



North Star

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

FALL 2025

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Country Trail
Association
Volunteer Awards

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PRESIDENT, NCTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Trails endure because people like you step forward with steady hands, strong hearts and the conviction that they can make a difference - by leading hikes, sharing stories, clearing trail, and welcoming new members. This is you. This is the community highlighted in this issue. Together, you are shaping experiences that

inspire and connect others to the North Country Trail.

Your NCTA board and staff members walk beside you in this work and share that same dedication to the trail. Our work provides guidance, resources, and planning that help these efforts succeed. It is trust in our mission that keeps us moving forward. We closely examine every program aspect by asking a basic question, "Does this further our mission?"

Developing and protecting the trail are possible because of a trail-wide league of volunteers and partners. This coalition is a key part of our mission. Federal partners, state agencies, and countless local entities - towns, cities, and counties - each bring something essential to our work. This broad partnership is one of our greatest strengths, but it requires care and relationships to thrive.

Our staff play a critical role in this interdependence. They connect with partners to ensure that the vision for the trail is aligned across agencies and communities, and that resources are shared effectively. Local Chapters and volunteers create the on-the-ground relationships that give the trail its roots.

It is a true team effort: staff providing coordination and continuity, partners offering expertise and resources, and volunteers personifying commitment and passion. When these relationships work together, the trail thrives. To secure its future, we must continue investing in these partnerships, nurturing both the broad networks and the local relationships that create a spirit that is both inspiring and unshakable.

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The content theme of the Fall issue is **Trail Community**. You'll see volunteer recognition; event reflections; program and project successes; celebrations of partnership; and much more.

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Trailhead

ANDREA KETCHMARK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Photo by
Andrea Ketchmark

When hikers step onto the newest section of the North Country National Scenic Trail in North Dakota, it may look like a simple mowed path through the prairie. But behind every mile is a story of persistence, partnership, and people working together across years, sometimes decades, to make it possible.

Building and maintaining a trail might sound simple: clear a path, put up a few signs, and invite people to hike. In reality, trail development and management is one of the most complex and collaborative endeavors a community can take on. For the North Country Trail, that complexity multiplies across eight states, thousands of miles, and countless communities.

The vision of a continuous footpath from North Dakota to Vermont can only be realized through a wide network of people, organizations, and agencies working together. Federal and state partners provide the framework of laws, policies, and protections that make the trail possible. Local governments help ensure access, easements, and trailhead infrastructure. Land managers balance the needs of the trail with conservation goals, sensitive habitats, and other recreational uses. Without their cooperation, a trail route could not exist, much less thrive.

But the work goes far beyond agencies and institutions. Volunteers remain the heart of trail building and care. Every mile of the trail reflects thousands of hours of handwork, including clearing brush, building bridges, digging tread, and installing signage. These volunteers are often the first to welcome hikers, offering both hospitality and stewardship. Their local knowledge ensures the trail is sustainable and sensitive to the character of each landscape it crosses.

The work, of course, extended well beyond any single group. NCTA staff coordinated logistics and training, balanced land management requirements, and kept partners connected and informed.

The result is more than a new segment of trail; it's a living example of what it takes to build a National Scenic Trail. No single person or organization can do it alone. It requires the steady hands of volunteers, the dedication of staff, the support of agencies, and the welcome of communities along the way.

Today, when hikers walk above Lake Sakakawea, they're experiencing more than just the natural beauty. They're walking on years of persistence, partnerships, and shared belief in the power of trails to connect people to the land and to each other.

CHRIS LOUDENSLAGER, NCNST
SUPERINTENDENT, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Photo by Kate Lemon

Greetings to you all, and thank you for your love of the North Country National Scenic Trail and for being an important part of our trail community.

It is always rewarding to have the opportunity to share news and updates about exciting accomplishments, interesting projects, or milestones we've achieved; and while this may prove to be old news to some of you, I

am nonetheless pleased to be able to share that we have recently succeeded in acquiring a very important and very beautiful property for the trail! The 317-acre Black River property, located in northwest Wisconsin about 30 minutes south of the city of Superior, is the third property the National Park Service (NPS) has been able to permanently protect for the North Country Trail. While the NPS might be the entity to now own this property, this success is a testament to the great importance of strong partnerships and collaboration, and it would not have been possible without the incredible effort, work, and support over the last few years by local volunteers, NCTA staff, Trust for Public Land, National Park Foundation, and the NPS National Trails Lands staff. My sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this project.

This strategically located property is bounded by Douglas County Forest to the south and Pattison State Park to the north, and features about one mile of the Black River flowing through its boundaries. And more than just a permanently protected connection between existing public lands, this property is something of a keystone that was needed to begin planning for what will ultimately be a 30-mile stretch of new off-road North Country Trail all the way to the St. Croix National Scenic River. I visited the property for the first time this September, and I already cannot wait to be back - and to share it with all of you. It

is stunning and peaceful, rich with wildlife that is supported by a delightful mix of river, forest, and wetland habitats that characterize the property.

I would ask for your patience in exploring this property though, as we first need to plan the new trail route through the county lands that will lead to our property, and to determine where to cross the Black River with a rather substantial bridge. Then we will work on the route northward through the property to connect to the existing North Country Trail in Pattison State Park. While it may take us a short while to realize the full potential of this property, step by step and day by day, we are moving forward together, doing incredible work, and getting ever closer to completing our nation's longest National Scenic Trail. Thank you so much for your role in our successes and progress, for your continued support for the trail, and for your critical help in ensuring that its abundance of amazing scenic, natural, cultural, and historic resources is protected for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.

New Digital Giving Options

Helping the North Country Trail just got easier: You can now make a gift or renew your membership using Google Pay, Apple Pay, PayPal, Venmo, credit card, or direct debit. With just a few clicks, you can make a difference from anywhere - then get right back to the trail you love.

Your dollars will go further because PayPal, Venmo, and direct debit have some of the lowest processing fees, so more of your gift supports the trail. You can also choose to cover processing fees, making every penny count.

Your help powers our mission to build, maintain, protect, and promote this incredible trail.

All contributions, including processing fees, are 100% tax-deductible, unless otherwise noted.

HIKE 100 CHALLENGE



"I've been training for the Sydney Marathon. I committed to running at least 100 miles along the North Country Trail, instead of running them all on the streets of Fargo and the treadmill. Most of those miles were in eastern North Dakota, but some of them did bleed across the Red River into Minnesota. Each time on the trail, I'd run about 10 miles. Fun and beautiful!"

— DAN SMITH, NORTH DAKOTA

SHARE YOUR JOURNEY LIKE DAN!

Learn more, sign up, or submit your completion form at northcountrytrail.org/hike-100-challenge.

Share the Trail's Magic

BY NANCY BROZEK, NCTA DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The quiet hush of winter is beginning to settle over the North Country Trail. Most leaves have fallen and the air is crisp. While the landscape may seem at rest, the work to protect and expand this national treasure never stops. As we reflect on the incredible progress we've made together this year, we also look to the future, and we need your help to get there.

Your gift to our year-end appeal is more than just a donation, it's a promise to the trail. It's a promise to the next generation of hikers - a commitment that the NCTA will continue to work with our dedicated partners and volunteers to fill the gaps in the trail, making it a truly continuous experience from North Dakota to Vermont. Most importantly, it's a promise to yourself - a chance to ensure that you and those you love will always have a place to find solitude and connection to nature.

Your help is what makes it all happen. A gift today will build new trail sections, secure land to prevent development, and maintain countless miles of the path you love.

This holiday season, your gift will help us continue this vital work. It helps us build bridges where there are gaps, protect vulnerable lands, and share the trail's magic with more people. Please make your year-end gift today. Thank you for being a part of this journey.



northcountrytrail.org/gift

Unlock Your Power

Unlock the power of your donation this year! Your year-end gift to the North Country Trail Association will go twice as far, thanks to these generous matching gifts. Every dollar you contribute (including memberships!) on these special days will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to the amount specified here. Stay tuned to email and social media for announcements of bonus gear giveaways to those who choose to support the NCTA on these match days, too.

DATE	MATCH CHALLENGE	SPONSOR
November 25	\$20,000	NCTA Board of Directors and an anonymous couple
December 2 Giving Tuesday	\$26,000	Lorana Jinkerson, Jerry and Nancy Fennell, and an anonymous couple
December 9	\$10,000	NCTA Board of Directors and an anonymous couple
December 16	\$10,000	NCTA Board of Directors
December 30	\$5,000	Anonymous couple

This incredible opportunity will double your impact for the trail. Mark your calendar today!

Match amounts are subject to increase.

Meet Jen: Newest HQ Staff

BY JEN HOWELL, NCTA GRANTS MANAGER



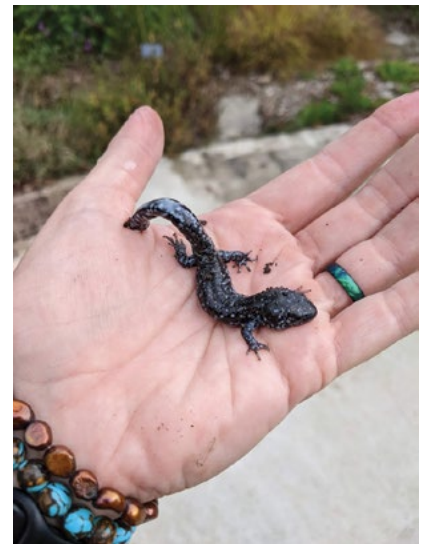
This summer, Jen Howell joined the NCTA staff in the new position of Grants Manager to serve as a vital link between Association's on-the-ground work and the financial resources needed to accomplish our goal of protecting the trail. Jen spent the past 20+ years protecting natural areas in Southwest Michigan while serving as the land manager for Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, and Calvin University's Ecosystem Preserve and Native Gardens. She earned a B.S. in Biology from Calvin University, as well as a M.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University. Jen currently serves as a board member and liaison for the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, and is a board member and Grants Award Chair for the Wildflower Association of Michigan. Jen has a passion for land conservation and helping people find their sense of place in nature in order to inspire care for our natural areas.

