



# Jordan Valley 45° Chapter Newsletter

Volume 10, Number 2

April 2021

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**Note: JV45° typically offers a hike on the 3rd Saturday of every month,**

**The JV45° Newsletter is usually published six times per year, every other month**

### Upcoming Events

April 17, 2021. Chapter Hike. See p 4

June 5, 2021. Petoskey Open House

### Fun Fact

Kenny Wawczyk wrote recently in his newsletter that the actual NCT mileage is now about 4760 miles, but the official mileage that NCTA still uses is 4600. Maybe we will need to change our sign at the 45th from 4600 miles to ">4600" or "nearly 5000 miles." Bob Haack



## Message from JV 45°

**President Mary Campbell**

[mcplanningdesign@gmail.com](mailto:mcplanningdesign@gmail.com)

**G**reetings Jordan Valley 45° Members and Friends,

### Bear River Bridge – status update

The initial clearing for the bridge has been completed on both sides of the river. Thanks to all who participated in our many work bees. Now that the snow has melted, we will have another minor work morning in April to cut the stumps down and move a bit more brush on the River Road side of the river. If you want to be part of this effort, please contact me (Mary Campbell).

The bridge is being manufactured in April, the culverts needed for construction access to the site can probably be installed in early May (pending permit approvals), so my fingers are crossed that the bridge and associated contracted boardwalk will hopefully be installed in May. Once the contractors have the bridge installed, JV 45° Chapter will be building an additional section of boardwalk to cross an additional section of wetland to connect the bridge to the existing trail in the NCMC natural area. Details and work day schedules with be forthcoming from our projects coordinator, Duane Lawton.

Stay tuned for the Bridge Celebration information--A bridge celebration will be scheduled, once the bridge and associated boardwalks are constructed.

### Tool Trailer Orientation Opportunity

Come check out the Jordan Valley 45° tool trailer and the fabulous equipment available for use in trail building and maintenance efforts. As the chapter has grown, and trail sections have new adopters, we decided it was time to invite

members to see what tools are available, provide demonstrations on proper tool use, and tool storage and maintenance.

We will try to schedule a few orientation opportunities at different locations this spring. Additionally, we hope to create an updated inventory of Chapter owned tools, so if you have any chapter tools in your custodial care, please record it in the Tool Trailer or notify Dan Dueweke. The first opportunity will be at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery, from 8:30-9:30a on April 17<sup>th</sup>, immediately before our April hike departure.

### First Aid/CPR Opportunity

A spring First Aid/CPR class is being planned. It will be an evening class held in Petoskey, likely in late April or early May. This class will be open to any NCTA member at no cost to the individual. Pre-registration will be required, with priority given to JV 45° Chapter members. Details will be provided soon. *Reminder:* All sawyers are required to be current on this training prior to chainsaw training or recertification, and additionally all second persons for sawyer activities must be current on First Aid/CPR training. If you are interested in this First Aid/CPR opportunity, contact Mary Campbell.

### NCTA Award Nominations -due May 1

The awards ceremony is held each year during the annual NCTA Celebration. Those who receive these awards have given exceptional service, often many years' worth, to the North Country Trail and the North Country Trail Association. There are diverse award categories to represent the myriad of efforts put forth for the Trail. See [www.northcountrytrail.org/volunteer/volunteer-awards/](http://www.northcountrytrail.org/volunteer/volunteer-awards/) for descriptions of the categories and for the nomination details.

**Safe and Happy Hiking to All  
Mary**

## February Hike Report

Robert Courtois

[bcourtois@comcast.net](mailto:bcourtois@comcast.net)

On February 20, 2021, we hiked from Starvation Lake Rd to Sand Lake. The weather started out at a very crisp 4 degrees with a misty frosty coating of the trees. There was almost no wind. By the time we got underway the sun had come out and it stayed out the balance of the day, and eventually warmed up to about 20 degrees.

Although snowfall was down this year, there was well over a foot of excellent snow and so snowshoes were required. For this hike, the trail is mostly flat and there are no challenging hills to deal with. As always, Jeanie Hough wasn't sure she could do the whole 7 miles but, as always, we found ourselves chasing her and Annie Matz as they blazed ahead of everyone. Altogether, we had 13 hikers. One was new (welcome Julie Shire). There were three of us (Julie, Jeanie and Bob) who work(ed) at Munson Otsego.

