

Pinnacle News

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

FALL 2014

Gap Closed!

Have you encountered “the GAP” in the Windmill Ridge trails? Come to the dead end on the Hemlock Trail? No longer! You can now through-hike all the way from Putney Mountain, across Route 35 in Athens, and west to Grafton. Just follow the white dots all the way.

This 20-year effort has involved the purchase of over 25 parcels of land and six additional trail licenses and easements to create a ridgeline trail 18 miles long! These last connections were due to a number of key players! First, we thank Libby Mills, who persisted on multiple options to acquire land in the gap...to no avail. Then she and Veronica Brelsford cooperated for the permanent trail easement near the Martin Sanctuary. Following that, trail licenses were obtained by Silos Roberts, in cooperation with Frazer Cooper-Ellis and Crescent Dragonwagon, to get from the old dead-end part of the Windmill Ridge trail down to Bemis Hill Road. From there a hiker can walk a short distance to the Martin Sanctuary trailhead and continue north on the newly cleared trail along the Brelsford easement, across the recently acquired Bemis parcel, and thence along a logging woods road across private land to a swift downhill section across Roberts property to the Bull Creek bridge, then along Sleepy Valley Road to the Route 35 trailhead and into Grafton.

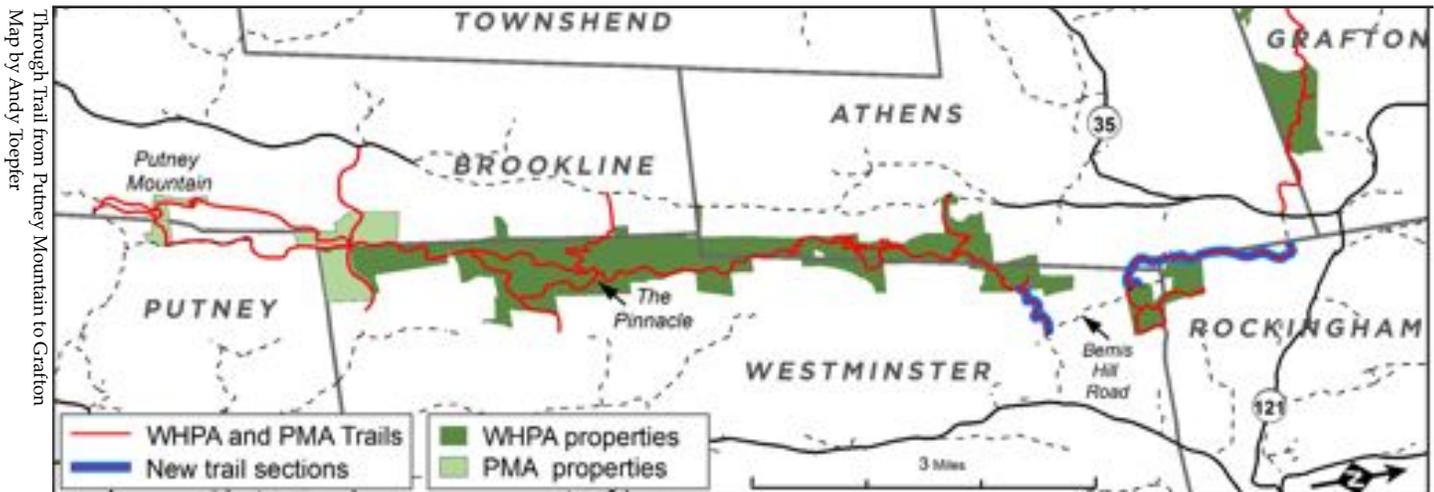
The initial clearing and marking of new trail sections were done over several days in May and June by hardy trail crews

that Sarah Waldo coordinates. The crews included Tony Coven, Hubey Folsom, Jeff Nugent, Joe Richards, Silos Roberts, Andy Toepfer, George Terwilliger, Molly Wilson, and Paul Wilson – all tromping the distance, cutting brush, and pounding in the markers and signs for this on-going effort. Thanks to Ray Hitchcock, the new trail is permitted through the Act 250 process!

