



North Star

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2026



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Photo by Tina Toole

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The content theme of each Summer issue is **Trail Use**. You'll be treated to stories about day hikes and long-distance treks, backpacking and car camping experiences, and much more.

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JAN ULFERTS STEWART,

PRESIDENT, NCTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



It's hiking season, and this issue is filled with stories from trail users' experiences on our trail. Read about the journeys that unfold along its path, including long-distance hikers celebrating adventures, solo explorers finding renewal, families enjoying afternoon strolls, children discovering the wonders of nature, friends

gathering at scenic overlooks, and neighbors taking walks close to home.

Every person who enjoys the North Country Trail or contributes to it becomes part of its story. The Association's founders built more than a trail - they imagined a place where people they would never meet could experience the beauty of the land, find adventure, discover history, and connect with one another. The North Country Trail is built by community, and that community continues to grow with every volunteer who gives their time, every donor who invests in its future, and every hiker who experiences its wonders.

Today, our community is stronger than ever. Volunteers maintain existing sections of trail, build new routes, lead Chapters, welcome new hikers, or work quietly behind the scenes. Not all contributions are measured in hours worked with tools in hand. Financial supporters play an equally essential role. Their generosity provides the resources needed for trail protection and planning for the trail's future. Every gift and every hour of service strengthens both the trail and the community that surrounds it.

Whether with a Pulaski, a pair of hiking boots, a volunteer handbook, or a charitable gift, each person helps shape our future and improve the hiking experience. To every one of you volunteers who gives your time, talent, and passion to the North Country Trail, we thank you. You are the heart of this community, and because of you, the trail continues to inspire and connect people every day.

As we celebrate another hiking season and the remarkable community that makes the trail possible, we are pleased to welcome our new Executive Director, Kate Hagner. We look forward to the leadership, ideas, and energy Kate will bring as she joins this remarkable community and helps guide the next chapter of NCTA.

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Trailhead

CHERYL KREINDLER,
FORMER INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As I move back onto the board of directors and reflect on my six months as Interim Executive Director, I'd like to share some awareness that I gained.

The size of our National Scenic Trail makes us a large and complex organization. This may seem like a factual statement - however, I wasn't

aware of *how* complex it is and how *hard* our staff of 15 works to juggle everything, every day, until I stepped in to serve as their temporary leader. Most volunteers, including myself, have a more concentrated focus - directing their passion and skills on smaller segments. Our staff have to make sure that it all fits together trailwide. Every day they come to work to diligently serve the trail and support us, the trail volunteers, from Vermont to North Dakota. One story to demonstrate:

Karen Raab, NCTA Finance and Operations Manager, is responsible for managing the 30 Chapter budgets. She issues checks weekly for expenses that volunteers incur, and feels a great responsibility to ensure people are paid in a timely manner. Some weeks, she has 20 checks or more to issue while she continues to collaborate with financial auditors and prepare the monthly reports for Finance Committee meetings. It is a large job, and until the last six months, I hadn't appreciated the extent of her commitment to issuing these checks weekly, no matter what else might be on her plate.

So, as I step back into my role on the board, I want to take this opportunity to thank our NCTA staff for everything they do for our trail - particularly all the things that are practically invisible to the public, yet so important to keeping this train on its tracks. You are an amazing group of people, and I am grateful for your trust and willingness to allow me to share the last six months with you.

To our new Executive Director, Kate Hagner, thank you for joining our team. I am excited to work with you in the coming years. We are lucky to have you.

CHRIS LOUDENSLAGER, NCNST
SUPERINTENDENT, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Greetings and my warmest regards to you all. As I give thought to this issue's theme of *trail use*, I find myself drawn to this quotation by Barry L. Hughes:

"Every day is an adventure, or it's just some thing you do. It's your choice."

To that end, I recently had the wonderful opportunity to hike with a group of teens from Grand Rapids, Michigan, in partnership with Friends of Grand Rapids Parks. I probably should have just gone to the office, but I chose to hike instead. While the section of the North Country Trail we visited was one that I have hiked several times over the years, the experience of sharing this hike with a group who was new to the trail represented an adventure I was grateful I chose. The trail brought us together, and through this opportunity we built friendships, shared discoveries, and had the chance to see the trail and all its nature through others' eyes. The day could have been just another day, but we chose better: We chose the trail.

This ready potential for adventure is among the things I love most about the North Country Trail. Yesterday could have been business as usual, but because the trail exists, I was afforded options and choices, and was instead able to make my day a memorable, meaningful experience. On any given day, adventure awaits should the opportunity present itself. Whether it is a months-long exhibition across eight states, a weekend getaway to a favorite destination, a day spent enjoying the splendor of wildflowers in bloom, or just a brief hike to decompress, commune with nature, or get some exercise, the North Country National Scenic Trail provides for these opportunities and so many more. Through your support and the incredible efforts of our committed volunteer community and staff, the trail is waiting to welcome all who seek adventure and aspire to make their day something more than just "some thing" that must be endured to get to tomorrow. Every visit to the North Country Trail is an adventure in and of itself, and you have my sincere thanks for giving us all something to look forward to.

JAN ULFERTS STEWART
CONTINUED

The North Country Trail is more than a path. It is a place where strangers become friends, where traditions begin, and where everyone who walks its pathway finds they are part of something larger than themselves. That is the living legacy of the North Country Trail Association: not simply the miles we preserve, but the community we continue to build together.

HIKE 100 CHALLENGE

As of July 2026, 1,600 trail users have signed up for this year's Hike 100 Challenge. Will you?



“My two younger sisters and I have had so much fun doing this together. Two of us have husbands with Alzheimer’s, so it’s a real challenge to get out for a hike many days. We needed to do it for our own health, so we figured out ways to make it happen! A few times my husband tagged along, so then he knew why I was gone a few hours! We enjoyed the fresh weather, birds, animals, mother nature so much, and appreciated the trails being maintained!”

- DIANA ROUSH

northcountrytrail.org/hike-100

What It Takes to Create the Forever Trail

BY NANCY BROZEK, NCTA DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

The board of directors’ vote to allow the Association to purchase land directly unlocked a game-changing strategy to create the *forever trail*. Since that milestone, our trail community has achieved incredible victories - from our very first property purchase along the Beaver River in Pennsylvania to our recent work on the Rogstad property adjacent to Minnesota’s Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.