Although there was an ORV lot east of the trail, most of us parked on an oil well access road just west of the trail. Bob French got his truck stuck while parking so we had to push him out before we could head out. Coincidentally the same thing happened to someone the last time we hiked here.



Ellen Whitehead on her Section



The February hikers

The trail adopters for this well-maintained section north of SLR are Ellen Whitehead and Jim & Denise DeKett. Ellen was with us today and took excellent pictures and had plenty of anecdotes to share.

Eleven of us were there when we headed out at 10:40 from Starvation Lake Rd. and headed one mile south to MacNeil Pond. This mostly flat, one mile of trail is maintained by the Grand Traverse Hiking Club. At MacNeil Pond there are two large beaver lodges but no fresh signs of beavers. There are large trees that have been chewed through most of the way. The name of this body of water says "Pond" but it is actually a pretty good size lake.

After returning to Starvation Lake Rd, we were joined by Cliff and Jane Denay. Even though they have been part of the JV45 chapter a long time, this was their first time hiking this southernmost segment from SLR 2.5 miles north to Sand Lake. So, after checking in at the register box and heading out, it was a sunny but cold day. The good side of heading north was the incredibly bright sun bouncing off the snow was at our backs. We passed through about a half mile of beautiful red pine forest that we believe was a CCC planting from the 30's. In there was a tree stump that was cut probably well before 1900. It has to be one of the largest diameter trees in the JV45. After continuing a mile north from the pines, past the oil collection junction, we came to a huge area that has been recently logged. Although most of the stand was clear cut,

NAME	
Bob Courtois	248
Rick Rowan	248
Dan DuBois	703
Jeanie Hough	989
Julie Schaefer	231
Annie Matz	23
Ellen Whitehead	23
WIL SHAPTON	9
Jim & Evelyn Howell	
JANE & CLIFF DENAY	
BOB FRENCH	

Hiker names in the log book

the loggers left a nice uncut corridor of trees along the trail that is maybe 100 feet wide. Reportedly this is what loggers are supposed to do all the time, but it only happens if the equipment operator gets the word.

When we got to Sand Lake, the snow was very deep at the east end where it had blown off the lake. We trudged along to the north end of the lake where the trail has been moved up the hill, which has been nicely benched out. This lake is a "kettle lake" in that it has no feeder creeks or drains, and water levels rise and fall over the years with the water table. Just a few years ago, the lake was very low but it has risen three or four feet and submerged the beach and trail. (Thank you to Ellen, Jim and Denise for all your work moving the trail back up the hill.)

Most times when hiking this area it is very quiet but today there were several noisy snowmobiles. But there is plenty of room for them too and they have stayed off the trail.



## March Hike Report

Robert Courtois

bcourtois@comcast.net

**W**ow! With the addition of 12 people (seven kids) from the True North Community Church, we had 27 hikers and one dog on the March Hike. In addition to the church group, we had a couple of new hikers and a few we had not seen for a while.

The hike took place on March 21<sup>st</sup>, the first Day of Spring! We hiked about 7 miles from the M32 Trailhead (via Warner Creek) to Dobleski Rd. We had walked this section in the fall and now with this being the first day of spring, the two hikes were fitting bookends to the mild winter we had experienced. Yes, we still had snow on the ground but we didn't need snow shoes. Some people wore yak-tracks since there was a bit of ice, especially on the Warner Creek portion. Spots of deep snow turned to mashed potatoes as the day warmed up. It was a cool day but absolutely clear sky and with no wind, the same as the last time.

First, we started out on the icy/snowy Warner Creek Loop (some of the trail is also NCT) and stopped to check out the



beaver deceiver and boardwalk at O'Brien Pond. The kids enjoyed learning about the beavers and how the beaver deceiver works (O'Brien Pond is a dammed-up back water on Warner Creek). The boardwalk held up well over the winter and currently the water level is down. Although the trail was not too wet today, the Warner Creek loop along O'Brien Pond is chronically wet and may need to be moved back up the hill a bit. Currently, hikers crash through the woods avoiding the mud. After O'Brien Pond, we completed the Warner Creek Loop and, at the NCT junction, we said goodbye to Pastor Rick and the church group as some of the kids would not be able to complete the challenging four additional miles to Dobleski Rd.

