wheeler Pond – constructing a new 6x8-foot accessible privy that is centrally located, environmentally friendly and, with a little 'raking and smoothing', fits well with the Wheeler Camp environment. Working closely with NEK Section members, GMC staff member, Pete Antos-Ketcham, developed privy plans, requested bids for site work and oversaw completion of the new privy.



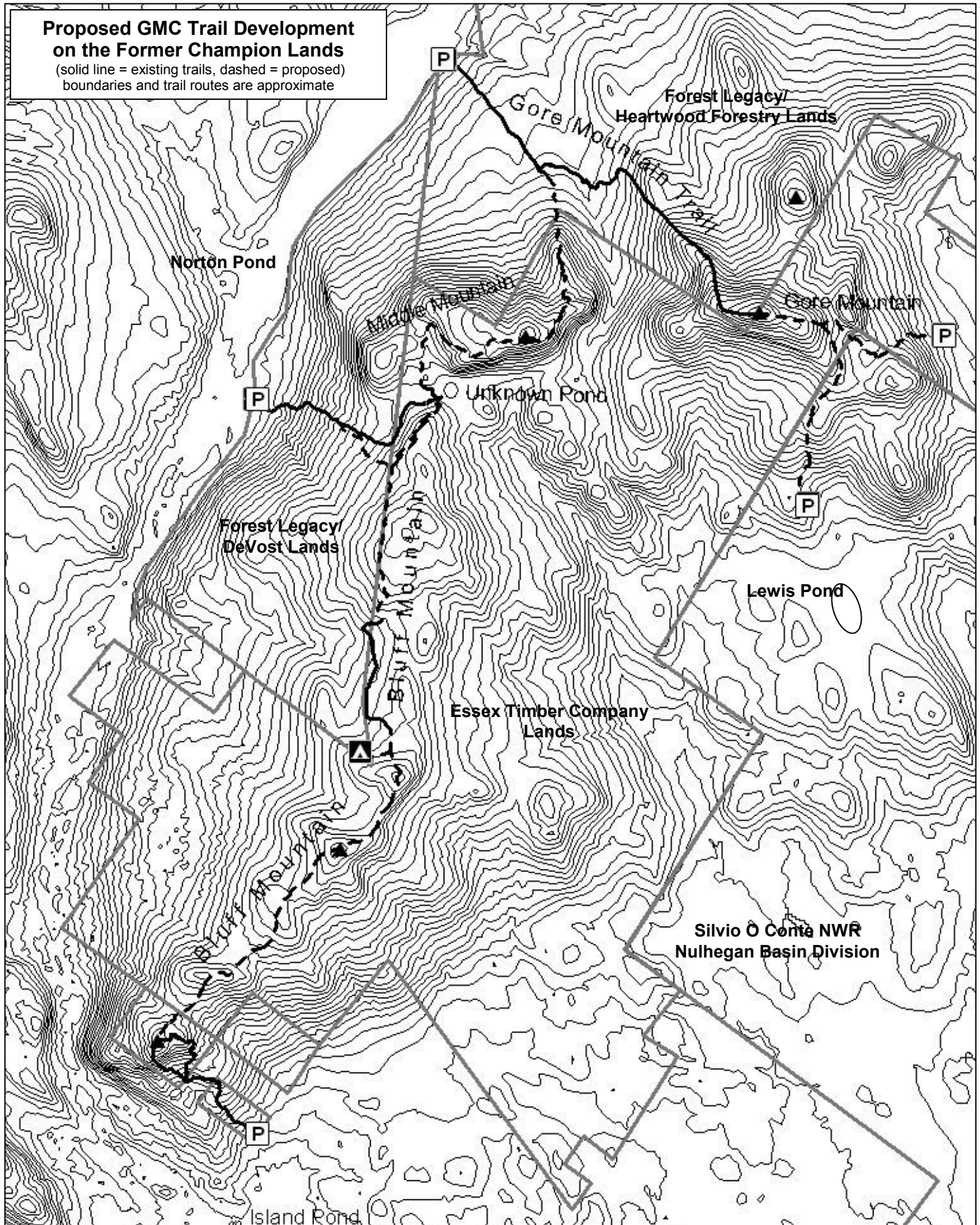
A local contractor expanded the roadside parking area, added gravel to the camp drive and installed the concrete holding tank. GMC staffers Pete Antos-Ketcham, Matt Wels and several members of the Fall Long Trail Patrol helped transport, frame and finish the outhouse structure. NEK Section members Jean Haigh, Michael Chernick, Dwight Cargill, Kevin Williamson, Ed Guest and Luke and Kerry O'Brien spent a day adding the door (complete with a crescent moon cut-out), window, and ship-lap siding. The GMC crew returned one last day to finish the roof, bench seat and trim – working by headlamp into the early dark hours of November.