But protecting a trail corridor takes a community and a whole lot of behind-the-scenes teamwork. At any given moment, multiple negotiations are underway across the trail. Our team is constantly focused on finalizing land purchases (including appraisals, property splits, and title checks), negotiating permanent easements with supportive developers, and meeting face-to-face with landowners to defend existing routes. Whether we are navigating complex conservation restrictions with local park districts, ironing out liability details for new campsite agreements, or managing major landscape projects with the National Park Service, it is all about protecting the trail experience.

The work doesn’t end once the NCTA officially owns the land; in fact, that is just the beginning. For every mile we acquire, a custom stewardship plan must be developed in close collaboration with the local NCTA Chapter(s), the Regional Trail Coordinator, and the Director of Trail Operations to ensure the land remains healthy and open for generations of hikers.

How can you help? Before a single shovel hits the dirt or a title is signed, this work takes funding. The Trail Protection Fund provides the critical, upfront resources needed for rapid land preservation, closing costs, legal fees, and initial stewardship.

Every dollar given to the Trail Protection Fund directly fuels these complex negotiations and secures the physical ground beneath our boots. From local Chapter partnerships to massive multi-state coalitions, your support moves us closer to a permanently protected trail network.

You can contribute to this fund today at
northcountrytrail.org/gift.





Meet Kate: NCTA's New Executive Director

This June, Kate Hagner began leading the North Country Trail Association from her home in Vermont. She comes to the Association from nearly 20 years working with the Student Conservation Association, most recently as the Senior Director for Enterprise Operations. She provided organizational leadership and aligned systems, processes, and teams to support strategic growth, program effectiveness, and mission impact. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Smith College, and a master's degree in English and creative writing from the University of Texas. In her spare time, Kate and her loved ones enjoy hiking, biking, skiing, gardening, reading, and exploring swimming holes.

What do you think is special about the North Country Trail?

The way it sparks connection in so many ways at once. It connects people to the places where they live. It connects communities across eight states. It connects volunteers to the generations of people who built and cared for the trail before them. And, perhaps most importantly, it connects people to each other.

We often think of trails as being about nature, and they are. But what I've learned over my years working at an organization rooted in the outdoors is that going outside has this profound ability to connect us. That, to me, is the core story of the North Country Trail Association, and it's a story I find deeply compelling.

How do you like to use trails? Tell us about some of your NCT trail use experiences so far.

Trails have been part of my personal story as long as my professional one. I grew up in the Finger Lakes region of New York (not far from the North Country Trail) and in New Hampshire. I've lived and hiked in Minnesota, New York, and now Vermont - all places connected to the geography and spirit of this trail.

As for how I use trails, there are a few ways. I love hiking with people I care about. Some of the best conversations I've ever had have happened on a trail, whether it's with my kids, my partner, or a colleague. There's something about walking together that makes it easy to talk together.

I also use trails for thinking. When I'm working through something complicated, getting out on the trail by myself is often where I do my best sorting through it.

Recently I had a lovely hike on the NCT near Canastota, New York - gorgeous farmland, trillium, rocky cliffs. It was a good reminder of something I feel strongly about: the North Country Trail is proof that adventure doesn't have to happen only in the Mountain West or some far-off destination. It can happen right near where people already live. That's one of the things I love most about it.

What attracted you to leading a member-based organization?

I spent nearly 20 years at the Student Conservation Association (SCA), which had a large and distributed network of participants and programs across the country. What I found there - and what I believe is even more true here - is that I genuinely enjoy the complexity of that kind of work. It requires relationship-building, a lot of attention to communication, and sometimes difficult collaborative work. My leadership philosophy is rooted in the idea that organizations are fundamentally human ecosystems, and a member-based organization like the NCTA is one of the purest expressions of that.

The NCTA has an extraordinary base of support. People are on the trail for all kinds of reasons: recreation, exercise, challenge, solitude. Volunteers are stewarding sections because of their deep connection to the trail, but also because of the sense of belonging and identity that their local Chapters create. That human network - the volunteers, the partners, the towns where the trail passes through - is one of the Association's greatest strengths. Leading an organization where that network is central to everything felt like exactly the right fit.



Kate (right) backpacking in New Hampshire with her partner.

How do you plan to balance honoring the Association's history and traditions while positioning it for growth and sustainability?

Leading an organization with a long and passionate history is a dream for me, and I think trails, by their very nature, model exactly this balance. The very nature of a trail is that it's a ribbon of earth where others have traveled before. It represents the cumulative work of successive groups of people - work that accumulates over time to create something that could never be completed without that shared effort across generations. Long trails like the North Country Trail are beautiful acts of optimism. The work done now is always rooted in faith that others will carry it forward.

I also have a personal connection to that idea. I'm a direct descendant of the Crawfords who cut the Crawford Path in 1819: the oldest continuously maintained hiking trail in the United States. That legacy gave me an early and deep appreciation for the long arc of stewardship: the understanding that trails are always being cared for by one generation on behalf of the next.

So for me, growth and legacy aren't in tension, as long as the core story stays consistent. Widening the circle doesn't mean changing what the trail is. It means inviting more people into what it already is.

Practically, one of the things I'm learning as I come into this role, is that some Chapters may be at a point where they need more support with succession planning. Investing in that kind of empowerment and leadership development is, to me, one of the most important ways to honor volunteer legacy while building future capacity.

What about your role are you most looking forward to learning about or growing into this year?

The first is the Chapter and volunteer network. I know that it's one of the Association's greatest strengths and I want to understand it from the inside: its history, its

leaders, its culture, its challenges. That takes time and presence, and I'm genuinely looking forward to that process.

The second is trail protection. Building the forever trail is a central part of the strategic plan, and doing that requires approaches such as easements, landowner partnerships, and strategic acquisition. I'm eager to learn more deeply. Development pressures are increasing. Once land is developed, it's much harder to reverse that development than it is to protect the land in the first place. We need to be thinking far out into the future about what we put in place now to protect the trail for generations to come.

The third is fundraising in this specific context. I have fundraising experience from my time at SCA, but every donor community has its own character, its own motivations, its own history with an organization. I'm looking forward to learning what makes the NCTA's supporters tick, and to building on what's already working.

Looking ahead, say, 10 years, what does success look like to you?

First, a stronger trail. Fewer gaps, fewer road walks, more protected corridor. The physical trail more fully realized as the truly continuous experience it was always meant to be - the forever trail that's at the center of our strategic plan. That also means building resilience: to increasing development pressures, and to the impacts of climate change on the landscapes the trail passes through.