In the first mile north of M32 there were several downed trees to be cleared, but aside from that, the trail was in great shape and well blazed. Dan Dueweke had his mighty Silky Saw and with a little help, we cleared one treetop tangle that was blocking the trail. The rest of the treefalls will be cleared later. The four-mile stretch between M32 and US131 is not that heavily traveled, maybe because it is very hilly. After US131 (be careful crossing this road) there is a long downhill to Dobleski Rd.

We did stop for a rest and snacks at one of the high points about halfway to US131. The views were terrific, especially



Some of the March Hikers

since there were not yet leaves on the trees. You could see all the snow still on the ground in the distant hills. What an outstanding day!

Before the hike, we posted cars at the hike's end on Dobleski Rd. and then ferried everyone back to the Warner Creek Trailhead. Most everyone then headed home but five of us (Bob, Kevin, Dan, Annie and Mary) went to Larry's for yummy food and pops. This time there were no snowmobilers and therefore service was very quick, but when it fills up, chances are you will have quite a wait.

project	JV45	MARCH 20, 2011
WARNER CREEK TO DOBLESKI RD		
WHO		246
Bob Cavatone		246
Kevin Whitley		246
Deb Murphy		246
Daryl Murphy		246
Doug Sealey		246
Rick Bristol		246
Toby Bristol		246
John Bristol		246
Katie Bristol		246
Dan Dueweke		246
Rae Kuchaczuk		246
Angela Kuchaczuk		246
Thomas Kuchaczuk		246
Annalisa Kuchaczuk		246
Ken Pichelt & son		246
Mary Puls		246
Lor Vellanhus		246
ALLEN BAIHAN		246
Susan Miller		246
Katie Bristol		246
Julie Schrier		246
WILL SHAPTON		246
Mary Campbell		246
Dan Matz		246
Chris Denay		246
Jane Denay		246
SARA SANDERS		246

Logbook entries of the March hikers

The JV45° Chapter is on facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/North-Country-Trail-Association-Jordan-Valley-45-636045479799699/>

**JV45 April Hike, April 17, 2021**  
**Hatchery to Pinney Bridge, Loop Hike**  
Long Hike 13.25 miles. Lots of up and down. Short Hike 5.5 miles

**T**he JV45 Chapter will host two hikes on April 17, 2021 in the southwest half of the Jordan Valley.

***Bonus- Maintenance Trailer Tour 8:30 to 9:30 - Before the hike, we need to check out the maintenance trailer. So, come early to see all the "toys" we have in the darn thing. A tool to fit every hand! We will then head out promptly at 9:30 (shorter hike at 10:30).***

See map at: <http://nct.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=23a2c0d674cb443ea9835af2e8c5f13a>

**We will gather at the Jordan Valley National Fish Hatchery (at the end of Turner Rd west of US131) at 8:30am. The Long Hike will head out at 9:30 and the Short Hike will head out at 10:30.**

LONG HIKE OPTION ~ 13.25 miles loop- Starting at the Hatchery at 9:30, we will do a clockwise loop:

- From the Hatchery go south on Jordan River Rd. to the Jordan Valley Pathway (JVP) and then to Landslide Overlook (mile 662.5, ~ 3.0 miles on JR Rd. and 1.1 mile on JVP)
- From Landslide Overlook to Pinney Bridge (mile 659.0) via the 45° Marker (~ 5 miles)
- Pinney Bridge (mile 659.0) to Jordan River Rd. (mile 654.25 ~ 4.75) miles
- To Hatchery (~ 1.0 mile)

SHORT HIKE OPTION (about 5.75 miles; gather at 10 to arrange transport to Pinney Bridge based on head count and head out by 10:30) Special guest hostess – Dove Day:

- Drive hikers to Pinney Bridge via Jordan River Rd. and Pinney Bridge Rd. (4.5 miles)
- Pinney Bridge to Jordan River Rd. (at 3 Tubes) via the NCT (~ 4.75 miles).
- Jordan River Rd. (at 3 Tubes) to the Hatchery (~ 1.0 miles)

Regarding social distancing due to covid, if you are not feeling well, please stay home, and if you are a high-risk individual, please stay home.

Dress for the weather, bring plenty of water and snacks. We can stop to picnic on the trail or afterwards at the hatchery.

