



Trail Crew Alumni Association Update

Updates for alumni and current crew.

May 2016 (I tried)

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Lonesome Lake Rebuild

In the late summer of 1970 it was decided that the crew's next summers project would be the rebuilding of the Lonesome Lake Trail. Over years of use it had become a ditch that in most places one could not even see out of making erosion control impossible.

In March of 1971 I snowshoed into Lonesome Lake with the idea of flagging a route that eliminated the myriad of switchbacks that made up the old trail.

I started out across the flats at the lake and went diagonally down the hill to the south. I then turned back to the north when I felt that I could intersect with the old trail near the bottom of the steep face. This route would require only one big switchback to deal with and hopefully better drainage.

In May, Joe and I went up to look at the alignment that I had set up. As we walked down my flag line Joe looked down the hill a ways and spotted what turned out to be an old logging road which had been used in the 1890's when this area was first logged. As it turned out the old road ran parallel to the line that I had flagged in March, and was in great shape most of the way. It reduced the amount of construction that was required immensely. We got down to the bottom of my flag line near the intersection with the old trail, but I couldn't find one of my flags. I was sure that I had placed it right where we were standing. Joe laughed and said, "Look up." There in the tree six feet over our heads was my flag. The snow had been a little deep in that area.



Don Stevens
1968-1971



During the summer's construction we managed to find a spot down from the trail with water and a sort of level ground camp to work from. It took most of the summer to get a two-foot wide treadway in place across the steep face on the first half of the trail. The loggers of the 1890's had done much of the work on the second half for us. We went to great lengths to eliminate all the crump rocks just to jab the Hut Crew.

--Don Stevens

Trail Crew 1968-71

Trail Crew Life... (Part Two)

In the 1960s, the town of Whitefield was a small village in the center of the White Mountains, with a rail, concert stand, small shops and playhouse. The crew members fit in this setting very comfortably. We all took advantage of the band concerts, pancake breakfasts, and some of the young ladies (although I hope they didn't 'take advantage'). The town folks were very pleasant and friendly. The community was the perfect place for the crew's time out of the woods and mountains.

This town, Whitefield, was the home of the AMC's "Trail Crew," the life blood of the AMC. Best of all the roads in the area brought us to all our work sites.

After chores and personal needs for the coming week, the guys were free to go on their own. Some did go back to the mountains and crags for their pleasures and went climbing. There was also reading, shopping and trips to Limmers. The folks in town and businesses in town took care of vehicles, food needs, medicine, etc.

A neighbor who lived close to the Lodge visited us sometimes and we talked about life on the crew. One day I brought up the situation we had at Bowman Bridge. The unpredictable stream behavior had taken many bridges out over the years. After some discussion about the situation, our neighbor said "I think I can help you," and he did.

First, he gave us two new telephone poles and moved them over to Bowman Bridge site. He used his crawler to drag the poles to the site, lifted them up to the rock built abutments, set them close together, and offered up some suggestions to keep this new bridge from getting lost down river. All this with a great hand shake, and off he went. Such kindness I'll never forget.

I happened to be at Hutton one day visiting my little family when two finely dressed men ambled up the driveway. They were polite, dressed to the nines, and introduced themselves. No mention of why they were there until finally they asked me if I knew about a lost plane engine. I said I had heard about it. One of the gentlemen walked over to a tree where the engine was poorly hidden. I said, "Oh, is that what that is?!" He thanked me very much for the engine. They loaded it into the back of their very expensive truck, got into their truck and left, saying "thank you" as they left. Now, I am really confused. How the "he!!" did they know that engine was here in Whitefield? The plane, twin engine Piper, had crashed at the top of Huntington Ravine. I heard that the plane was still in fairly good condition, had killed two people, but an engine was missing. How did they know the engine was in Whitefield, at Hutton Lodge? I lost sleep over this, but I never found out who ratted on us to this day.

A really great man, Victor J. Martinek, came by the Lodge every summer. He was welcomed with open arms. He came for a meal, shared some stories, and wanted a ride to the trail head of his choosing. We obliged willingly.

Victor was an architect and painter. On his trip through the mountains he stayed at our shelters. He dropped us notes detailing what he observed. He also created little devices and little things that he hoped the folks using the shelter could use. Hooks, cups, spoons, etc. carved out of wood. He cleaned the shelter and grounds before he left. Then, one summer he failed to show up at the Lodge. We never saw or heard from him again. We missed him. (See *Before there were Caretakers*, Chips' Fall 2015)

One of the crew members, Don Palmer from Worcester, MA, performed a rescue right at the Lodge. Chris May, youngest crew member, was sliding down the embankment in front of the Lodge, out of control and right towards our fire pit. The pit as used to barbeque meat, etc. for some of our meals. The fire was going and Chris was headed for it. Don, faster than a speeding bullet, went up and over the railing of the porch, down the embankment and snatched Chris up and away from the pit. That's who crew guys are!

In order to explain the crew work and what that entailed, some of the crew and myself put together a display of tools and pictures of crew work. We displayed this at many AMC activities on the weekends during the summer. Many crew guys helped to explain life on crew to visitors. Crew members gave up their weekend days off to inform visitors about what they did to keep trails open and usable for the general hikers.

There are many more stories about crew life I haven't shared, if more are requested I'll do my best to put some more down on paper.

Next segment I'll go into the mountains and share some of the great moments the crew went through during the "great" summers of the sixties and the explosive increase of the people discovering this great pastime of hiking and camping in the whites, actually everywhere.

---Joe May
Trail Crew Supervisor, 1961-1971

Annual Reunion - Have you Marked your Calendar!
Saturday, November 12th
Attend to hear about planning for
the 100th Anniversary of Trail Crew (2019)!

Visit the Web site soon for complete information.



Visit TCA Web site - amctca.org!

Stay connected--If your address or email changes...
please email bhwhiton@maine.rr.com

Please note our new address

P.O. Box 100
Washington, VT 05675

Have you paid your dues???

If you have already sent your dues or paid on-line, Thank you!