

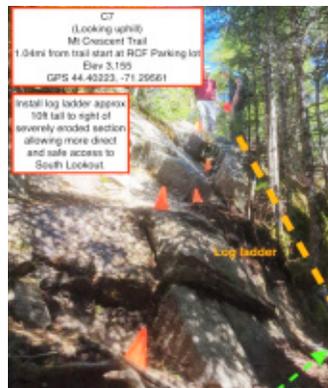


Randolph Mountain Club Newsletter

The mission of the Randolph Mountain Club is to promote the enjoyment of the Randolph area through hiking, trail development and maintenance, upkeep of camps and shelters, and the sharing of the collective knowledge of its members.

December 2025

Volume 23, No. 2



New Grant for 2026 Mt. Crescent Trail Work by John Phinney

In late October, we learned that the RMC had been granted the full amount requested on our application to the New Hampshire Recreational Trails Program (RTP), to support major trail work on the Crescent Range next summer. As many know, RTP funds—provided through the Federal Highway Administration—have long been the RMC’s most important source of external support. Year after year, this program has provided steady funding for the Club’s trail crew and helped us keep our most popular trails in excellent condition.

Most recently, RTP funding supported our trail crew’s stone stairs and drainage improvements on Lowe’s Path in 2024 and 2025. In 2026, they’ll turn to the Mt. Crescent trails in the Randolph Community Forest, addressing conditions such as the persistent wet spots on the Castleview Loop and the steep ledge on the Mt. Crescent Trail below the South Outlook. And here’s where RMC members come in: the RTP grant requires a significant match of volunteer labor hours, as a demonstration of support from the community and the Club. Please consider joining our 2026 work trips for brushing and blazing—your efforts will be essential to the project’s success!

Finally, many thanks to Eric Sandin, Scott Meiklejohn, Deva Steketee, Bob Drescher, Adam Berger, Benzo Harris, Joey Schilke, and Ben Lieberson for their outstanding work on this application, earning us a perfect score and securing our largest grant award ever.



Trail Adopter Profile a conversation

The December newsletter includes two features on Trail Adoption, a new RMC initiative for maintaining trails and making use of volunteer abilities. At right, my interview with an ‘early adopter’ member. See related article on p. 8.
- the editor

RMC: Why did you decide to adopt a trail, and why did you choose the EZ Way?

Heather Wiley: I decided that trail adoption would be an excellent way to give back to the RMC and the hiking community in general, after several decades of enjoying the trails which others had maintained. I chose the EZ Way because it was close to my home, a trail I knew well, and I felt it would be manageable on a yearly basis.

When did you start?

I scouted the trail last winter, and began on it in spring 2025.

continued on page 9

Heather Wiley repainting a blaze on the EZ Way. Christoph Geiss photo.

Top, left to right: Map of work sites on Castleview Trail and Mt. Crescent Trail (RTP application); RTP sign posted at Lowe’s Path work site, 2025 (Annalise Brinks); diagram of work at the steep ledge below the South Lookout (RTP); view from Castleview Ledge (R. Meiklejohn).

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Randolph Mountain Club 2025-2026

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committee chairs and honorary members

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Vice President Eric Sandin, Freeport ME
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Secretary Joel Douglas, Andover MA
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 Laura May, Oakton VA
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 Cheryl Byrne

Trails Deva Steketee, Ben Lieberman,
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Events Eliza Horton, Joan Ostergren

Planned Giving Randy Meiklejohn

Membership Michele Cormier

Work Trips Benzo Harris

Stearns Lodge Howie Wemyss

Alumni Benzo Harris

Revenue Dev't. Chris Cross, Scott Meiklejohn

Trail Easements Randy Meiklejohn

Trail Adoption Christoph Geiss

Communications John Phinney

Newsletter Randy Meiklejohn

Website Tom Breunig, Jenna Maddock

Archives/History Steve Chase, Judy Hudson

Honorary members Bill & Barbara Arnold
 Paul & Michele Cormier
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www.randolphmountainclub.org

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From the President ...

Winter is well underway in Randolph, which you can see in my photo taken after the third snowfall in mid-November. As you read through this newsletter's look back at the work, fellowship and celebrations of the past RMC year, I hope you'll note the many opportunities for you and all members to join in and contribute to a successful 2026.

As articles and photos for this newsletter rolled in during the fall, I was struck by how many them told stories of our community: the Club as a community of people, and how we create welcoming communities in the town of Randolph and in our mountains. We had an especially good season of traditional and new events (page 4), with record attendance and younger generations in key roles. In other articles you'll see how our work on trails and at the camps builds continuity and connection too. Page 5 reports on the project on the now 150-year-old Lowe's Path, and features the trail crew together with members of the Lowe family still among us. Next year the crew will be working here in town, on the historic Mt. Crescent trails (page 1). Hikers who follow Lowe's Path to the camps will find that special mountain community we've preserved, and that our caretakers convey to the public. On the mountain, community also means stepping up when help is needed, and Jack's rescue story (page 7) is the latest example of RMC caretaker can-do. Every season I am impressed by the work of our trail crew and camp employees. Over the years, as RMC alumni they too have become a community, sharing knowledge and stories (page 11) and occasionally meeting up in places like Antarctica! Some alumni have found roles on the RMC board and on our committees, and they spread the RMC's tradition of volunteerism well beyond the borders of Randolph.