Wandering the woods behind my childhood home in Northern Ohio, I discovered my first vernal pool, a magical but ephemeral world teeming with life. I visited this pond often, marveling at the metamorphosing blue-spotted salamanders and wood frogs, discovering that tiny bundles of moving sticks housed resourceful caddisfly larvae, and picking up any trash that might threaten the aesthetics of such a beautiful place. That personal connection - and the dismay I felt when I witnessed that fragile ecosystem carelessly degraded - inspired my career in conservation. As someone who has also lived in Indiana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Michigan, I am familiar with and inspired by the types of habitats the North Country Trail traverses, and understand that we need to create spaces where people can be inspired by the natural world around them. The future of the wild places we love depends on it.

My role at the NCTA allows me to help fund vital trail protection projects

envisioned by our dedicated staff, volunteers, Chapters, and Affiliates. I believe that by providing access to the North Country Trail's stunning landscapes, we are fostering a deep connection that inspires people to become lifelong stewards of this natural treasure. David Attenborough's powerful words, that "no one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced," are a constant inspiration. They highlight the importance of what we do. I look forward to working together to create memorable experiences on the trail that will ignite a passion for the outdoors and lead to a legacy of environmental stewardship!

"Hiring a grants manager was essential for the NCTA," explained Nancy Brozek, NCTA Director of Development and Communications. "This new role allows us to find and pursue new funding opportunities to help achieve our mission of maintaining and building the trail. By strategically



A blue-spotted salamander.

Photo by
Jen Howell

identifying diverse sources of funding, we ensure we have the resources needed for the long-term expansion and protection of the trail. We are excited to welcome Jen to our team in this important position."



VOLUNTEERS

National Park Service Volunteer Recognition 2025

BY NIC LOISEAU, NPS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER

As Sherry Anderson once said, "Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless." This quote perfectly captures the essence of your invaluable contributions. Your commitment to trail building, maintenance, and enhancement ensures that this beautiful trail remains accessible and enjoyable for all. The staff at the North Country National Scenic Trail honor and celebrate your service to preserving this special, one-of-a-kind trail. Thank you for all that you do! The National Park Service is pleased to highlight volunteers who have reached cumulative hour milestones. These milestones are determined by service hours reported through the end of the [NPS] fiscal year on September 30, 2024.

4,000 HOURS

Bill Courtois

Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore Chapter (MI)

Duane Lawton

Jordan Valley 45° Chapter (MI)

Eric Longman

Chief Noonday Chapter (MI)

2,500 HOURS

Bob Courtois

Jordan Valley 45° Chapter (MI)

Tim Hass

Superior Shoreline Chapter (MI)

Glee Mayer

Central Flyway Chapter (ND)

Tom Walker

Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore Chapter (MI)

1,000 HOURS

Daniel Geiger

Star of the North Chapter (MN)

Richard Glasgow

Allegheny National Forest Chapter (PA)

Nicole Halgrimson

Kekekabic Trail Chapter (MN)

Barbara Isom

Superior Shoreline Chapter (MI)

Byron Knapp

Itasca Moraine Chapter (MN)

Tom Norton

Chief Noonday Chapter (MI)

Joanna Swanson

Star of the North Chapter (MN)

Lyn Szymkiewicz

Wampum Chapter (PA)

Shawn Weishaar

Allegheny National Forest Chapter (PA)

400 HOURS

Joseph Baker

Superior Hiking Trail Association (MN)

Rick Barta

Arrowhead Chapter (MN)

Timothy Bauer

Dakota Prairie Chapter (ND)

Denny Caneff

Superior Hiking Trail Association (MN)

Ken Garness

Itasca Moraine Chapter (MN)

Joshua Gary

Superior Hiking Trail Association (MN)

Jan Genaway

Butler County Chapter (PA)

Stephanie Hogan

Laurentian Lakes Chapter (MN)

Jonathan Hughlett

Brule-St. Croix Chapter (WI)

Kenneth Knight

Western Michigan Chapter

John Larch

Jordan Valley 45° Chapter (MI)

Annie Matz,

Jordan Valley 45° Chapter (MI)

Jack Norland

Dakota Prairie Chapter (ND)

Jim Shinnners

Arrowhead Chapter (MN)

Dominic Sosnowski

Brule-St. Croix Chapter (WI)

Bill Stone

Dakota Prairie Chapter (ND)

Pamella Tavernier

Border Route Trail Association (MN)

Bruce Ueland

Superior Hiking Trail Association (MN)

Bill Vitaniemi (WI)

Darlene Warren

Grand Traverse Chapter (MI)

Nelson Whitting

Clarion County Chapter (PA)

200 HOURS

Erik Baron

Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore Chapter (MI)

Jay Benda
Western Michigan Chapter

Paul Bush
Superior Shoreline Chapter (MI)

Karen Campbell
Central New York Chapter

Cynthia Clemens
Chief Noonday Chapter (MI)

George Dahm
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Dan Driesenga
Spirit of the Woods Chapter (MI)

Sally Dykhuis
Grand Traverse Chapter (MI)

Amy Elvey
Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore Chapter
(MI)

Karen Frederick
Wampum Chapter (PA)

Ginny Garness
Itasca Moraine Chapter (MN)

Sylvia Grisez
Allegheny National Forest
Chapter (PA)

Stephanie Hoff
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

David Jansen
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Marty Klein
Grand Traverse Chapter (MI)

Colleen Matula
Heritage Chapter (WI)

John McDonald
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

James Olmsted
Brule-St. Croix Chapter (WI)

Tom Piikkila
Chequamegon Chapter (WI)

Holly Rose
Arrowhead Chapter (WI)

Melissa Santini
Peter Wolfe Chapter (MI)

Julie Smith
Chief Noonday Chapter (MI)

Trudy Snodgrass
Butler County Chapter (PA)

Josh Stangle
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Jeffrey Steele
Central New York Chapter

Sarah Steele
Central New York Chapter

Jim Stewart
Dakota Prairie Chapter (ND)

Christopher Whitsel
Dakota Prairie Chapter (ND)

Zack Wilk
Peter Wolfe Chapter (MI)

Merri Carol Wozniak
Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore
Chapter (MI)

100 HOURS

Steve Anderson (MN)

Mark Anstaett
Superior Shoreline Chapter (MI)

Jack Barnhill
Spirit of the Woods Chapter (MI)

Cheryl Batson
Star of the North Chapter (MN)

Mark Benoit
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Lisa Bertolasio
Wampum Chapter (PA)

Christopher Besemann
Dakota Prairie Chapter (ND)

Rick Bothwell
Kekekabic Trail Chapter (MN)

Mark Braasch
Brule-St. Croix Chapter (WI)

Katy Carrier
Finger Lakes Trail Conference
(NY)

Pamela Chipman
Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore
Chapter (MI)

Kyle Crawford
Kekekabic Trail Chapter (MN)

Jesse Dailey (OH)

Chris Davis
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Timothy DeJong
Minnesota Waters and Prairie
Chapter

James Dunn
Western Michigan Chapter

Emily Fenster
Sheyenne River Valley Chapter
(ND)

Jason Gilbert
Chief Baw Beese Chapter (MI)

Rhiannon Harmon,
Chequamegon Chapter (WI)

Carol Holland
Butler County Chapter (PA)

Evelyn Howell
Jordan Valley 45° Chapter (MI)

Matt Hultman
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

David Irvine
Chief Noonday Chapter (MI)

Joyce Irvine
Chief Noonday Chapter (MI)

Richard Jenkins
Ni-Miikanaake Chapter (MI)

Zach Johns
Arrowhead Chapter (MN)

Beth Kodluboy
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Alexandra Korbelt
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Mark Larson
Ni-Miikanaake Chapter (MI)

Ken Leedle (CA)

Dale Linton
Chief Baw Beese Chapter (MI)

Katie Logan
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Jeffery Meister
Ely Northwoods Chapter (MN)

Jeff Miller
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

James Patterson
Kekekabic Trail Chapter (MN)

Mike Pelech
Heritage Chapter (WI)

Ozzie Reif
Ely Northwoods Chapter (MN)

Kirk Rodysill
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Todd Rowe (MN)

Chris Sherman
Chief Baw Beese Chapter (MI)

Donna Siska
Superior Hiking Trail Association
(MN)

Paul Smith
Allegheny National Forest Chapter
(PA)



VOLUNTEERS

National Park Service Volunteer Recognition 2025

Cindy Smith,
Allegheny National Forest
Chapter (PA)

Kris Suttén
Grand Traverse Chapter (MI)

Lisa Szela
Heritage Chapter (WI)

Erik Thomsen
Superior Hiking Trail
Association (MN)

Nancy Wadopian
Central New York Chapter

Dave Walch (MI)

Dale Webb
Wampum Chapter (PA)

Robert Weisenberger
Marquette Area Chapter (MI)

Linda White
Allegheny National Forest
Chapter (PA)

Robert Wing
Superior Shoreline Chapter (MI)

Diane Wright
Wampum Chapter (PA)

Doug Young
Superior Hiking Trail
Association (MN)

Tom Zavitz
Chief Noonday Chapter (MI)

National Park Service Regional Excellence in Volunteerism Impact Award

BY NIC LOISEAU, NPS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGER



Photo provided by
Bob Courtois

Dan Dueweke

Each year, the National Park Service (NPS) recognizes volunteers who demonstrate exceptional dedication to their park (or trail!) and community. We are pleased to announce that **Dan Dueweke** has been awarded the *Regional Excellence in Volunteerism Impact Award* for his meaningful contributions to the North Country National Scenic Trail.

