



# Jordan Valley 45° Chapter Newsletter

Volume 9, Number 4

October 2020

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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**

**WANTED: New Trail Adopters and Trail Coordinator(s).** JV 45° is in need of additional trail adopters to monitor and perform routine maintenance on new trail segments in the Petoskey area and the Cherry Valley Overlook loop trail. Also, after many years of dedicated service, the Days' are stepping down as Trail Coordinators and therefore this position needs to be filled soon. If interested, please contact Mary Campbell or Dove Day. (See email addresses on p. 4.)

## Message from JV 45°

**President Mary Campbell**

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

**G**reetings JV 45° Members and Friends, What an unusual trail season it has been and continues to be...but trail activities continue.

### Bear River Bridge News

As noted in the Governing Board meeting minutes (p. 3), the construction bids received by the City of Petoskey in August for the bridge construction came in significantly higher than expected (approximately 50K higher). Since that time, the City's consulting engineer has been in communication with bridge manufacturers and the contract bidders to determine if there are some other cost savings to be achieved.

Simultaneously we have been actively identifying and pursuing additional grants, including a crowd funding matching grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, which I expect to launch mid-late October. This grant will match crowd funding dollars we raise up to a goal amount (provided we meet or exceed our goal amount). As part of the crowd funding campaign, a short video promoting the benefits of the bridge (both for the NCT and the community) is needed to enhance the appeal. If YOU have any video experience or know someone who does, see Help Needed on p. 9.

A notice and a link will be distributed when the crowd funding effort is live. This will be your opportunity to fulfill your prior bridge pledges and/or

give more! Please give what you can and encourage others to participate as well. We are in the final stretch for fund raising so that we can convert this decade-long bridge dream into a reality. Thank YOU in advance for any support you can provide!! Any 'extra' dollars raised through the crowd funding and associated matching grant will be directed to other JV 45° chapter trail construction expenses.

### JV 45° Leadership Opportunities

Do you have a little (or a lot) of time to spare and want to get more involved? Any interest in collaborating with an amazing group of people for the benefit of the NCT community and our JV 45° Chapter? If so, contact Mary Campbell to explore what opportunity best fits your interests.

### Other Activities & News

See the Leadership Team minutes (p. 3) for information on a proposed cell tower at Sand Lake Road, near Mancelona .

Due to strong winds, JV 45° trail maintainers have been kept busy, working to keep up with the tree clearing needs due to the MANY windfalls. Thank you all! The work days have resulted in new and repaired structures on the trail in locations in and near Petoskey, as well as near Cascade Rd, thanks to those who participated!

After many months of no chapter hikes, JV 45° is hosting smaller chapter hikes with masks and physical distancing. Thanks Bob Courtois for coordinating safe and successful hikes.

**Stay safe and enjoy the trail!**

## Upcoming Events

**October 17, 2020: JV45° Hike**

Details on page 3.

**November 21, 2020: JV45° Hike.**

Details to come later

**Don't forget to submit your Volunteer Hours at:**

<https://northcountrytrail.org/members/report-volunteer-hours/>



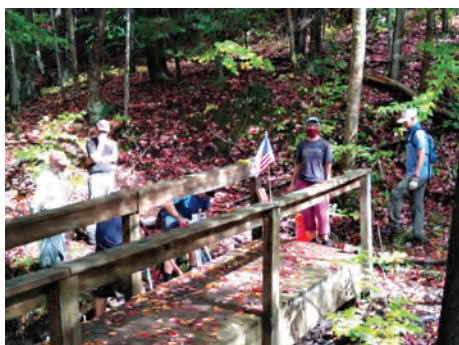
## North Country National Scenic Trail Day

Duane Lawton

[delawton@torchlake.com](mailto:delawton@torchlake.com)

On Saturday, 26 September 2020, seven JV45 members observed NCNST Day by doing a needed work project at Cascade Creek. We had intended to start with a hike and picnic, but as luck would have it, it rained 2 inches in the morning, and we merely went to work around noon. The rain did accentuate the areas in need of repair!

We repaired three puncheons, added shingles for traction on some historically slippery puncheon, and shored up the sagging Cascade Creek Bridge. Water is



Making Cascade Creek Bridge Right Again.



Kevin, Bob, Jim, Mary, Adam and Eugene carrying the dock section.

inexorable, and there is a lot of it here. There were quite a few backpackers passing through taking advantage of the weekend.