Question?  
call Bob Courtois at 248 212-6699

## Trail Coordinator's Report

**Dan Dueweke**  
[dandueweke@gmail.com](mailto:dandueweke@gmail.com)

**J**ust a short note to the trail adopters. Please walk your trail sections soon and clear any fallen trees. If you're not chainsaw certified, or if you find a tree that's outside your comfort zone, let me know via email at [dandueweke@gmail.com](mailto:dandueweke@gmail.com). There are no open sections at this time. And don't forget, all sawyers should be current with their Red Cross First Aid/CPR certification and also have completed the NPS Trail Safe Video training by May 2021 ([www.nps.gov/noco/trail-safe.htm](http://www.nps.gov/noco/trail-safe.htm)).

## Trail Adopters and Volunteers: Assistance Requested

**James Howell, JV 45° VP**  
[pattenlake2620@gmail.com](mailto:pattenlake2620@gmail.com)

**H**ello, Jim Howell here, your vice-president of the Jordan Valley 45° Chapter of the NCTA. As the dust has barely settled on my inauguration ceremony, President Mary tasked me with my first duty. The Chapter over the years has added many "Non-trail structures" such as signs, register boxes, road markers, benches, etc. We are defining non-trail structures as anything that isn't underfoot when we are on the trail.

While we as a chapter have been great about inventorying the trail structures we installed, we haven't done as much with the non-trail structures. So, this is where all of us come together and assist in inventorying these numerous and valuable parts of our Trail. While out clearing trees, mowing, painting blazes, or just enjoying a hike on our many miles of trails, if you come upon one of these items, snap a photo with your smart phone and send it to me along with the area where you encountered this object. When using a smart phone it captures the GPS coordinates of the location where the photo was taken (unless disabled by you), which will assist us in placing the object in our inventory and locating it on the NCT. Your photo and notes will also assist in identifying any needed maintenance.

Please email photos and notes to me at [pattenlake2620@gmail.com](mailto:pattenlake2620@gmail.com) or text me at (231) 838-0036. Thank you for your assistance in this project. Enjoy your time on the trail and hope to see you out there on the trail soon.

**Mary Campbell - President**  
[mcplanningdesign@gmail.com](mailto:mcplanningdesign@gmail.com)

**James Howell - Vice President**  
[pattenlake2620@gmail.com](mailto:pattenlake2620@gmail.com)

**Josh Berlo - Website Coordinator**  
[joshberlo@gmail.com](mailto:joshberlo@gmail.com)

**Annie Matz - Secretary-Treasurer**  
[amat57@yahoo.com](mailto:amat57@yahoo.com)

## CURRENT JV45° GOVERNING BOARD

**Duane Lawton - Project Coordinator**  
[delawton@torchlake.com](mailto:delawton@torchlake.com)

**Bob Courtois - Hike Coordinator**  
[bcourtois@comcast.net](mailto:bcourtois@comcast.net)

**Sue Bouwense & Dove Day - Events Coordinators**  
[sbouwense@gmail.com](mailto:sbouwense@gmail.com)  
[doveday70@gmail.com](mailto:doveday70@gmail.com)

**Bob Haack - Communications Coordinator**, [haack@msu.edu](mailto:haack@msu.edu)

**Dan Dueweke - Trail Coordinator**  
[dandueweke@gmail.com](mailto:dandueweke@gmail.com)



## A Lesson Learned, A Lesson Reinforced - Staying Safe on the Trail

James Howell

[pattenlake2620@gmail.com](mailto:pattenlake2620@gmail.com)

On March 4, 2021 it was time to finish the JV45 work bee that had started the Saturday before. It was time to get the big stuff on the ground. While clearing the new bridge area on the NCMC Campus Natural Area, two trees were deemed at the time by four of us too iffy to handle that day. We all agreed that ropes to control their fall would be the safest for the sawyers and swampers. After all, we all had just finished the National Park Service Trail Safe education webinar, it was the smart thing to do. So as the four of us gathered that bright clear Thursday morning we were confident that everything would go according to plan.

Off we trudged; President Mary, Chapter Trail Coordinator Dan, Dave, and myself through the icy trail made slicker by the warming and freezing over the past three days. Arriving at the site of the new Bear River Bridge on the NCMC side of the Bear River, we huddled at the site to review and finalize our plan. The two dead trees towered over us as we pondered how to get the two to the ground. It was clear that a few smaller trees would need to be removed to allow the larger trees to fall and not hang up or land in the wrong area. The plan was finalized: we would remove the small trees, brush and clear, then tackle the dead pine first.