Dan is an invaluable asset to the NPS, having dedicated more than 20 years as a trail maintainer for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail before joining the North Country Trail community in 2019.

As a member of the NCTA Jordan Valley 45° Chapter in Michigan, Dan's volunteer efforts encompass leading projects, trail construction and maintenance, relationship building, and enhancing public interest - truly making him a powerhouse!

As the Chapter's Trail Adopter Coordinator, Dan oversees the maintenance of 15 trail segments across 80 miles. He also ensures his own five-mile section is well-kept and enjoyable for hikers. As a well-trained and highly skilled chainsaw and crosscut sawyer, Dan also leads sawing operations in the Jordan Valley and teaches proper techniques to others.

In 2022, Dan exemplified his dedication by traveling 625 miles to Minnesota's Superior National Forest, where he helped clear tornado-damaged trees alongside other volunteers and U.S. Forest Service staff. His leadership and extensive experience enabled the team to clear over 500 downed trees along almost a mile of trail in wilderness, while simultaneously training four new crosscut sawyers.

Dan consistently meets and exceeds trail needs. He assisted in building and installing six new interpretive panels, and led a project to acquire a large toolbox for volunteers in his area, offering easy access to tools without long drives. Last September, Dan spearheaded the construction of 30 log steps, three grade dips, and three puncheon structures on a sloped, compacted, and wet section of trail. This entailed ensuring environmental compliance was complete, the appropriate permits were obtained, and developing an innovative way to deliver materials to the worksite to reduce time and effort. The improvements created safer, drier crossings and reduced erosion.

The NPS is extremely thankful for Dan's love and dedication for the North Country Trail, and for so generously sharing his passion, time, and energy. Congratulations Dan!

National Park Service Natural and Cultural Resource Steward Award

BY STEPH LIGUORI, NPS NEPA SPECIALIST

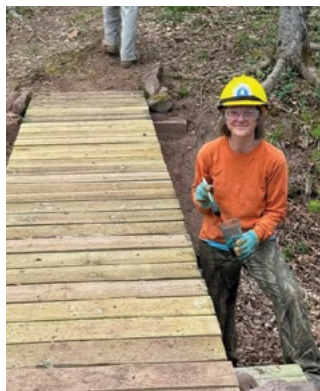


Photo provided by
Bill Menke

Colleen Matula

This year, the National Park Service (NPS) for the North Country National Scenic Trail offers a new recognition for Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs). It's awarded to those who exemplify exceptional dedication and efforts associated with the protection, impact avoidance, or public education regarding the natural and cultural resources that contribute to the scenic

beauty, biodiversity, and cultural fabric of the North Country Trail and its surrounding environment.

For commendable volunteer efforts and stewardship to confirm the protection of a rare natural resource, the NPS presented the inaugural *Natural and Cultural Resource Steward Award* to **Colleen Matula**.

In 2024, the NCTA Heritage Chapter proposed a new trailhead and spur trail in Iron County, Wisconsin, for improved access to a campsite near the Potato River. Before construction could begin, the NPS reviewed the natural and cultural resources of the area. A consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) revealed that a state-listed threatened plant called Braun's holly-fern is known to exist nearby. The DNR recommended conducting a survey to confirm that the vegetation cut and removed during the trail's construction would avoid impacts to this rare fern. Colleen, of her own volition, volunteered to complete this survey.

Colleen has extensive experience in forest and plant ecology. For a decade, she worked as a plant ecologist and forestry technician for Ottawa National Forest. She then worked as a forest ecologist and silviculturist for the Wisconsin DNR for 22 years. In her career, she conducted botanical surveys and identified many plants and plant habitats, including the Braun's holly-fern.

During her survey, Colleen identified many plants and flowers that contribute to the beauty and biodiversity of the trail, and was able to confirm that the protected fern was not within the trail's project area. The project was then given the green light by both the NPS and DNR. Congratulations Colleen, and thank you!

Blazing a Trail

for your future has never been easier.

Do you have a plan for the future? Just like maps guide you on your adventure, we can help you navigate your legacy plan.

"I've made a habit of giving and giving generously since I joined the NCTA. I find it only fitting that I would want to leave a final gift as I leave this adventure for the next."

— LORANA JINKERSON

northcountrytrail.org/ways-to-give



LEGACY SOCIETY
NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION



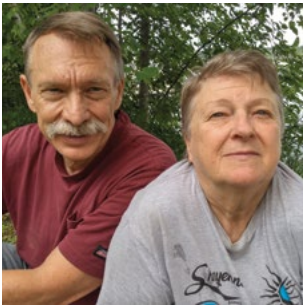
VOLUNTEERS

2025 North Country Trail Association Volunteer Awards

Together, let's celebrate this superb trail community that contributes so much to the enhancement of the North Country National Scenic Trail. The NCTA Awards Committee is delighted to recognize the following award recipients, as nominated by those who work alongside them and observe with admiration.

THOMAS L. GILBERT LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Becky and Daryl Heise



Becky and Daryl have been volunteering for the North Country Trail in North Dakota for more than 20 years. Becky has held nearly every officer position with the NCTA Sheyenne River Valley Chapter since 2004. She participates in workdays, researches landowners and prospective routes, and helps develop trail easements. Daryl has been a critical member of the Chapter's maintenance committee for more than 15 years, and has often

donated his own equipment. Thanks to Becky's three-year leadership of the Recreational Trail Grant Project, the Chapter successfully obtained 24 easements, protecting 29 miles of trail. Additionally, she helped install a number of structures funded by this grant, and helped research and design the informational panels. Becky is a fantastic marketing volunteer, having written narrative for the website, brochures, grants, news articles, and annual reports. She tables events, brainstorms ideas for new hikes and events, and serves on the editorial committee of the *North Star*. Both Becky and Daryl have received a variety of NCTA volunteer awards over the years for their dedication, and the NCTA is honored to recognize them at this most esteemed level.

Larry Pio



For nearly 25 years, Larry has exercised extraordinary generosity of time, talent, and treasure for the NCTA and its Chief Noonday Chapter. There is scarcely a foot of trail in the Chapter's territory that Larry has not trod and helped build, repair, maintain, improve, or promote. There is scarcely a work or outreach project he has not led or taken part in. He is ever on the lookout for things that need to be done, then either handles them himself, or organizes and delegates to get them done. Early

on, Larry joined the Chapters' Trail Adopter team, and tended to three miles, largely alone for approximately 20 years. He's a certified sawyer, program and project leader, and energetic participant. For 19 years, he produced and distributed the Chapter newsletter, and eventually brought it into the digital age. He won't hesitate to table events or give presentations to promote trail use and volunteerism. Larry is calm, sensible, and attentive. This effective style and kind demeanor has led him to a number of Chapter and national leadership positions, including the NCTA Board of Directors. He and his wife Suzanne have generously supported the NCTA for a number of years. His low-key yet rich career with the Chapter and Association are more than worthy of celebration and recognition through this award.

THOMAS L. GILBERT LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

John Heiam and Lois Goldstein



John and Lois were dedicated volunteers with the NCTA Grand Traverse Chapter for many years. They served in committee and board roles at the national level, offered significant financial support to the NCTA, and were beloved friends to many. They said “yes” a lot, mainly to serving in leadership roles with their

Chapter. John attended a number of Hike the Hill events in Washington D.C., effectively and passionately advocating for the trail. The couple was among the first to embrace the Association’s growing fundraising efforts by making

significant gifts and hosting events at their home. They were instrumental at the start of the NCTA’s Endowment Fund. Hardly a weekend would go by without them leading a hike or local river trip. The number of folks in the Traverse City (Michigan) area who benefited from their efforts is incalculable, yet they did so quietly because they simply believed it was the right thing to do. When John and Lois passed away in a tragic car accident in late 2023, the NCTA was notified of a final gift. As Legacy Society members, they chose to include the Association in their wills. This ended up being close to \$400,000, which the NCTA added to the Endowment Fund John helped start. John and Lois’s legacy will live on. We only wish they were here to receive this recognition.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE



John Backes

Since the start of the NCTA Laurentian Lakes Chapter, John has served essentially as the sole organizer and administrator of its annual fundraising efforts. He ensures funds are readily available to purchase and maintain

equipment, and contributes quite generously from his own pocket each year. John also sponsored a three-phased Eagle Scout project: They cleaned up tornado damage, designed and constructed interpretive signage about this storm and cleanup efforts, and built three trailside benches with tabletops. After working tirelessly to help establish the Chapter’s 66 miles of trail, he became a Trail Adopter of a three-mile section that he has maintained on his own ever since.



Jeff Fleming

Jeff helped rebuild a covered bridge on the trail in 1998 then joined the NCTA in 1999. For 20 plus years, he’s scheduled, directed, and participated in workdays with the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter. He’s improved

trail, structures, and signage. He mows, moves and stages building materials, and cleans up after storms. He’s a Trail Adopter and certified sawyer, and seems to have endless energy for both leading and committing to projects across Southern Michigan.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE



Pat Monahan

Pat has a long history with the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC). After becoming a member in 2001, he quickly became involved with major construction projects. In the early days of the FLTC, Pat was the moving force

behind creating the 45-mile-long Crystal Hills Branch of the Finger Lakes Trail. He assessed routes, gained permissions, flagged trail, and organized many workdays to actually build it all. His talent for patient persistence has kept this segment open despite floods, windstorms, and landowner relations issues. He was a hike coordinator for the FLTC Hike the County program, completed an end-to-end hike of the main Finger Lakes Trail in 2008, and bagged all the branch trails in 2015. Pat also served as FLTC President for 15 years, where he significantly strengthened their partnership with the NCTA.