Special thanks to everyone involved, with a long list of projects here in the Northeast Kingdom, the Wheeler Pond Privy was well-organized and a priority job well done. For more information on the Wheeler Pond Camps or to make reservations, visit the GMC website www.greenmountainclub.org.

(excerpted and edited from the Spring Edition of the Long Trail News)

Proposed GMC Trail Development on the Former Champion Lands

(solid line = existing trails, dashed = proposed)
boundaries and trail routes are approximate





The NEK “Top 10” By Kevin Williamson

Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom offers many excellent hiking opportunities, including more than a dozen mountains which rise over 3000 feet above sea level. This list identifies the ten highest summits located in (or near) the NEK that can be reached by at least one established hiking trail. (Several other 3000-footers exist but are only accessible by bushwhacking and are located on private land.) For ‘directions to’ and ‘descriptions of’ most of these trails, refer to the Green Mountain Club’s [Day Hiker’s Guide to Vermont](#) (DHG) or [The Long Trail Guide](#) (LTG).



Bald Mountain and Bald Hill Pond

- 1) **Bald Mountain** (elev. 3315) tops this alphabetical list. Because of its central location and the fire tower on its summit, Bald Mountain offers what is arguably the best overall view of the Northeast Kingdom. The shortest of three approaches to the summit is by way of the Long Pond Trail. It also offers the easiest trailhead access. (4.2mi. RT, 1450’ elev. gain, see DHG)
- 2) **Belvidere Mountain** (elev. 3360) in Lowell provides a 360-degree view from the open platform of its nearly 70-foot tall fire tower. The two most direct approaches to this summit are nearly equal in distance and difficulty, the Long Trail is the easiest to find and follow of the two. (6.0mi RT, 2000’ elev. gain, see LTG).
- 3) **Burke Mountain** (elev. 3267) also has a fire tower on its summit, which offers an exceptional view of the New Hampshire’s White Mountains. The tower can be reached by way of hiking trails, alpine ski trails, or an auto toll road. Access to the Red Trail (hiking trail) begins at the Burke Mountain Sherburne Base Lodge parking area. (6.0mi RT, approx. 2000’ elev. gain, see DHG)
- 4) **Doll Peak** (elev. 3409) in Jay can be summited by way of the Long Trail between Routes 242 and 105. For those who are able to spot a car, the total hiking distance between these two highways is 9.3 miles. While this distance is a mile longer than an out and back trek from Route 242, most people will find it an easier option than traveling the difficult section between Doll Peak and Jay Peak twice. (see LTG)
- 5) **East Haven Mountain** (elev. 3027) has a privately maintained hiking trail to its summit. (This should not be confused with nearby East Mountain, which has an abandoned radar station on its summit.) The trail on East Haven leads to a mostly wooded summit with limited views from a blowdown patch. **Please do not visit the privately owned cabin on a nearby summit if it is occupied.** This trail begins on a one-lane road that leaves the north side of the Granby Road 4.5 miles from Route 114. The trail, well marked with flagging, leaves the north side of a log landing approximately ½-mile up this lane. (3.5-4.0mi RT, 1100’ elev. gain)
- 6) **Gore Mountain** (elev. 3332) was once topped by a fire tower, but now the only structure remaining on its heavily wooded summit is the former fire lookout’s cabin. The best views of this trail are located below the summit, particularly during the winter when trees are bare of foliage. Winter is also the best time to avoid the long muddy stretches that are ever present on this trail except during prolonged periods of drought. (8.0mi. RT, nearly 2000’ elev. gain, see DHG)
- 7) **Haystack Mountain** (elev. 3223) in Lowell is traversed by the Long Trail from a trailhead near the height of land on Route 58 in Hazen’s Notch. There are two summit lookouts located on a spur path off of the LT, approximately two miles south of Route 58. Road not plowed in winter. (4.2mi. RT, 1450’ elev. gain, see LTG)
- 8) **Jay Peak** (elev. 3858) is the highest summit on this list and it is also one of the busiest. From the trailhead on Route 242 at the top of Jay Pass, the Long Trail provides a short but steady climb north to this open summit. **Please note that conditions on the open summit can be dangerous during inclement weather.** (3.4mi RT, 1650’ elev. gain, see LTG)
- 9) **Monadnock Mountain** (elev. 3148) in Lemington provides an exceptional view of the northern Connecticut River valley from its restored fire tower. The trail to this summit has also seen significant improvements in recent years. With an elevation gain of more than 2000 feet, the challenge to this hike is equal to the reward. (5.0mi RT, 2100’ elev. gain, see DHG)
- 10) **Spruce Mountain** (elev. 3037) in Plainfield is located on the doorstep of the NEK and, because of its proximity, is the ‘ringer’ needed to complete our list. Its summit is also topped by a newly restored fire tower, with wide-ranging views that can be reached for a relatively modest effort. (4.4mi. RT, 1200’ elev. gain, DHG)

As with all hikes, please tread lightly and leave trails and peaks better than you found them. For more information on the NEK Top 10 or to volunteer as an NEK Trail Adopter, please contact Kevin Williamson at (802) 222-5951.