One section of wide puncheon was lengthened by the addition of a donated section of dock which matched perfectly. The Antrim County Road Commission had cut a drain in the road to stop runoff from running down the trail. Fail. Now, it runs across the trail a little further down, but under a puncheon.

We stuck and nailed some asphalt shingles to about 75 feet of puncheon... we'll see how effectively this solves slips, and how durable it is.



The finished repair



Shingling the puncheon

## October Hike Plans

Bob Courtois

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

### Fish Hatchery to Pinney Bridge Loop Hike

October 17, 2020

The full hike will be nearly 14 miles long, but there will be shorter options too. We'll meet on Saturday, 17 October 2020, at 9 am at the **National Fish Hatchery (at the end of Turner Rd west of US131)** and head out by 9:30. See map at: <http://nct.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=23a2c0d674cb443ea9835af2e8c5f13a>

Long Hike Option ~ 13.75 miles loop, starting at the Hatchery. We will do a clockwise loop:

- From the Hatchery up to Turner Rd. to the Jordan Valley Pathway (JVP) and then to Landslide Overlook (mile 662.5, ~ 4.75 miles on Turner and JVP)
- From Landslide Overlook to Pinney Bridge (mile 659.0) via the 45° Marker (~ 3.5 miles)
- Pinney Bridge (mile 659.0) to Jordan River Rd. (mile 654.25 ~ 4.75) miles
- Jordan River Rd. To Hatchery (~ 3/4 mile)

Short Hike Options to decide on hike day (we will have to arrange transportation):

- Hatchery to Pinney Bridge via the Jordan Valley Pathway ~ 8.25 miles
- Hatchery to Pinney Bridge via the NCT ~ 5.5 miles

- Hatchery to Pinney Bridge via Jordan River Rd. (.5) & Pinney Bridge Rd. (3.5) ~ 4.0 miles

Regarding social distancing due to the Coronavirus threat, 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. Any questions? Call Bob Courtois at 248 212-6699 or email [bcourtois@comcast.net](mailto:bcourtois@comcast.net)

The JV45° Chapter is on

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

[facebook.com/North-Country-Trail-Association-Jordan-Valley-45-636045479799699/](https://www.facebook.com/North-Country-Trail-Association-Jordan-Valley-45-636045479799699/)



## August Hike Report

Bob Courtois

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

On August 15<sup>th</sup> we had 17 hikers and two dogs complete about a 7 mile hike in the northeastern section of the Jordan Valley. We welcomed two new guests, Lucy Evasheski and Jamie Vendeville from the Hiawatha Shore to Shore Chapter. It was mostly sunny and warm and the threatening rain held off. What a treat.

The hikers were pretty spread out along the trail as we split up into faster and slower groups. The hardest part was the half mile uphill climb from the hatchery to the Jordan Valley Pathway. Along

the top of the ridge between Turner Rd. and Deadman's Hill Overlook it is very wooded with glimpses of the potato fields to the east. After the overlook, it is a long down-hill trek into the valley. Compared to a couple years ago, the trail is in great shape below Deadman's Hill with just a few muddy spots and maybe a little touch-up needed on the newly benched-out trails. We noted that the sign posts that the JV45° Chapter had installed had been tampered with. Some knuckle head keeps scratching off the location

numbers on the signs, so we keep rewriting them with magic marker. Varmints do their share of messing with them too.

The last third of the hike included stops at the spur trail on the backwater above the beaver dam west of Deadman's. We then followed the reroute (made a couple years ago) around to the beaver dam. This is one of the most photogenic areas in the JV. The last mile of the day was from Three



The August hikers

Tubes on Jordan River Rd. back to the Hatchery where some of the group hung around for a picnic.

In October we plan on walking the southwestern part of the valley, which will be more challenging. Maybe the salmon will be running!



## JV45 Governing Board Meeting Minutes

August 27, 2020; 5:30 – 6:30 pm

Conference call: Present were Mary Campbell, Annie Matz, Eugene Brannigan, Bob Haack, Duane Lawton, and Kenny Wawczyk. Meeting led by Mary Campbell.