Jo Taylor

Jo has been quietly supporting the NCTA and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) for almost 30 years. She is a jack of all trades when it comes to all things Finger Lakes Trail.

She was editor of the quarterly Finger Lakes Trail News magazine for 10 years. She has hiked all 400 miles of the main trail, end-to-end. She is also a crucial member of the FLTC mapping group, dedicated to producing and updating high-quality maps of the entire Finger Lakes Trail system - which includes more than 400 miles of the North Country Trail. As the current Vice President of Mapping, she leads strategically and collaborates effectively. It is largely due to Jo’s efforts that trail users can navigate and enjoy the trail in Western New York.



VOLUNTEERS

2025 North Country Trail Association Volunteer Awards

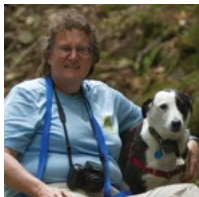
LEADERSHIP



Glenn and Barb Cazier

Glenn and Barb have been involved with the NCTA Western Michigan Chapter for well over a decade. They're Trail Adopters; Glenn is a certified sawyer and is considered an "institution" within the maintenance

crew. Barb tables numerous events on behalf of the Chapter, and assisted with the Chapter's first-time backpacker program this spring. They frequently support day and section hikers with trailhead shuttling, and they host long-distance hikers at their home, where they offer both lodging and laundry. They also host annual Chapter events on their property, welcoming dozens of people. Glenn stated that hiking is now more than a hobby for them, thanks to the North Country Trail Association and its volunteers.



Peg Schmidt Fuller

Peg has been with the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) since 2001 and is a dedicated trail maintainer in Chenango County, New York. Through the Bullthistle Hiking Club, she oversees an active guided hike

program on the North Country Trail, Finger Lakes Trail, and other local trails. She also holds multiple leadership roles on the FLTC Board of Managers. She leads many hikes and organized a very successful fall weekend celebration for the FLTC. Peg cultivates a culture of appreciation. Her collaborative, enthusiastic, and encouraging nature has elevated the work of both staff and volunteers for these trail systems

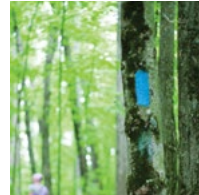


Mary Moberg

For 15 years, Mary has been deeply involved in the development and leadership of the NCTA Dakota Prairie Chapter, and has been active at the national level, too. She has attended nearly every NCTA Celebration event

since 2007 and even co-organized North Dakota's in 2016. Her patient and thoughtful nature allows her to provide valuable perspectives over the years. When she and her husband Tom made the decision to move away from North Dakota, she worked hard to ensure a smooth transition in Chapter leadership. And now, from multiple time zones away, she continues to attend monthly meetings and contribute valuable information and thoughts to the Chapter.

BLUE BLAZES BENEFACTOR



Bigelow Family

The Bigelow Family are lifelong hikers with a deep appreciation for the trail. Mike and Lorraine raised their children in West Michigan, where they all developed a strong love for the outdoors. They are now retired

and wintering in Florida, but their bond with the trail remains strong. A couple years ago, they made a significant contribution to further the mission of the Association. Mike recognized that while using the trail is free, its upkeep requires immense effort, and they admire the NCTA's dedication. The Bigelows have since supported the Association annually, demonstrating a lasting commitment and profound understanding of the work involved in building and maintaining a National Scenic Trail.

FRIEND OF THE TRAIL



City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Division

More than 350 miles of trails wind through and around the City of Duluth (Minnesota). The Parks and Recreation Division takes seriously the importance

of maintaining these world-class recreation opportunities for their residents and visitors. Last year, the City passed a resolution to support the Superior Hiking Trail Association's Master Plan, which included two future reroutes through the city to significantly reduce the trail's roadwalks. Even through a bustling city, the Division prioritizes trail connectivity with park lands. They are able to provide fantastic access to the outdoors and are absolutely excellent partners.



Catherine Getty

Catherine is a Commissioner in Barry County, Michigan, as well as an engaged member of the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter. She claims one of her main motivations to run for County Commissioner was to represent the

importance of parks and trails. She has served on the county parks board for about 20 years. Here, she builds strong relationships between nonprofits, municipalities, and private businesses. Catherine often includes the Chapter and North Country Trail in her discussions. For example, she co-championed an effort to incorporate them in the country's Master Trails Plan, which connects communities to trails. Thanks to her efforts, roadwalk has been eliminated and the trail community has been strengthened.

FRIEND OF THE TRAIL



Drew Hanson

Drew is wholly dedicated to the partnership model that embraces the roles of the NCTA, its Wisconsin volunteers, and his agency, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

He facilitates partner meetings, helps secure state funding for projects, and advocates for land easements for the trail. He does a wonderful job maintaining relationships between the NCTA, volunteers, and local DNR property managers. Drew is always willing to listen, entertain ideas, and identify solutions. He understands the nuances of working on a National Scenic Trail and is an excellent example of the cooperative management system.



Richard Hatfield

Rich has been a District Ranger with the Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania for a decade, and supports the NCTA Allegheny National Forest Chapter in countless ways. He is great at gathering stakeholders to agree on

solutions. He once led a discussion that resulted in dedicating 100 feet of buffer on both sides of the trail through logging projects, as well as added safety provisions. This has become a standard for any logging contract with the Forest. Rich stays in regular communication with the Chapter about potential projects and how they might impact the trail, and he has directed funds to help the Chapter purchase supplies and equipment. His prompt responses and professional skills make working with Rich very productive and rewarding.



Joe Jandernoa

Joe is Unit Manager of the Yankee Springs Recreation Area in Michigan, through which the North Country Trail winds. He is a reliable assistant to the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter, providing equipment and park employees to

help control erosion on the trail. Last fall, he approved the placement of multiple benches and provided the hands to help install them. In alignment with the NCTA, Joe strives to make the trail more accessible and enjoyable.



Michael Kangas

Under Michael's leadership through his position at the U.S. Forest Service, the NCTA Sheyenne River Valley Chapter can develop and care for the trail and its amenities in North Dakota's Sheyenne State Forest. Michael's support, through

both guidance and funding, allows the Chapter to keep the trail maintained. He stays in close contact with volunteers regarding their needs, and often sends Forest Service employees and equipment for Chapter workdays. Michael's dedication, especially at a state level, is invaluable.

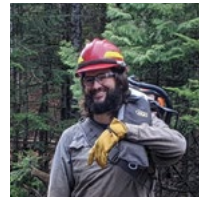
FRIEND OF THE TRAIL



Joe Morisette

Joe is a state park superintendent in New York State, and has provided the NCTA Central New York Chapter with unwavering support and advocacy. For many years, the Chapter has strived to reroute a large roadwalk segment

through state lands. Joe pored over maps and hiked the proposed route, provided and purchased materials, had custom signage made, and coordinated the design of a trailhead kiosk. He assigned park personnel to assist with Chapter workdays and allowed the Chapter to store materials at a state park facility. This reroute was completed last October thanks to Joe's dedicated partnership.

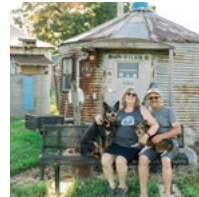


Scott Shipley

When Scott joined the Chippewa National Forest staff, he immediately began assisting the NCTA Star of the North Chapter. He helped clear trail and secure camping for Chapter work trips, and joined construction projects. With

his extensive background in fire and trail work, he ensures everyone is safe and provides excellent experience stories. He is currently leading the development of a trail reroute that will eliminate a long roadwalk. Scott is a true *Friend of the Trail* in Central Minnesota.

OUTSTANDING PRIVATE LANDOWNER



Kevin Hough

Ever since a stranger offered him fruit during a hike in the Upper Peninsula, Kevin promised himself he'd find a way to give back to other trail users. He and his wife Jenny are now extraordinary trail angels. In 2021, they used a variety

of recycled materials to transform a grain bin into a shelter named the Bin Walkin, and have since hosted numerous overnight, section, and thru-hikers. Over the years, they've added a privy, shower, and picnic table, and Kevin actively promotes both the shelter and the trail on social media. Kevin is also a Trail Adopter for the Western Michigan Chapter, and supports the Chief Noonday Chapter as he's able. They are equally as great at developing relationships as they are providing resources to trail users.



2025 North Country Trail Association Volunteer Awards

OUTSTANDING PRIVATE LANDOWNER



Jon Holzhauser

Jon has hosted the trail and a campsite on his land in Minnesota for more than 15 years. He is also an active participant with the NCTA Laurentian lakes Chapter board, in efforts to improve the trail on his land. He also

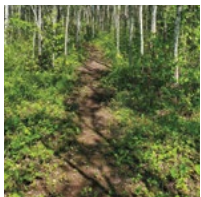
designed and built trailside fence stiles at his property's edge. He is welcoming and engaging, which are much appreciated qualities for a trail host to have!



Candy McCready

In 2019, Candy and her husband Robert granted the NCTA Wampum Chapter permission to develop two and a half miles of trail on their property in Western Pennsylvania. It was soon clear just how much they cared about

the trail and its community. They eagerly attended many Chapter events, and even after Robert's passing, Candy continues to loyally support and engage with the volunteers. She has gone beyond merely permitting the trail - she allows others to enjoy their hiking experience.



Rogstad Family

Ever since the North Country Trail was routed in their direction, the Rogstads have been pleased to host it across their land in Western Minnesota. They've also offered a fantastic, trailside campsite here for more

than 15 years. Going above and beyond, they are actively collaborating to sell key areas of their land to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to both preserve it and to allow the North Country Trail to exist there in perpetuity.

