

Jordan Valley 45°

Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 1



Calendar

ANNUAL MEETING

Sat., Mar. 14, 2015

Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Boyne Valley Twp. Fire
Hall, Boyne Falls

Food, Trail Talk, Prizes
Hike or Snowshoe

2 p.m. Meet Duane

Warner Creek Pathway
Trailhead on M-32

See pg.2 for more

SNOWSHOE HIKE

Sat., Feb. 21, 2015

NCMC Natural Area

Meet 3:00 p.m.

NCMC College Gym

Parking Lot, Howard St.
Petoskey

See pg. 5 for more info

QUIET WATER SYMPOSIUM

Sat., March 7, 2015

MSU Pavilion

E.Lansing, MI

See pg.3 for more info

February, 2015



President's Commentary by Duane Lawton

Welcome to our February
chapter newsletter!

Here in the middle of winter,
one wonders how much
activity there could be on the
trail. There are actually a lot
of folks who snowshoe, ski
and even walk on sections of
the NCT in the winter.
Meanwhile, we are beginning
to think about warmer
weather, and getting on with
sprucing up and improving
our section of trail.



Photo by *Dove Day*
"O'Brien Pond Boardwalk"
January 1, 2015

The annual meeting on January 10th was a success, with a
much-appreciated update on the NCTA by Andrea
Ketchmark.

The big news is that we have new Trail Coordinators,
Dove and John Day, elected by a landslide (!). They are
already heavily into re-invigorating all I let slip last year.
...just read their report, (see pg. 4)

Congratulations to Amy Wilks, our intrepid Communications Coordinator—and newsletter editor—for winning the coveted “Big Foot” award! Congratulations to Connie Allen for receiving the NCTA Chapter Honor Award for her culinary excellence at our O’Brien Pond weekend work camp!

A full report on the annual meeting are in the draft minutes included in this newsletter.

I hope you are all enthused about getting out on the trail in 2015, and can make it to our March chapter meeting, where we will get down to business.

Jordan Valley 45° Chapter March Meeting

How about something a little different?

Saturday, March 14th, 2015 6:00 pm
Boyne Valley Twp Fire Hall, Boyne Falls

- Trail Talk
- Door Prizes
- Food (pizza and pop will be served)
- Fellowship
- Hike!

With respect to the hike: I will be going out at 2:00 from the Warner Creek Pathway trailhead on M-32 to hike (or snowshoe, as the weather dictates) in to O’Brien Pond. Come along!! If we’re ambitious, we might do the whole WCP loop, or we might just “return to GO”.

Please let us know you’re coming, so we’ll know how much pizza to buy. ...but come anyway if you forget to rsvp!

Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign—Not

Our quest to get authorization to post NCT signs along M-32, C-38 and US-131 at trail crossings keeps meandering. I reported the NPS is working with MDOT to “standardize” the emblem to be used on such signs. I suspected that they’re waiting to include reference to the “governor’s showcase trail”.

Wrong. Andrea assures us that the use of an NCT logo on a roadsign is not appropriate (It's not a standard approved emblem), and the discussion is all about how to standardize the text sign: "North Country National Scenic Trail".

Meanwhile the governor's showcase trail has been named the "Iron Belle Trail", in reference to its endpoints, Ironwood and Belle Isle. Here is the DNR press release:

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10371_10402-346208--,00.html

And here's NCTA commentary:

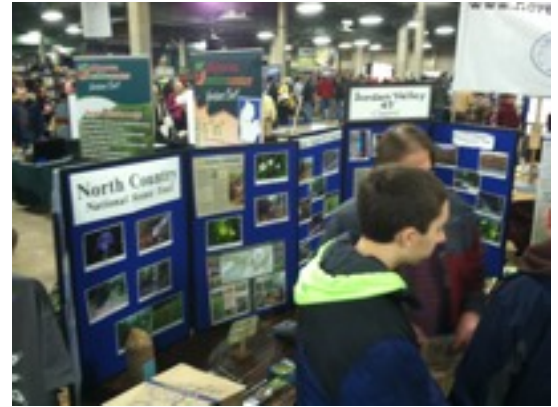
<http://northcountrytrail.org/2015/01/30/what-is-michigans-iron-belle-trail/>

Duane Lawton, delawton@torchlake.com

**The 20th Annual Quiet Water Symposium will be
Saturday, March 7, 2015**

at the MSU Pavilion, 4301 Farm Lane Rd., East
Lansing, MI.

