



# Jordan Valley 45° Chapter Newsletter

January 2024

## President's Message

Kevin Whitley [kjwtorchlake@gmail.com](mailto:kjwtorchlake@gmail.com)

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### Important links:

[Click here for link to Jordan Valley 45° page on NCTA website](#)

[Jordan Valley 45° is on FaceBook - click here](#)

[Click here for link to Report Volunteer Hours](#)

[Click here for link to NCTA Events Calendar](#)

Hello Fellow Hikers;

We are quickly approaching the two-year mark of me being President of this group. It has been a fun experience and I have no complaints. I am proud to be part of a great group of people so dedicated to the goal of helping to provide free outdoor recreation and exercise. My involvement in this group has taken me from Walker, Minnesota to Maine Junction, Vermont and many places in Michigan. I am willing to serve another two years and I am open to any suggestions for improvements of the way we operate. I highly recommend groups occasionally changing leadership so I would like members to consider running for the role of President of our Chapter in January of 2026. I know that sounds like a long way down the trail but it will be a beautiful trail and we will hike it together.

### Upcoming Group Hikes:

Jan 20 – Deadman's Hill to M-32.

Feb 17 – Possibly Chandler Hill area?

Story and pictures by Duane Lawton  
[delawton@torchlake.com](mailto:delawton@torchlake.com)

We had a pretty good year in 2023 and looking forward to some projects in 2024. Still working on an easement to be able to take the trail off Dobleski Rd. This has long been a wish of ours and hoping we can open a dialog with one of the landowners to enable us to connect two large chunks of state land that meet at his corner.

# BUILD IT

## Let's Get To Work



### November 11th Group Hike Report – Jordan Valley - Hatchery Loop

Story by Bob Courtois - [bcourtois@comcast.net](mailto:bcourtois@comcast.net)

By 10 am, twenty-six of us had gathered at Jordan Valley Notional Fish Hatchery. Special guest included Mary & John's black lab (Loki) and Miki's ferret (Eamon).



For several people, this was their first hike with the Jordan 45. Welcome! Also, five people were from the Grand Traverse Hiking Club and one person from the Spirit of the Woods chapter. From Mason, MI was Rich Baily. Rich is a relative of the Turner family who own about 120 acres of land along the top of Turner Road. Rich was full of insights into the history of the Jordan Valley.



As a good omen, we saw a bald eagle fly from the river to trees just south of the hatchery. They are seen frequently because of their nearby nest and easy river fishing.

So, after signing in and getting pictures, four trail groomers with their gear shot ahead to clear the trail of blowdowns (Dan, Jen, Jeff & Duane). Six people drove to Deadman's Hill to start there for a shorter hike. That left sixteen people to hike the full 7.75 miles. The cool morning (30s) was perfect for the march up Turner Rd. to pick up the Jordan River Pathway. It was partly sunny and no wind.

It didn't take long to catch up with the trail groomers using a cross-cut saw on a large log. We then all proceeded to Deadman's Overlook. It was a terrific view but the leaves were, pretty much, all down, which made it a little slippery on the long downhill into the valley. Along the foot of Deadman's Hill are many springs, puncheons and two elevated walkways. Although a bit muddy in spots, the trail is on very good conditions. Thank you to all the volunteers.

Our large group became separated and spread out along the trail as crew stopped to cut more trees and reposition puncheons. By the time we got to Three Tubes (3 culverts on Jordan River Rd), the entire group was back together.



Rich Baily informed us that, what we call Three Tubes, formerly was known as Plank Bridge. Reportedly, the 3 culverts will be replaced by one large culvert to make it easier for the salmon to migrate upstream.





From Three Tubes we followed the river along Jordan River Rd. back to the hatchery. Jordan River Rd. was a railroad when the valley was logged out a hundred years ago. You can still find railroad ties embedded in the now dirt road. From the hatchery, sixteen of us went to the recently reopened Forx Restaurant in Elmira. The food was excellent and they have a separate cozy room to seat large groups such as ours.