Second, a wider circle. More people who see the trail as theirs - not just hikers, but conservation advocates, community development leaders, health and wellness partners. People who may never have set foot on the trail but who, nonetheless, understand that the NCTA's mission intersects with what they care about.

Third, a deeper philanthropic foundation. A broader base of members, a stronger major gifts program, a culture of planned giving, more robust institutional relationships. A fundraising program built not just on trail users but on everyone who believes in what the trail connects.

Fourth, Chapters and volunteers who feel genuinely well-supported, recognized, empowered, and equipped for leadership succession. Not dependent on a single generation of dedicated founders, but with the infrastructure to carry the mission forward. And underneath all of that, I hope that NCTA is recognized not just as a trail manager, but as infrastructure for connection across the regions it passes through. Because the North Country Trail is more than a path. It is a thread connecting people, place, and time. Success, to me, is more people knowing that, and more people seeing themselves as part of it.



TRAIL
USE



Each June, dedicated volunteers with the NCTA Allegheny National Forest Chapter in Northern Pennsylvania plan, organize, and host the Allegheny 100 Challenge. The A-100 is an unsupported endurance hiking challenge with no timekeepers, no aid stations, and no finish line other than the one hikers set for themselves. Participants choose to traverse 25, 50, 75 or 100 miles of the North Country Trail through Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest (ANF). They are given 50 hours to complete their chosen mileage.



2026 Allegheny 100 Challenge

BY SHAWN WEISHAAR, NCTA ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST CHAPTER

On a Friday evening in June, 185 hikers gathered at the northern trailhead of Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest, ready to take on the 16th annual Allegheny 100 Hiking Challenge (A-100). As the clock struck 6:00 p.m., participants disappeared into the forest.

Individuals' goals ranged from completing their first backpacking trips to covering the entire 100-mile route. The shared experience of overcoming obstacles, encouraging one another, and celebrating every finish is what continues to make this event so special.

Every year presents a different challenge and 2026 was no exception. One day before the event, a powerful storm brought down treetops, snapped tree trunks, and uprooted trees along portions of the trail.

Fortunately, this didn't faze the Chapter. Their capable volunteer team includes sawyers who are certified and maintainers who are trained.

"Someone was even out with a chainsaw clearing fresh blowdowns on Saturday morning," said participant Walker Ziewitz. "That's dedication!"

The trail was clear for the event, but another storm blew in Sunday evening, bringing additional wind damage and creating even more trail cleanup. Again, the volunteers laced up their boots, donned their safety gear, and headed back out.

This caliber of training and preparation, alongside gifts and membership, is exactly what this event's registration fees help fund. Your support ensures that these volunteers are equipped for the challenge of organizing and facilitating events that get you on the trail, from simple Chapter

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Top left: Brian Smith completes his 100-mile challenge for the 10th time.

Photo by
Tina Toole



Photo by
Katie Prindle

A-100 RESULTS

This June 12-14, participants hiked south from the Willow Bay Trailhead at the northern end of the National Forest.

185

PARTICIPANTS

from Pennsylvania,
New York, Ohio,
multiple East Coast and
Midwest states, and
California

18

COMPLETED ALL 100 MILES

7

COMPLETED 75 MILES

83

COMPLETED 50 MILES

68

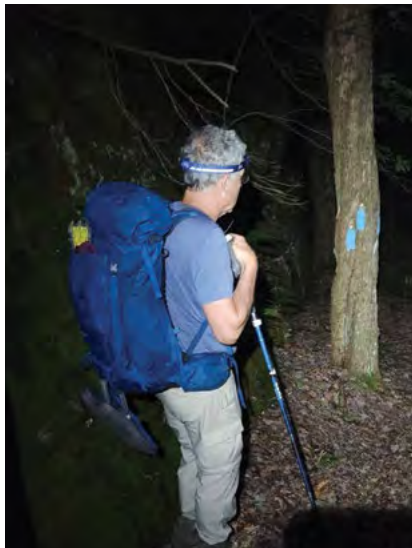
COMPLETED 25 MILES



Far left: (Left to right)
Hunter, Dan, Hannah,
and Julia at the 100-mile
mark.

Jenny (left) and her
friend at the 50-mile
mark.

Photos by
Tina Toole



Far left photo by
Tina Toole

Roxanne (left) and
Veronica at the
50-mile mark.

Photo by
Roxanne Blay



TRAIL
USE

2026 Allegheny 100 Challenge continued



Tina Toole with her husband Mike at the 50-mile mark. Tina is on the national NCTA Board of Directors and both are stalwart Chapter leaders.

Photo by

Tina Toole



Volunteers manning the registration booth.

Photo by

Tina Toole

hikes to more complex occasions such as A-100.

“Great weekend,” said participant Dennis Rakin. “Congratulations to all the finishers and thank you to the volunteers and trail crew. The trail was amazing, the burgers were delicious, and the trail magic was much appreciated. Thanks for all the work and making another amazing, friendly, challenging weekend.”

By the end of the event, despite the heat and unpredictable weather, 95% of the participants completed at least 25 miles.

But more than the miles themselves, the A-100 continues to create a community. Many return year after year to challenge themselves, reconnect with friends, and experience the beauty of the Pennsylvania Wilds. Whether participants reached their intended goal or discovered a new one along the way, every mile traveled represented determination, perseverance, and a personal achievement worth celebrating.

The Allegheny National Forest Chapter extends its sincere appreciation to every participant, volunteer, and supporter who helped make this year's A-100 another memorable weekend on the North Country National Scenic Trail. We look forward to welcoming everyone back next year!



The 2027 A-100 will be held June 11-13 and participants will travel south to north. Learn more at northcountrytrail.org/a-100.

Avenza Maps Update

BY MATT ROWBOTHAM, NCTA GIS PROGRAM MANAGER

Avenza Maps has recently merged with another company and, as part of this shift, is no longer supporting map updates or new content in the Avenza Map Store. This means the North Country Trail Association is no longer able to update existing maps or add new maps within Avenza. Our official maps will continue to be maintained and updated through our website, and they're still free there! We recognize

many of you rely on Avenza for navigation, so we're prioritizing additional guidance and options for you to access up-to-date trail information. We'll continue to share details as they are available.



[northcountrytrail.org
/trail-maps](https://northcountrytrail.org/trail-maps)

The Many Ohios of the NCT

BY LISA SNOOK



Ever since my hiking partner Barb Whittington and I decided to attempt to complete the entire North Country Trail (NCT) 13 years ago, the goal has been hiking unique miles and connecting the dots to finish all 4,800. We have now completed the entire state of Ohio.