This is a marvelous connecting accomplishment! When you have hiked the whole trail, please let us know! We would like to recognize those who have gone all the way, now that this is possible. Thanks be to the determined!

Vermont Trail System

The Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association has been officially approved by the Commissioner of Vermont Forests, Parks and Recreation as a member of the Vermont Trail System. The acceptance letter for this high honor states: “...this designation indicates the importance of WHPA’s trail system. By providing and maintaining many miles of publicly accessible trails, WHPA has proven to be a vital member of the Vermont recreation community. As a member of the Vermont Trail System, your trails are recognized to be significant to providing access to our natural landscape for both recreation and transportation. This designation implies that your trails are and will be maintained to the highest standards...”



Through Trail from Putney Mountain to Grafton
Map by Andy Toepfer

Recent Highlights

Trails. New kiosks have been built and installed at the Pinnacle and Paul's Ledges. All kiosks are being updated with beautiful new maps created by Andy Toepfer. The bridge over the stream at the Athens Access has been completed. A new Townline Trail (from Brookline Road to the Jamie Latham Trail), designed and built by Roger Haydock, is nearing completion. The bridge over Grassy Brook at the end of the Townline Trail at Brookline Road was built on August 24 by Tony Coven, Roger Haydock, Joe Richards, Andy Toepfer, Joe Valaske, Sarah Waldo, and Molly Wilson.



From the Board

Board of Trustees for 2014-2015

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Photos. At far left, line leveling for Brookline bridge over Grassy Brook by, clockwise, Tony Coven, Andy Toepfer, Joe Richards, Joe Valaske. At center, Roger Haydock standing on that finished bridge designed by Andy Toepfer. At right, the newly installed Pinnacle kiosk with, left to right, Andy Toepfer, Tony Coven, Joe Richards, Sarah Waldo, and Silos Roberts.

Volunteer of the Year

Susan Roman, at left, thanks Webmaster Laurie Indenbaum, who was recognized as the Pinnacle Association's Volunteer of the Year at the 2014 Annual Meeting. Laurie totally reformatted the Pinnacle website and updates it periodically with copy and pictures that are sent her. Asked why she took on this important, ongoing responsibility that is essential to keeping Pinnacle members informed, she replied, "I feel so fortunate to live in this wonderful part of the world, and WHPA is doing fantastic work to conserve the beautiful places that surround us. I am happy to volunteer my web-design skills in developing the new website and helping to keep it fresh and up to date."



September, 2014

Dear WHPA Member,

To trim financial and ecological costs while increasing flexibility and immediacy, we plan to send newsletters electronically in the future. Of course, we'll need your email address to do so. The easiest way for you to do that is to email it to us at whpa@sover.net.

If you prefer to provide your email address by the US Mail, please use the postcard bound into this issue. Of course, WHPA won't share membership lists or email addresses with other entities. Nor will we overload your inbox with email. We do plan to occasionally share trail status and other pertinent information with members.

Even if you believe that we do have your current email address, please take a moment to send it to us via email or the enclosed postcard so we can confirm the accuracy of our database.

Best regards,

Susan

Susan Roman
Chair, Board of Trustees
whpa@sover.net

PS. The Spring 2015 newsletter will be sent electronically to all members for whom we have an email address. Every current issue is always available on our website: www.windmillhillpinnacle.org.

Schedule of Events: Weekend Strolls and More

For directions and updated information, please visit www.windmillhillpinnacle.org or contact the program person listed below. Check the website for information on a Winter Tracking Program and other added events.

September 20, Saturday, 11 AM-4 PM. Accessibility Day. This once-a-year opportunity for a vehicle ride to a special trail site will go to Paul's Ledges for lunch via an often rough road. Leaders will be Tony Coven and Bev Major. The popularity of this program and the need for four-wheel-drive vehicles make advance registrations a MUST for riders. Hikers do not need to pre-register. Bring water, a snack, bag lunch, and sweater or jacket for chilly weather. Meet at Westminster West Church at 10:45 AM or Athens Dome Trailhead on Route 35, opposite Sleepy Valley Road in Athens, at 11 AM to carpool. Register with Bev Major at 802-387-5737.