The Quiet Water Symposium celebrates non-motorized outdoor recreation and a shared concern for our Great Lakes Environment.



At the Symposium visitors will find presentations by world famous authors, photographers, and expedition travelers. Other presentations may cover skills, safety, local and distant destinations. There may be presentations on bicycling, sailing, diving, and history.

The Symposium has a wide range of exhibits on the show floor. You will find clubs and nature centers. Handcrafted and historic watercraft will be on display. Biking, hiking and water trails are represented. Conservation and watershed groups are available. A number of outfitters and liveries are represented to support your outdoor adventures. We have a growing selection of outdoor oriented retailers as well.

The North Country Trail will be represented by the Jordan Valley 45° Chapter, and probably the Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore and Western Michigan Chapters.

Some presentations (of dozens) you might be interested in: Jim DuFresne: The Alaska Marine Highway; Cliff Jacobson: Stormproofing your camp; Larry Lindsey: Backpacking on Tasmania's South coast; Tom Funke: Exploring the Eastern U.P.

More information at quietwatersymposium.org "I'm going to Quiet Waters, want to ride with me?" Duane Lawton delawton@torchlake.com

Trail Coordinators' Report by Dove and John Day

Introduction of Our Newly Elected Trail Coordinators

John and I live on a road section of the NCT in Petoskey. The trail is a big part of our every day lives. It's close by so it's a great place to walk our two dogs Junior and Koda. The love of being outdoors and hiking on the NCT was one of the things that brought us together. When we first met, John was marking all the local NCT sections he had hiked on a map, I joined him, and we have been doing it together ever since. Over time we collected all of the Michigan NCT trail maps, and any time we travel anywhere near the NCT we always try to take an hour or two out of our day to get out and hike a bit of it.

The trail has given us much joy in our personal lives. We are now excited to be Trail Coordinators for the Jordan Valley 45° Chapter. If any of you are interested in adopting a section of trail, or know anyone who might be, or if you notice any problems with any section of trail, please feel free to contact us.

Dove and John Day

John 231-838-6445 and Dove 231-373-0090

or e-mail us at johnanddove@gmail.com or doveday@gmail.com

We are happy to announce some new trail adopters.

Bob and Sheridan Haack of Central Lake, MI and T.J. Jepsen of Elmira, MI.

Bob and Sheridan are JV45° members. They, along with their dogs Duster and Shelby, have adopted the Cascade Rd. to Pinney Bridge trail section.

T.J. Jepsen, a member of the Western Michigan NCT chapter, has adopted from Giem Rd. to Kuzmik Rd. section, and has also agreed to care for part of the Jordan Valley loop from Turner Rd. to the Deadman's Hill Junction.

We want to thank them for volunteering their time to help keep the trails in good condition. If you see them out of the trails, be sure to tell them, thank you!



Photos: Left, T. J. Jepson
Right: Top, Bob and Sheridan Haack
with dogs, Duster and Shelby

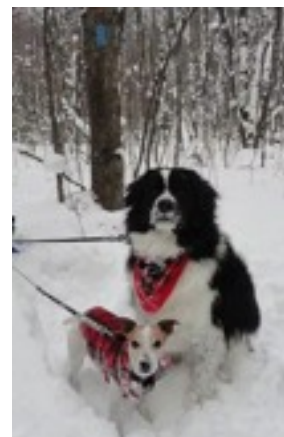


Photo: Our dogs, Junior & Koda, NCT Spirit





Snowshoe Hike

NCMC Natural Area

Saturday February 21st

The Jordan Valley 45° Chapter of the North Country Trail Association invites you to a 3 mile snowshoe hike in the North Central Michigan College Natural Area, Saturday, February 21, 2015. The hike will wind through the woods and pass by the beautiful Bear River. A shorter 1.2 mile route is available. **BYO snowshoes.**

Meet at 3:00 p.m. in the back of the NCMC college gym parking lot, at the very end of Howard Street in Petoskey. Plan on about two hours. If you do not own your own pair of snowshoes, rentals are available at Bear Cub Outfitters in Petoskey (\$9 for half day).