After we cleared 4-5 smaller trees (< 4" in diameter) Dave agreed to drop the dead pine. He attached a rope about twenty plus feet up the tree and set a winch off a turn pulley to apply tension to pull the tree to its intended fall target. Dave, as sawyer, prepared the notch, tension was applied and Dave made the final cut. The tree fell as planned and was quickly limbed and cleared from the area.

Once again we cleared a number of smaller trees and brush and I agreed to drop the aspen: Dave attached a rope, Dan set the pulley and winch. I notched the tree, tension was applied and the final cut was started. This tree appeared to be unstable at the base so care was made to not over cut, which might have weakened the hinge point. I stopped the final cut short of what would be a proper hinge for a tree this size

(12-15" DBH). I exited the area and Dan applied greater tension on the winch. The tree resisted the applied tension. Ok, we reevaluated the situation and all agreed that the trunk was solid and did not have a hollow spot. Dan released the tension and I enlarged the final cut. Again, exiting the site, I indicated to Dan to reapply tension and the tree crashed to the ground. Dave and I limbed and bucked the aspen and Mary and Dan cleared the logs and limbs from the area. The two trees had been taken down, everything going as planned for a job well done.

Earlier that morning while preparing the site for the two trees to be removed, Mary had spoken to the bridge contractor to make sure the site would meet their expectations. Based on that communication, Mary identified a few additional trees be removed at the landing point of the elevated boardwalk. Dave tackled a few of the trees and we all helped clear the cut limbs and logs. Then I stepped up to handle the remaining three small trees. The first two went as planned. The final one was a small 3" tree leaning at about 45°, no question where it was going to fall. I notched the fall side and made a final cut or so I thought. The tree didn't fall, so I reached out with my right hand to push the tree over.

The tree still didn't fall but I noted everyone else was staring at my chaps... looking down I wondered how did all those spaghetti noodles get on my chaps? Quickly, I realized that the chain had grazed my chaps ripping a 2-3" cut in the chaps at about mid-thigh. In the brief moment when the tree didn't fall, I had made a major error: I did not set the chain brake before switching control of my saw from my right hand to my left hand.

Let me stop here and comment on my life with a chainsaw in my hand. First, I have owned a chainsaw(s) for over 45 years. Second, I have never had an accident with a chainsaw. Have I had near misses, yes, maybe too many to admit. Am I a professional sawyer, no, definitely a weekend warrior type. When I attended the chainsaw class 2 ½ years ago, I was astonished at what I didn't know, or hadn't thought about. How fast the chain is spinning on the bar when running, how quickly and easy it would be to accidentally hit a leg or arm, and other items. Operating a chainsaw in a safe and responsible manner is essential for myself and everyone around me. I had taken great care during the previous hour of cutting prior to the grazing of my chaps, remembering to set the brake

each time before moving while limbing, checking my surroundings for a safe exit plan prior to felling trees and checking on everyone's whereabouts prior to cutting or felling. But... still it happened, I had a near miss and my chaps prevented a sudden lack of judgement from becoming a potential life-threatening accident.

To finish the story, I put down the saw (the chaps had gummed up the chain, stopping the engine), immediately removed my chaps and checked the back of my chaps and the front of my left leg for any sign of penetration. Thankfully, the chaps had performed as intended, and the chain had not torn through the back of the chaps or my pant leg. Everyone breathed a collective sigh of relief. President Mary and I quickly agreed that this needed to be reported back to the National Park Service and the NCTA following our recent Trail Safe procedures training. We collected photos, one of which you see here, cleared the site and proceeded back to the cars grateful for our safety equipment and NCTA training. A job completed and well done, but not without its teachable moment.

In closing, let me just say, I will never be without sawyer chaps. Yes they can be hot to wear and another item to carry, but the alternative is just too horrific to even ponder. This includes at home or on the Trail. I was truly embarrassed that the incident happened. However, everyone involved, my three companions that day, the NCTA and National Park service personnel I interacted with after the incident, have all been very supportive of my coming forward to tell my story so others will understand the need for safety. For that I am so thankful. Please, please be safe out there, don't do it alone, even if just clearing branches with a nipper or painting blazes. The proper preparation and preparedness works and keeps all of us safe on the Trail.



