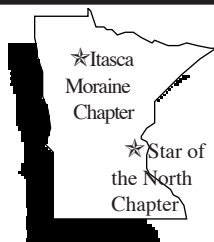


# Call of the North



Vol. 10 Issue 3

FREE for members



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## Itasca Moraine Keeps On Building

By Florence Hedeem, Itasca Moraine Chapter Historian

New signage on Hubbard County 91 directs attention to the North Country National Scenic Trail footpath to the east and west, thanks to Dave Olsonawski, Hubbard County Highway Engineer. East from there the certified trail goes about 20 miles through the Paul Bunyan State Forest to the Chippewa National Forest. To the west the work continues with the hope that quality footpath will be laid to Itasca State Park by August, 2007 when the North Country Trail Association Annual Meeting will be held at Bemidji State University.

During two weeks in June two crews of four from the Minnesota Conservation Corps were hired for seven days to help lay trail west from where the Wisconsin Rovers crew left off in the fall of 2005. Each day the MCC worked, 1-5 members/friends of the Itasca Moraine Chapter worked side-by-side with them. With an eye to creating Gold Standard trail, the work proceeded slowly creating another two miles of premiere footpath.

This newest section of trail goes through a variety of forest types, but is outstanding for its water features. Coon, Crappie, Island and Teepee Lakes give the hiker beautiful overlooks, opportunities to refresh with clear water and chances to observe wildlife. Wild flowers and mushrooms abound, but a sighting of spotted choral root orchids was very special in June.

Many more hours of volunteer help with trail building will be required to

supplement the grant dollars that are secured to hire MCC crews. Interested persons and groups are encouraged to

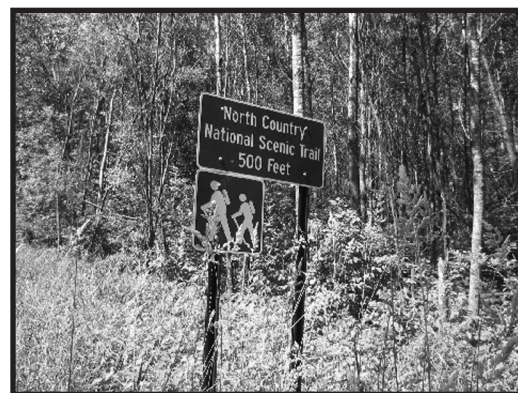
contact Carter Hedeem, President of the Itasca Moraine Chapter though the web-site: [www.northcountrytrail.org](http://www.northcountrytrail.org), or by calling 218-732-9226.

Trail building is a year round endeavor for the members/friends of the Itasca Moraine Chapter. For a couple of years in

advance of grubbing out the final footpath, the area is scouted, flagged and re-flagged multiple times as the exact trail location is fine-tuned, then chain-sawed, brush mowed with a DR mower, and swamped. As a general rule work is confined to the months when bugs, ticks, and mosquitoes are less active – September through April. Whenever work-



Minnesota Conservation Corps crew members: Joe, Ben, Jake, John, Justin, Drew, Willy, and Tony.



New NCNST signage on Hubbard County 91 in the Paul Bunyan State Forest.

Continued on page 4



## Editor's Note...

Just called an old friend, Al Mitton. I was not able to talk to him as his hearing is not very good, and especially not good on the phone. His wife says he doesn't like to wear his hearing aides.

Al, at the age of 87, hasn't done any trail clearing this year, but he keeps busy in the yard at his home. He still drives (too fast — so someone says) and likes to keep in touch with people. Next week he plans on attending a meeting in International Falls. Its people like Al (plus a whole bunch of other people) that made trail clearing to me a real pleasure, almost like a vacation trip.

Two other people that I met during a trail clearing trip were the Del Bjerknesses. Del and his wife, Jo, originated from my home town. Del and I had the same band teacher. Jo was in the same beauty pageant as my cousin—the Montevideo Fiesta Queen. What a small world we live in!!

Trail clearing is not about work; its about building endearing relationships. Relationships that are like beautiful threads running through the tapestry of our lives.

This year I AM going to do some trail clearing. Now that I have put it in writing, I will have to definitely carry out my promise.

President Jerry talks about not seeing anyone on the trail in the Chippewa National Forest. I didn't see anyone either on my trip through the Forest, but there was a tent set up right on the trail. I had to go around the tent to stay on the trail. It was nice to know someone does use the trail.



