

ADK TRAILS PROGRAM HISTORY

James W. Cooper

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This history is prepared at the request of Bruce Wadsworth who is editing a book to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the existence of the Adirondack Mountain Club, Inc. Bruce will be required to edit the final draft to reduce the content by two-thirds. As it was all of interest and important to me as author, of course, I've made about a dozen copies of the unedited manuscript and sent you one as a major contributor or a person with particular interest in the trails program or the ADK's history. The committee chairman, club and some others have been sent copies for their archival value as many of the persons interviewed for this history are elderly and the research won't be able to be duplicated for the 100th anniversary.

I am not a historian. I'm a country lawyer with a particular interest in trails. My research and work wouldn't stand serious academic review as I'm sure I've made a mistake more than once, for instance whether the state came to own Marcy in 1921 or 1922. Both dates may be right because two landowners had to be bought out and their boundary ran right over the summit.

The facts contained in this history came from diverse sources: books - The Forest Preserve by Eleanor Brown, ADK 1985; Peaks & People of the Adirondacks; Russell Carson, ADK 1973; The Adirondack High Peaks, the Adirondack Forty-Sixers, 1970; Of the Summits, of the Forests, Adirondack Forty-Sixers, 1991. I relied heavily on ADK's library of old issues of High Spots and Adirondac, many furnished to me by Bruce

Wadsworth. I had personal interviews with Jim Goodwin and Clint Miller and conversations with Ed Stanley and Werner Bachli. Telephone interviews were very helpful with: Jim Goodwin, Clint Miller, Bob Hofer, Mary and Ditt Dittmar, Helen Menz, Art Newkirk, Dave Newhouse, Werner Bachli, Grace Hudowalski, Almy Coggashall, Bill Penn, Bill Huckle, Charles Gardner, Paul Schaefer, Grant Cole and Willie Janeway. Neil Parker relayed information from Bill White. I had short correspondence with Mrs. Rudy Strobel, Bruce Wadsworth, Bill Brosseau and Art Newkirk.

I hope to have done an honest job to communicate the flavor of trails activities since 1922. I regret not being able to elaborate in more detail the contributions of committee members known to me such as Don Burness' dedicated job getting the lean-to-adoption program going in the face of skepticism from State administrators, or the people who have led and served on our pro-crews and led supervised volunteers. They deserve a history of their own, colorful as it is.

I'm sorry that more data about adopted lean-to numbers and other activities couldn't be included as a gauge for future readers, but that information is dry and should be able to be recovered from the Trails chair's annual report. (At this historical time ADK has dropped 'man' from 'chairman'. For purposes of this history chairmen are referred to by the title then used as acceptable). Other specific data on numbers of hours worked, stair-steps and stepstones built, crew size, leaders, etc. will be found in Trails Committee minutes and reports that should be kept and available in the future.

I hope you enjoy this work. I took more pleasure in speaking with my sources than in writing it and say to them how grateful I am for getting to know them, even if briefly.

Warrensburg, NY
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JAMES W. COOPER

ADK'S TRAILS PROGRAM

ADK'S Trails Program started with an explosion of enthusiasm and grand ideas spawned from the perceived need for an Adirondack trails and shelters development organization, the reason why ADK was organized, covered in greater detail elsewhere in this work. Among the men of great accomplishments who were our founders and original leaders were highly placed administrators of the then Department of Environmental Conservation. The first three trails chairmen were department employees, our first president, its former head. Hindsight more than suggests that they were not squeamish about using their state positions to advance the interests of ADK. It would be extraordinary today if the recent DEC Commissioner was our president while today's staff equivalent of the then Assistant State Superintendent of Forests was our Trails Committee Chairman, but that's the way it started. They had a vision for ADK. Some of their ideas now seem out of proportion to the young club's capabilities, and it was only a few years before events demonstrated that to them.

To understand the history of the Trails Program requires 1) an appreciation of the small size of the club that stayed relatively constant right up until the 1970's when growth mushroomed and 2) understanding how trail activities were affected by events. We were smaller than a thousand members, more or less, for a very long time. Small numbers translate into limited financial and human resources. War and depression impacted the Trails Program in odd ways. The gift of the JBL property to ADK at the time the state acquired other Johns Brook valley lands changed the focus of the Trails Program.

The enthusiasm and energy that follow new birth generated the Trails Program's first phase, the grand design period. In historical context, the formation of ADK and the acquisition of JBL coincided with the first major surge of interest in hiking on the part of common people. The early 20's was a period in which the State was aggressively acquiring lands in the High Peaks, advertising the acquisitions and promoting Mount Marcy as a hiking destination. The State was actively engaged in trails construction and facilities location in the backcountry to serve a new class of hikers who came from more humble origins than their nineteenth century aristocratic antecedents. The first World War had produced an army surplus of camping materials which could be acquired relatively inexpensively that had not been the case prior to that time. The increase in recreational usage was dramatic. A nine-year-old Jim Goodwin first climbed Mount Marcy in 1919 in a party including his father on a fair summer day during which they encountered no other parties. This circumstance was repeated with increasingly less solitude through the 1920's and became rarer during each of the other 194 ascents made by Jim, the most recent at age 85, August 1995.

