

## **Northeast Kingdom Section- Green Mountain Club, January Quarterly Meeting**

### **NorthWoods Stewardship Center -Charlestown, Vermont, January 18, 2026**

**Call to Order** - NEKGMC President John Predom called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.  
Attendees: Shelia and Duncan Goss, Steve Farrow, Victor and Linda Caamano, Hope Crifo Cathi Brooks, Sue Winsor, Debby Dorsett, Jeff Morris, Paul Trojano, Kevin Williamson, John Predom, Chris Rice, Maria Young, Michael Chernick and Verna Stoddard

**Welcoming Comments** - John Predom offered the following remarks:

I will start by thanking all of you who volunteered for our section in 2025.  
We had 865 hours of reported trail work and 38 reported hours of wood stacking.  
We participated in 10 events; Vermont First Day Hikes, Winter NEKGMC Meeting, Spring NEKGMC Zoom Meeting, National Trail Day Hike, Brighton Trails Day, Summer NEKGMC Meeting, Bald Mountain Volunteer Carry, Long Trail Day Hike-A-Thon, Westmore Mountain Challenge, and Wood Stacking Weekend. Volunteers led three kayak adventures, one ski adventure, and 20+ hikes. Thank you all!  
25 years ago, we were a newly formed section and on the agenda were these two items.

- First, the Northeast Kingdom Section's Bylaws will be considered.
- Second, the question of the GMC's potential role as the hiking corridor monitor for the former Champion Lands will be on the agenda."

Interestingly, this year 2026 our Bylaws are being reviewed and standardized.

Also, GMC's role in the NEK, as it looks like GMC is relinquishing the Corridor Manager role to Northwoods Stewardship Center (unconfirmed as of this writing).

It appears our Newsletter also went digital 25 years ago. Including the listing of the Executive Committee (a recent change is to remove email addresses because of scams).

*"NEWSLETTER PROPOSAL: Efforts to electronically distribute the newsletter are continuing under editor Jay Collier's direction. Jay encourages the submission of stories and photos. Luke also suggested the listing of the executive committee roster."*

We were still in the early stages of the KHT.

*"Luke noted that the development of hiking trails, on the former Champion Lands (meaning the state and privately owned Essex Timber sections), will be incremental. For now West Mountain & Sable Mountain have hiking trails, and the VLC has developed trails on Gore Mountain and Bluff Mountain in the Island Pond area."*

Added Comment: There is a warning sign at Moose Bog regarding the presence of feral swine.

Our mission:

- To maintain and establish trails and shelters in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont
- To sponsor outdoor-related activities
- To promote awareness of the trails of the Northeast Kingdom and the Long Trail.
- To promote education about the environment of the Northeast Kingdom, including issues of stewardship of lands and wildlife
- To make the mountains of Vermont play a larger part in the lives of both the Section's members and the general public

### **Treasurer's Report**

Northeast Kingdom Section ~ Green Mountain Club

#### Quarterly Financial Statement

As of January 4, 2026

#### Operating Account

Beginning Balance (as of 10/08/2025)	\$1576.92
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#### Income

##### Dues Sharing

Sept / Oct	(posted 12/03/25)	\$223.75
Nov	(posted 12/12/25)	\$51.25

##### Other Deposits

Cathi- Hats	\$105.00
John – Deposit	\$188.00

#### Expenses

<u>Ending Balance</u>	\$2,144.92
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#### Certificate of Deposit

CD#1	....4489/Matures 01/12/2026 @.40%	\$1,622.66
CD#2	....3785/Matures 06/27/2026 @.40%	\$1,784.06

Grand Total All Monies	\$5,551.64
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Angela Smith ~ Treasurer

The Treasure's Report was accepted

**Secretary's Minutes** - Chris Rice /Cathy Brooks MOTION [Approve the Secretary's Minutes]

Unanimously Approved

**Director's Report** - NEKGMC Director to the Main Club Cathy Brooks reported on the January Main Club Board meeting. Aside from financial and governance matters, key highlights that GMC Executive Director, Mike DeBonis addressed included the 2025 field work season, which included emergency bridge repairs, trail relocations on or near the Massachusetts border and at Belvidere Mountain, and significant work at the Wheeler Pond Camps.

The challenge match of \$162,000 for the receipt of a \$250,000 grant to implement the Strategic Conservation Plan (SCP) was met. 2025 marked the second year of the SCP's implementation. Securing the grant enabled the Main Club to hire Rowan Kamman as Land Stewardship Coordinator and allow Mollie Flanigan to focus more fully on the SCP, which is being implemented in a two-tier process, Tier 1-Continued Implementation of Outreach Strategies and Tier Two–New Scope of Work for 2025. Additionally, the Spring and Fall 2025 LTN issues featured SCP articles.