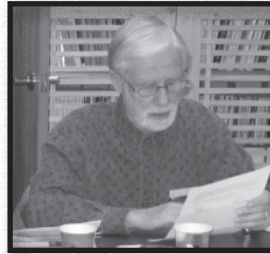
This tent was set up near one of the lakes in the forest. It was my understanding at the time that Walker residents also use the trail as part of their marathon runs they have in September. Its a wonderful trail to hike on. Put the "Chip" on your future hiking plans.

*Ginny Ruppe*

Send your letters to the editor: Ginny Ruppe, 429 Hilltop Avenue, Owatonna, MN 55060 or [vruppe@charter.net](mailto:vruppe@charter.net). Identify your emails with NCTA in the subject line.

## Star of the North Chapter Report . . .

*By Jerry Johnson, President*



### If We Build It, Will They Come

A few weeks ago I had an opportunity to hike a portion of the North Country Trail in the Chippewa National Forest. I didn't meet any other hikers, nor did I really expect to. In-

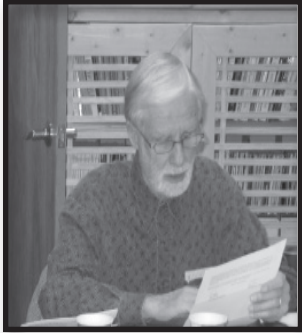
deed, I would have been surprised if I had. This short hike raised a question for me: Will there ever be many hikers on the NCT? Surely we would love to know that the trail is well used (as I assume is the Appalachian Trail and are segments of the NCT).

I've come to the conclusion that most of us support the trail because, basically, we know it's a good thing. Even though we seldom get the opportunity to work on it or even to hike it, we believe the concept is worthwhile and worth, at a minimum, our annual dues and a maybe a couple of hours at the Expo. Beyond that we realize that if such a trail is not now put in place, in twenty or fifty years it may well be impossible to create it. We are building for future generations who will never know us, but who will look back with appreciation on our efforts. Thus, the current numbers are not really all that important, it is rather the numbers a hundred years from now that justify our efforts.

For many members of our Star of the North Chapter the NCT may only be something to read about. To those individuals I would say the next time you travel up north find a segment of the trail to hike, if only for an hour or two. You'll find that even a short hike will make you feel good about your support for the NCTA. (A great place to hike the trail, for one mile or forty miles, is either in the Chippewa National Forest or in the Paul Bunyan State Forest. Based in Walker you are only ten minutes from a great experience.)



## State Coordinator's Message *By John Leinen, Jr.*



I had to chuckle a bit as I looked over my last offering which began with my questioning whether spring was going to arrive after the last heavy wet snowfall. As I sit here today with the Solstice and the Fourth of July now past, memories of those late snowfalls and the abundant spring rainfall we

experienced after, are now too long forgotten. Today, I wonder when we'll see some rain again. The river's way down, more like late September than early July. All the sunshine has been great, but a few days of steady cool rain would be welcomed indeed.

I hope that you are enjoying your summer and getting a chance to maybe take it easy a bit, get away on vacation and spend time with your families. We're getting caught up around here after heavy spring commitments to trails and the requirements of the yard and garden. Now, getting our chance to relax some, we have already begun to turn our thoughts to the NCTA 2006 Annual Conference, in Clarion, PA. I hope that you can join us there, August 10 - 13. Our staff and Pennsylvania friends have a great time planned for us all, so I know you'll have fun.

I hope you got a chance to get out and enjoy National Trails Day. Pat and I joined the Superior Hiking Trail Association opening new trail in west Duluth. It was a wonderful day, bright and sunny. The new trail is spectacular! The lake and St. Louis Bay views were super, but the woods and the remoteness of the trail stole the show for me. Beautiful valleys and stream crossings, an overabundance of wild flowers in bloom (the hillside covered with yellow ladyslippers was too much), the songs of the birds, all within Duluth. The trailhead was barely two hours from my driveway north of Stillwater, you'll have to check it out for yourselves.