As we section-hiked, the focus was more on the process rather than the end result, since we could now see the end and didn't want to lose sight of the joy of the moment.

Ohio has been my home for most of my life. While I was well aware of the rail trails and the beautiful Oak Openings section, when Barb and I planned to hike the state, I envisioned a lot of roadwalks with a bit of beauty here and there. However, our adventure exceeded my expectations from the outset. I found a rich history with many more different Ohios than I had known before.

I was surprised to learn that the shared NCT and Buckeye Trail followed remnants of the Miami/Erie Canal system. It was also a pleasure to see how well-cared for the small towns were as we headed south following the canal. We enjoyed the state parks and bike paths from Yellow Springs south, skirting the Cincinnati area.

Most people name cities when they think of Ohio: Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo. But there are 32 counties that are considered Appalachia, and as we walked through the southeastern part of the state, the largest city was home to only 25,000 people. Much of this area is also known for either prior or current extraction economy: logging, mining, oil, and gas. We loved seeing the prehistoric, Native American serpent mounds in Adams County; reading historic markers, and seeing covered bridges and vintage homes. We were welcomed with smiles and encouragement on our trek.

Southeastern Ohio is also home to the Wayne National Forest and the jewel of Ohio's parks system: Hocking Hills. That stretch of the NCT hits all the high spots! It is truly awe-inspiring as far as natural beauty, but how well the park is cared for is also an inspiration. It was a pleasure to see people enjoying this place, and despite the crowds, the park was in pristine condition. Boch Hollow is a relatively new addition to the Hocking Hills area: a gorgeous hike definitely not to be missed. Plus, we were the only visitors, judging by the parking lots on both sides.



Lisa Snook (left) and Barb Whittington.

Photos by
Lisa Snook



On our way to Pennsylvania, we passed Amish buggies and walked through the once-communal settlement of Zoar, where many of the structures are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ohio can be the Japanese word for "good morning." It can be *the heart of it all*, as in the state tourism ad campaign. The Gen Z social media slam, *only in Ohio*, is used to describe its oddities. From this Buckeye's perspective, they are all pretty representative of the Ohio I have come to know! But as with all of Barb and my NCT hikes, regardless of the state, we were met with kindness and respect. People offered water, asked if we needed anything, and showed pride for the places they called home. They held doors for us and answered our sometimes stupid questions while we were in their towns. Whether it's a good-morning greeting, the heart of it all, or unexpected uniqueness, Ohio's NCT is a wonderful and unique hiking pleasure.



TRAIL
USE

The Quiet Path

PART II

BY JAKE REDLAWSKI

This is the second installment of a longer piece that was first featured in the Summer 2025 [North Star](#).



I had chosen Michigan because it was where I grew up, yet I had never truly explored it. Though I had seen most of the country and a fair bit of the world, I had never ventured into my own backyard. This journey, this walk along the North Country Trail, was my chance to discover it for the first time.

Lake Superior, even though its features were familiar and its shores well-charted, still held a sense of mystery. It is situated in a largely uninhabited region, untouched by human hands in a way that made it feel like a secret. I was grateful for that. Thank God the soil up here isn't suited for farming - otherwise, these shores would be polluted with fertilizers instead of remaining as pristine and wild as they are.

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore took me along the lake's colorful cliffs; the trail went down bluffs, and across sand and pebble beaches. Walking barefoot on the sand felt good, but the North Country Trail in Upper Michigan was far from just beach walking. I knew the western parts of the trail were rugged, but the terrain still took me by surprise.

The rough surfaces were hard on my feet, tender from months spent paddling in a canoe. I wasn't in hiking shape, and the jagged trails of the Porcupine

Mountains, Huron Mountains, and Trap Hills were grueling. I wasn't a stranger to long-distance hiking, but my body wasn't quite ready for this kind of challenge.

I slapped this trip together with just a few days of intense planning as my sore back and sunburnt skin recovered from paddling the length of the Mississippi River with friends.

Walking Michigan was a step back from the suffer fest we willingly endured on the river; this was a slower, quieter journey. The quiet meadows, rugged hills, meditative forests, and peaceful lakeshores were exactly what I needed to unwind and reflect on the summer.

I had everything planned in advance - each meal portioned and packed into boxes that I would pick up along the way. I mailed one box to the office at Tahquamenon Falls State Park and dropped off the rest in person in Rockland, Munising, and Marquette. My brother, from Charlevoix, helped by driving me to the resupply towns along the way and finally to the small bridge over the Montreal River, where my hike began.

Each box held enough food for a steady pace of 22 miles per day. I used downloaded maps, but I also sent ahead hard copies in each box as backups. Though I rarely had to use them, they were cheap insurance. The trail was actually much easier to follow than I had anticipated.

The NCTA Ni-Miikanaake Chapter volunteers had done excellent work marking their rugged sections of the trail, and routing it through some stunning scenery. My favorite spot was the expansive vista on top of Bald Mountain, overlooking the Gogebic Range, whose iron ore once brought great wealth to the state.



(Jake, left) "I met a man near Cole's Creek; first hiker I've met doing the section from Mackinaw City to Wisconsin. He started on the Labor Day Bridge Walk."

Photo provided by
Jake Redlawski

Two challenges I worried about were navigating through the unmarked McCormick Wilderness and crossing the Mackinac Bridge on the \$5 pedestrian shuttle, but in the end, I had no problems.

Planning each mile was tedious, but it allowed me to focus entirely on the journey itself. Without the distraction of logistics, I could truly immerse myself in my surroundings - the quiet mountains, grey crags, peaceful meadows, and of course, the lake.

The maples and birch were beginning to show their autumn hues, rust and gold, as I left the soft sand bluffs of the NCTA Superior Shoreline Chapter's segment behind and crossed the Two Hearted River, entering the dense woodlands maintained by the NCTA Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore Chapter. A visit to the Tahquamenon Falls Brewery and Pub with my dad lifted my spirits, and I entered this new territory full of energy.

Over the 28 days, I touched the shores of three Great Lakes, with Lake Superior dominating most miles until I turned south near Menekaunee Point, heading toward Hiawatha National Forest and the Mackinac Bridge.

On the St. Ignace side of the Bridge (north), I found myself walking beside Lake Huron, and farther down the trail, I took a side quest from Wilderness State Park to swim in the chilly waves of Lake Michigan.