OUTSTANDING PRIVATE LANDOWNER



Sally Williams

Sally owns a 180-acre horse farm in Barry County, Michigan. Roughly half the property is wooded and surrounds a large, private, undeveloped lake. The North Country runs through here and it's a gem of a segment for the NCTA

Chief Noonday Chapter. For her horse boarding clients, Sally and her staff maintain trail through the property, which she offered as North Country Trail route. Alongside the Chapter, she helped plan an additional footpath, as well. This new section opened in 2022 and has been a favorite - it's quiet and full of wildlife. Her staff's regular maintenance of the trail lightens the load of NCTA volunteers, and she is happy to attend group hikes when able. Sally is always cheerful, supportive of the Chapter's efforts, and willing to keep the trail open and protected.

TRAIL PROTECTOR



Jan Ulferts Stewart and Jim Stewart

Together, Jan and Jim have designed and built some of the most iconic structures on the NCTA Dakota Prairie Chapter's segment of the North

Country Trail. Included are six trailhead kiosks that feature information for trail users of all kinds. They've also built several benches and fence stiles, renovated several privies, repaired puncheon and signage, and painted blazes. Jan is currently President of the Board of Directors, helping to guide the Association through expanding trail protection initiatives. Jim led negotiations to secure an easement for the trail on the Albert K. Ekre Grassland Preserve. They've both been instrumental in protecting and enriching the North Country Trail in North Dakota and beyond.

SWEEP



Steve Hicks

Steve is responsible for mowing a variety of trailheads and segments across Barry County, Michigan for the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter, and has been doing so since 1998. He volunteers his own vehicle and trailer to move the walk-

behind mower from site to site, covering about 70 to 80 miles. He proudly maintains aging equipment and rarely bothers to ask for reimbursement, and he often pitches in on other Chapter projects like building trail and puncheon.



Michelle Lazar

Michelle brings an extraordinary blend of professionalism, technical expertise, and generosity to the NCTA. A retired GIS professional with a career spanning both civil engineering and the U.S. Forest Service, she approached the NCTA with

a desire to give back - and quickly became invaluable. For several years, she has contributed to a variety of complex GIS and data-related projects. She eagerly and methodically improves data, cleans and clarifies records, and creates user-friendly processes. Michelle always goes above and beyond what is asked of her, and exemplifies the spirit of service.



Tom Norton

Tom is one of the most crucial members of the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter who is not a hiker - but he's rather accomplished at waiting. Last year, over two four-day periods, he shuttled hikers between trailheads during a

lengthy hike across Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Each year during the Chapter's half-marathon hike, Tom can be found receiving participants at the finish line. At most outreach events, he's at the information table or greeting folks at the door. He has shuttled his wife Jane around most of Michigan and Wisconsin, during her pursuit of North Country Trail miles. His friendly nature and extreme patience are beyond appreciated.

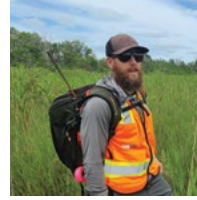


Larry Scanlon

Larry has regularly volunteered well over 100 hours a year for many years. He helps to assess projects and scout reroutes. For the past five years, he has been at every ribbon-cutting event for trail expansion or renewal projects in the

Duluth area. He often plays a support role - staying behind the scenes but making great things happen for the trail. He once volunteered to drive multiple hours for bridge materials that would have cost the Superior Hiking Trail Association hundreds of dollars to ship. Larry also leads weed-whipping crews as a section adopter, keeping the trail open and well-maintained.

SWEEP

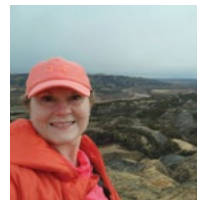


John Storkamp

John has been involved with the Superior Hiking Trail for over 30 years. He was one of the first Volunteer Crew Leaders recruited and trained. Aside from coordinating standard logistics, he goes above and beyond by recruiting

volunteers and organizing their lodging. He fosters a welcoming environment, and focuses on mentoring and skills building. He is an active sawyer, clearing 15-20 miles of trail each year and training the next generation. Through his company, Rocksteady Running, which hosts marathon and ultramarathon races on the trail, John has shown incredible generosity by contributing more than \$30,000 to the trail over the past couple decades. He makes a direct call to action to race participants each year to become members, donors, and volunteers. From these efforts, he had inspired at least an additional \$17,000 of support for the trail.

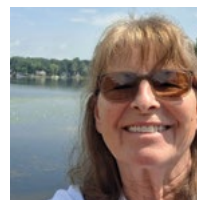
BOOTS ON THE TRAIL



Autumn Dinnel

Autumn has been leading hikes with the NCTA Dakota Prairie Chapter for over five years. And if she isn't leading a hike, she is attending one. As the Chapter Secretary, she takes fantastic notes at monthly meetings. She was a critical

contributor to the Chapter's annual *Hike Every Mile* event, and she can always be called upon to represent the trail and Chapter, ensuring all visitors receive thorough knowledge of the North Country Trail.



Amy Seymour

Amy has been on the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter's Hike Committee for three years, and has come up with so many unique themes for hikes, including a spring ephemeral hike and a storybook hike for families. She goes a step further

and provides detailed, topical information for these hikes to create the best possible experiences. She once took the time to inquire about display cases at a highway rest area, which resulted in three months of advertising for the Chapter's upcoming hikes. (It's one of the largest rest areas in Michigan!) Amy also leads and sweeps hikes, always ensuring each participant feels welcome, comfortable, and appreciated.



2025 North Country Trail Association Volunteer Awards

BOOTS ON THE TRAIL



Robert and Robin Sharkey

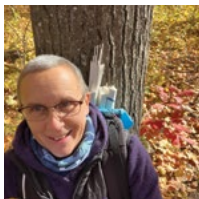
Bob and Robin are always happy to step up as hike sweeps during the Chief Noonday Chapter's monthly social hikes across three counties in Southwest Michigan. They eagerly participate in several community events, including parades and roadside cleanups. They do an excellent job answering questions about the trail, Chapter, NCTA, and Hike 100 Challenge.

OUTREACH



Nikk Adams

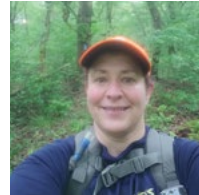
In 2016, teacher and trail runner Nikk Adams decided to create an event to raise funds for the NCTA Brule-St. Croix Chapter, attract new people to the North Country Trail in Northwest Wisconsin, and unite the local trail running community. The *North Country Trail Races* began as a single 5K. Over the past eight years, Nikk has added both a half and full marathon, as well as a mystery ultra marathon. Each race attracts 80-100 runners, and Nikk has raised more than \$12,000 for Chapter trail maintenance projects, including repairs to the Brule Bog Boardwalk. Multiple runners have since become regular trail maintainers, and Nikk serves on the Chapter board. Nikk's efforts have significantly improved visibility of the NCT in Wisconsin, and further developed the identity of Solon Springs as an NCTA Trail Town.



L Byrne

For several years, L has been instrumental in organizing Northern Minnesota Track Club members to help weed-whip 10 miles of the Superior Hiking Trail through Duluth. L has since encouraged Duluth Foot Trails Alliance members to join as well, and this larger group now helps with trail renewal projects. In 2024, L also became a certified sawyer and volunteer crew leader with the Superior Hiking Trail Association. Enabling and encouraging trail users to give back to the trail has resulted in a deeper connection and sense of responsibility.

OUTREACH



Tina Harkins

Since joining the NCTA Wampum Chapter in 2016, Tina has been a consistently valuable volunteer. She delivers outreach materials to local businesses, ensures brochures and maps are stocked, prepares and distributes press releases, and stays in constant communication with Chapter members. Many of Tina's articles have made the front page of the local newspaper, and she maintains the Chapter's social media. This spring, she was interviewed by a local radio station and spoke eloquently about the trail. Not only does she manage all of these outreach tasks, but Tina's a Trail Adopter, hike leader and sweep, and works full-time as a nurse. She has a wonderful relationship with the landowner of the section she maintains, and is always willing to lend a hand where needed.



Mark Lelle

Mark has supported the trail for many years in many capacities with the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter. He organizes trail cleanup projects that include community members and college students. He serves with the Calhoun County Trailway Alliance as a member and secretary. He's doing a wonderful job increasing the awareness of Albion, Michigan as an NCTA Trail Town. Mark is a trail angel and offers his yard as an overnight campsite, and provides great insight regarding new signage and potential reroutes.

COMMUNICATOR



David Irvine

When David sees a need, he doesn't complain, he simply works to fix it. Not only is he an integral part of the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter's social media team, but he's a sawyer too. He's phenomenal at coordinating Trail Adopters, particularly with his spreadsheet that tracks downed and cleared trees - it's an invaluable asset for the team. David is excellent at integrating new people into the Chapter, and he brings a fresh perspective to any event or task.

COMMUNICATOR



Gail Rogne

Since her first day as a member of the NCTA Dakota Prairie Chapter, Gail has been happily volunteering. She has held a variety of leadership positions, including Chapter President, and her communication skills cannot be matched.

She manages a variety of social media accounts to promote Chapter hikes and events, and does a fantastic job showcasing North Dakota's North Country Trail. Should the need arise to sweep a hike, table an event, or maintain trail, Gail is usually at the ready. She spreads the joy of the trail wherever she goes.



Doug Seaney

Doug has been the NCTA Jordan Valley 45° Chapter's communication coordinator for over three years, but he is one of the longest-serving active members. He maintains the Chapter email list to distribute updates to members and trail

users, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and attends all Chapter leadership meetings. In addition to communications duties, Doug helps maintain the trail, showing up for most work projects and mowing long parts of the trail every summer. He also participates in most Chapter hikes and adds to the fun.