## Dec 16th Group Hike Report – Giem Rd. 131 to Kuzmic Rd.

Story by Bob Courtois - [bcourtois@comcast.net](mailto:bcourtois@comcast.net) &

Thirteen of us and Sophie, the dog (golden doodle?), gathered at Kuzmik & Camp Ten Rds. (hike's end point) to post cars. After picking up three bags of trash, we drove everyone in three cars to the hike's start on Giem Rd. just east of US131.



The weather was not the best with temperature in the mid 30's, damp and cloudy but little wind. The trail was a mix of mud and ice with little or no snow. Since the wind was mild, once we got going, we warmed up and it was actually quite pleasant.

The first mile or so we headed east on Giem Rd. to where the trail cuts north at the junction of the proposed reroute from Dobleski Rd. to Giem Rd. We took the opportunity to hike a half mile in and back on a two track that may be part of the reroute. It was a fairly steep uphill, through older growth forest, to a hill top where we stopped and turned back.

The proposed reroute will allow us to get three miles of trail off of roads (Dobleski Rd., US131 and Giem Rd.). If a right of way at a corner crossing can be secured, we hope that project can be started in 2024. This will require blazing new trail, mark a railroad crossing and build an elevated walkway across a creek.





After crossing Giem Rd., the next 3.5 miles are on pretty rough two tracks, much of which has washed out and impassable by most vehicles. The first two miles is fairly steep up-hill to a high point at about 1230 feet. Then it is all down-hill to Kuzmik Rd. The woods are recovering nicely from the extensive thinning by loggers in 2018. The last stretch of the hike is a pleasant 2-mile stretch on Kuzmik Rd. Sights include farms, streams and livestock. The road itself is not busy at all.

As we noted in the past, it would be nice to shift the trail off the terrible two-tracks and into the woods. This project is a lower priority than getting than securing the Dobleski reroute. If we did this, we would have the JV45 off of roads almost the entire 27 miles from Landslide Overlook to Kuzmik Rd. (Note, there is road walk for the 4.5 miles between Kuzmik Rd. and Thumb Lake & Slashing Rds.)

Following the hike four of us (Bob, Kevin, Dan and Shelli) went the Whi-Ski Inn in Boyne Falls for pops and excellent sandwiches.



### Trail Maintenance Update

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

Not too much happening on trail maintenance this time of year. As always if you get a chance to walk your adopted section with the mild winter, we've been having so far, it's a great opportunity to keep up on trimming back growth as you walk. Long time members / adopters; Andy Zeek and Peggy Jones are stepping down from adopting their section - Mancelona Rd to Whispering Pines. They've been members since early 1999 and pretty sure they have been adopters for most of that time as well. A huge thank you to Andy and Peggy for their many years of service to the trail! Fortunately, we had someone waiting for a section to



adopt and Jeff Jakeway answered the call. We don't always have such a seamless transition but when we do it's the ideal handoff.

## Q&A with 4 of our members that have hiked all of Michigan NCT miles

Compiled by Doug Seaney – [dseaney@hotmail.com](mailto:dseaney@hotmail.com)

A few months ago, Kevin asked if we could have an article with some Q&A from people in our local chapter that have hiked all of the NCT in Michigan. To our collective knowledge there are 4: Susan Miller, Doug Seaney, Jim Howell, Duane Lawton. If there are any others, please let me know and we'd love to feature another Q&A with you in a future newsletter.

### Susan Miller:

#### **1 – What were your starting and ending dates, and starting and ending locations?**

Technically speaking, the first section I ever did was along the waterfront wheelway in Petoskey. But I was not aware that it was part of any sort of national scenic trail. I think it was summer of 2008 or 2009 that I met up with a coworker to hike, and we did an out and back from Lakeview Rd to Sturgeon Bay Tr. She had the maps. That's when I realized the existence of the NCT. But I didn't really seriously apply myself until 2010, and even then, it was somewhat sporadic until a few years ago. I finished Michigan 8/8/23, with the section from the Ohio border to the Tripp Rd trailhead.