A Farewell to Friends...

After seven years of dedicated service to our section, Robby and Alice Robinson will be moving to California this summer. Regrettably, health concerns have brought about this change in their lifestyle, but in California, they will have the added support of their children.

The Robinsons became charter members of the Northeast Kingdom Section when it was first formed in August of 2000. From the beginning, Robby and Alice regularly attended meetings and outings. Alice edited our newsletter from Spring of 2002 until Winter of 2005, and Robby has been very active as a trip leader and trail adopter. In addition to his own outings, Robby has always expressed an interest in joining hikes lead by others. We have also enjoyed Alice's contributions to our potluck dinners for many years.



All of us are saddened to be losing two very loyal and good-hearted members from our inner circle, and we hope that this move will benefit both of our friends. Robby and Alice, we will miss you.

Upcoming Hikes Schedule...

Saturday July 21
Hike Moose Mountain to the Willoughby Lookout -
4.6 miles RT - moderate.
Call Jean (802) 586-9637

Sunday July 22
Hike Gore Mountain - 8.0 miles RT - difficult.
Call Michael (802) 223-0918

Saturday July 28
Day Hike Double Feature: Climb to the lookouts
on Gardner Mountain near Woodsville, NH and
Mount Pulaski in Newbury, VT. Total round trip
distance for both hikes is 2.5 miles. Mostly easy,
except for some steep terrain on Gardner.
Call Kevin (802) 222-5951

Saturday August 25
Day Hike Double Feature: Visit Barr Hill Nature
Preserve in Greensboro and Nichol's Ledge in
Woodbury. Total round trip distance for both

hikes is less than 2 miles on easy to moderate
grades. Call Kevin (802) 222-5951

Saturday September 22
Hike Piermont Mountain in NH - 4 miles RT - 1300'
elevation gain - mostly moderate grades with two
short, steep pitches.
Call Kevin (802) 222-5951

Saturday October 13
NEKGMC Quarterly Meeting - details TBA
(Possible work day at Wheeler Pond Camps before
meeting)

Sunday October 14
Day Hike Double Feature: Check out Devil's Hill and
Peacham Bog in Groton State Forest. Total round
trip distance for both hikes is 3.5 miles on mostly
easy grades.
Call Kevin (802) 222-5951



Green Mountain Club
Northeast Kingdom Section
 PO Box 187
 East Burke, VT 05832

Support the GMC and Trails in the Kingdom!
Please Renew Your Membership Today! See below for details...

Join the GMC!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Yes! I'm interested in volunteer opportunities!

Section _____ At-Large

\$35 Individual \$100 Protector

\$45 Family \$20 Limited Income

\$55 Sponsor \$75 Defender

\$125 Business / Corporation

Mastercard Visa Exp. Date _____

Card # _____

Signature _____

Total Amount enclosed _____

Send check and membership form to:
 Green Mountain Club, 4711 Waterbury-Stowe Road,
 Waterbury Center, VT 05677

The Green Mountain Club

The Green Mountain Club and its members maintain and protect the 445-mile Long Trail System and 70 overnight sites. Join the GMC and enjoy year-round outings, evening programs, outdoor education workshops, seasonal trail maintenance activities, member discounts, and our quarterly *Long Trail News*.

Section Membership

GMC sections are local chapters. Section members join in group gatherings and hikes. Section volunteers maintain trails and shelters on the Long Trail and beyond.

- Bennington..... Bennington, VT
- Brattleboro..... Brattleboro, VT
- Bread Loaf..... Middlebury, VT
- Burlington..... Burlington, VT
- Connecticut..... Central, CT
- Killington..... Rutland, VT
- Laraway..... St. Albans, VT
- Manchester..... Manchester, VT
- Montpelier..... Montpelier, VT
- Northeast Kingdom..... Burke/Westmore, VT
- Northern Frontier..... Montgomery Center, VT
- Ottawaquechee..... Woodstock, VT
- Sterling..... Morrisville/Stowe, VT
- Worcester..... Central MA

At-large Membership

At-large members support the work of the GMC and participate in club activities, events, and trailwork outings but are not interested in affiliating with a section.