- Bear River Bridge Project. Two bids came in at \$246,000 and \$256,000. The bids can be reduced to \$230,000 if NCT agrees to build the boardwalk. Original estimate was \$166,000 in 2016. Funds available are \$205,000. The City of Petoskey is budgeting an additional \$25,000; however, most has already been spent on associated engineering costs. The Iron Bell Trail funds had been frozen at the state

level due to Covid-19, but now are available again. The hope was to get the bridge built by the end of this year but final bridge installation will likely be delayed until spring 2021. JV45 plans to build the boardwalk on the north end of the bridge. Duane will be planning a workday to clear the area for construction.

- September 26 is National Scenic Trails Day so we will plan to celebrate by scheduling a workday. Possible project will be working on Jerry's bowl south of Springvale Rd in Chandler township, or elsewhere.
- The NCTA is still requesting no advertised hikes due to Covid-19.
- NCTA is requesting an honor award nomination from each chapter, if you would like to nominate someone please notify Mary Campbell.
- There is a proposal to construct a cell

tower on a private 10-acre parcel near Sand Lake. Kenny has informed us that the proposed site is very close to the NCT. Duane made a motion that JV45 draft a letter to the NPS to try to prevent the building of the tower or at least have the location moved further from the trail. Bob Haack seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all members were in favor of sending the letter.

- Mary is looking for someone to take over responding to the official JV45 email. Annie Matz volunteered, and she will contact Dove for instructions.
- Chainsaw class will be held on 9/12-14/20. The classroom portion will be at the Kalkaska pavilion.

Respectfully submitted by Annie Matz  
Secretary/Treasurer ([amatz57@yahoo.com](mailto:amatz57@yahoo.com))



## September Hike Report

Bob Courtois

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

We had eleven hikers and a cool but absolutely clear sky day on September 19<sup>th</sup> as we hiked from the M32 Trailhead (via Warner Creek) to Dobleski Rd. (about 7 miles). The trees were just starting to change color so the end of summer was upon us. It was perfect hiking weather. The group included Jamie V. from the Soo, who is a Hiawatha Shore to Shore member and Diane F. from Alpena. I think everyone else was a JV45 member.

First, we started out on the Warner Creek Loop (a portion of which is NCT) and stopped to check out the beaver decoy and boardwalk on O'Brien Pond. (O'Brien Pond is created by a dam on Warner Creek.) After the pond, we completed the Warner Creek Loop and at the NCT junction we said goodbye to one hiker (Tammy and dog Jack took off to a wedding) and gained another, Kevin who was waiting on M32.

Jim and Evelyn Howell are the trail adopters for M32 to O'Brien Pond and they were here for the hike. Jim was making notes along the way for maintenance opportunities. Overall, the trail is in excellent shape and well-blazed. The O'Brien Pond board walk has been shored up but probably needs a longer-term fix. The Warner Creek loop along O'Brien Pond is chronically wet and may need to be moved back up the hill.

After crossing M32, we walked the very hilly four miles to US 131 and downhill to Dobleski Rd. The views were terrific. We had not group-hiked this section for a couple years so it was interesting to see how it had changed. It is not a section that is heavily traveled. Of particular note



O'Brien Pond



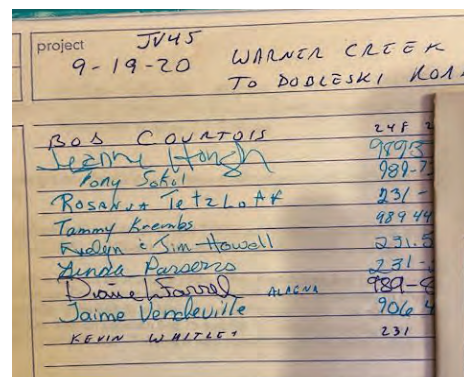
Boardwalk on O'Brien Pond

was the vast improvement in the trail from a mile west of US131 all the way down to Dobleski Rd. (Thank you, adopters, Bob and Gena Schrems!)

We posted two cars at the hike's end on Dobleski Rd. For the ride back to the Warner Creek Trailhead we of course all wore masks. Three of us hung out for a while to enjoy pops and snacks.