As of December 8, 2025, the year's volunteer data consisted of 874 volunteers completing 12,384 hours of service, in various capacities for the GMC. The process was on track to monitor all 82 of GMC's easements and fee-owned properties, and the 63 volunteer corridor monitors were critical for this accomplishment.

Funding was secured for a beaver baffle to be located on the Main Club campus. The device mitigates the threat of flooding at Cabin Lane through the retention of a steady pond depth in the adjacent beaver pond. Notwithstanding this past fall's federal government shutdown, GMC and ATC completed another successful season of Open Areas projects on the AT.

Financially, (as of December 13, 2025), the Main Club proceed forward on FY 26, which features "no pandemics, floods, capital campaign, or major construction projects (to date) a typical year") Monitoring expenditures has kept costs within budgetary limits. From a revenue perspective, donations, compared to FY 25 are up. But membership revenue is down, in part due to the database software transition. Program revenue has declined but within projected budgetary levels. Overall, expenditures are on target, personnel expenditures have risen (noting the new land stewardship position and increased retirement expenditures); but balancing this rise are lower supply and office costs, partially reflecting new office software implementation.

Specifically:

Revenues totaled \$1.4 million (62 percent of the budget, 8 percent below FY 25 and one percent above the year per date. Note: Program revenue at \$455,00 is 52 percent of the budget, representing a 43 percent decrease from FY 25, due, in part, to a greater reliance on restricted funds for field season work;

Contributions (other than membership renewals) are \$777,000 (83 percent of the budget, 73 percent increase over FY 25).

Membership Renewals - The new operational software was problematic for membership renewals, and the staff is employing e-mail, snail mail, and personal outreach to compensate for this obstacle;

Sales are \$71,000 (51 percent of the budget, a healthy 17 percent increase over FY 25);

Expenditures overall totaled \$1.88 million (65 percent of the total, an 8 percent decrease for FY 25; The above data results in a balance sheet of \$629,000 restricted cash, \$268,000 in outstanding receivables with field season invoicing, the endowment's value stood at \$8.8 million; Bromley Tower construction is in progress with \$392,000 reserved for this project; and end of the month accounts payable stood at \$21,000.

With respect to governance revisions extensive discussion continues within the Main Club Board. There is agreement that each section will adopt and adhere to a budget in addition to the submission of regular reports to the Main Club. The Bylaws continue to be revised extensively with the objective of a smaller board, with a significantly reduced section presence, and an overall reconfigured governance structure, including a limitation on the authority of non-director committee members. Leadership titles are now changed from president and vice president to chair and vice chair. The period of consecutive Board service before a one-year leave is extended from six to nine years. But the treasurer would be limited to three consecutive years instead of six.

With the ending of the NEK's role as hiking manager for the Kingdom Heritage Trail (KHT), the NEK Section will no longer have a trail management responsibility, but it will continue to play a role in the management of the Wheeler Pond Camps.

**KHT Corridor Management** – North Woods Stewardship Center (NWS) Executive Director, Maria Young, stated that assuming the KHT corridor management role made sense for NWS, as it is geographically nearby. Although the transfer of the corridor management role from the GMC to KHT will occur, the actual transfer remains to be finalized. There will probably still be an MOU between GMC and NWS. (an MOU was executed subsequent to the January NEKGMC winter quarterly meeting). The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) is the exclusive funder for the KHT. The MOU will (and now does) address the activities of the NEKGMC in KHT projects. Maria sees the corridor management role as a fundraising potential for NWS.

Maria reviewed the working draft of the proposed (at the time of the meeting) MOU between the GMC and NWS.

One issue was insurance liability coverage. At present the proposal would assume the liability coverage for NEKGMC volunteers working on the KHT (This was addressed in the agreement). Kevin Williamson raised the question of liability coverage for volunteers on other NEK projects. There is the related question of which organization (GMC/NWS) should coordinate adopters in the NEK.

The 2025 annual KHT Partners' meeting was held per the KHT Hiking Corridor Management Agreement. The day included updates, including discussion of the hiking corridor management transfer. Organizations represented were FPR, NWS, Weyerhaeuser, the Northern Forest Center- US Refuge, and the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sweet Tree, though invited, did not attend. Other partners include VAST, Vermont Horse Council, CRAG, GMC, and the Agency of Natural Resources .