TRAIL MAINTAINER

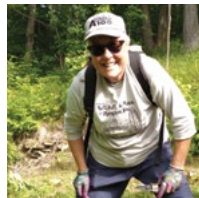


Danny Austin

Danny has demonstrated unwavering dedication to the North Country Trail for more than 15 years. With the NCTA Western Michigan Chapter, he serves as a Trail Adopter for multiple segments. He is also chairman of the Chapter's Trail

Committee, playing a critical leadership role by organizing meetings, training new adopters, and ensuring sawyer certification and safety. As a sawyer himself, Danny sets the standard for excellence in trail stewardship, and continues to be an invaluable asset.

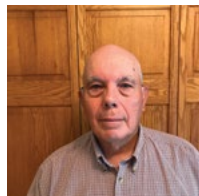
TRAIL MAINTAINER



Lisa Bertolasio

Lisa has been a member of the NCTA Wampum Chapter since 2015. She drives an hour and a half one-way to maintain two sections she adopted in Ohio. She is the Chapter's Trail Adopter Coordinator, assessing trail needs,

scheduling workdays, and ensuring maintainers are trained and equipped. Because she is organized, thoughtful, and enthusiastic, Lisa's service is in high demand across the Chapter - particularly the Landowners Relations Committee. She also leads hikes and strives to attract new hikers and volunteers. She handles many Chapter communications, volunteers her time for community events, and ultimately, embodies the spirit of the North Country Trail.



Stephen Kesler

Stephen has become a constant presence at NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter workdays. Whether he's eradicating invasive species, helping to build puncheon, or pushing a DR mower through thick brush, Stephen goes above

and beyond. He's been a Trail Adopter for a three-mile wooded section for more than three years. When he's not maintaining trail, Stephen is volunteering with fellow veterans and others who are receiving cochlear implants for hearing loss.



Tim and Nancy Van Nest

Tim and Nancy are Trail Adopters with the NCTA Western Michigan Chapter who have been maintaining a four-mile segment for more than a decade. They are certified as a sawyer and swamper team, regularly participate in workdays,

then volunteer wherever else they think they can help. Thanks to their skills and knowledge, the Chapter has been able to complete many significant projects, from boardwalks to bridges to reroutes. Tim and Nancy work tirelessly to make the North Country Trail safe and accessible for everyone.



Chris Whitsel

Chris has maintained the North Country Trail with the NCTA Dakota Prairie Chapter for more than eight years. He mows, clears trail, and updates signage. He steps up when others cannot. In the last several years, Chris has coordinated

maintenance of an 18-mile segment. He communicates and troubleshoots effectively, trains patiently, and monitors the trail closely. He also leads hikes and promotes the trail in any way he can.



VOLUNTEERS

2025 North Country Trail Association Volunteer Awards

TRAIL BUILDER



Ryan Bowles

For several years, Ryan has been deeply involved in multiple trails across Southern Michigan and Northern Ohio. He served as President of the NCTA Chief Baw Beese Chapter, led the North Country Trail committee for the Northwestern Ohio Rails-to-Trails Association (NORTA), and contributed significantly to the Wabash Cannonball Trail. He is now the volunteer Trail Manager for the NCTA Chief Noonday Chapter. He is an organized and efficient workday leader, ensuring volunteers feel valued and effective. Ryan has developed numerous camping opportunities along the trail, and continues to work toward enhancing the hiking experience for everyone.



Jerry Warner

Jerry joined the NCTA Sheyenne River Valley Chapter 18 years ago after he fell in a creek. He was there when the first boardwalk was installed at this site and has been a dedicated member ever since. He is quite familiar with the needs of North Dakota's North Country Trail because he has hiked its entirety. Jerry organizes volunteers from his former employer, Doosan/Bobcat, for annual trail workdays. (Jerry is now retired.) They've built water bars, picnic tables, and boardwalks, installed benches, and improved trail. He's an excellent liaison with the North Dakota Forest Service, and chairs the Chapter's Trail Maintenance and Development Committee. Many miles have been enhanced thanks to Jerry's guidance.



John Gellatly

John adopted a trail segment in Duluth more than a decade ago and maintains it expertly. Not only does he keep the corridor clear, but he builds turnpike, does rock work, and improves drainage. Heavy snowfall creates excessive runoff here, but John isn't afraid of the challenge and lives by the motto "people on, water off." If you ever can't find John on his segment, it's likely he's at another project along the Superior Hiking Trail.

TRAIL BUILDER



Jeff and Sally Steele

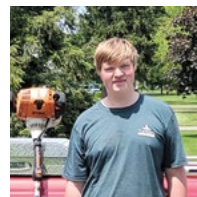
Jeff and Sally jumped right into trail projects shortly after joining the NCTA Central New York Chapter. They've volunteered many, many hours of manual labor during reroute projects. They've excavated hillside trail, hauled buckets of rocks, constructed trail tread, constructed earthen steps, and painted blazes. They are active stewards of a segment in the Tioughnioga Wildlife Management Area, and Jeff is a certified sawyer. When they aren't digging in the dirt, they're leading hikes and serving on the Chapter's Executive Committee. Willingness to learn and participate in projects, promotion of the trail, and solicitation of volunteers are their most important contributions.



George "Madhat" Dahm

Madhat might be one of the Superior Hiking Trail Association's longest serving volunteers who is still actively working on the trail. Since the mid to late nineties, he remains busy maintaining a segment near Finland, Minnesota. He's a sawyer and leads swampers. He has a jovial and joking nature, creating an atmosphere of fun and camaraderie, and he is eager to both learn and teach. Last winter, he used his own snowmobile to move materials to a future project site. Whatever the task may be, he's a volunteer we can count on.

RISING STAR



Alex Harris

For more than three years, 15-year-old Alex has been dedicated to trail upkeep in Northwest Ohio. His father is the official caretaker as Delphos Section Supervisor for the Buckeye Trail Association (BTA), but Alex has taken it upon himself to keep the grass mowed, area clean, and wood supplied. He rebuilt an antique push mower and uses it on a quarter-acre every three weeks in the mowing season. He supplies his own fuel for it, too. Alex assists his father with other maintenance tasks and is an enthusiastic advocate for the trail. Through Scouts, he has completed two service projects: rebuilding a canal crossing and rebuilding a switchback section. In August 2023, he spent a week with his father and a BTA work party re-benching a large section of trail and removing invasive species.



Giants of the Trail

BY KAREN STENBERG, NCTA LAURENTIAN LAKES CHAPTER

Every NCTA Chapter has charter members and mentors who laid the groundwork. Ray Vlasak was the first President of our Laurentian Lakes Chapter in Minnesota. He filled almost every other leadership position too, until others learned how our Chapter functioned and how the trail was constructed. From planning sessions to route finding, clearing and building trail to leading hikes, Ray did it all in an impressive manner. He was the driving force in securing permission for the trail across private, federal, state, and county land. He also hosted AmeriCorps and Minnesota Conservation Corps crews that assisted our Chapter in trail building. He served a couple of terms on the NCTA [national] Board of Directors, and received the NCTA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016.



Top of page: Ray Vlasak (left) leads a hike.

Photo by
Karen Stenberg

Above: A group on a memorial hike for Gary Narum, at the showcase entrance he designed and built.

Photo by
Rodney Schneider



Ray Vlasak (left) and Gary Narum from the 2016 NCTA Celebration, where they both received national awards.

Photo by
Karen Stenberg

During many of his structure-building tasks, Ray was aided by his neighbor, Gary Narum. Gary, who had recently retired from a position at North Dakota State University, had the perfect skill set to compliment Ray. He also became one of the charter members of our Chapter.

Gary designed and built many of the 48 structures that cross wetlands, bogs, and beaver dams across our 65-mile trail segment. He hardly ever missed a workday to build boardwalks, puncheon, and bridges.

He also dreamed of designing and building a “showcase” entrance at the start of our trail segment. This became a reality in 2015. Placed strategically east of Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, off State Highway 34, it invites people to stop and discover what the North Country Trail is all about. We know this trailhead is well-used from the trail counters placed here, and cars are consistently parked at the trailhead.

Gary passed away last December and Ray, this June. These “giants” of our trail left us with so much to be grateful for. Through their leadership and example, we thank them for a plan becoming reality - our Chapter has 65 off-road miles completed. We lost two remarkable friends, but the bootprints they left on the trail are also left in our hearts.



VOLUNTEERS



GPS in the ADK



This article was compiled from content provided by volunteers Joan Young and Bill Courtois of Michigan, volunteer Bob Rosati of New York, NCTA GIS Program Manager Matt Rowbotham, and NCTA Regional Trail Coordinator Will Brazill.

In 2016, an NCTA GIS intern collaborated with a highly dedicated volunteer in New York, Mary Coffin, to create the first-published, temporary connector route for the North Country Trail through Adirondack Park. With today's navigational technology allowing hikers to view their real-time location on maps and mobile devices, trail users began reporting inaccuracies and points of confusion. Trail lines were sometimes as much as a half-mile from where they should be.

After Joan Young finished hiking the entire North Country for a second time in 2023, she confirmed just how difficult it was through the Adirondacks. She had to bushwhack several times in an attempt to find the route. Matt Rowbotham was aware that the trail lines on the NCTA's interactive map were not correct, but no agency or person seemed to have accurate data.

"We were just waiting for someone to get seriously lost trying to hike through," said Joan. "The 'Daks are rugged, and trails are generally less well-maintained

Top row left to right: Bob Courtois, Joan Young, Bob Rosati
Bottom row left to right: Bob Rosati, NCTA Regional Trail Coordinator Will Brazill (far right) with the GPS Rangers volunteer group.