September 28, Saturday, 1:30 PM Meet for Walk, 4 PM Light Refreshments. Closing the Gap Celebration. Twenty years in the making, this event will celebrate the completion of the final sections that provide a through trail from Putney Mountain to Grafton and the designation of Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association trails as officially part of the Vermont Trails System. Hikers should park at the foot of Bemis Hill Road in Westminster by 1:30 PM to carpool to the start of the hike along new sections of the trail system. Hike Leaders will be Libby Mills, Andy Toepfer, and Sarah Waldo. After the walk, hikers will return to the original parking location for a celebration with light refreshments at Jim Jordan's house, 6817 Westminster West Road in Westminster. For more more information, check the website or contact Susan Roman at whpa@sover.net.



October 18, Saturday, 2-4 PM. Athens Dome Hike. Camilla Roberts will lead this occasionally steep 1.5-mile hike to Creature Rock, the summit lookout and shelter site (where you can check out the progress of the Scout project described on the back page), then down to Shortcut Road, past the edge of an old beaver wetland, and back on Ledge Road alongside tumbling Ledge Brook to the parking area. Creature Rock is a collection of house-sized boulders with small caves. The summit view looks to the east, towards Cambridgeport and Atcherson Hollow. Dress warmly, wear sturdy shoes, bring water. Meet at the trailhead parking area on Ledge Road, off Route 35 in Grafton. Contact Camilla Roberts at 802-869-1388 for information and registration.

November 8, Saturday, 2-4 PM. Bald Hill Hike. Get to know local trails on this hike along the combined trail system of the 50-acre WHPA Bald Hill Reserve and the 200 acres of the Bellows Falls Union High School, which has more land than any other public high school in Vermont. This moderate hike by the Bald Hill Committee of the Pinnacle Association will give participants a close-up view of Twin Falls from the infrequently visited south side of the Saxtons River and climb up one side of Bald Hill and down the other, taking in views of the nearby Village and distant Mount Ascutney forty miles north. Hikers should bring water, meet at 232 Covered Bridge Road in North Westminster, and contact Hike Leader Randy Major at 802-387-5737 or majorrandy71@gmail.com for information or registration.

December 6, Saturday, 10 AM-Noon. Hike to Champion White Ash. By popular request, there will be another hike to the largest White Ash in Vermont – which is located on Pinnacle property off Headwaters Trail. Since the tree is not that easy to find if you don't know its exact location, this guided hike will lead you to this remarkable specimen and discuss the factors that affect its health. Without leaves on the tree, its size and structure should be very obvious. Wear hiking shoes, bring water and a snack, and meet at the Holden Trail kiosk. Closer to the event check the website for more information or call Bev Major at 802-387-5737.



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Silos Roberts scythes at Paul's Ledges.

Shelter in the Making

A small, log, three-sided lean-to shelter is being constructed, the old-fashioned way, at the summit of the Athens Dome area in Grafton. Located at the end of a spur trail off the white main trail above Creature Rock, it is set back from and above the view site, in a quiet, peaceful spot somewhat secluded among hemlocks, spruce, and mossy ledge.

Members of Boy Scout Troop 206 from Chester are to be congratulated on their hard work and skill in constructing the lean-to. Eagle Scout Earl Grennan of Grafton designed the shelter and organized workers for his project. The Scouts cut trees, hauled and debarked logs, chopped notches, and then lifted the heavy logs into place.

Look for more details about the progress of this project in our next newsletter and on our website. When completed, the shelter may be reserved by hikers for overnight camping and should become a most favorite resting site. See photo at right.



In the early phase of the shelter, Boy Scouts cut, dragged, and debarked large logs for the framing. Glimpsed partially at left is the Troop Scoutmaster, Pastor Tom Charlton of the Chester Baptist Church. He has contributed supportive skill, hands-on help, and leadership for the Scouts.