In this transitional period, ADK was formed by, among others, William G. Howard, then Assistant Superintendent of Forests of the Conservation Commission. Bill Howard was Trails Committee Chair in 1924, although the committee's first designation was as the Committee on Trails, Camps and Shelters. His administration lasted until 1927 when another Conservation Commission career employee, A. S. Hopkins, became chairman, the same year the Conservation Commission was renamed "The Conservation Department." During Howard's tenure grand designs were

proposed. The wealthy and, powerful men who formed ADK expected club growth to support hired laborers to build trails. The first such example was what we now know as the N-P, the trail connecting Northville and Lake Placid. It has undergone several relocations but generally follows the same valleys of its origin. George D. Pratt, ADK founder, its first president and Conservation Commissioner of New York State in 1920, donated the funds to construct five shelters on the "Long Trail", 135 miles long. The foot path gained its present name, the Northville-Placid Trail, in 1923. The cost at that time was \$250 per lean-to. ADK, with all 583 members, built the trail with two obviously robust men, finishing up in 1924. Whether those two built the lean-tos as well is unknown, but doubtful. The complete marking and clearing of the trail was delayed in 1923 because "suitable labor" was unavailable and the crew hired in August quit shortly after starting. A second crew hired in September worked a month. Conservation Commission employees cleared and marked the section from the Cold River to Averyville. The trail originally required a long roadwalk around Blue Mountain, but for much of its length connected segments of existing logging roads. The N-P became our flagship trail and Howard's hiring of the first crew, our first professional crew. A Dartmouth College alumnus, mechanical engineer and World War I veteran, Edwin M. "Doc" Noyes, had contracted tuberculosis during the war and for his health went to the Adirondacks to work with A. S. Hopkins surveying forest fire damage. His work in the Cold River area acquainted him with Howard Rowe of Long Lake, who with Noyes was hired as ADK's crew. There was then, as today, a sharing of costs for this pro-crew between the State and ADK with the State actually issuing the paycheck, the reverse of today's procedure. Doc Noyes and Rowe

marked and/or cleared 110 miles of the N-P in 1922 and 1923, 25% of which was through untracked forest. There is apparent unresolved confusion between Noyes' account of work in '23 and Howard's comments summarized above that there were labor problems. They set up base camps at French Louis' at Big West Canada Lake and at Frank Plumley's at the north end of Long Lake among other sites. They had a theory that if they brushed in all the crossing deer paths that the animals would keep the corridor's foot tread worn down and apparent. Later Noyes and Rowe ran a 100-mile trap line out of Plumley's for many years covering the circuit in four days. Noyes' legs eventually gave out and he spent four years on crutches after he returned to his home at Duxbury, Massachusetts, where he lived out the rest of his life on an Army disability pension and as a public official. Without knowing it, the Glens Falls Chapter of ADK revived the work of Doc Noyes and Rowe by maintaining the N-P from Shattuck Clearing to Long Lake Village out of Plumley's since 1984.

The second proposed trail was to link Lake George, from Bolton Landing, and Lake Placid. George Marshall reported to Jim Goodwin that the germ of the idea was his and Bob's but that it failed because Bob got involved in other things. It was touted as "the major trail project of the Adk. M.C. for 1923". The route was to proceed cross-country due north into the Pharaoh Lake Region, swing west then north through Hoffman Notch, then northwest over Boreas to Marcy and beyond. By November of '23 Howard reported that the LG-LP trail route had been carefully scouted by the Marshalls assisted in mapping and legwork on the south end by Arnold W. Knauth (ADK President in 1927). Howard invokes a qualification in his '23 report saying that clearing can start in the

Spring of '24 " . . . provided funds are available for this work". The idea never got any further because the Club President, George Pratt, ordered all available club money shifted to pay for the construction of JBL.

In '23, by resolution, ADK asked the legislature to appropriate funds to the Conservation Commission so that men could be specifically delegated to look after lean-tos and arrest those misusing or destroying State property, our first effort of many to get the Department sufficient budgetary support.

In 1929 Glint Miller and two friends walked the finished N-P as far north as Duck Hole. Arranging transportation was as much an adventure as the hike. They found heavy blowdown, enough to require hunting and searching for the trail at a one mile per hour rate between Spruce Lake and the West Canada Creek lean-to at Mud Lake. They had trouble again further north between Cedar Lakes and Cedar River Flow where map and compass were required to stay on course. Clearly something had dimmed the great hopes of 1922 in just five years as ADK turned maintenance of the N-P over to the Conservation Department in 1927 upon the condition that the Department would "maintain the identity of the trail as a trail initiated by the Adirondack Mountain Club", which obligation is honored in good faith today as indicated by the generous comments on the Department's N-P sign at Benson, the usual starting point. Club growth and wealth had not met the expectations of the founders.

The 20's closed out on this low note for the Trails Program but had also seen steady lean-to and trails construction. ADK people had also constructed the Red Horse Trail from the then Beaver River Flow to Wanakena. The State had started using metal trail markers in the teens

but continued the practice on a larger scale in the twenties, something more or less unique to New York to this day. Blue was for north/south trails, red for east/west trails and yellow for diagonal trails.

In the 20's Howard produced a mimeograph pamphlet "Adk. M.C. Standard Trail Construction" as an adaptation of one existing already published by the New England Trail Conference, and did a second pamphlet on open camps.