While there has been much that has happened concerning the North Country Trail both here in Minnesota and all across these seven states, the most important development in my opinion has to be the announcement by new Interior Secretary, Dirk Kempthorne, of a new plan that will stress conserving natural and historic places as the National Park's predominant mission. This new policy reverses this Administration's plan that shifted the park's priorities toward recreation with less emphasis on preservation. The North Country National Scenic Trail is not an official "unit" of the NPS, so this new plan will not

directly affect NCT, but it will be good to know that the agency that administers our trail has this kind of focus.

We did have a slight false start filling the new Minnesota/North Dakota Regional Coordinator. Our first candidate realized the time away from home and his young family was not the right fit for him. This proved to be only a small setback/delay when Matt Davis left a regional coordinator position with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to take our position. He and his wife are looking forward to returning to the Detroit Lakes area, where they are from and joining our efforts in Minnesota and North Dakota.

Here in Minnesota, 2006 should be another year with much new trail built. Again led by the efforts of our Itasca Moraine Chapter, we'll have more paid help from the Minnesota Conservation Corp crews than ever before. This effort helps supplement the great effort provided by the IMC members, the YMCA's environmental backpacking program at the U of M, the Outdoor Program Center at Bemidji State University and many others. IMC President, Carter Hedeem, will be happy to provide anyone with a chance to help build new trail. There will be folks working every week, so give Carter a call if you're interested in helping out (218.732.9226). Or you could join Carter and me for our annual trail building trip September 28 - October 1. We'll be again staying at Carter and Flo's rustic and beautiful Skunk Lake cabin. With your help we have a chance to have the Trail complete between Chippewa NF and Itasca SP by the 2007 NCTA conference to be held in Bemidji.

On the negative side of things, it looks like partisan politics will make it impossible to get the NE Minnesota Route adjustment passed this year. With this being an election year nobody seems to be interested in cooperating with the other side. I guess I can't blame them, it's the system they have to operate within and they certainly understand the rules better than I. The election this fall may offer some hope. Without the need to campaign and run, cooperation seems to be easier to find. We'll just have to wait and see. Remember to exercise your right to vote this fall, let's let them know we'd like to see a little cooperation.

I'll conclude by reminding everyone to make sure they keep August 2 - 5, 2007 free so that you'll be able to attend the NCTA 2007 Annual Conference in Bemidji Minn. If traveling to another state to attend conference has never been in the cards for you, then this is tailor made for you. Help us have a great turnout and welcome all of



*Continued on page 4*



*The NCT's ideal footpath in Chippewa National Forest.*

*State Coordinator Cont'd. from page 3*

the attendees from the other states. I know the Itasca Moraine Chapter has already begun to plan the conference, and NCTA staff has already made arrangements with the university. This will be a great conference. Join us there, I know you'll enjoy yourself.



*Continued from page 1*

ers are available, however, the chapter provides guidance and support.

The Itasca Moraine Chapter is very pleased to have more than 21 miles of certified trail ready for hiking. Fun hikes are scheduled monthly. Upcoming hikes include a Picnic Hike, July 23; over-night hike, August 26-27; Mushroom Hike, September 10; and the sixth annual Hike for Hope, October 1. For more information about these hikes contact Beth Trout at 218-675-5448 or [jbtrout@tds.net](mailto:jbtrout@tds.net).

*John Leinen shot this photo of our state flower, Lady Slipper, along the Superior Hiking Trail.*



## Tips from Andrew Skurka

*Taken from Andrew Skurka's website*

### Energy Bars

Andy Skurka says that energy bars are his biggest source of calories. He feels energy bars are nutritious, tasty, and satisfying. Many are fortified with vitamins and minerals, contain healthy ingredients by design, and come in a variety of flavors and textures.

Balance Bars are his energy bar of choice because, for hikers, they have two distinct advantages over other popular types of energy bars:

They have a low Glycemic Index (GI) ranking. The GI is a measure of how quickly carbohydrate-containing food items affect blood sugar level over a 2-hour period. Low GI-ranking foods result in a more modest rise and fall in blood sugar levels, avoiding the energy bursts that are undesirable for hikers, who need long-lasting energy.

They have a ratio of fats, carbohydrates, and proteins that is better aligned with the long-term needs of a long-distance hiker. Hikers need fats for energy storage, carbohydrates for energy, and protein for muscle recovery. Bars that contain mostly carbohydrates (and relatively little fat and protein) will not fulfill our long-term nutrition needs alone.