#### **2 – What was your favorite section of trail?**

There are so many beautiful spots! It is soooooo hard to pick a favorite. There is so much variety, for sure. I have thoroughly enjoyed seeing what's around the next corner. If I had to pick a favorite, I think it would have to be our own Jordan Valley. Seeing it in all four seasons, the water, the trees, the creatures, the views. Every time I hike it, it really feels like "coming home".

#### **3 – Were there any memorable moments on the trail (assistance, funny, etc.)?**

Memorable moments. Hmmm... I can think off hand of two that stand out. First is the group of "trail angels" that assisted with rides during the last push in southern MI this summer. Connected with them through the trail angels of the NCT website, and through the "Trail Angel Coordinator" of the Chief Noonday Chapter. It was fascinating to meet up with these people, and hear a little of their story and connection to the NCT community. I felt very safe getting into a car with a stranger because of that connection. Included in this is the "oasis" at the shelter of Bin Walkin' south of Lowell. The other memorable moment occurred when backpacking between McCormick Wilderness and Mulligan Flats in the UP. I was with two friends. It was hot, and we had stopped for a drink break. I was facing sideways, when I spotted a very LARGE black bear, not more than 10 ft away, as he stood up from his resting spot and lumbered away. I was speechless! And could only point! (Where's the camera when you need it?!). My friends made me sing the rest of the way....to scare it off??

#### **4 – Describe the most challenging day on the trail.**



There were a few. Usually related to hot humid weather and a lot of bugs, which means I was up in the UP. Probably the day I hiked between Norway Rd and the Victoria Mine complex. One of those HOT HUMID days, very rugged up and down sections without much break, and the friend I was hiking with that day was really struggling. The combination made those 17 miles seem like 50... The cool air wafting up from some of the abandoned mine shafts/vents was a welcome reprieve, although those vents were usually found when the trail crossed a rock pile.

## **5 – What’s next on your hiking bucket list?**

Next on the hiking bucket list, perhaps tackling one of the “shorter” states, like maybe Wisconsin?

## **Doug Seaney:**

### **1 – What were your starting and ending dates, and starting and ending locations?**

The first I “discovered” the North Country Trail was when I moved to the Eastport area in 1999. I was driving around looking for houses and saw a sign for Deadman’s Hill. I hiked down and found the sign for the NCT at the bottom. I started to actually hike the trail in St. Ignace spring of 2003 with a 90-mile hike to Tahquamenon falls. A *short* 17 years later I finished all of Michigan in October of 2020.

### **2 – What was your favorite section of trail?**

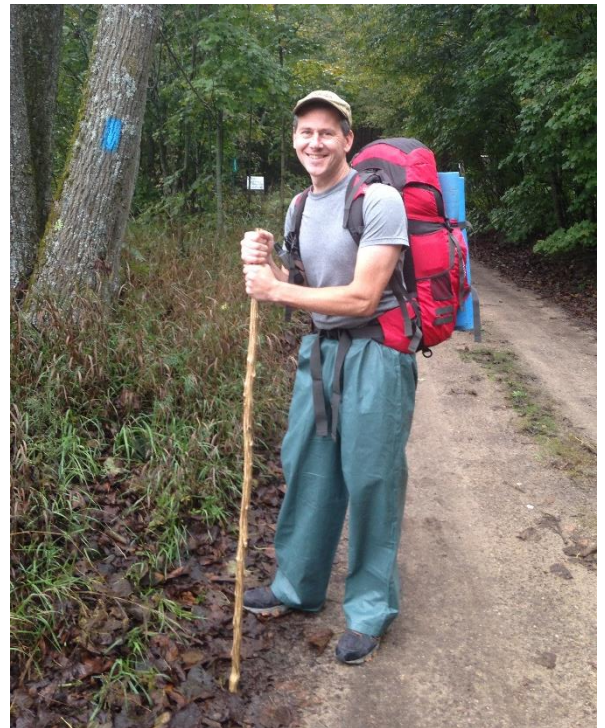
I get asked this often; I really liked the Niagara Escarpment in the UP. Very cool how in the middle of the forest a 20-25 foot tall rock wall pops up, and that it’s part of the rock formation that created Niagara Falls.