September hikers who finished the trail



Signing the log book



September hikers who started the day

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

Eugene Branigan - Vice President  
[eugene.branigan@gmail.com](mailto:eugene.branigan@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<sup>o</sup> GOVERNING BOARD

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

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

Open - Events Coordinator

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

Dove & John Day - Trail Coordinators  
[doveday70@gmail.com](mailto:doveday70@gmail.com)  
[johnanddove@gmail.com](mailto:johnanddove@gmail.com)



## Six JV45 Members Take Chainsaw Training

Bob Haack

[haack@msu.edu](mailto:haack@msu.edu)

On Saturday and Sunday six JV45 members took chainsaw training and testing to become chainsaw certified (or recertified). The JV45 members were Denise and Jim DeKett, Bob Haack, Duane Lawton, Annie Matz, and Doug Seaney. Also attending were 9 members of the Grand Traverse Hiking Club.

Scott Peterson was our trainer. Scott runs *SOS Tree Service* out of Ludington, MI, where he works as a professional tree feller as well as a chainsaw instructor. We all met on Saturday at the Mill Pond Pavilion outside of downtown Kalkaska



How to sharpen the chain

for the classroom portion of the class. It was a misty chilly day. The pavilion did not have electricity but there was a portapotti nearby! For the slide shows, we used the side of Scott's van as the screen. Some of the topics that we covered were safety features of the saw, safe handling, kick-

back, maintenance, chain sharpening, fuel, and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

For testing on Sunday, we met at the Little Traverse Conservancy's *Nathan "Barry" Driggers Nature Preserve* located on the Boyne City-Charlevoix Road. Thanks to the emerald ash borer there was no shortage of dead ash trees to cut. Scott instructed us on various felling, limbing, and bucking techniques. To practice boring cleanly and evenly through the tree, we each cut a square cube out of the trunk of a fallen tree. (Duane kept his cube!) Then Scott worked with each of us individually on felling, limbing, and bucking, with the rest of the class members watching and learning from what each person did right and wrong! Overall, it was a great class!



Scott lecturing and using his van as the screen



Scott giving felling tips



Aftermath of practicing the bore cut

## Register Box Buzz



### 45th Parallel

Bob Haack

[haack@msu.edu](mailto:haack@msu.edu)

Here is a summary for the entries in the Register Box Logbook at the 45th Parallel for 2020 from January through September. In our April 2020 Newsletter, I presented a summary of the 2019 entries at this same location. I'll make a few comparisons between the two years, considering that in 2019 we hosted the NCTA Celebration while in 2020 we were and still are dealing with COVID-19.

The first entry in 2020 was on March 7<sup>th</sup>, compared with January 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2019. Based on the text entries, there were at least 438 distinct hikers who passed the 45<sup>th</sup> through September 2020, compared with 679 for all of 2019 (including 105 people that attended the 2019 NCTA Celebration). These numbers of course do not count everyone who passed by the register box given that many hikers do not write anything at all, and many groups sign in with just one name for an entire family or even an entire Scout Troop!

It appears that COVID definitely had an impact in 2020 on the locations where hikers came from. We had hikers sign in from just 6 states outside of Michigan in 2020 compared with 14 states in 2019. The six states in 2020 where hikers came from were Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. In 2020, there were at least 5 hikers that signed the logbook in March, 28 in April, 66 in May, 112 in June, 86 in July, 91 in August, and 55 in September.

Less than half of the hikers that signed the logbook listed their hometowns. But of those that did, 48 Michigan towns were listed in 2020 compared with 79 Michigan towns in 2019. No hikers from the UP signed the logbook in 2020, compared with 5 UP towns in 2019 (4 hikers/families were at the NCTA Celebration and 2 others hiked later in the summer, with 2 of them from the same town). The general pattern of the hiker's hometowns in Lower

Michigan were similar in the two years, but with many more towns listed in 2019 (74) than in 2020 (48) (see maps that were made in Google Maps). The home towns listed in 2020 were: Addison, Alba, Alden, Allegan, Ann Arbor, Arcadia, Atwood, Bellaire, Bellevue, Boyne City, Bloomfield Hills, Cedar Springs, Charlevoix, Clinton Twp, East Jordan, East Lansing, Eastport, Farmington Hills, Flushing, Gaylord, Gilbraltar, Grand Rapids, Grandville, Grosse Pointe, Hamilton, Hemlock, Holland, Holly, Indian River, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Lawton, Lewiston, Livonia, Mears, Nunica, Onkama, Petoskey, Royal Oak, Sanford, Saginaw, St. Johns, St. Joseph, Traverse City, Troy, Walloon Lake, Ypsilanti, and Zeeland.