Concurrent with the great trail schemes was ADK's acquisition of the 15-1/2 acre JBL property by gift from the J & J Rogers Company as a result of the persuasion of Howard and Hopkins who worked it out as part of a package which saw the State purchase most of the rest of the Upper Johns Brook valley. The Rogers Company also conveyed 'camp' properties to several other people in the vicinity of JBL. J & J Rogers had logged much of the Johns Brook valley-up to 1923. The acquisition in 1923 came to dominate the later Trails Program. Hopkins was involved in appraising the value of lands in the Johns Brook valley in view of state acquisition both from the Adirondack Mountain Reserve and J & J Rogers. Clifford R. Pettis, Superintendent of Forests, was in charge of purchasing state forest land and was an ADK governor at the time.

Howard and Hopkins were professional foresters and undoubtedly influenced by the Gifford Pinchot philosophy of scientific forestry that gave slight weight to wilderness values and the value of natural processes being allowed to occur. Their former boss, George Pratt, had been criticized for using 1916 Bond Act funds to purchase logged over tracts rather than to acquire virgin timber. The justification claimed was that the State would get more land that would ultimately regenerate itself anyway. This may have been a root cause of his replacement. The

Johns Brook valley purchase fits the pattern of foresters maximizing use of the forest's products before it was placed beyond their reach in Forest Preserve. Secondly, Howard and Hopkins must have considered that if their focus was to be on recreational enjoyment of the Forest Preserve rather than managed forestry, it would further the Commission's goals to get a trails development organization in the heart of the Johns Brook valley purchase, knowing that once it became Forest Preserve, state options to do something on the scale of a lodge-hiking center would be impossible. Helping ADK acquire the JBL property, therefore, fit Howard and Hopkins⁷ multiple, Commission related objectives. It would be inaccurate to view it as self-dealing or corrupt, because we can't see their idea of how things would work out to the advantage of the Commission from the perspective of 1923.

Jim Goodwin remembers the guide, market hunter, and squatter, Mel Hathaway, stopping him on the trail near the cabin that Hathaway had taken over and lived in for 40 years on ADK's new land. With tears in his eyes, the 84 year old Hathaway told the young man: "Jimmy, they're taking my home away from me!" He had been paid a recent visit by ADK people: vice president and Mrs. John P. Myers, William Howard, A. S. Hopkins, and Homer Brown of Keene Valley. The latter must have been brought along to show Hathaway a familiar face because Hathaway's response to being asked to move was unpredictable. (Brown built the original Winter Camp nearby). Hathaway was implacable as Myers offered him another residence in Keene Valley and Howard and Hopkins stiffly marshaled legal arguments why he had to move. The anxiety level of an awkward and tense confrontation jumped when Hathaway who had been seated, stood, picked up his shotgun and told Myers that he would talk

to him behind the cabin but not to those "conservationers". Myers, a banker and hardware retailer from Plattsburgh, went along and after some time he and Hathaway returned in agreement. Mrs. Myers' heart rate returned to something near normal. Hathaway is reported to have later moved in with his daughter in Syracuse, but his adjustment to the city was apparently not smooth as he "went for a walk downtown with his ax and was arrested for blazing telegraph poles. An apple tree from Hathaway's orchard is still alive on the property today.

Out of Johns Brook Lodge (JBL) built in 1924-25, ADK trails began to radiate up Slide Brook and to the Wolf Jaws Notch in 1929 and into Klondike Notch in 1928. Trail building at that time was rather a casual matter, not requiring formal Department approval, hardly necessary when the approvers were ADK Trails Chairmen. This informality continued more or less until just after the second World War. About 1928 Hopkins with nine volunteers including two women, Mrs. John Myers and Julia Chapman, laid out and built the trail from Upper Wolf Jaw to Armstrong. John Myers and his group of ADK friends became the first trails volunteers to work on a regular basis and the nucleus of volunteers who returned yearly to JBL to clear club trails.

In 1928 the stone shelter on Marcy was built for emergency use, by stone masons hired by the ADK and paid by its president, Pirie MacDonald. They moved rocks on Marcy's dome with a horse-drawn stone boat. The Conservation Department removed it in 1968 with state employees after ADK had been asked and concurred in the action. It had become a dump and latrine. There was small likelihood that its original intended purpose was ever necessary based on experience. A 75 year old Jim Goodwin found some detritus from its removal such as steel bed frames in the krumholtz

when he led a centennial hike up the route of Orson Phelps' original Marcy Trail in¹ 1985.

The Great Depression hit in '29 but ironically that had small effect on hiking traffic other than to increase the volume of usage because then, as now, it was cheap recreation. Despite the capable leadership of A. S. Hopkins, the Trails Program weakened during the early 30's. The last grand design proposed was a joint concept with ATIS (Adirondack Trail Improvement Society) to construct "A Great Trail Circle" reported by Hopkins in 1930 as a consideration of the "Trails Committee". It envisioned a 40-mile loop from Keene Valley, to connect with the W. A. White Trail over the Great Range to Skylight, from there to Alien, to the Pinnacle, to Colvin, to Nippletop, to Dix, and then to St. Hubert's and back to Keene Valley. The proposal was couched in the qualification that private land owners would have to cooperate. Hopkins concludes that no funds were available to begin work in '30 but he had hopes for '31. The concept did not proceed far into implementation.

In '31, Glens Falls Chapter volunteers and other ADKers reopened the Phelps Trail from The Garden to JBL. It had fallen into disuse because of the high-grade logging road that had been constructed on the south side of Johns Brook, but washouts that the logging company no longer repaired made the old route once again desirable. It had become a faint trace around hundreds of blowdowns but had never been completely abandoned of use.