There is no cost for this event.



If the weather is questionable or if you have any other questions feel free to call John Day @ 231-838-6445 or Dove Day @ 231-373-0090.

Secretary's Report by Mary Campbell

(Special Thanks to Peg Jones, who filled in for, under-the-weather, Mary Campbell, and produced this epic in blazingly [(:o)] fast time.

NCTA JV45° Chapter Annual Business Meeting Minutes - DRAFT -

Date: Jan. 10, 2015, 11 a.m.

Location: BJ's Family Restaurant, Gaylord, MI

Meeting called to order by Duane Lawton approximately 11:15. Twelve Chapter members and Andrea Ketchmark from NCTA HQ staff attended. Duane presented the proposed agenda which was approved after a motion by Eugene Branigan seconded by Amy Wilks. Peggy Jones took minutes – our secretary is ill today.

Finances:

Duane reported that our finances improved a bit, with our checking account balance up from \$2,802.15 at the end of 2013 to \$3,666.68 as of 12/31/14. During the year we received \$2,000 in grants from the National Park Service (NPS) and NCTA for the O'Brien's Pond Beaver Deceiver and Trail Repair project. Although the major work was completed on this big project in Sept. 2014, the permit for the project is good for 5 years and we will be evaluating whether additional work is needed at this troublesome spot in the spring. Approximately \$1500 of the grants was spent so far, and the rest can be used if we need to adjust the drain tube size or alter the puncheon.

2014 Accomplishments and Activities:

The Beaver Deceiver and Trail Repair at O'Brien's Pond was our largest project for 2014. The water level in O'Brien's Pond is down 22" after the beaver deceiver and 56' of puncheon were installed to reconnect the NCT in Jordan River Valley with the Warner Creek pathway section. There is an open discussion about whether the trail can be moved back onto the RR grade that was significantly damaged by the beaver activity, or if the permit for the repairs will need to be amended to indicate the new puncheon location very near to the RR grade. A site visit after the spring thaw will be needed to determine how we did with "Deceiver 1.0".

Two workdays were focused on building the new "Skyline Camp" on privately owned property near the "Skyline Trail" east of Petoskey. The Boor family granted NCTA use of the land for the camp, as well as a wall tent ("yurt"), and helped us with spur trail construction and campsite improvements. The spur trails were built to the campsite and a future water source in July, and additional site preparation for a fire ring and the yurt was done on National Trails Day in Sept. We look forward to adding finishing touches in 2015, including figuring out how to create a catch basin for the spring that will be the water source.

Register boxes were installed in three places where the NCT intersects other trails and hikers would benefit from clear directions. The outside of each box has mileage indicators to nearby road crossings or key waypoints, and there are notebooks for hikers to mark their progress and share comments with us inside each box. We appreciate Duane's work to make these boxes, get (see next page).....



Photos: Left, Building the new "Skyline Camp"

Right, New Register Box with Mileage Distances



the mileage signs printed, and lead the installation hikes. The 2014 boxes were installed at the foot of Deadman's Hill where the NCT heads north to O'Brien's Pond and the DNR trail returns to the parking lot on the top of Deadman's Hill, off Krause Road in the Skyline Trail section, and in the North Central Michigan College Natural Area. Duane has a contract with a local sign printer ("Sign and Design" in Petoskey) if we know of other places that would benefit from clear directional indicators. They will print the signs for \$65 each if we do fewer than 18 at once. If we can group all of our signs into a single printing run they will discount the price to \$35/sign. Duane proposes that we think of places along the Jordan River Pathway/NCT that could use a "you are here" sign so we can get the discounted price.