### **3 – Were there any memorable moments on the trail (assistance, funny, etc.)?**

Getting lost twice in the UP on my first long hike. I wandered about until I found some familiar boot tracks... my own! (I had walked in a circle). The second time I got lost I followed some RR tracks in hopes of finding a road and figuring out where I was at; I lucked out and the trail crossed the tracks again and I pick up the trail. When I started the trail was much less traveled and maintained, maps were a black squiggle on an 8 ½ x 11 pages with a narrative of the route, if GPS was a thing, I didn’t own one. I received lots of assistance in both the lower and upper peninsulas. My wife has been a great help with camping while I hike and picking me up when slack packing.

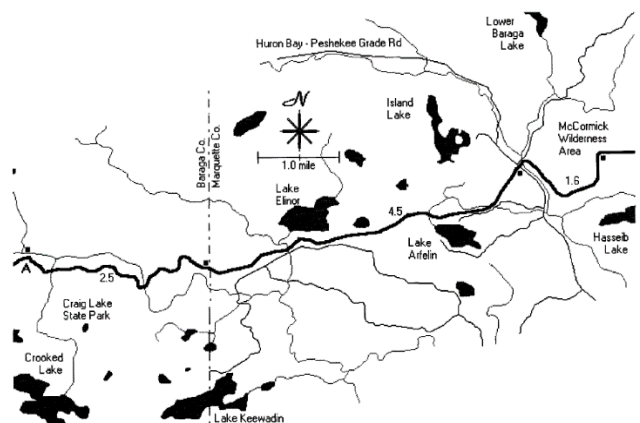
### **4 – Describe the most challenging day on the trail.**

My first attempt to complete the UP I was planning on about a 90-mile hike ending at the WI line – at the time the trail ended in Ironwood. It was August and about 90 degrees. The section through Old Victoria and Trapp Hills was brutal, many water sources were dry. At one point I filtered water out of a puddle that had a dead mouse in it (I didn’t end up drinking it, found better water later). Thus, Jim Howell has bestowed upon me the trail



NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL - MICHIGAN: COVINGTON - HARVEY

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#### **28.9 [5.5] LEAVE CRAIG LAKE STATE PARK**

Once leaving the park, the trail continues east on Mead Paper Company lands, then turns to cross the Main Branch of the Peshekee River on a bridge built in 1990. The bridge timbers were flown to the site by a Coast Guard helicopter, making the most spectacular cover photo ever for the NCTA Newsletter. The trail turns northeast, crosses on another bridge built with flown-in bridge timbers, and continues to the east until reaching the McCormick Wilderness.



name of “Mousewater”. I had to bail and hitch a ride out to the highway. I lost 17 pounds in 2 ½ days. Definitely had heat exhaustion.

### **5 – What’s next on your hiking bucket list?**

Since completing MI, I have done all of the WI miles and am about 200 miles into MN. Planning to keep picking away at MN, and may start PA in the spring as I can hike there a bit earlier than Northern MN.

### **Jim Howell:**

#### **1 – What were your starting and ending dates, and starting and ending locations?**

Boy that is a multiple part answer, which should be an easy question. I hiked the state of Michigan in two directions, from the Ohio border north and from the Wisconsin border east, with the goal of arriving at the Mackinaw Bridge at about the same time. So, I started in Wisconsin on 8/17/2017 @9:06 am and in Ohio on 10/7/2017 10:45 am. The ending date was 9/4/2023 at the Mackinaw Bridge.