Yet another Conservation Department employee, A. T. Shorey, became Trails Committee Chairman in 1935. Shorey continued the chairman's tradition of trail building, although curses are often substituted for praise for the Shorey Shortcut. He had been a reporter for the New York

World but lost his job in the Depression before signing on with the Conservation Department. Shorey's suggestions for hikes statewide were published as late as 1967 by the Conservation Department's Conservationist magazine and distributed thereafter as an educational leaflet. Shorey's knowledge of the mountains was shared with early ADK'ers due to his careful location of the trail routes on the club's first maps. For a minimal fee he carefully plotted trails on topographic maps for those who asked him. He was described as a man with a twinkle in his eye, a good story teller, a very personable and remarkable guy. He died in 1974 after writing a friend "I am lucky in a sort of natural wild-flower area . . . I am happy in very interesting woods and trees." Among Shorey's other achievements was the planning of the Elk Lake-Dix Trail and the Yard Trail. Shorey wrote in 1935's July High Spots an article about proper use of open camps. He must have felt well insulated in his position in the Department as he identified hunters and fishermen as the worst offenders of "decent and civilized" use of lean-tos. He bemoaned the ignorant hiker who burns all the balsam boughs so laboriously gathered by a forest ranger to make a soft and sweet smelling bed. He chides the user to burn out his cans, flatten them with an ax and bury them. He cautioned that boots and ax handles be placed out of reach of porcupines lest the salt-loving porkies render them to tatters overnight.

The 30's saw a major dispute develop between ADK and the Conservation Department which arose over the Civilian Conservation Corps. President Roosevelt, to jump start the economy, had come up with this make-work project that proved enormously successful. The Conservation Department employed young men planting trees and

building fire roads, bridges and impoundment dams in the Forest Preserve. In October 1935 a critical article appeared in ADK's magazine High Spots that,

"These roads, well built, sixteen feet wide, with stone base and gravel top, will be a constant temptation to the roving motorist, whether hunter, fisherman, picnicker or tourist, to reach the remoter regions to which they penetrate."

A photo by Russ Carson in the same issue, that most of us would easily recognize as Marcy Dam Pond, is identified: "Typical Artificial Pond Created by CCC labor". Glint Miller indicates that many hikers hated the elaborate bridges built by the CCC. Today we walk CCC roads from South Meadows to Marcy Dam and from Axton to Duck Hole. The debate at the time was acrimonious. George and Bob Marshall fought to stop the truck road built to Duck Hole and with others persuaded the State not to carry out its plan to extend it to Moose Pond. Many feared that the roads would create future pressure to log the Forest Preserve as timber corporations would not have to incur their usual expense of building such roads and would therefore view the logging as a golden profit opportunity.

Perhaps with Bill Howard's influence, the CCC built a ski trail up what is now called Howard Mountain, an act of no utility at all except as used in conjunction with ADK's Winter Camp. It later grew over during World War II and was abandoned.

Howard, now Superintendent of Lands and Forests for the Department, attended a "First Annual Trails Conference" sponsored by ADK in 1935. It apparently was of interest to State administrators and the trails community as 150 people attended the first meeting Friday night. Only half that many came back for the second meeting the following morning.

Forty clubs and outdoor organizations were represented. The meeting had a neutral agenda but rapidly got out of control. Howard, an ADK founder, patron and trails advocate, apparently had to sit through excoriating criticism of his administration of CCC laborers. A High Spots article notes:

"Intemperate discussion . . . offense (taken) due to faulty principals of trail construction . . . protesting resolutions . . . heat and passion of angered discussion . . . injustice to the Conservation Department . . . discourteous attitude toward its officers."

Russ Carson reported that the delegates "became feverish over the wilderness situation in general, and the CCC activities as related to that situation in particular", that the CCC was "roundly abused", the Conservation Department's firetruck trails "cursed and damned" and "its good faith and integrity . . . questioned." He called it "a noisy, acrimonious show" and singled out for "the most scathing denunciation" a Schenectady delegate who tried to usurp the chair. One wonders what must have passed through Howard's mind as he reviewed his nurturing years and benevolent assistance given to the young ADK, perhaps the maxim - 'no good deed goes unpunished'⁷. There does not appear to have been a Second Annual Trails Conference. The hue and cry must have had an effect as road construction was suspended by the Department that year.

A. T. Shorey continued his journalistic predispositions during the 30's writing short pieces to encourage hikers to other areas in the Adirondacks. His committee had been, was then, and continued on until the mid-70's to be pretty much a one-man operation except for the wonderful yearly reunions of trail volunteers at JBL to brush out the club's trails, a tradition that continues to date that signaled entry

into the second phase of the Trails Program as JBL oriented. Nell Plum cooked the meals for the trails volunteers at JBL for many years followed by Helen Menz and then Helen and her sister, Mary Dittmar, for the last twenty years or so. Helen and Mary enriched many conversations when queried, readily recalling their youthful experiences at Noah John Rondeau's Cold River hermitage. In 1938 Shorey turned over his job to Hal Burton, another journalist who had reported for Long Island Newsday and wrote freelance alpine articles for the Saturday Evening Post. He was an avid skier and rock climber and later became an officer in the army's Tenth Mountain Division. His last success was as the driving force behind the creation of the State ski area at Whiteface Mountain. He reported that 1938 was a "satisfactory year" because of the revitalized attitude of club members. Not surprisingly, his contribution & Trails Committee Chairman was construction of the Wright Peak Ski Trail. Burton was also active in production of the club's yearly Bulletin. At that time the club was also stocking blanket caches in lean-tos for emergencies.