The tell-tale chaps



## Duane Lawton

delawton@torchlake.com

**S**pring! (Almost). After a weird 2020, hopefully we will be back on track this year to do more projects.

First and foremost, the Iron Belle Trail Bear River Bridge. It is happening. Mary led several work bees this winter to clear trees from both sides of the river to allow construction access and for boardwalk on the NCMC (North Central Michigan College) side. (Pictures in banner: L-Here's where the bridge goes, there's the clearing; R-This is line-of-sight of the area we will build extension boardwalk in.) It currently sounds like the bridge could go in in May. As soon as the bridge and its northern approach boardwalk are in, we can build our extension. So, I expect a late May or an early June work day or two. Of course, we're still waiting to confirm funding for materials...

When the bridge is in, we will need to finish up signage in preparation for

officially opening the NCT reroute. We'll need several road marker posts, NCT badges, and relocation of the register box within the NCMC Natural Area. Another work day.

Then we can have a celebration.

There is a small bridge on the NCMC Natural Area trail not far from our new branch-off that is damaged at one end—one side is just hangin' there. I propose to go in and repair this sometime soon. Hope to use chapter funds for material, and get a couple of you to help.

The other big project this year will be to rebuild the O'Brien Pond boardwalk. I anticipate this project will be in the fall, and that we'll have a work weekend.

I am aware there still are road crossing posts, register boxes and Jordan/Warner YAH map signs in need of repair. Our J45 VP Jim Howell is compiling an inventory, with your assistance (see his article, p.4). As issues are identified, he will let me know so that corrective actions can be implemented. Thanks!



## Bigfoot Award Delivered

**K**enny Wawczyk (above) finally received 'the boot' this past week! Kenny was awarded the Bigfoot award at our Jordan Valley 45° Chapter (virtual) Annual Meeting in January 2021 in recognition of his outstanding service to JV45. However, due to COVID, the award hand off was delayed until recently. Kenny was given the award outdoors when he was in our region to help us scout a future trail reroute. Thanks, Kenny, for all your assistance!

**Mary Campbell, JV45° President**

## 2/25/2021 NCTA JV45 Leadership Team Meeting Minutes

**M**eeting held on zoom. Members present: Mary Campbell, Annie Matz, Jim Howell, Kenny Wawczyk, Dan Dueweke, Duane Lawton, Bob Haack, Dove Day, Sue Bouwense, Bob Courtois

Meeting led by Mary Campbell

1. Bear River Bridge Update. JV45 recently held 2 work bees to cut trees and clear brush from the River Rd side of the river. We will reassess once the snow has melted to see if any additional clearing is needed. We have the go ahead to cut and

clear the area on the NCMC side of the river which will be done at another work-bee soon. The bridge should be ready to set this Spring. It looks like we have all the funds needed.

2. Work Projects by Duane Lawton. Work-days will be scheduled for early spring after the bridge is installed to construct boardwalk sections on the new trail segment between the existing NCT trail in the NCMC Natural Area and the new bridge. Additionally, plans are being made for a 2 day work-bee and camp this summer or early fall to rebuild the boardwalk at O'Brien Pond.

3. Tool Trailer: Mary is going to contact Steve Snell regarding the status of the tool trailer. Organizing and inventorying the

tools is needed. We discussed having an orientation of the trailer for all trail adopters. This orientation may be held on the day of the April hike which will occur at the fish hatchery.

4. Supplies: Mary will purchase register books, if you need them let her know. NCTA brochures and maps are in short supply and may need to be redistributed so as not to need to reprint prior to the map revisions. The maps will need to be updated soon to include the reroute. Bob Courtois will check with Munson to see if they are willing to sponsor the new maps, like they did recently.

5. Non-trail Structures: We need to create an inventory of all benches, signs, and register boxes, etc so we can make sure



they are properly maintained. NCMC would like trail information signage at the beginning of the trail on their property and we also need signage at the River Rd Sports complex.

6. **Signs and Vehicle magnets:** Mary would like to know if any members would like a NCTA vehicle magnet. Event signs need to be ordered for hikes. JV45 is interested in exploring the idea of developing a video to show at events to promote our chapter and the NCTA. If you know of anyone who is interested in creating this pro-bono please let Mary know. "Trail crew at work" signs are being used and more are being ordered to post during work-bees. Our JV45 chapter display needs a review and update. NCTA banner and stand will also be ordered.

7. **Skyline Property.** The Boor family who owns the property where the Skyline shelter is located are considering selling the property and are hopeful that it will be purchased by the city of Petoskey. Mary has sent a letter on behalf of JV 45° to the city in support of the purchase, hoping the access to the property will continue. TOM-MBA (Top of Michigan Mountain Bike Association) is also hoping to develop trails on this property.