I remember vividly the love I felt for the region, so much so that I went back to my journal to capture the essence of what I had loved most about it.

"Timber sales leave equipment prints and stumps, piles of debris and the powerful scent of pine sap in the air. Between these tracts were the exquisite Upper Michigan colors of autumn. Purple on the ferns as they die out until next summer, green on the conifers, red on the maples, yellow on the birch, white peeling bark and subtle in-between colors of the leaves getting ready to start their death..."

I made a fire and built my tent beside the Carp River. It was freezing cold and numbed my muscles to wade into its waters, but I got into the Carp. I

went down and soaked in its icy current. My legs stung as the fire brought heat and circulation back to them. The fire is dying down out there as I write this in my tent."

After walking the pristinely manicured NCTA Harbor Springs Chapter's segment, I finally arrived at my grandmother's home in Petoskey. I'm close with her, and the thought of walking all the way to her house had simmered in the back of my mind since I started doing long walks a couple years ago.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to have finally taken this journey, for all the beautiful miles of the trail that led me to her doorstep. It was quiet out there, the kind of peace you hope for when you step into the forest. At times, it was so still that even the distant honk of a migrating Canada goose startled me though it would not fly overhead for another two minutes.

I found that I could think clearly, without distraction, and in those moments of quiet, I found a peace that mirrored the tranquility of the land. My desire to see more of the world remained intact, but the urgency to do it faded.

It struck me one day as I was walking: If I never did another thing - never paddled another river or walked another trail - that would be okay.

The thought came to me like a new, yet familiar feeling - a realization that had been forming quietly in the background. If I never did another thing, that's okay. It was a mantra in my mind, peaceful and reassuring as I walked away from the place where it had occurred to me.

I've walked other long trails, but always as a single, continuous journey. There's something different about hiking a section at a time - less pressure, but also a constant curiosity about the miles I haven't yet explored. This was my first section hike and I liked it.

Returning to my home state to take on this 4,800-mile trail in pieces felt right. I may never have the time to complete the entire trail in one go, but by hiking it in sections, I remain curious about the unhiked miles out there. If I never get to walk those distant miles, that'll be okay. But I hope this isn't the end of my story with the North Country Trail.

Jake is an adventurer and writer from rural Michigan. He has paddled the Mississippi River, hiked numerous long trails, and spent extensive time adventuring internationally, as well. He left a career in interstate truck driving to pursue travel full-time. Read the first installment of this story in the Summer 2025 issue of the North Star. Read other stories of his at stoicnomadic.substack.com or find him on YouTube @stoicnomadic.



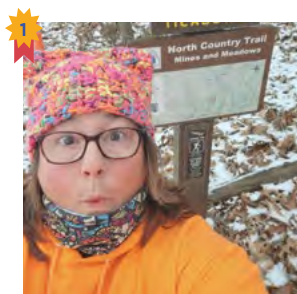
TRAIL
USE

LONG-DISTANCE HIKER Recognition



North Country Trail hiker and volunteer Joan Young leads an effort to officially recognize individuals who hike [complete] NCT states and/or 1,000 unique miles of the trail. More than 100 hikers have received recognition so far. The following trail users have recently been recognized, though not all of their accomplishments are necessarily recent.

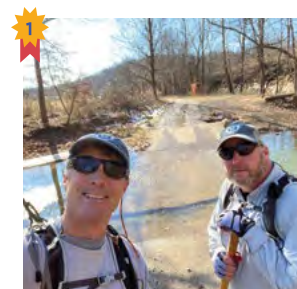
Thanks to your membership and gifts, the NCTA was able to help these hikers meet their goals by keeping North Country Trail maps updated and free.



Tanya Bromley, Michigan

COMPLETED 1000 MILES AND THE MACKINAC BRIDGE

"I started my journey by helping my husband and his running friends. I would drop them off, bring them snacks and water along the route, and pick them up at the end. I added in my own short hikes while waiting for them to be done with their runs. My hikes got longer and longer, and we finally came to the conclusion that we all needed to support each other."



Alan Monnin, Ohio

COMPLETED OHIO AND 1000 MILES

"My brother Neal and I initially began hiking the Buckeye Trail in January 2019. We did it as a way of getting exercise, reconnecting, and seeing the great state of Ohio. We lucked out, in fact, that [the pandemic] came on - we really dug in and got some miles. Along the way, we discovered the North Country Trail and the American Discovery Trail, and decided to include them."



Doug Seaney, Michigan

COMPLETED PENNSYLVANIA AND 2000 MILES;
PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED MICHIGAN, WISCONSIN,
THE MACKINAC BRIDGE, AND 1000 MILES

"My trail name, Mousewater, was bestowed on me by Jim Howell, a frequent hiking partner. I was hiking in Trap Hills in the Upper Peninsula and it was 90 degrees; water sources I thought I might use were dry. I found a fairly clear (and deep enough) puddle and filtered it. It had a dead mouse in it. Luckily

I didn't need to drink it, as I found a better source farther up the trail."



WHAT IS THIS?

When you see this symbol on a recipient's photo, it means this is their first time being recognized. Congrats!

See additional awardees, apply for recognition, and find additional information about this program at explorenct.info/NoCoLo/index.htm.





Jay Shutt, Ohio
COMPLETED
PENNSYLVANIA;
PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED
OHIO, THE MACKINAC
BRIDGE, AND 1000 MILES

"I continue to enjoy many things about hiking on the NCT including the people I have met

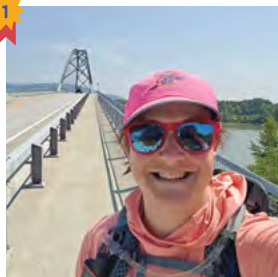
and now count as friends; seeing and learning about areas the trail passes through; the beauty of nature observed at a walking pace; the sense of accomplishment that comes from a successful hike; and the sense of well-being that comes from a physical workout."



Mike "Hiker Miker" Cunningham, Connecticut
COMPLETED VERMONT
AND THE MACKINAC
BRIDGE

"I thought it would be great to hike the longest trail in the U.S., but I would settle for

New York. When the [North Country] Trail got extended into Vermont, I thought that would be an easy state to pick up. I have hiked a considerable amount in New York and Pennsylvania, and will work on those in the future. I am also considering Ohio and the upper peninsula of Michigan."