In 1940 Bill Howard wrote the first trail description of the N-P for the Guidebook Committee.

World War II pretty much stopped trails activities in the Adirondacks, as with twenty million men and women under arms, they were hiking elsewhere. Younger forest rangers were all drafted. Jim Goodwin went into the Tenth Mountain Division as a rock climbing instructor and later was a combat medic. Things picked up after the war immediately as there was a surge of interest in hiking as a result of military training about camping and a flood of superior and inexpensive equipment due to war surplus. The increased usage was at least as dramatic as that after

World War I and probably greater. Sleeping bags replaced blankets and ski and snowshoe equipment had been upgraded and improved. For the first time, large numbers of winter recreationists were in the mountains and surprisingly rock climbing interest justified creation of a rock climbing school by the Keene Valley Chapter. Art Newkirk became committee chairman at the end of the war and had to virtually reinvent the committee's purposes as he was given nothing to work with. He allocated responsibility for ADK trails into three groups of volunteers and resumed the yearly trails weekend at JBL.

In 1948 ADK purchased 250 "Be a Good Woodsman" signs. These relics now, instructed campers then in camping etiquette in so many words, admonishing them to leave a dry supply of firewood for the next lean-to occupants. The last surviving of these metal signs can be seen nailed to the rear walls at the Seward lean-to on the Cold River and the O'Neil lean-to at the south end of Tirrell Pond, both vandalized.

ADK's old aluminum red and gray trail markers were first deployed about the same time. The design was by W. G. Huckle, based on the original club logo. In 1983 these were replaced with orange and black plastic round disks. Prior to the war ADK's trail markers were mass produced sheet steel, and were white with a red or blue rim around which the club name was printed, but during the war were made of tarpaper-like material.

In 1949 ATIS ceded maintenance of the Wolf Jaw's Notch to Lower 'Jaw connector trail to ADK as well as the Range Trail from Gothics to Armstrong. Near the end of the 40's, upon the recommendation of prominent attorney, then club president, Bordon H. Mills, Trails Committee Chairman Art Newkirk and the JBL Trails Weekend Crew began

removing ladders and bridges from ADK trails around the Johns Brook valley. Their motivation was based on liability and wilderness aesthetics. At that time Ditt Dittmar struggled with the problem experienced by Hopkins, Myers, and later volunteer Jim Goodwin, to find a route around the cliffs on Armstrong's northeasterly end, not satisfactorily solved until 1985 when the pro-crew built a massive ladder. A cook for the JBL Trails weekend, Dorothy Graton, had fallen in 1978 at that spot and had to be littered out with a broken shoulder.

The trend of increasing formality in the Conservation Department's policies was completed at least in the early 1950's when it was well understood that new trails construction on Forest Preserve required their approval. In 1951 Jim Goodwin obtained their consent to construct what became the ADK trail from Second Brother to Big Slide as well as an extension of the ADK Sachs Trail over Hedgehog to the W. A. White in 1954. Jim had been involved in earlier construction of trails which came to be Adirondack Mountain Club trails such as the Garden to Porter Mountain in 1930 and numerous ATIS trails.

In 1950, Huckle, Werner Bachli, Lucius Carry and others replaced the rusted and fibrous ATIS cable on Gothics' west peak. Bachli had packed in the 80 lb. aluminum cable and fittings from The Garden. This job was replicated as the '50 cable wore out in 1969 when Bill Penn and Burt Harrold arranged for larger eyebolts to be galvanized and carried in the cable and replacements. In 1986 the cable was again replaced with Penn and Harrold involved, but a helicopter fly-in and drop meant only that the old one had to be carried out to JBL.

The intense low pressure storm which came to be known as the "big blowdown" occurred on November 25, 1950. The winds had been capricious

and spared almost all of the Johns Brook valley except for the Hopkins and Yard Trails where, as in other sections of the Adirondacks, the forest was leveled. Numerous individual trees in the Johns Brook valley blew down and caused trail obstruction. On the day of the big blow, Mary and Ditt Dittmar took two friends into the Johns Brook valley to show one of them JBL and to photograph for the Adirondac magazine the new lean-to on lodge property memorializing William G. Howard's contributions to ADK's trails program. The wind picked up while they went in but didn't get severe until they were crossing the swinging bridge from the Southside Trail. Mary watched as large spruce were twisted and thrown down. They had keys to JBL so they took a sheltered lunch there but thought the roof would come off. They decided to evacuate the area, but their bizarre day was not over as they came upon a party littering out a Syracuse college student who was unconscious. They helped with the carry, awkward enough because the litter was centered in the trail and they had to walk in the brush but complicated by having to watch overhead as well because trees continued to come down. Ditt and Mary were unfazed apparently as his brief mention of the experience in the Adirondac article focuses on the difficulty of getting a good film exposure of the Howard Lean-to because of the weather conditions. People understood why the woods had to be closed in sections for five years. The ADK work weekend at JBL was not interrupted. Frank Studer made repeated trips to almost single-handedly open the Yard Trail.

The early 50's saw a rapid,-succession of trails chairmen as Werner Bachli succeeded Huckle, Joseph W. Gross succeeded Bachli, and James A. Goodwin, Sr. served for the year 1954, succeeded by Frank J. Studer in 1956 who was succeeded by Rudy Strobel in 1959.