Photos by

Joan Young, Bob Courtois, and Will Brazill

than North Country Trail hikers are used to.”

True to her nature, Joan jumped in headfirst to help resolve this issue. Her experience in this area, combined with her long history of service as an NCTA volunteer (both at the local and national level) made Joan uniquely qualified to tackle this challenge.

At the 2023 NCTA Celebration event in the Adirondacks, Joan led a presentation on this uncertain path. This is what motivated Bill Courtois to get involved. Deciding it was safer and more efficient if she didn’t attempt this project alone, Joan invited Bill to join her on this adventure. Also, with the two of them, they were able to take GPS tracks on three different devices, which enabled Matt to average them to get a better centerline of the trail.

They spent several months preparing: Working out a schedule, studying maps, evaluating and learning digital navigation tools, and requesting help from friends to spot them. Sarah Layne-Ayers, Diane Nelson, and Marie Altenau (all of New York) each volunteered to help for several days, even cooking for Joan and Bill, or providing showers. Will Brazill, NCTA Regional Trail Coordinator for New York and Vermont, also spotted them. They were able to day-hike most sections, but they did backpack twice for a total of five days.

“Hike speed was slow,” said Bill. “Generally about one mile per hour because of frequent pauses to observe and record information. Rarely were our feet dry; mud holes and marshes often slowed our hiking speed.”

Over 12 days, they hiked about 90 off-road miles of trail, logging GPS tracks, and noting and photographing essentially everything: shelters, culverts, bridges (or missing bridges!), rock work, a board thrown down as makeshift puncheon, signage, switchbacks, and road crossings.

As helpful and valuable as this data was, there was still the need for more.

“GPS spatial accuracy can be affected by many factors including tree cover, terrain, and satellite conditions at the time of collection,” explained Matt. “With recreation-grade GPS equipment, every track recorded in the same area will be slightly different, and none of them perfectly precise.”

To help smooth it out, shortly after Joan and Bill returned, the NCTA teamed up with the GPS Rangers: a volunteer group who use GPS technology to support land management. In July, they too walked the route, guided by Joan and Bill’s data and Will, who joined them for some time.

“Joan and Bill’s data proved invaluable,” said Will. “It also illustrated how quickly trail conditions can change. For example, the high water they reported in June was non-existent in July.”

“

I can’t convey how excited I was to be part of this project. I’ve loved the Adirondacks since I was a child, and to be able to help make my favorite trail more user-friendly in that area is a dream come true.”

— JOAN YOUNG

By adding multiple passes and additional GPS records, they helped statistically improve the accuracy of the NCTA’s route information in one of the most remote sections of the North Country Trail.

These volunteers collected nearly 1,000 non-unique miles of data, as well as more than 1,000 points documenting signs, structures, and trail issues. They submitted hundreds of photos.

While this of course created quite the to-do trail maintenance list, it’s important to remember the nuances of our trail community. We must balance hiker needs with broader goals of our land management partners, including the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the National Park Service.

More than 80 miles of off-road trail through Adirondack Park have now been accurately mapped. The inventory of trail structures will not only improve the hiker experience, but has already begun to build a stronger, collaborative relationship between NCTA and our partners at NYS-DEC.

“The data collected by Joan and Bill will be used to supplement and improve the current field data in support of updating existing maps, used as input to work plans and grants, and help to complete documenting the current status of the trail Will Brazill and I are working on,” said volunteer leader Bob Rosati. “I have already been on the trail making improvements this summer based on their work.”

“I can’t convey how excited I was to be part of this project,” said Joan. “I’ve loved the Adirondacks since I was a child, and to be able to help make my favorite trail more user-friendly in that area is a dream come true.”



TRAIL
WORK

Tale of the Porcupine Creek Crossings



Part I: The Beginning

BY MARTY SWANK, NCTA
CHEQUAMEGON CHAPTER



Prior to 1984, you could drive their vehicle to the point where Porcupine Creek takes a sharp left turn - just as you reach the North Country National Scenic Trail - and launch your canoe. There were also two creosote timber bridges over Porcupine Creek, and a wooden shelter on the northern shore of Porcupine Lake.

When this nearly 4,500 acres became a designated wilderness, the timber bridges and shelter were removed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The North Country Trail was rerouted along the lake, away from the creek, due to concern over soil erosion by trail users.

In the vein of "if you don't build it right, the public will let you know," hikers and anglers decided the reroute was too long, and many started forging a trail along Porcupine Creek. As predicted, this caused significant erosion. The reroute also led to people piling timbers precariously at the mouth of Porcupine Creek in order to cross it. NCTA Chequamegon Chapter volunteers used this crossing to maintain the trail, but after a few near-mishaps and major safety concerns, they endeavored to gain approval to build a bridge and adjust the trail back to its original route.

In 2006, they received USFS approval for their proposed reroute and a single-log bridge. (Adding a second log to the bridge was approved shortly after, noting many bridge users would be carrying watercraft.)

In the fall of 2007, a variety of volunteers and USFS staff completed this project. A grip-hoist with a sling was used to move large nearby rocks to build a raised base on both sides of the creek. The two hemlock logs used for the bridge were moved to the creek crossing (from where they had been blown down in a windstorm) by using the grip-hoist and roller logs like those used in ancient Egyptian stone moving. Once the logs were in place over the creek,

a two-man crosscut saw and Pulaski were used to flatten the tops. This accomplishment became the highlight of my years as a volunteer on the North Country Trail. The Two-Log Bridge would become an oft-photographed icon.

Flash floods nearly destroyed it in 2016; they washed out part of the trail on the lower side of the creek and parts of both bridge approaches. I have a hard time visualizing that much water flowing down Porcupine Creek, but it happened.

By 2023, many of us knew the bridge was reaching its end. The bouncing had become more pronounced. I remember wincing a little when a large group of hikers - the NCT Navigators - lined up on the bridge for a photo opportunity.

Part II: The Beginning of a New Legacy

BY ED RONKOWSKI AND MEL BAUGHMAN,
NCTA CHEQUAMEGON CHAPTER

In early May 2025, USFS staff Katie LeMoine got word that the downstream log of the two-log bridge had broken and was a safety hazard. By the end of the month, she had recruited some incredibly strong Forest Service employees, and invited our Chapter volunteers to join in the effort to replace the bridge with pre-positioned, laminated beams. Katie functioned as the crew leader, assisted by fellow USFS staff Natalie Osowski.

"The crew carried the very heavy timbers using log tongs," reported Katie. "It was a good example of teamwork and how the trail being in the Wilderness limits any motorized help to haul in material."

Above: Volunteers pose with the new bridge.

Photos provided by
Marty Swank



Katie held a safety lecture before we hiked in, then explained her plans to construct the bridge at the site.

The original logs were cut into segments with a silky saw, then carried to the banks using log carriers each grasped by two people. Before installing the new beams, existing rock abutments were leveled on top with gravel scraped from the creek bottom. Then, 10 people carried beams across the creek using five sets of log carriers. The heavy, laminated beams were placed on the rock abutments, side-by-side, creating a 22-inch-wide bridge deck. A few buckets of gravel and dirt were carried to the bridge ends and tamped down to make walk-up ramps.

The bridge built in 2007 took days to complete. The replacement this May - removing the old structure and replacing the rotting logs with wooden girders - was done in 80 minutes! Under Katie's direction, coupled with enough people working, the bridge was completed much faster than anyone expected. Best of all, no one was injured, and mosquitoes were not too bad. We're grateful for all the volunteers and staff who have made this project successful.



Photo by
Chris Pregent-Halford

First-Time Backpackers Trip

BY NANCY DEJONG, NCTA WESTERN MICHIGAN CHAPTER



This summer, fellow Chapter member Barb Cazier and myself led a group of 14 on their first backpacking experience. We hiked about 3.5 miles each way, from the north

side of Nichols Lake to Sawkaw Lake National Forest Campground, about one hour north of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

We invited the hikers to attend two orientation meetings before the excursion. We covered topics including the packs and gear, how to pack, keeping weight low, training with weight, and setting up tents. We also discussed food possibilities.

The campground was located on a beautiful lake. After pitching tents, we made and ate dinner. Many tried

dehydrated meals for the first time. We then hung our food bags out of the reach of critters, and enjoyed a nice bonfire with an excellent view of the lake. The weather was pleasant, although during the night, the temperature dropped to 34°F.

Some of the lessons learned were how important the weight of the pack is; the importance of training beforehand by wearing packs with weight; how to hang food to keep bears and other animals out; filtering water; trail meals; and dealing with ticks. The participants were great sports, and eager to learn and adventure. There was camaraderie and a lot of fun!

Find more trail use opportunities like this at northcountrytrail.org/events.



Photo by
Nancy DeJong



Photo by
Katy Shelton



TRAIL
USE



North Dakota Hike Fest Recap

“

Having some kind of activity that involves all the Chapters in a state is really important. The collaboration and coordination for Hike Fest across the three North Dakota Chapters seemed to work well.”

— TOM MOBERG, ARIZONA



Reflections

BY JAN ULFERTS STEWART, PRESIDENT, NCTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND DAKOTA PRAIRIE CHAPTER MEMBER

Hike Fest on the North Country Trail in North Dakota offered an adventure for everyone! People from 10 states joined us for four days of hiking, exploration, and building friendships.