Jill Wilson, New York
COMPLETED VERMONT

"I began hiking the North Country Trail sort of by accident! It was really the Finger Lakes Trail that drew me in and got me to do my first long-distance section hiking.

I completed that over three

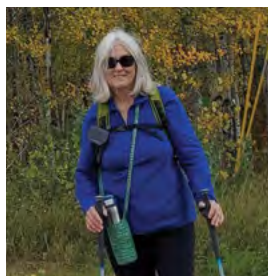
years. After, I considered continuing on the NCT through the rest of New York and beyond. Why not? Might as well keep going on this gloriously long trail!"



Tara Atkinson, Oregon
COMPLETED
VERMONT, NEW YORK,
PENNSYLVANIA, OHIO,
1000 AND 2000 MILES

"On May 18, 2021, I began my first thru-hike on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). In the four years since, I have finished

the PCT, the Arizona Trail, the Oregon Coast Trail, the Ice Age Trail, the Florida Trail, the Appalachian Trail, and the Potomac Heritage Trail. The NCT is to be my seventh (of 11 total) National Scenic Trails. I always enjoy seeing so much of the country at 2-3 mph. The North Country Trail is so varied in terrain, I never got bored."



Michelle Olsen, Minnesota
COMPLETED WISCONSIN;
PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED
NORTH DAKOTA,
MINNESOTA, THE
MACKINAC BRIDGE, AND
1000 MILES

"One magical day in December

2023, we had a memorable hike through the Porcupine Lake Wilderness in the Chequamegon National Forest. We saw otter tracks and slides in the snow, several multi-level beaver ponds, grouse that we flushed, and coyote and fox tracks. The last mile or so we felt surrounded by wolves with fresh tracks on the trail, scat, and territorial markings. At one point, we heard a pack that we believed was feasting on a carcass. It was eerie, but it really made us feel alive and a part of the world around us!"



Barbara "Day Tripper" and Christopher "Eagle Eye" Cook, Michigan
COMPLETED MICHIGAN,
THE MACKINAC BRIDGE,
AND 1000 MILES

"This journey across Michigan has been special for so many reasons. We met so many

wonderful and amazing people, visited small towns we had never heard of (and probably wouldn't have visited without the NCT), found beautiful waterfalls, hiked through historical buildings, saw views on the trail that only a few will see. We'll cherish the priceless memories we've made forever. My son Chris and I feel so lucky we could do this adventure, one step at a time."

Read these hikers' full essays
at northcountrytrail.org/blog.





TRAIL
USE



A Mother and Son's Epic Hike

BY R.C. WHEATER, SR., EDITOR, TIMES INDICATOR

This piece originally appeared in the Times Indicator, a local newspaper in Newaygo County, Michigan, under the title Mother and son finish epic hike from Waldron to Ironwood. It is published here with permission from the author and has been edited minimally for NCTA style guidelines.



When Barbara Cook and her son Christopher Cook arrived at the western edge of the Upper Peninsula a few days ago, it marked the completion of a hike of 1,177 miles on the North Country National Scenic Trail, the longest hike a person can take on the trail without crossing a state line.

"We have hiked every single step together," Barb said.

They started the hike in April of 2019, setting off from the Michigan-Ohio state line near Waldron, Michigan, a bit southeast of Hillsdale. They hiked together over a span of six years. Barb injured her leg in her backyard in 2020, so they took the year off.

"I honestly thought my hiking days were over," Barb recalled.

In 2024, they took their hiking boots to Arizona.

With encouragement from her son, Barb took advantage of an invitation to join a Lansing-area teacher to try hiking a few years ago. Before long, Chris said, "I think I should join you."

"We travel well together," said Chris. "I enjoy hanging out with her.

The North Country Trail stretches for a total of 4,800 miles across eight states. It also crosses the Mackinac Bridge. Barb and Chris crossed the Bridge on Labor Day

2019. In fact, they walked across and then walked back, earning themselves the title "Double Crossers." Labor Day is the only day of the year the Bridge Authority allows people to cross on foot.

The hiking duo encountered snakes in the marshlands of Southern Michigan, met some black bear cubs briefly in the Marquette area, and they were surprised to find a music festival waiting for them at the Porcupine Mountains. They hiked through ferns taller than Chris.

Along the way, volunteer trail angels helped them stage their hikes. Some of those angels became hiking partners. A small teardrop trailer from Veurink's RV Center in Newaygo helped keep the costs of lodging under control.

They hiked most of the Lower Peninsula in the first year of their trek. With the travel distances, the Upper Peninsula took more time and planning.

On hiking days, they rose early in the morning and hiked for 12 hours or more.

"Every night," Barb said, "I told my shower 'thanks for being there.'"

They carried water, cell phones and rain gear, plus protective netting to ward off Michigan's aggressive insects. If the weather failed to cooperate, they took advantage of opportunities to rest or enjoy getting to know some Michigan communities.

"Sometimes," Chris said, "a rest day is a good day."

Barb said that, when they started on this adventure, her son was focused on covering



Photos by
Barbara and Chris Cook

the miles, getting from start to finish. His mother often encouraged him to take note of the interesting things around them.

“Over time,” she said, “it became him saying ‘Hey, did you see that?’ That makes me just as proud as finishing.”

“There’s nothing like doing this with your son,” she added. “I couldn’t think of a better hiking partner. It’s been a great adventure!”

Of course, with Michigan covered, this mother-and-son team still has hiking plans: 284 miles of trail in Pennsylvania.

“We’re not good at sitting around,” Barbara Cook said with a definite flair for understatement.

Blazing a Trail

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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.



“

The North Country National Scenic Trail is an idea being served and implemented through the hearts, sweat, and tireless dedication of so many volunteers. I had the unique privilege of working with many of them during my tenure with the Association, some of whom are no longer with us. When I think of the volunteers at work right now, and their countless hours building, maintaining, and telling the story of the North Country Trail, I want to honor their commitment. And when I think of future trail users benefiting from this legacy of effort, we want to do our part in ensuring it gets paid forward.”

—BRUCE MATTHEWS



LEGACY SOCIETY
NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

northcountrytrail.org/support



Hike 100 Challenge Showcase



Since 2016, thousands of outdoor enthusiasts have signed up for the North Country Trail Association's annual Hike 100 Challenge: a pursuit of logging 100 miles on the North Country Trail within a calendar year. Your 100 miles don't have to be *unique*; some explore the same mile 100 times over. Your 100 miles don't have to be *hiked*; some walk, snowshoe, or run. The choice is yours: How will you explore the North Country Trail this year? The Association offers free maps, mileage logs, and access to group hikes to help you meet your goals. Learn more, find resources, sign up, or submit your completion form today at northcountrytrail.org/hike-100-challenge.