P. F. Loope, in retirement, effectively became the club's first executive director in the middle of that decade and authored an article in Adirondac expressing concern about the aesthetics of trails, design to avert erosion and to create a quality experience for the hiker. His was the first such plea and argument made publicly about Adirondack trails in our magazine.

Rudolph W. Strobel served as Trails Committee Chair from 1959 to 1970. He began the modern era of the Trails Program toward the end of his administration by recognizing that trails engineering was required to protect the resource. He claimed to have made the first use of waterbars in the Adirondacks in 1967. He was an engineer from General Electric in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, an enthusiastic leader and is well remembered by those who knew him, well organized but relaxed, a "great guy". In 1971 he assumed the presidency of the club and five years later at age 68 completed his quest to climb the highest point in each of the 48 contiguous United States. It was not unusual to come upon Rudy working solo on a trail. Before the State Land Master Plan came into effect, he used to good result a gasoline powered brush hog to do side cutting. Chainsaws and other powered equipment were in use at the JBL trails weekend until the SLMP became effective in 1972. Following the chairman's tradition Rudy conceived and constructed new trails: Lake Arnold to Golden, and the now abandoned VanHoevenberg Bypass from Avalanche lean-tos. He flagged the Cascade Mountain relo with Bob Hofer, who later built it with Algonquin Chapter volunteers. He laid down the law and got ADK chapters to adopt and maintain some of the twenty or more miles of ADK trails that Keene Valley's Jim Goodwin had been doing alone in addition to running a summer camp. He went on to build trails in the

Taconic Range in his later years. His October 1963 article in Adirondac is a source of some information of this history. He died April 10, 1994, an 87 year old trail worker.

By the time of Rudy's administration, in the view of the main club that the Trails Committee's function was restricted to trails building and clearing club trails out of JBL, is made out by the fact that when ADK President Therron Johnson wanted to carry out a "no dump" camping campaign he had seen successfully used out west, he created an ad hoc committee, the 'Clean Trailsides' committee, chaired by Almy Coggashall to do it. Almy came up with the now familiar "If you carry it in, carry it out" slogan and had a tough sell with the Conservation Department who thought the campaign doomed to failure, preferring dump pits at lean-tos. Almy and Ed Ketchledge got the program off the ground in 1965 - 1966, organizing a "summit scrub" of Marcy that saw 400 lbs. of litter packed out. There followed a massive dump pit cleanup in the High Peaks organizing volunteers from ADK, the 46ers and ATIS and others in the early 1970's to shuttle bagged trash like army ants all the way to a pickup station. The Trails Committee, which in retrospect should have been expected to be involved (originally having camps and shelters in their name), were focused exclusively on "marking and building" according to Almy. Another illustration of Trails' JBL focus was the modern relook of the VanHoevenberg that was done by Loj committees⁷ Alice Waterhouse and Bill Adriance in 1973 as all trails on the Loj property had always been a Loj committee concern. Further evidence that the trails program was JBL oriented is that ADK's only involvement with the Northville-Placid Trail right through the 1970's appears to have been in furnishing

the State with white diamond shaped metallic markers for the N-P, a practice started in 1957 by Morgan Porter of the Guidebook committee when he and Glint Miller walked and wheeled the N-P putting the special markers up. Their use was abandoned in 1976.

The end of Rudy's administration saw him embellish and implement the concerns of P. F. Loope about trail construction as Rudy began to implement engineering practices used by the Appalachian Mountain Club in the White Mountains. The first ADK use of waterbars was on the Woodsfall Trail between the Southside Trail and Wolf Jaws Notch in 1967.

In 1970 Rudy was elected club president and was replaced on trails in 1971 by Charles G. Gardner, an educator from Syracuse, until 1975. He had been a principal organizer and dynamic leader of the Onondaga Chapter. He had generated chapter support to maintain the 90 miles of the Finger Lakes Trail that Charles Embree had laid out. He had helped Rudy Strobel lay out the Lake Arnold-Golden Trail. Under his administration relocations of the VanHoevenberg were constructed. Gardner also instituted what has become a traditional menu at the JBL trails work weekend that roast ham be the main course. He thought that the laborers needed salt after climbing two or three high peaks and cutting out blowdown. Since then it has become something of an honor to boast of carrying in the ham from The Garden and to be subject to derisive rebuke to have packed in the lighter fare such as bread. In the 1980's ADK began air lifting fuel to JBL. Before then it was not uncommon for the committee to pack in jerry cans of kerosene in conjunction with the work weekend.

In 1975, President Glen Fish appointed Bob Hofer, a mathematics professor from Plattsburgh as chairman. Grant Cole, then ADK Executive Director, encouraged and helped Bob to expand the Trails Program. Bob began conducting three or four committee meetings a year and accomplished three main things in his administration. He persuaded the Board of Governors to institute a dedicated fund into which contributions could be made exclusively for the Trails Program, Later several ADK program areas were also given dedicated funds, but trails always received the highest member contributions for program areas until the funds were eliminated to conform to generally accepted accounting practices in 1990. Bob authored a trails manual in 1982 which borrowed heavily from the Appalachian Mountain Club's techniques in the Whites but was tailored to Adirondack soils and geology and Rudy Strobel's theories. Bob's most significant and lingering contribution was to get a professional trail crew off the ground.