Here are some quotes from 2020 entries.

April 11, Emily: Awesome day hiking.

Weather and trail fantastic. So glad to live in northern Michigan.

April 15, Austin: Snowy wonderland

April 26, Susan: JRP (Jordan River Pathway) full loop #5 for this year. (Editor's Note: Our JV45 Susan Miller went on to complete the entire 18-mile-long loop 12 times thru Sept 2020).

April 28: First mosquito of the year!

May 9, Susan: The trilliums are budding and just waiting for warm weather (as am I).

May 12, Ken: We should have taken an uber!

May 22, Annie: Just graduated highschool. Celebrating with a trail run.

June 3, Angie: Great trail. No bugs at all!

June 13, Alex: 3<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary. 1<sup>st</sup> backpacking trip.

June 4, Sara: Thanks for the new boardwalks!

June 20, TJ: Lots of toads and lots of rain too.

June 25, Jason & Marcie: Mesick to the Bridge. This is a beautiful trail. It is by far the hardest we have been on since Mesick. Happy trekking.

June 27, Kyle: It is HOT and we are sweaty.

July 8, Jessica: Still hot and sweaty. 90° F but beautiful.

July 12, Kelsey: First time on the Jordan River trail. Loving it.

July 14, Quinn: First backpacking trip! Bears, brown thrasher, kingfisher, ruffed grouse, and yellow rumped warblers, Oh My!

July 18: Troop 157 from Holland MI was here!

Aug 1, Mark & Kimberly: Great trail First time here.

Aug 13, Ann: Thank you so much for this beautiful trail! A few blowdowns just to keep you slow enough to enjoy the area and Mother Nature.

Aug 16, Perry: Checked this trail off my bucket list. It was wonderful. I'm 62 and still at it.

Aug 28, Kurtis: Thru-hiking Michigan. Slack-packing thanks to Duane.

Aug 31, Helen: Awesome hike. The NCT is Amazing!

Aug 25, Jo: Hiking all 1150 miles of NCT from Ohio to Wisconsin – solo at 65 years old!

Aug 29, Jennifer: 2020 is over half way done. We can make it!

Sep 9, Susan: Full loop #11 this season. Feels good to be back to (almost) full capacity after 2 ½ months "rest" due to foot issues. And an absolutely beautiful day.

Sep 19, John: Saw bigfoot again!

Sep 23: Great color and beautiful day.

Sep 25, Kelsey: Leaves falling like a gentle rain... perfect weather.



Google Maps showing the home towns listed by hikers in the 45th Parallel Logbook in all of 2019 and January - September 2020. The black star indicates the approximate location of where the NCT crosses the 45th Parallel near Alba, Antrim County, Michigan.



## Where I Hiked

### Mt. Arvon

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

**Q:** What is the highest point in Michigan? **A:** Mt. Arvon.

Mt. Arvon, at 1,979 ft above sea level, is actually the highest NATURAL point in Michigan (there are mining companies that boast they have created a higher point with their pilings). So, of course, this past August while visiting friends in the west-central U.P., I HAD to hike it!

Access to Mt. Arvon starts by heading northeast out of L'Anse, in Baraga County. Following the directions from Baraga County's website and paying attention to the blue-diamond directional signs, we wound our way through a myriad of dirt logging roads to get to the starting point. A hiking trail had been added in 2017, though one CAN drive almost all the way to the top. (But where is the fun in that?)

The trail begins just off a 2-track and winds through the woods. We soon encountered a small creek that we followed a ways. And then, SURPRISE, a lovely waterfall! What a treat! The homemade sign said "Sol-Ner Falls." There seemed to be an upper and lower section to these falls. It was a little tricky following the trail upward given that although the trail has been benched, the tread seemed relatively new. We encountered multiple creek crossings as we climbed. We ended with a short walk on the road to the upper parking lot, and then out to the viewpoint. Lake Superior was about 8 miles to the north. Had to check out the US Geological Survey spike, and, of course, sign the register box, before making our way back down the same way we came up.

It was a short little hike (not any more than 3.5-4.0 miles round trip), but just right for the time we had, along with some beautiful views. (And not toooo many bugs!)