### Pre-Hikes

If you are a beginner and are planning to embark on a long-distance hike, I would highly recommend that you get out there before you start. It will give you a chance to:

Assess your equipment: what you are not using or could do without, what you are missing, what you might like more, and what might work better;

Develop some backcountry/backpacking skills: how to stay warm in inclement weather, how to pitch your shelter in stormy conditions, and how to determine the amount of food you will need between two resupply points; and

Familiarize yourself with things that will be a central part of your life for the next several months: you'll see how the trail is graded, maintained, and designed; you'll learn how to use your guidebooks, handbooks, and databooks in conjunction with each other; and you'll figure out how to pack your backpack to maximize your comfort and efficiency.

Veteran hikers can benefit from pre-hike hikes as well, though the benefits are smaller.



*Call of the North*  
429 Hilltop Avenue  
Owatonna, MN 55060



Place  
Stamp  
Here

## FIRST CLASS

### Activities Calendar

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**July 23** — Picnic Hike. For more information contact Beth Trout at 218-675-5448 or jbttrout@tds.net.

**July 29** — The July hike sponsored by Itasca Moraine Chapter will be held on Saturday, July 29th at 10:00 AM. Hikers will meet at the Shingobee Recreation and Picnic Area five miles south of Walker on Highway 34. We will hike approximately six miles on the North Country Trail to the point where the trail and the Steamboat Forest Road intersect with Highway 64 approximately five miles north of Akeley. Hikers should bring a lunch and should wear long pants and long socks so that the pants can be tucked into the boots or hiking shoes. For more information call Ken Zimmer (218-327-0911) or Beth Trout (218-675-5448).

**August 10-13** — NCTA Annual Conference, Clarion, PA.

**August 26** — The August hike will begin at 11:00 AM on Saturday, August 26th at the same intersection of Highway 64, Steamboat Forest Road and the North Country Trail approximately five miles north of Akeley. Hikers will camp overnight at Waboose Lake and hike on to the point where the North Country Trail intersects with Refuge Forest Road, hiking nine miles over Saturday and Sunday. Hikers should carry sleeping bag and tent, food for both Saturday and Sunday and appropriate clothing. The campsite at Waboose is a primitive camp site. For more information call Ken Zimmer (218-327-0911) or Beth Trout (218-675-5448).

**August 26-27** — Overnight hike. For more information contact Beth Trout at 218-675-5448 or jbttrout@tds.net.

**Sept. 10** — Mushroom Hike. Contact Flo Hedeem at (218) 732-9226.

**Sept. 15-17**—Trail clearing with Ray Vlasak. Ray's email address is: highpines@arvig.net.

**Sept. 28-Oct. 1**—Trail building with Carter Hedeem and John Leinen. This group will also be participating in the Hike for Hope. Contact Carter Hedeem at (218) 732-9226 for more information.

**Oct. 1**— Sixth Annual Hike for Hope on the newest section of the trail. Contact Flo Hedeem for more information.

**Nov. 11-13**—Midwest Mountaineering Expo.

#### North Country Trail Association and affiliates web sites:

Home site: [www.northcountrytrail.org](http://www.northcountrytrail.org)

Star of the North: [northcountrytrail.org/stn/index.htm](http://northcountrytrail.org/stn/index.htm)

Itasca Moraine site: [northcountrytrail.org/itm/index.htm](http://northcountrytrail.org/itm/index.htm)

Visit our trail partner's websites for a list of their activities:

Kekekabic Trail Club: [www.kek.org](http://www.kek.org)

Minnesota Rovers Outing Club: [www.mnrovers.org/html/activities.htm](http://www.mnrovers.org/html/activities.htm) or contact them at (612) 829-5142.

Superior Hiking Trail Association: [www.shta.org/Event/Calendar/index.php](http://www.shta.org/Event/Calendar/index.php).

The Kek, Rovers, Parks & Trails, and the Minnesota Canoe Assn. have a list of trail clearing opportunities at [www.kek.org/mwta2004.html](http://www.kek.org/mwta2004.html).

Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota: [www.park-sandtrails.org](http://www.park-sandtrails.org), phone numbers are 651.726.2457 & 800.944.0707.

Border Route Trail: [www.borderroutetrail.org](http://www.borderroutetrail.org).