#### **2 – What was your favorite section of trail?**

First let me just say I cannot pick just one favorite section of the NCT. I loved the whole trail, woods, meadows, stream sides, hills, and yes even the road walks. It’s really hard to pick one spot over another. Having lived in Michigan my whole life and spending a lot of time over the years driving around the state, I thought I had seen everything, but walking gives you a greater perspective. Michigan is a diverse landscape, farmlands, meandering rivers, wild places, large urban areas, vast forest lands, beautiful remote beaches, numerous lakes. It is just hard to appreciate how beautiful Michigan really is until you spend 102 days over seven years hiking from one end to the other.



#### **3 – Were there any memorable moments on the trail (assistance, funny, etc.)?**

During most of my hiking I was hiking alone, but fortunately on a number of occasions I had company. Being able to share a trail with someone is a special treat I really enjoyed. I am not the biggest conversationalist, but just having another person to share a special place or relax at a lunch spot made the days hike even better.

#### **4 – Describe the most challenging day on the trail.**

That is an easy one: August 18, 2022, I was east of Munising, MI in the UP and I was hiking in the vicinity of the Rock River Wilderness in the Hiawatha National Forest. About 11 miles into the hike at about 1:00 pm I felt a pop in my left leg, and I had a hard time putting any weight on that leg. This part of the UP (like most of it) has very limited cell coverage and I had no service. So, I had no way of letting Evelyn (my wife) know what had happened. I was not scheduled to be picked up until about 4:30-5:00 pm about 5 miles further down the trail. And as luck would have it had started raining about 30 minutes before this and I was getting wetter by the minute.

I started walking slowly again and my leg responded to the movement, but my pace was now slow and strained. I did make it to the truck by about 5:30. Found out that my left knee in unconventional medical terms a “mess”. I slapped on a brace and have hiked another 535 miles in 2022 and 2023 on this knee since the incident. My wife’s moral of this story: “never hike alone”.

#### **5 – What’s next on your hiking bucket list?**



My knee has reduced my mileage per day down to 8-10 miles, so I am not planning any long adventures until I get it sorted out. However, I do plan to help Doug Seaney in his quest to hike the whole NCNST and go where the trail leads.

## **Duane Lawton:**

### **1 – What were your starting and ending dates, and starting and ending locations?**

Start 8/13/2006 in the Porkies and ended 9/1/2019 at Black River Harbor

### **2 – What was your favorite section of trail?**

That's hard. Many outstanding sections. OK, Porkies escarpment. No, Pictured Rocks. Err..

### **3 – Were there any memorable moments on the trail (assistance, funny, etc.)?**



O, Hiking in Pictured Rocks with Eugene and Linus Branigan. Someone passed us and said “How sweet, three generations hiking together”. I swore under my breath.  
O, We met a long distance hiker near Augusta who said his trail name is “Nuclear”....he is a nuclear engineer, but his trail name is due to his flatulence.  
O, Hiking west, north of Silver Lake Basin 10/12/2015, target is west side of McCormick Wilderness. The trail wasn't developed at that time (blazes only), we didn't make it. We were in no cell coverage area at a remote road crossing with no traffic. After an hour, one truck came by and we hitchhiked to M28.  
O Hiking to Carp river, Sunday 6/18/2011, the bridge is out, fording is impractical (high banks, deep water). Back to the road, picked up by a pickup truck with two guys drinking beer. Rocketing down the road, passed the trail crossings three time, ended up at Gamble Road where we talked with them for two hours. Did you know that throwing out returnable beer cans on the road in the U.P. is considered charity?

### **4 – Describe the most challenging day on the trail.**

6/23/2019 Lake of the Clouds lookout heading west. Raining. The trail is terrible....in and out of ravines basically bushwhacking on loose steep slopes. Had intended to make Black River Harbor the next day, but aborted at Presque Isle.

### **5 – What's next on your hiking bucket list?**

Would like to do another state (Wisconsin, Vermont, Pennsylvania)?

**JV45 Annual Meeting January 6, 2024 - noon**  
**The Blue Lake Township Hall- Mancelona**

Location: Blue Lake Twp Hall 10599 Twin Lake Rd NE Mancelona, MI.