In 1977 Bob organized an ADK Trails Task Force to develop a volunteer labor base to give people the opportunity to give something back to the trails. To conform to the State Land Master Plan, his committee organized volunteers that year to raze the Lake Tear and Four Corners Lean-tos, they also paint blazed the trail on Marcy's dome. In 1978 Mike Merigliano, a forestry graduate, was hired to supervise recruited volunteers. He was the first paid trails staffer since the 1920's. The following year, James A. Goodwin, Jr., (Tony), was hired as crew boss to lead a crew of six professional trail crew workers. An AMC crew boss, Nick Santigate, came over from the AMC to train our crew for two weeks. Funded by the trails dedicated fund, then known as the Better

Trails Booster Program, largely organized by Bob Hintermister, the crew was paid by ADK and began to redress the inevitable impact of hiking on resources with engineering, trails hardening, manipulating user psychology and relocation. Their tools were purchased from John Myers' hardware store in Plattsburgh, wholesale, the late John Myers of Mel Hathaway fame and the original JBL core of volunteers. Bob Hofer formed friendships with the pro-crew and its leaders. They were a rough and ready lot with loyalty to each other and a necessary sense of élan to get them through working wet, eating wet and sleeping wet for five days in woods teeming with biting insects. When they came out for their weekends, their need to express their youth, strength and relief was sometimes uncontrolled. Housing at the Loj property, therefore, was a problem and continued to be.

Tom Stanwood succeeded Bob in 1983 but moved to Oregon almost immediately.

Willard Reed served as chairman for the balance of 1983 and part of '84.

The author became chairman in November 1984. The following summer the professional crew virtually disintegrated as their planned work projects were vetoed by the Commissioner of Department of Environmental Conservation until the Attorney General of the State of New York issued an Opinion regarding the use of on-site timber in the Forest Preserve for trail construction purposes. The whole painful process was described in detail in an Adirondac article, April 1986. Ultimately the Opinion was issued but too late to salvage the 1985 season for the crew whose morale was destroyed, all but two having quit by the end of the summer, leaving ADK looking at a 1986 season with no returning professional crew

employees. Though the pro-crew had ceased to be, they had proven their necessity with enduring quality work a limited example of which can be seen today at the cantilevered bridge they built over Feldspar Brook the massive ladder on Armstrong's cliff, step stones and waterbars on our major trails such as Calamity Brook, Algonquin and the VanHoevenberg. They were especially proud of their work with wood and axes. Their loss presented at the same time an opportunity to start fresh and to control hooliganism that had been a sporadic problem. Jeff Brown, North Country Director, located William C. Janeway, Willie, who was then a crew chief of one of the AMC's professional crews. That autumn, Willie, Jeff and I conferred on what I thought the Trails Program should be. The meeting developed some pretty good ideas, always improved with staff suggestions. Willie worked out our '86 work projects and contract with the DEC that fall and came on board part time the next spring. He hired Tom Parker from AMC as crew chief and hired a pro-crew. Willie fulfilled his obligations to the AMC that summer as Trailmaster, returning to the Adirondacks to supervise some volunteer programs for ADK. He worked for trails part time until 1987 when ADK funded his position as Trails Coordinator. Tom Parker trained crews and developed a professional base from which ADK has been able to draw since that date for leadership without interruption. Their focus was shifted to rock work because of its durability. Rock waterbars and staircases began to appear in High Peaks trails and at Snowy Mountain where eroded gullies disappeared.

In succeeding years Willie got a large scale supervised volunteer program going, upwards of 300 people, some for week long projects. The committee initiated gifts of volunteer recognition items. It started a newsletter. Willie did a professional inventory of trail conditions on

the N-P. The committee developed an Adopt-a-Lean-to program and later an Adopt-a-Trail program. I came up with the idea and design for the trillium patch and Willie found an artist in Lake Placid to draw it. We started a subcommittee on handicapped access. We sent for the first time our pro-crew and supervised volunteers into the Catskills. We developed a chuck-wagon trailer to support our mobile volunteer base camps. Due to the growth of ADK in those years and the membership talent we were able to tap, the Trails Committee grew both in its political influence within the ADK and with the State. Quality people given an assignment did a quality job. The committee grew to more than a dozen members. We persuaded the Board of Governors in 1988 to revisit the club's longstanding support for the Adirondack Lean-to by asking the Adirondack Park Agency to review its broad-brush rule that will require removal of a large percentage of lean-tos. Willie developed financial support from corporate sponsors. The signal achievement accomplished during those years was the construction of the Weizel Trails Cabin by volunteers with fundraising of \$120,000 for installation of the well, foundation work and for materials, \$40,000 of which came from the Weizels' estates. The cabin finally solved the recurrent problem of where in Keene Valley or Lake Placid we would find summer housing for ten or twelve college-aged kids to dry off, clean up, regroup and relax on their weekend. Its dedication in 1991 gave us a pro-crew housing capacity of 16. The commitment of Tom Parker and his successors meant that we would no longer have to rely on AMC to furnish us with leaders for our program. We routinized our relationship with DEC which came to recognize ADK's Trails Program for its professionalism, quality and reliability. The State's confidence in the program is borne out by its yearly contract with ADK by

which, for dollar-for-dollar contributions on ADK's part, the State contracts with us for trail work and brings our crew under the aegis of DEC. In 1995 the state contributed \$35,000.00, allowing us to leverage our trails money, a deal for the State that no other vendor can match. The blossoming of the modern program started by Rudy and Bob was largely due to the extraordinary force of personality and enthusiasm of Willie Janeway, one of the most likable and competent employees to grace ADK with his association. His efforts caused the magazine Adirondack Life to give its prestigious "Wilderness Award" to Janeway and the pro-crews in 1989.