The idea for Hike Fest began after the 2025 NCTA Celebration - slated for North Dakota - was canceled. Determined to still showcase local sections of trail, our three volunteer Chapters came together to host a series of hikes that weaved through prairie, forests, and grasslands, all the way to the Western Terminus. We added a few surprises along the way, including a trail dedication to Tom Moberg, former NCTA Board President. We also developed a scavenger hunt for historical fun facts called *Quest Adventure*, and a game called *You Might Be an NCT Hiker If...*

Hike Fest was created out of our shared love of the trail and shared purpose. Our planning team included me, Bill Stone, Jack Norland, Becky Heise, Jerry Warner, Glee Mayer, Mark Zimmerman, and many other members of the Dakota Prairie, Sheyenne River Valley, and Central Flyway Chapters. From start to finish, the hikes, meals, and activities were smoothly organized and offered fresh and memorable trail experiences. Miles shared on the path sparked new friendships, showcased North Dakota's hospitality, and left participants connected not only to the North Country Trail, but to each other. The best proof comes from those who joined us.

All photos were provided by participants of Hike Fest.

“

What a wonderful experience! The North Dakota NCTA Chapters did an amazing job of planning and executing this event. I learned there is a certified waterfall in North Dakota. There is a state forest! It is hot in the summer! And it is beautiful country.”

— DUANE LAWTON, MICHIGAN



“

Two years after earning my first Hike 100 Challenge patch, I hiked to the Western Terminus and earned the NCT sampler patch.”

— DIANE BASSETTE NELSON, NEW YORK



The NCT sampler patch can be obtained through a long-distance hiker recognition program run by Joan Young. Learn more at explorenci.info/NoCoLo/index.htm.

“Tim and I were both very impressed with the collaboration and cooperation between the three North Dakota Chapters, and how smoothly everything was run, down to the smallest detail. The dinner arrangements were unique and fun, and really demonstrated rural North Dakota community and charm. The trail segments chosen for hiking were wonderfully varied with regards to the terrain and scenery, which showcased North Dakota’s prairie and forest beauty. And the sunsets! Hike Fest ‘25 was an awesome opportunity for small group socialization and networking to applaud all things trail related. Let’s do it again!”

—Tammy Bohan, North Dakota

“The coordination of the week’s events was impressive, and I enjoyed interacting with many trail enthusiasts from across the country. The North Dakota Forest Service was proud to host part of the Hike Fest on the Sheyenne River State Forest. The Sheyenne River Valley Chapter does a great job maintaining the trail and they have been super to work with.”

—Mike Kangas, U.S. Forest Service, North Dakota



TRAIL
USE



“

The North Country Trail never disappoints. Each section has beauty and something unique. The views along the new section of trail at Lake Sakakawea were stunning.”

— JANET BALL, PENNSYLVANIA



“We started in the southeastern corner of the state and hiked with the Dakota Prairie Chapter through beautiful rolling prairies with a surprising number of forested areas. The Sheyenne River Valley Chapter hosted the next hike, which was also heavily forested compared to my expectations. The highlight was visiting North Dakota’s only waterfall, which is beautiful in its own right despite being almost 90 times shorter than Amicalola Falls in my home state. We ended by hiking along the shores of Lake Sakakawea and the Missouri River, as we visited the Western Terminus of this nearly 5,000-mile National Scenic Trail. I knew I would see beautiful landscapes that were different from the green tunnel of the Appalachian Trail. I was most excited to meet hikers and members from a new-to-me National Scenic Trail group. Their hospitality rivaled our famed southern hospitality, and the local clubs led great hikes highlighting their Chapter segments. I’m now a proud member of the Central Flyway Chapter. I look forward to returning to visit and hiking with my new friends as I continue to explore the understated beauty of North Dakota.”

—Eric Graves, Georgia

From the game You Might Be an NCT Hiker If...

“...you know someone who hiked the entire North Country Trail twice.”

“...you hiked across The Bridge.”

“...you drive over an hour to hike the same trail to get miles for the Hike 100 Challenge.”

“

I thoroughly enjoyed the North Dakota Hike Fest; getting to know fellow hikers from a variety of states and experiencing prairie hiking with big views. Everything was so well organized and I felt very welcomed. It was a special way to experience North Dakota with people who love their state.”

— JULIE DENNISON, MICHIGAN

“The NCTA team was thrilled to be part of the 2025 Hike Fest! Huge thanks to our amazing North Dakota Chapters for making it all happen: organizing logistics, leading hikes, and showcasing the beauty of the North Country Trail and North Dakota. Alongside the celebrations, staff also had productive conversations with our state and federal partners who share our excitement and commitment for completing and showcasing the trail in North Dakota, building on the strong foundation laid by our local volunteers.”

—Val Bader, NCTA Director of Trail Operations



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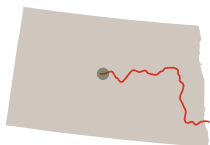


PARTNERSHIP



New Trail in North Dakota

BY MATT DAVIS, NCTA REGIONAL TRAIL COORDINATOR



Thanks to our Central Flyway Chapter volunteers, a new, three-mile segment of the North Country Trail is now open near Riverdale, North Dakota. Sure, new trail segments are built all the time, but to help you more fully appreciate this particular segment, sharing some of the local trail history is in order.

In 2007, the National Park Service (NPS) contemplated a significant relocation at the western end of the trail, which could have even moved the western terminus east, away from Lake Sakakawea State Park. The reasons cited were a lack of interest from the local land management agencies in hosting the original planned route on their lands, and a lack of local volunteers to help make it happen.

Instead, the NPS continued reaching out to local land managers every few years. I focused more on promoting the trail in this region, with some events in Bismarck and Minot. There was definitely volunteer interest – we just needed something for local folks to work on.

We finally made some progress in early 2018, when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff at the Audubon National Wildlife Refuge agreed to host the trail within the refuge. Right away, an Eagle Scout candidate built the first part of the trail. Shortly after, the Central Flyway Chapter was officially chartered. With Mark Zimmerman and Glee Mayer as key leaders, the Chapter focused on completing the North Country Trail within the refuge. This happened through two more Eagle Scout projects in 2021.

The Chapter then moved on to establish more off-road trail within the nearby Chain of Lakes Recreation Area near Turtle Lake. They also aimed to get the trail co-located onto existing trails on the Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery property. We tried (unsuccessfully) in 2023 and 2024 to secure a route up Garrison Dam. We did succeed in getting the trail moved off Highway 200 though, to instead cross the open prairie on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) lands.

In 2024, partially in preparation for the 2025 NCTA Celebration event slated for North Dakota, the Chapter set their sights on getting the trail through the City

of Riverdale, on the east side of Garrison Dam. Unfortunately, the city council was not receptive to hosting the trail, which also led to this Celebration being cancelled. While disappointed that we were not going to be able to share the unique history of Riverdale (a federal-government-built “company town” during the building of Garrison Dam), we immediately reached out to the Corps to inquire about routing the trail through their lands, between the lake and Missouri Drive. They said yes.

In spring of 2025, the route was marked and the Corps did their required reviews. Construction commenced this summer and the new North Country Trail segment officially opened during the North Dakota Hike Fest event in late August.

The route north of Overlook Road features a mix of open prairie, shrub shelterbelts, and a mix of planted trees. It affords trail users outstanding views across Lake Sakakawea, west to Lake Sakakawea State Park, and of Garrison Dam, which



Top left photo by
Val Bader

Above: The ribbon cutting ceremony..

Photo by
Duane Lawton

spans 2.5 miles. Lake Sakakawea is huge, stretching 6.5 miles north from Riverdale across to Fort Stevenson State Park and extending 178 miles west toward Williston. From the trail, you can also catch sporadic glimpses of Riverdale, its water tower, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters building.

Our sincere thanks go to Eric Kelce and Joan Koob of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for all their help in making this new trail a reality. Thanks also go to Mark Zimmerman and Glee Mayer for all their tireless efforts. They are the main drivers of the Central Flyway Chapter, and the main reason why all this new North Country Trail exists here. Jack Norland of the Dakota Prairie Chapter also drove out to help scout and flag in this area. Thanks, Jack!



See a map of this trail segment at northcountrytrail.org/trail-maps.

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northcountrytrail.org/support

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Fall Map Update

BY MATT ROWBOTHAM, NCTA GIS PROGRAM MANAGER

The NCTA's hiking maps have been updated! This includes the online interactive map, downloadable/printable PDF files for each state, and GPS data on our website. The updated data has also been submitted to Avenza Maps and FarOut Guides, whose staff will update their apps accordingly.

This round of updates includes major improvements in New York's Adirondack Park, where more than 80 miles of trail have been ground-truthed by NCTA volunteers and staff. These corrections resolve inaccuracies from earlier datasets, and bring the mapped route into much closer alignment with the actual on-the-ground trail. Hikers in this remote section will now see more reliable navigation across all platforms, including Avenza, FarOut, and for the first time: AllTrails.

Additional significant reroutes are also part of this release, including segments near Tyler Forks in Wisconsin, Munising and Middleville in Michigan, and Rome, New York, as well as numerous smaller reroutes and data updates across the entire trail.

These twice-a-year updates ensure that hikers, volunteers, and partners have access to the most accurate representation of the North Country Trail, reducing confusion on the ground and improving the reliability of digital navigation tools.

Find all your North Country Trail map options at northcountrytrail.org/trail-maps.



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The North Country Trail Association develops, maintains, protects and promotes the North Country National Scenic Trail as the premier hiking path across the northern tier of the United States through a trail-wide coalition of volunteers and partners.

Our vision for the North Country National Scenic Trail is that of the premier footpath of national significance, offering a superb experience for hikers and backpackers in a permanently protected corridor, traversing and interpreting the richly diverse environmental, cultural, and historic features of the northern United States.

Sandy bluffs on the Lake Sakakawea shoreline near Riverdale, North Dakota, from an evening hike during the 2025 Hike Fest event.

Photo by Val Bader