Meeting called to order at 12:09pm

Members present: Annie Matz, Dave Matz, Kevin Whitley, Duane Lawton, Bob Courtois, Doug Seaney, Jane Denay, Cliff Denay, Mary Campbell, John Larch, Wil Shapton, Debbie Bishop, Jen Reynolds, Ellen Whitehead, Dan Deuweke, Maureen Doull, Jim Doull, Karina Taylor, and Jerry Taylor.

2023 in review by President Kevin Whitley.

Kevin Whitley presented a slide show program of the 2023 events including:

The Quiet Water Symposium

A Wild Things family hike on National Trails Day

The NCTA National Celebration in NY

Volunteer/Adopter lunch at Chandler Twp Hall

Top' O Michigan Race

Trail projects report presented by Duane Lawton:

2023 projects:

Kipp/Hathaway Rd reroute completed.

New signed constructed and installed at several location in the JV45 section.

Planned projects for 2024:

Working on obtaining an easement and complete Dobleski Rd reroute.

Elections: The following positions are up for 2-year term and all current leaders have agreed to run for another term.

President Kevin Whitley

Project Coordinator Duane Lawton

Hike Leader Bob Courtois

Communications Coordinator Doug Seaney

No new candidates were nominated and all current leaders were unanimously voted in.

Big Foot Award: Evelyn Howell was awarded this for her help in providing lunches for work projects and her work on the NPS Jr. Hiker Program. Thank you Evelyn.

Presentation: Dan Dueweke presented a very interesting slide show program of his post-tornado log out on the Border Route/NCT in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in northern Minnesota last May.

No power tools are allowed in this natural area so Dan and 4 other volunteers cleared a one-mile section of the NCT using crosscut saws and axes. (If you'd like to see a 4 minute you tube of Dans' presentation the link is here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BipKifKgEVI> – ed.)

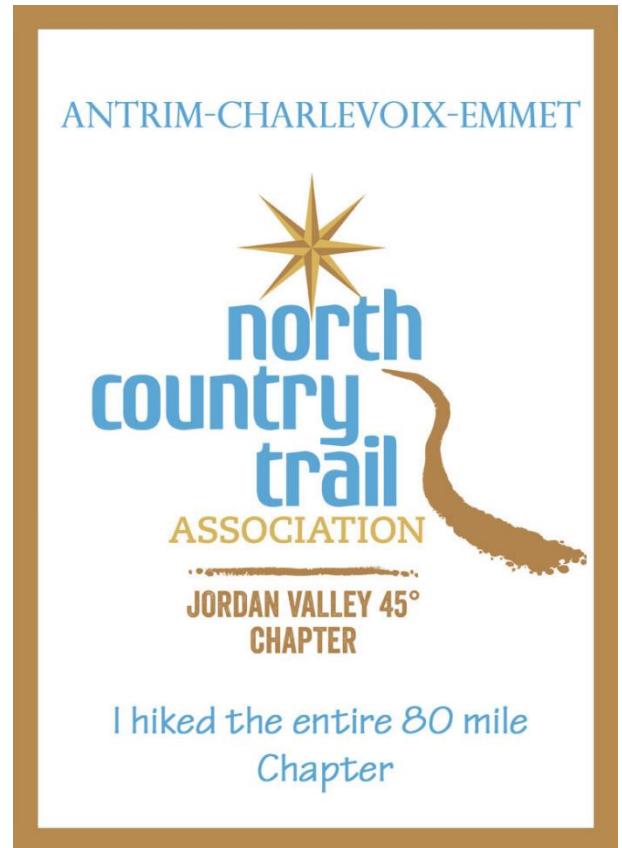
Look ahead 2024 by Kevin Whitley:

We have many events to look forward to in 2024 including the national celebration which will be in St. Ignace 8/21-8/25.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00pm

Minutes typed by Annie Matz





## CURRENT JV45° GOVERNING BOARD

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