8. **Potential Upcoming Events:** May 29 Top O'Michigan Marathon. June 4 Petoskey Open House. June 5 National Trails Day (possible bridge celebration). Sept 25 NCTA National Scenic Trail Day

9. **Other Business:** March 20 hike Warner creek to Dobleski Rd

10. It was decided to hold a Leadership meeting every 2 months, next meeting via Zoom April 22 at 5p.

Annie Matz, Sec/Treasure JV45  
amat57@yahoo.com

**Don't forget to submit your Volunteer Hours at:**  
<https://northcountrytrail.org/members/report-volunteer-hours/>

## Where I Hiked

### SKY ISLAND: MT. WRIGHTSON, SANTA RITA RANGE, TUCSON, AZ

Susan Miller  
[slmiller150@gmail.com](mailto:slmiller150@gmail.com)

Because of pandemic restrictions, my annual hike at the Grand Canyon did not happen last fall as usual. Instead, I went to visit my brother in Tucson. My cousin, Eric, who also lives in Tucson, is an avid hiker/backpacker, so I contacted Eric to see if he would consider taking his old(er) cousin (me!) on one of his favorite hikes on a day when my brother had to work. Eric heartily agreed...any excuse to go hiking was fine by him!

Surrounding Tucson are what they call "sky islands"...isolated mountain ranges. Eric made several suggestions for our hike. I opted for Mt Wrightson (aka "Old Baldy"), in the Santa Rita range south of Tucson. A mountain peak sounded pretty good, since temperatures were forecasted to reach the upper 90s in the Tucson valley on the day we were planning to hike.



I picked Eric up at 6 am, and we headed to the trailhead at the end of Madera Canyon (about 40 miles SE of Tucson). Thanks to my "America the Beautiful" pass, the parking was free. Headed up on the Old Baldy Trail. And I



**View of the Santa Rita Range, with Mt Wrightson circled. Photo taken from the north side of Tucson.**



**Sun peeking over the crest of Mt Wrightson**

do mean UP. The first couple miles took us up the south side of a creek bed to the intersection of several trails at the Josephine Saddle. We then continued on the Old Baldy Trail to the northeast, watching the sun peek over the top of the mountain. The trail was narrow, steep, very rocky, with some high steps and switchbacks. We encountered some critters, e.g., squirrels, deer, and various birds, mostly. Nothing of the reptile sort! And we did not see the leopard that was rumored to be in the area, either.







We enjoyed interesting views of the valley below along the way, including a top-down look at an open-pit copper mine, and a view of the observatory at nearby Jackson Mt. (above). I think at times Eric got a little impatient at the number of pictures I was taking....but those pictures were also a good excuse to catch my breath in the unfamiliar altitude. Overall, the air was rather hazy due to wildfires to the southwest.



Susan taking in a view to the north from the peak



About a mile from the peak, we came to another saddle. Evidence of a 2005 wildfire was still obvious, but with plenty of new growth. (picture above) It was quite windy. Yet my cousin said they have camped here before. And it was here that in November of 1958, several boy scouts got caught in a snowstorm and perished. Sobering. A mile-long trail took us from the saddle via switchback after switchback to reach the 9453 ft. peak (a total elevation gain of about 4000 ft in the 5.4 miles from Madera Canyon). We were rewarded with an amazing 360-degree view. It was 70 degrees and breezy, and, of course, sunny.

After a lunch break, we made our way back down the trail (slowly and carefully, I might add, due to the loose rock and the steepness). When we arrived back at the upper saddle, my cousin asked if I wanted to take the "Super Trail" loop around the southeast side of the peak. It

was longer distance, but not near as steep or as rocky. Of course! This trail circled through high desert terrain that reminded me a lot of my hometown of Prescott. The descent was definitely more gradual and thus more comfortable on the knees. There were some stands of trees that looked like something from Dr Seuss (again, thanks to the wildfire). Some views to the south extended into Mexico. We arrived back at Josephine Saddle in probably not any

more time than it would have taken us to descend the Old Baldy Trail that we had ascended. Time for a break and snack (and Eric took a brief nap!), then completed a "figure eight" on the north arm of the Super Trail back to the parking area.

Total distance: 13.1 miles. Well worth the time and effort! So much to yet to explore!



Josephine Peak from the Super Trail