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHTS

As of June 30, 2026, there are nearly 1,600 trail users signed up and more than 150 have reported completing the challenge



Shirley James

After years of loss, illness, and multiple surgeries - including two knee replacements - hiking has been part of my healing. I now volunteer with the Buckeye Trail Association and have logged over 300 hours this year. Thank you for making these trails possible; I'm truly thankful I can walk them.



Aaron Deiter

[In 2025], I volunteered for three trail running events: All three overlapped with the NCT, finished at NCT trailheads, and were positive, meaningful experiences - both as a volunteer and as a Michigander who likes Upper Peninsula fresh air. These volunteer opportunities were not only rewarding on many levels, but they also provided additional weekend moments to explore sections of the NCT that I may not have seen. My challenge for you is to also look for unique ways to experience the North Country Trail.



Deborah Guthrie

This year I've been leading a series of all-female hikes on the North Country Trail in Michigan, starting at the Hodenpyle Dam going north to complete my Lower Michigan miles. Winter weather and seasonal road closures have put a damper on some of the hiking miles, but never the smiles! A group of ladies and I have been enjoying winter hikes on the trail, and I was excited to meet my 100-mile challenge high on a ridge on the outskirts of a farm before crossing U.S. Highway 131. Thank you, NCT!



Sandra Billingsley

We did it: 100 miles on the North Country Trail from Rockford to Baldwin (Michigan). My sister Donna and I walked every single mile. Our incredible sister Kim joined us and crushed 60 miles before severe foot issues forced her off the trail. Kim, tapping out took more guts than most people will ever know. You are just as much a part of this story as any of us!



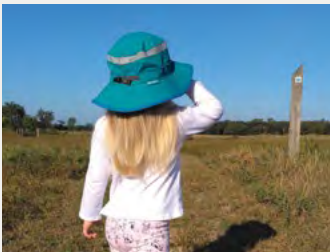
Jim Dornbush

Since starting to hike the NCT in 2016, the goal was to finish in 20 years. Now 10 years later, I am over halfway toward that goal, with more than 2,600 miles finished. This year's first 200 miles was Western Minnesota and Eastern North Dakota. It's been fun each year to get the new patch design added to the collection.



Patty Hoch-Melluish

We challenged City of Battle Creek (Michigan) employees to complete the 2025 Hike 100 Challenge since the NCT runs right through our town, and we thought it would be a fun way to show off our trails and parks. Five employees finished the 100 miles and one reached 400 miles! It was a fun, camaraderie-building venture. The NCT also goes right by the Calhoun County Animal Shelter, so a few of us occasionally took some friends along for a hike, too.



Cory Enger

I completed all of my miles [in 2025] hiking on the NCT at the Sheyenne National Grassland in southeastern North Dakota. The highlight of my year was taking my 2.5-year-old daughter, Winter, on her first hike on the NCT, and she loved it. She didn't make it to 100 miles, but perhaps in the near future she'll be starting to collect patches, too.



Joan Ludtke

[2025 was] our 10th year of completing the Hike 100 Challenge. We are lucky enough to live in White Cloud, Michigan, near the trail. In 2025, our grandson Morgan, who has autism, was able to complete his first Hike 100 Challenge, too.



Daniel and Ethan Frein

This was Ethan's first year doing the Hike 100 Challenge. He kept a very close track of the miles as we completed them throughout the year. He was very proud to do it with Grandpa!



TRAIL
USE

Hike 100 Challenge Showcase continued



David and Sharon Schantz

We have been hiking parts of the Michigan NCT for a number of years. Once we heard about the local Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore Chapter, we got involved - finding others with common interests and passion! Starting with individual and group hikes, our involvement developed into becoming trail section adopters and working with others doing trail construction. We found out about the Hike 100 Challenge this year and realized that we are beyond the mark.



Nathan Proctor

I hike to escape and recharge. In these troubling times, I find it almost impossible to live and function in society, and spending as much time as possible on-trail in the wilderness is as close to bliss as I can get. This is now my ninth year in a row completing the Hike 100 Challenge, and I hope to keep the streak going.



Betsy Leighton

I have a chronic illness called Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS). I solo-backpacked the 300-mile Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) between June 2024 and August 2025, and it taught me a lot about my true strength. I published a book about the first two-thirds of my journey on the SHT. Last summer, I solo-backpacked the Wisconsin section of the NCT in four sections of approximately 50 miles each. My trail journal is at betsyleighton.com if you want more stories.



Michael and Isabelle Boyer

We do a lot of running throughout the week to train for different races. Our favorite place to do our long runs is a stretch of the North Country Trail that is close to home. We are there almost every Saturday morning running, since it is a really pretty place to walk, hike, or run!

Trail Protection at Lake Superior Falls

BY NCTA AND TRUST FOR
PUBLIC LAND STAFF



This spring, the National Park Service (NPS) and Trust for Public Land (TPL) achieved a major milestone in the

effort to protect Lake Superior Falls: an iconic natural landscape along the South Shore of Lake Superior in Northern Wisconsin. Together, they conserved 213 acres of land for public access and ecological preservation, and expanded recreational opportunities to the North Country Trail.

Bordering the mouth of the Montreal River, which separates Wisconsin from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, this property affords spectacular views of Superior Falls and Lake Superior. The falls and surrounding areas provide habitat for wildlife, support clean water systems, and offer world-class recreation opportunities including hiking, wildlife viewing, and nature exploration.

"Lake Superior Falls represents the very best of America's natural heritage - clean water, rugged beauty, and a place where people can connect with the outdoors," said Will Cooksey, TPL Senior Project Manager. "By protecting this landscape, we are ensuring that it remains open, accessible, and unspoiled for generations to come."

The project protects critical acreage surrounding the falls, preventing private development and securing the land for inclusion



Photos ©Sara Rubinstein, courtesy of Trust for Public Land

in the National Park System. Protecting these lands also strengthens the integrity of nearby public lands - preventing fragmentation, preserving continuous habitat corridors, and establishing a new and critically important off-road connection for the North Country Trail.