Progress was made on the proposed Dobleski Road re-route. When completed, this re-route would eliminate a road walk just east of and on US-131. Jeff McCusker from the NPS walked proposed route #2 with Duane and rejected it because there was a hill climb and descent that cost energy without yielding a good view at the top. A flatter route was flagged and deemed acceptable. Jeff started the paperwork needed for the next step toward an approved re-route- creation of an "Optimum Location Review" document. The "OLR" needs to be approved by the NPS and the local land authority – which is the DNR at this location. After approval, the NPS can begin working with the landowners who need to grant us an easement to cross their property. Although these preliminary steps can be time consuming, they are required. Jeff just accepted a job in Oregon for the Bureau of Land Management so it looks like the OLR approval will hibernate until his replacement begins work. NCTA HQ is hopeful that NPS will replace Jeff by April.

Todd and Jen Winnell led the "Last Chance Before Deer Season Hike" along the Skyline Trail section on Nov. 8.

Regular meetings were held except in March and Nov. at the Boyne Valley Fire Hall, and we celebrated the second annual Petoskey Trail Town day on June 7.

Incomplete Projects from 2014:

Getting large signs to mark trail crossings along US131, C48, and M32 appeared to be a straightforward project between us, the County Road Commissions, and MDOT. Unfortunately it veered off the road and into federal and state government regulations for signage. NCTA headquarters is working on this because multiple chapters have the same problem. The federal regulations list very few logos that are permitted for highway signs, and the North Country Trail's logo is not among them. The most likely resolution is that we will be able to use simple standardized text signs approved and provided by the Michigan Dept. of Transportation. In the meantime we are permitted to work with the local highway authorities to erect simple "Trail Crossing ¼ mile" type text signs that do not specifically refer to the North Country Trail.

A second open project from 2014 was to try to get a better route between the Oden Fish Hatchery--with a great visitor's center just 1.5 miles from the current trail route--and Conway. A potential off road route was identified, but a major land owner who controls a narrow strip about 2 miles long blocking the proposed route refused to consider allowing the trail on their land. This project is on hold while we explore a suggestion from the Harbor Springs chapter which would eliminate some roadwalk by taking advantage of some Land Trust area with trails, but this route would bypass the Oden hatchery.

We hiked a proposed re-route around the beaver ponds and damaged bridge in the Jordan River Valley section on May 10. Ken Phillips from the DNR flagged it and requested our feedback. Unfortunately with the exception of one scenic overlook, the group consensus was that we didn't like the route and strongly preferred to focus on beaver control and bridge repair so the original route could be restored.

2015 Projects and Plans

We have lots of ideas for projects and activities in 2015 – generally the limiting factor is having someone to lead the projects and events. See Tables 1 and 2 for some details in separate email. Duane is looking for speaker ideas.

NCTA would like us to update the GPS data for our section so we can update the section map and Jordan River Pathway Map. Dove and John Day may take the lead on this. John is very familiar with the mapping software NCTA's Map Guy (Matt Rowbotham) uses. NCTA worked with Michigan State University to create a detailed training package and template to help Chapter volunteers improve the GPS data, and plans to open the GIS dataset so Chapters can edit their own sections. If you would like to do some GPS'ing but don't have a GPS, NCTA headquarters can loan you a GPS.

Eugene asked if the GPS data for the trail were available for downloading to GPS and other devices from the website. (Apparently he found a "work around" to get it in the past, but it wasn't straightforward.) Andrea said it was now in a downloadable form, and they are thinking about how to incorporate trail alerts into the downloadable maps and GPS data.

Communications Update

Communications Coordinator Amy Wilks noted that our membership is up to 65-70 and credits the "e-membership" for the boost. Dove and John Day suggested that NCTA HQ update the description of the JV45° trail on the website section where a new member would look to determine their chapter affiliation. Our Chapter's description leaves off Emmet County and Petoskey. Andrea to followup.

We also noted that the old Chapter name remains in place at the Deadman's Hill trailhead and on stickers on carsonites. This could be confusing. Duane will ask his DNR contacts about who maintains the signage at Deadman's Hill so we can get this updated, and also let them know the display at Landslide Lookout needs to be cleaned out.