Two views of Sol-Ner Falls



Susan enjoying the view



Susan logging in



USGS survey marker



Michigan's highest natural point



## Where I Hiked

### Barr Trail. Manitou Springs, Colorado

Paul Hagan [paul.w.hagan@gmail.com](mailto:paul.w.hagan@gmail.com)

**A**re you looking for a nice 12-mile (one way) hike just outside of Colorado Springs? Are you looking for about 7,500 feet of elevation gain over those 12 miles with an average grade of about 11%. Would you like to get lightheaded at the top with an altitude of about 14,100 feet? Well, I've got the perfect trail for you.

The Barr Trail starts in the small town of Manitou Springs, which is adjacent to Colorado Springs. It ascends via numerous switchbacks to the top of Pikes Peak, aka America's Mountain. Along the way you go from a desert environment with the occasional cactus and lizard, through the alpine with oak trees, and up above the tree line for about three miles before hitting the peak. There are a few streams to filter from along the way and The Barr Camp is about 6.5 miles up. This camp has year-round stewards and can host overnight guests. The sign outside says that they will give you some store credit for snacks if you pack their trash back down the mountain. I thought about doing this, but when I stopped they still had leftovers from the Pikes Peak Marathon the day before. I went for the free leftovers. I felt no guilt in taking some amazing brown bread and cookies. The day before, during the marathon, I had been trying to make time and didn't even notice them.

This past August, I participated in the Marathon and then hiked back up to Barr Camp the next day to get a better feel for the trail. It is relatively smooth with some boulders here and there and the occasional

flat section. The surface varies from more rocky/boulderish at the top to more smooth with some fine gravel at the bottom. If you are headed out that way check out the internet

for videos. I watched several to try to understand the course before the race.

The race dates back to 1956 when Dr. Arne Suominen, an ardent tobacco critic, challenged any smoker to try to beat him. In 1959 Arlene Pieper was the first woman to enter the race, as well as the first woman to enter any marathon in the US. The race is the third oldest marathon in the US.

Where does one train for a race or hike like this? The NCT of course. Heavy on the Deadman's Hill repeats.

As a result of COVID-19, start waves were spread out with 10 people starting every ten seconds. There were 8 waves. All runners had pre-race temperature checks and symptom screening. Aid stations were a bit more minimal with the food and drink being handed to you and volunteers wearing PPE. Runners were required to use hand sanitizer before getting snacks at the aid station. I carried a bottle and the volunteers filled it with a pitcher. A mask was required for the start and a portion of the run through town which was a little over a mile. There was no post-race party/hangout after. I was able to get into the race only a few weeks before it was held because several international athletes were not able to come. The concept of "social distancing" was a bit bizarre as this race is an out and back course. So, you of course have to eventually run past the entire field of runners who are all huffing and puffing. On the upside, we were all outside. Fortunately, I had two weeks of vacation after the race.

Several trail races have happened this year throughout the country and I have not heard of any coronavirus cases that were linked to the races. Next up for me is an ultramarathon in Moab, Utah ([www.moab200.com](http://www.moab200.com)).

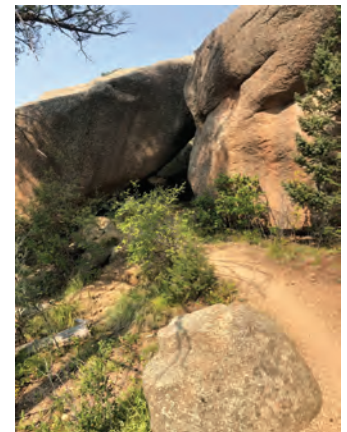


Forest fire smoke as seen above the tree line.



Just above the tree line. Less than 3 miles to the top

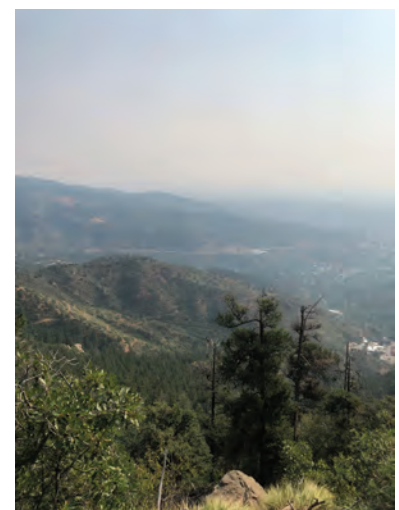
Large rock arch a few miles up the trail



Spread out at the start



Barr Camp, 6.5 miles up



Smokey haze from distant fires



## Where I Hiked

### Kekekabic Trail (KEK)

Bob Courtois

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**H**ey! Lucky me. In late August, I was able to hike/camp not only in various parts of the JV45 and Hiawatha Shore to Shore sections, but also a grueling 41 mile-long six-day backpack/camp in the Kekekabic Trail Club (KTC) section of the NCT, in the Minnesota Boundary Waters.