NWS Topics (aside from KHT) - Every Saturday, this winter, the NWS Lodge will be open for ski and snowshoe trails. There will be a reprint of the second edition of the Northeast Kingdom Trails Guide with changes (ie add Belvidere/Jay) and other technical modifications.

This discussion included whether the Stannard Lookout should be removed from the Westmore Challenge and perhaps add Big Rock at Perry Holbrook. (Maria will check with FPR Recreation Specialist Luke O'Brien). Monadnock remains in the book, even though there remain access issues. It is accessible but there are issues and a hike should not be publicized.

There will be a supplement to the Mountain Challenge that is being characterized as the Chickadee Challenge. This will be announced in the spring. The motivation is accessibility and universal access. It will be web publicized. The locales to be included were discussed. There will be a patch for those who complete this event.

The Vermont Trails and Greenways annual meeting will be held at NWS. The NWS Westmore Challenge No. 10 will be held in September 2026. There are plans to improve the dock on the shore of the Clyde River.

**Membership** - (Victor Caamano) The most recent Main Club membership report for the NEKGMC lists 186 members but John Predom's list is 257. The following data was provided in the report:

September 2025--\$895 (NEKGMC share \$223.75) 15 members

November 2025- \$

December 2025 \$425 (NEKGMC share \$ ) 8 members

**Brighton Trail Days** – A June date is usually selected in March. NEKGMC Vice President Paul Trojano has suggested that if NWS were involved that might bring additional resources and participation to the event. The New Year's hike had greater attendance, for example, with an FPR partnership. Maria Young inquired relative to the intended audience for the June event. Sue Winsor indicated it was the general public The Island Pond businesses are supportive. Maria asked follow-up questions and will consider the matter. There was discussion regarding the use of a truck in connection with Brighton Trail Days.

Once NWS assumes the KHT hiking corridor management role, it hopes to institute a KHT Ramble. But for now, it sees no participation gain from increased posters. NEKGMC President John Predom was uncertain how to proceed with Brighton Trail Days

**Wheeler Pond Camps** - NEKGMC Vice President (and Main Club Camps Chair) Paul Trojano commented that the North Country Union High School volunteers at Wheeler were great workers. We are losing Sterling College volunteers with the college's closure. There will be a limited workday on February 3. The amount of wood stacking will be reduced this coming fall with only 4 chords. Paul has considered a fourth wood bay on top. He will move certain seasoned logs from the top to Haigh Cabin There is an odor problem at the outhouse that needs attention.

**Outings** – Not many events have occurred. The Golden Road hike was well attended. The First Day hike attracted 37 hikers, including many children, and hot chocolate was served. Susan Winsor is looking for a younger person to assume her role as outings coordinator. Volunteer leaders become frustrated with minimal attendance. The hikes are posted on several social media sites. Linda Caamano commented on social media posting. John Predom mentioned that in the Breadloaf Section there would be a list of future hikes and he has tried to institute that process at NEKGMC meetings. The idea of posting spontaneous hikes was suggested.

**Future Outing:**

Sat March 21 -Holland Pond Fishing Access Will hike to Round Pond -10:00 AM

Trail Adopters – It is too early to make assignments for the 2026 trail work season. The future may depend on the relationship between GMC, FPR, and NWS. Paul Trojano offered that if individuals need assistance on trail clearing , there should be discussion within the section. John Predom suggested a section trail workday.

**Newsletter Editor** – Janet Steinert will assume the newsletter editor’s role.

**Mail Chimp** – This communications service vendor is now limiting its free service. There are two options at \$13 or \$20 per month. John Predom suggested approving the \$13 service for now.

Motion: Cathi Brook/ Unknown Seconder (Authorize a \$13 a month expenditure for a Mail Chimp subscription).

Unanimously approved

**Nominations** – Nominations for NEKGMC Section officers are open. The vote for these positions will be held at the annual meeting in March.

Brochures & Business Cards -Motion John Predom/Chris Rice ( Purchase QR Codes for information access.

Approved unanimously

**Clothing** - Cathi Brooks announced she will be ordering new tee shirts, hats, and sweatshirts, She has a supply of new cotton blend tee shirts. There was a consensus (not a formal motion) that free tee shirts should continue to be provided for free to section volunteers and trail adopters.

**Next Meeting** – The Annual NEKGMC meeting was scheduled for Sunday March 29. Tentatively at Burke Mountain Clubhouse

Time & Hike TBD

Adjournment

MOTION: Cathi Brooks/Paul Trojano (Adjourn the meeting)

Approved unanimously

Submitted by, Michael Jay Chernick, NEK Section Secretary