"The successful protection of the Lake Superior Falls property is an incredibly important and exciting milestone for the North Country National Scenic Trail, and I am extremely grateful for the tremendous efforts and assistance provided by Trust for Public Land and the outstanding collaborations between the many partners that were critical to this project's success," said Chris Loudenslager, NPS Superintendent of the North Country National Scenic Trail.

Across the country, projects like Lake Superior Falls help address a longstanding challenge facing public lands: privately owned inholdings that can threaten access, conservation, and management. Strategic conservation efforts - supported by tools like the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) - help unify these landscapes and improve access for the public. Funding through LWCF, the National Park Foundation, and Wyss Foundation helped make this project a reality.

This milestone builds on decades of conservation work in the Lake Superior region, where TPL has partnered with federal, state, and local stakeholders to protect critical lands, expand trail systems, and enhance public access to the outdoors. Since 1990, Trust for Public Land has completed 37 land protection projects within a half-mile of the North Country Trail, covering more than 65,000 acres.

"Thanks to the fantastic work of Will Cooksey and Trust for Public Land, this long-sought-after property is now in public ownership," said Matt Davis, NCTA Regional Trail

Coordinator. "When combined with the Iron County property to the west that the NCTA helped acquire, it will provide a new off-road connection between Saxon Harbor County Park and the State Highway 122 bridge into Michigan. I can see the day in the near future when hikers will enjoy camping at Saxon Harbor, hiking across this NPS property to enjoy the amazing overlook of Lake Superior, and then continuing into Michigan and taking in Superior Falls."

The North Country Trail Association is committed to protect the North Country National Scenic Trail and its surrounding landscape forever. Thanks to your annual membership, the Association can have the resources to continue trail protection efforts such as this, to secure a permanent route for the nearly 1,500 miles of trail that are currently not in a guaranteed position. Renew today or make a special gift at northcountrytrail.org/support.



Photos ©Sara Rubinstein, courtesy of Trust for Public Land



TRAIL
PROTECTION

When Memories Become Miles

BY KATE LEMON, NCTA MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



According to Jonathan's dad, the Rogstad family fell in love with the property in 1919. Multiple generations, siblings, and cousins had over 100 acres in north-central Minnesota to hunt, fish, and camp. They eventually cleared some

trees to add a primitive cabin that Jonathan recalls helping build. The structure remains standing today, complete with kerosene lamps, wood heat, and an outhouse.

"From fall to spring, my parents went up about every other weekend to build the chimney from stone and to hunt," explained Jonathan Rogstad, one of the landowners who is now in his 60s. "Us kids came along, dug up sand and mixed mortar."

"Mom hosted dinner parties and loved burning the wood stove," Jonathan continued. "She was the camp cook, except for breakfast! We didn't have the facilities to do much from-scratch cooking, but one of my most memorable meals was boxed scalloped potatoes. I also remember sitting on the [tree] stand and hearing Mom pump the water for lunch. We'd have steaks over the fire on Friday night. On Saturdays, Dad smoked a beef roast. We took any game we got to a shop in Frazee for processing and smoking."

In the winter, Jonathan's mother would cross-country ski around the property, often hosting her ski club. In the spring, the family tapped maple trees and boiled the sap into syrup. It's been paradise for the Rogstads; this land helped create a wealth of

memories for the family. They now invite you here to make memories of your own.

"The land has never been posted, and we want to keep it that way, open to the public," said Jonathan.

About 10 to 15 years ago, after meeting with Willis Mattison, volunteer from the Laurentian Lakes Chapter of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA), the family reached a handshake agreement, allowing the trail to cross their property.

The trail also winds through the adjacent Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, thanks to a strong partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). On the other side of the Rogstads' property was an isolated parcel of land also owned and managed by the USFWS: the Johnson Tract. It was technically part of Tamarac, but not connected to the main refuge.



Above: Jonathan Rogstad at the family cabin.

Photo provided by
Matt Davis

Left: Karen Stenberg (right) scouting a campsite location with Jonathan Rogstad.

Photo by
Laurentian Lakes Chapter

"It was difficult to access," explained Kent Sundseth, Refuge Manager at Tamarac. "For a long time, [we] wanted to find property that would bridge the gap."

This is when the group discussion began. The Rogstads approached the USFWS. They were aging, and the land was becoming difficult to maintain. Considering the North Country Trail threaded through it all, the NCTA was invited into the discussion as well. While the Association had permission from the Rogstads for the trail to cross their property, that handshake agreement - albeit sincere - wasn't a permanent solution.

"This isn't something the USFWS does a lot, adding acreage to an existing refuge," said Kent. "I've worked for the National Wildlife Refuge System for just shy of 27 years and have never had an opportunity to add fee title acres to a National Wildlife Refuge. It's taken two and a half years; getting the funds released from the Land and Water Conservation Fund took a while. It wasn't easy or quick, but what a great feeling."

The Rogstads officially transferred possession of 118 acres to the USFWS this March. That once isolated, 160-acre Johnson Tract is now connected to the rest of the wildlife refuge. A segment of the North Country Trail is now protected forever. As a bonus, the Rogstads sold an additional five acres to the NCTA to provide a campsite for long-distance trail users. Without this, because camping is not permitted in the wildlife refuge, there is a 33-mile gap between campsites.

"We're very committed to this and proud to be a part of the trail community," stated Jonathan.

"The Rogstad family has a great conservation mindset," applauded Kent. "They never posted this land and they didn't want to just sell it for profit. They'll still utilize the land, too. They retained some rights for about five years to tap maple trees and cut firewood."

"It's been a real pleasure working with the Rogstad family," said Paul Gagnon, NCTA Director of Trail



NCTA Regional Trail Coordinator Matt Davis (left) hands Jonathon Rogstad the sign a bear gnawed on.

Photo provided by
Matt Davis

Protection. "Land conservation projects can be complicated and frustrating. There's a need to arrange for and coordinate appraisals, environmental assessments, title work, and surveys, and there are usually delays in those processes. Through it all, Jonathan and his siblings were patient, generous, understanding, and helpful. They were fantastic partners to work with. The land is beautiful and has been well cared for. Now that it is permanently protected, it will continue to provide hikers with the same beloved Minnesota outdoors experience that the Rogstad family enjoyed for decades."

*Support the Association's ongoing trail protection efforts today at **northcountrytrail.org/gift**. You will help secure more permanent trail miles, and conserve additional land needed to buffer the trail and to enhance everyone's experience.*



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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.

West Canada Lake Shelter 1 on the North Country Trail in New York's Adirondack Park.

Photo by Will Brazill