Our group - Bill and Bob Courtois, Merri Carol Wozniak, Heidi Koval and Linda McReynolds. We are all members of the North Country Trail Association Hiawatha Shore to Shore Chapter, Jordan Valley 45 Chapter or Chequamegon Chapter (WI).

Everyone tested themselves hiking with loaded packs prior to starting the trip and showed up totally prepared. Yes, we had educated concerns about the challenge but, as it turned out, the insects were few, weather was great...maybe a wee



bit warm but little rain. The only other hikers we encountered were day hikers near the two ends of the KEK (Snowbanks Lake and Gunflint Rd). We did see several canoers at the portages near our camps.

Although we saw lots of scat from moose, wolves and bears, we never did see any. We did hang our food and garbage each night in bear-bags. Beaver dams were abundant and we did see loons and eagles. We were harassed by hungry chipmunks at every camp, which included: Band Saw Blade, Vista Portage, Harness Lake, Lake Gabimichigami and Bingshik. The only drinking water sources are the lakes and streams, so you must filter and treat the water. This was a somewhat time-consuming process in order to have enough to cook and stock up for the daily hikes.

What a rugged section of trail! Frequently we were challenged to keep up a one mile per hour pace. The clearest stretches are the end sections near Snowbanks (west end) and Gunflint Rd. (east end) and at canoe portages. The KEK did receive a major clean up two years ago but it is frequently not foot friendly with many long steep ups and downs and tree falls. With the help of cairns, blazing and Avenza maps, we had no serious trouble finding the trail!

The maintenance by the Kekekabic Trail Club (KTC) kept us safe. By coincidence, we encountered Eric Campbell (President of the KTC) and his wife and daughter. They had paddled into a remote area to camp and do trail maintenance. In much of the KEK, maintenance workers



The KEK Kickers

can only access the trail using canoes. The KTC's goal is that every mile of the KEK gets freshly cleared at least every other year.

After the KEK, I would probably never rate any trail conditions in the JV45 as a major concern and this experience makes me appreciate all the work our volunteers do to keep the JV45 foot friendly and clear. Trail adopters make a huge difference for all chapters of the NCT.

At the end of the hike we found refuge at the Hungry Hippy Hostel north of Grand Marais.

We kicked the KEK instead of getting KEK'ed by the KEK.



### Help Needed with Video Assistance

JV 45° Chapter seeks a member or friend to work with chapter leadership to prepare a short video promoting the Bear River Bridge as a vital link for the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Iron Belle Trail and Petoskey area recreation trails. The video will be used as part of a crowdfunding campaign to be launched SOON. If YOU can provide assistance, text or call Chapter President Mary Campbell (231-622-2677). For more information on upcoming fund-raising, see President's Message (p. 1).

**NCTA News.** Updated NCTA Covid-19 Guidelines and answers to frequently asked questions are available online. These have been developed by the NCTA Covid Task Force team over the past few months to create and provide tools and guidelines to help minimize the risks of Coronavirus for volunteers on the North Country Trail. These documents will be updated on the NCTA [Trail Alerts](#) page. [Covid-19 Guidelines for NCTA Volunteers](#) and [FAQ](#)

**Hike 100:** Hike 100 continues to have more participants than ever before. This is a great way for new and existing members to explore the Trail and there's still plenty

of time to get miles in before the end of the year. We'd encourage all of you to promote this program with your members.

**Videos:** We hope you've checked out our new [tool maintenance](#) and [gear care](#) videos. These are great ways to brush up on skills in down time. If you missed any of our annual Celebration, you can find all of those [videos](#) online too!

**Training:** [Trail Safe!](#) is a unique safety program for NPS volunteers. The online videos will take about 3 hours to complete and you'll even receive a pin for completing the course! These videos are required viewing for all certified sawyers.