In 1991 Nat Wells was lured to the Loj and literally cornered by Willie, Tom and me, and coerced into accepting the chairmanship, subject to presidential approval. He had been a committee member and week-long supervised volunteer for years. He is a retired executive from ALCOA. Nat's personality, wry wit, and dedication have caused the program to continue to grow with outreach to other trails organizations, a new mountain hiking subcommittee and National Trails Day that has the State asking if we wouldn't assume the job of statewide coordination again "like Tom Parker did" the first year. We even have volunteers paying air fare to work for a yearly ADK trail project in Montana.

Before Tom Parker left us he had succeeded Willie as Trails Coordinator and instituted a fall drainage clearing day that attracted 75+ volunteers each autumn since. Bill Brosseau continues his fine work.

At least since Rudy Strobel's administration, chapter Trails Committees have been maintaining trails in the High Peaks region dutifully on a yearly basis. This involves, in the case of the Niagara Frontier Chapter, traveling all the way from Buffalo and working on the

Klondike Notch Trail. The Long Island Chapter travels to Keene Valley to brush out and maintain the Brothers Trail to Big Slide. Albany Chapter maintains the Cascade Trail. Schenectady Chapter maintains the trail from the airport to Porter Mountain, and from Porter to The Garden. The Glens Falls Chapter maintains the trails leading to Roostercomb Mountain. Keene Valley Chapter (most recently in the form of Ed Stanley) continues to maintain club trails in that valley. Hurricane Chapter, Algonquin and Northwoods dutifully maintain segments of the ADK trails. Our chapter Trails Committees also do work outside the High Peaks, in the case of the Genessee Valley Chapter in the West Canada Lake Wilderness Area, Schenectady in the Silver Lake Wilderness Area, Albany in the Siamese Pond Wilderness Area. The Iroquois Chapter is involved in the Haderondah Wilderness Area. Our Chapter Trails Committees are also affiliated with other trails clubs and work in the trails system of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, the Taconic Hiking Club, and on the Finger Lakes Trail Conference.

Between supervised volunteers and professional crews since 1985, we have grown to about 10,000 annual hours of work on the trails as an honest count that does not include cooking and sleeping time. If chapter efforts are tallied in all over the state we would probably increase those hours by a third. It gets confusing though whether Onondaga has its FLTC hat or ADK hat on when work is being done in Central New York, for instance. The 10,000 hours is about one-third of what AMC claims, an organization about four times as big as ADK. We've learned a lot from them, the employees they trained and their techniques, and owe a debt of gratitude to their trails program that can't be repaid.

The N-P, our first project and flagship trail, has partially come back into the embrace of ADK as our trail stewards program puts trained volunteers to work clearing and draining sections they have adopted. Since 1970 the Schenectady Chapter has, on its own, and not as a trails committee function, kept track of N-P end-to-enders, issuing a patch that replicates Morgan Porter's special N-P markers. They issued the patch to claimants who finished before 1970 and in twenty-five years have issued just over 700 patches. Bill White and Clark Galloway have run that program from the beginning.

As the recent success of the trails program has become more widely known it has in some instances eclipsed the fine work of Department of Environmental Conservation employees, whose rock staircases have been assumed on occasion to be ADK work. Our crews sometimes cross-train. Not in its seventy-fifth year, no more than it was in its fifth year, is ADK in a position to maintain the trails for which the Department has responsibility.

For the last twenty years or so the DEC has had inadequate budgetary support for trails maintenance. In some areas foot trails are cleared by Forest Rangers and in others by Division of Operations personnel. They used to regularly have crews to do the routine maintenance, but this has become rarer and rarer, causing the Department's reliance on citizen organizations among which ADK is preeminent in the Adirondacks and significant in the Catskills. The primary financial and legal responsibility for trail maintenance remains on the State. We're glad to help and to fulfill in part the hopes of Howard, Pratt and Hopkins that ADK could be a partner in aiding the

Department in its mission to make the Forest Preserve accessible to the people.

The porous jurisdictional lines of committee responsibility in ADK have allowed trails people to contribute to other club program areas and vice-versa. Largely because of its small size ADK has had to be ambidextrous and interdisciplinary. For sixty-five years this covered our responsibilities until we could afford the staff support of volunteers that accelerated all club programs to greater accomplishments, including trails.

The Trails Committee is now composed of about 20 people of great skill, cordiality and interest.

Historically the Trails Program has been peopled by volunteers with a practical mindset about the Forest Preserve, a necessary voice for recreationists in the club although hardly a still one when fundamental principles were involved as in the 1935 CCC controversy or in 1954, when Art Newkirk left its ranks to save the club's soul, successfully running for president when the nominee had publicly urged managed forestry for state lands. We also raised our voice and when lean-tos were threatened to be eliminated wholesale by illogical and inflexible state policy. Looking back and considering our work of seventy-five years as we would reluctantly take that last view at a bog bridge just finished before slogging back to camp with blackened trousers and mud caked gaiters, we think: "Nice job; pass the ham."