Josh Berlo, our webmaster, asked for any suggestions for the Chapter website. We had none – just gratitude for his skillful service.

Refer to "Table 1. Proposed 2015 Trail Projects" and "Table 2: Proposed 2015 Events & Meetings (in separate email.)"

Trail Condition Update -Duane reviewed the trail condition report that he will be passing on to Dove and John Day.

Election

The following members were elected unanimously (including several absentee ballots) for 2 year terms – **THANK YOU** for being willing to serve as our leaders: Board member at Large (Webmaster) – Josh Berlo, Trail Coordinator(s) – John and Dove Day, Vice President – Eugene Branigan, Treasurer – Todd Winnell

Awards

Connie Allen was recognized with the NCTA Honor Award for the wonderful food she provided during the Beaver Deceiver project at O'Brien's Pond, and the 9th annual Jerry Allen Big Foot Award for Chapter Service went to Amy Wilks for her excellent work on our newsletter and other communications. (This was originally named the "Big Boot" award in honor of the big shoes our first Chapter president, Jerry Allen, left when Gary Johnson replaced him. The official award is one of Gary's old boots spray painted gold and mounted on a log. It lives in Jerry's garage.)

Speaker: Andrea Ketchmark, NCTA Trail Development Director

Andrea Ketchmark presented an update on the NCTA's overview of 2014 and outlook for the coming years. In 2014 the NCTA members reported 76,450 volunteer hours supplied by 1,022 volunteers. NCTA knows that this is just the tip of the iceberg – we probably have five to ten thousand volunteers, but getting them to report their hours is tough. Only the Appalachian Trail reported more volunteer hours than we did.

Some 2014 Stats: 1,022 Volunteers, 76,450 Hours, \$1.8M equivalent volunteer labor, 43 Miles New Trail, 68 Miles Rerouted, 2,791 Miles Completed and Open, 25 New Bridges, 54 New Boardwalks/Puncheon Sections, 1 New Beaver Deceiver – OURS!

There are 3 new videos on the NCTA website just for you:

<http://northcountrytrail.org/members/volunteer-resources/>

- Intro to the North Country National Scenic Trail – 10 minutes
- Trail Adopter Training – by Bill Menke, a trail maintenance legend.
- Trail Design and Layout – by Jeff McCusker, 15 minutes. How to plan re-routes and new trail.

The handbook for Chapter Leaders has been revised to be more useful to us, and will be posted on the NCTA website in the next couple weeks. GPS training materials are in the new manual, and there will be more workshops and webinars for volunteers this year. NCTA got help from an expert in “Trail Town” development and promotion in Traverse City and looks forward to sharing a “Best Ideas for Trail Towns” document with us. They are hiring a part time marketing staff member in 2015 and hope to provide volunteers with more support to help spread the word with simple tools like a press release template.

Matt Rowbotham, the Map Guy, is back to a full time position with NCTA – we were sharing him with the Buckeye Trail. The online maps have been improved and you can now download GPS data to your devices without hacking the website.

The annual conference, which took a lot of staff and volunteer time to organize, was replaced by a locally planned and hosted “Hiking Celebration” in Minnesota. The new event preserved the best aspects of the conference and was well received. The 2015 “Celebration” will be in New York in Sept.

NCTA is making progress on Trail Protection. We were able to provide the first “Trail Protection Grant” of \$10,000 to fund a land appraisal and background work on a critical 2.5 mile section of land needed to join two State Parks that contain the NCNST in Pennsylvania. This area, just north of Pittsburgh, is under a lot of development pressure so we are trying to work with the State of Pennsylvania, Land Conservancy groups, and a land owner to make the connection while there is still an opportunity. Funding for the trail protection grant was raised from private foundations through David Cowle on the NCTA staff.

Closer to home, \$500,000 in land acquisition funds were approved in the Federal Budget to protect the trail along Tyler’s Creek, a trout stream near Lowell.

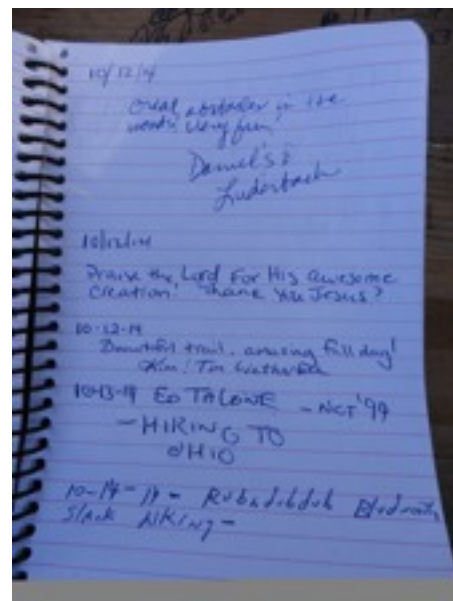
What’s ahead for 2015 and 16?

- The proposed NCT route through the Adirondack Park in New York should be approved.
- Luke Jordan, a.k.a. “Strider”, has been interning with the National Park Service to start an NCTA Chapter and plan the last major connecting trail route along the North Dakota-Minnesota Border.
- The “Governor’s Trail” announced by Rick Snyder has created some real opportunities for NCTA in Lansing. NCTA has been educating some folks that they have a great trail waiting for them, and significant portions of the “Governor’s Trail” will be the NCTA in Michigan. The DNR is expected to have land acquisition money and staff dedicated to this project, and NCTA has been working hard with the National Park Service to have our land targets identified and ready to fund. We reminded Andrea that the Dobleski Re-route would be one place that could benefit from this opportunity. The replacement for Jeff McCusker on the National Park Service staff is expected to spend a lot of time on route planning and land acquisition. NCTA had a representative on the committee that picked 5 possible trail names from which Snyder will pick one, and we will be present at a major trail summit in Lansing on Feb. 10. [see related story]

- Hollywood is helping promote long distance hiking with two big releases this year – “Wild” (Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail) and “A Walk in the Woods” (Bill Bryson on the AT) are coming out. NCTA is trying to figure out how to be ready to benefit from the visibility created by these releases.
 - The NCTA Board re-invigorated the “Advocacy Committee” to help us lobby more effectively nationally and at the state level. They also created a “Trail Development Prioritization” committee to help keep staff resources and funding focused on major projects with big impact. For example, the Adirondack Park route was mostly defined back in 2007, but it has taken over 7 years to near the finish line. We think a prioritized list, created by volunteers, staff, and our partner agencies will help us accelerate completion of major projects.
 - The staff is working on enhancing relationships with key partners and land trusts including the National Forest Service Regional manager. One example is that three people in the Lansing DNR administration who have been long time partners with us retired in Dec. so new relationships will be established this year.
 - The National Park Service turns 100 in 2016 so NCTA is planning to identify 100 mile hike opportunities. They will not all be as grueling as the Pennsylvania 100 mile hike in 3 day challenge! Where would you walk 100 miles on the NCT? Several Chapters offer segmented hikes to allow people to accumulate significant mileage. There will probably be one patch designed to commemorate these 100 mile hikes for the entire NCTA family.
- After door prizes were distributed, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45

Member's Input by Dove Day,

I thought this was worth sharing. On Jan. 2, 2015 John and I snowshoed from Warner Creek to the new register box at the Deadman's Hill Junction. We noticed a very exciting entry in the log book. Ed Talone, recognized as the first thru-hiker of the NCNST, hiked through the area in October and signed the log book.



NEW JV45 °CHAPTER BROCHURE

...is completed, and printed. You can also view it on our website:

http://northcountrytrail.org/j45/?page_id=57

The two sides are **TRAIL MAP** and **TRAIL INFO GUIDE**

And “Like” us on NEW FACEBOOK address

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/North-Country-Trail-Association-Jordan-Valley-45/636045479799699>

Communications Report by Amy Wilks

NOTE: New [Email---ameliawilks1@gmail.com](mailto:ameliawilks1@gmail.com)

“Our vision for the North Country National Scenic Trail is that of the premier footpath of national significance.....” NCT