Our Club's strength has always been in its community of participating members, and today's RMC continues to offer many opportunities to volunteer and contribute, some featured in this newsletter. You can join a one-day or half-day trail volunteer work trip next summer on Mt. Crescent (p. 11); "adopt" one of our trails (p. 8); share photos of your Club experiences (p. 10), or help with the committees responsible for our trails, camps or events. For those able to do so, there are opportunities to secure the Club's future through giving, to our upcoming Fundraising Campaign (p. 3), or bequests and memorial donations.

Finally, it's from our community that we renew the Club's board. Every year members step up to serve, as others step down after terms of service. I am grateful to our new directors, and to those leaving the board in 2025: Tom Breunig, Sally Micucci, Deva Steketee and Ginny Umiker. I hope you recognize how their service strengthens our community, and that you'll consider a volunteer role in 2026 that works for you. To get involved, email one of the committee chairs; emails are at: <https://randolphmountainclub.org/about/rmc-committees/>

Meantime, I hope you enjoy the coming winter, and I look forward to being with you throughout 2026.

John F. Phinney

John Phinney, President
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New RMC Directors

At the 2025 Annual Meeting in August, the RMC membership voted to elect three members to serve initial three-year terms as Club directors; to re-elect directors Adam Berger and Chris Cross to second terms; and to elect one director (Scott Meiklejohn, appointed by the President in April to fill a board vacancy) to an initial two-year term. The three new directors are profiled below in excerpts from the report of the Nominating Committee (Peter Rowan, Ginny Umiker and Sally Micucci). Courtesy photos.

Steve Chase was introduced to Randolph and the RMC in the mid-1970s by the Meiklejohn family, became a camp caretaker, and has stayed engaged with the Club ever since. Most recently, he has been assisting Judy Hudson with the preservation and growth of the RMC archives. Steve worked as Gray Knob caretaker for three spring and summer seasons, as well as on construction and trail crews during the 1980s and early 1990s. He has returned to Randolph as often as possible with his wife Karen and daughter Aimee. Steve is presently the Deputy Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, D.C. and spends time between homes in Middleburg, Virginia and Orford, New Hampshire.

Beth Krusi grew up in California hiking in the Sierra Nevada, and has maintained her passion for hiking, trails, and the outdoors ever since. Her broad experience includes roles as AMC Books editor-in-chief and VP of Marketing for the Montshire Museum of Science. She has served on the boards of organizations such as the Randolph Foundation, Upper Valley Trails Alliance (chair), Outdoor Industry Women's Council, and the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce. Beth became a member of the Randolph community when she married Sandy Harris in 2001. She and Sandy live in Norwich, Vermont and spend as much time as possible at their Boothman Lane cabin in Randolph.

Laura May first came to Randolph in 1980 with her future husband and longtime summer resident, Ted May. They have returned to the Valley each year, bringing their three children (and now a growing number of grandchildren) for memorable woodland adventures. In retirement from her career as a school counselor, Laura looks forward to chasing the grandchildren up the trails. When not in Randolph, the Mays live in northern Virginia.



Steve Chase



Beth Krusi



Laura May

"Dear RMC Team ..."

from an appreciative hiker

In October the Club received a donation accompanied by the message below, and it's clear the writer descended over the new staircases built by the trail crew in 2024 and 2025.

Below, Izzy Hughes (right) and Aidan Schilke (right) on Lowe's Path. Annalise Brinks and Owen Hoggard photos.

Dear RMC Team - As a longtime member and supporter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude towards your club too. I recently hiked to Mt. Adams via the King Ravine Trail, and returned along Lowe's Path. Having explored much of the mountains and sections of the Appalachian Trail over the years, I remain deeply appreciative of the incredible work your team and others do to maintain the trails, huts, and shelters. I know that the RMC plays a vital role in caring for many of the areas I passed through on this recent hike, and I'm truly thankful for your dedication. Please accept the enclosed donation as a token of my appreciation - feel free to use it wherever it's most needed.



Campaign for the Camps, in 2026

by John Phinney and Scott Meiklejohn

As announced at the 2025 Annual Meeting on August 9, the RMC board of directors has been gathering construction estimates for essential repairs and maintenance at Crag Camp and Gray Knob, including new roofs on both buildings and replacement of five windows at Gray Knob. Contributions to a "camps campaign" will also allow us to fund the installation of new privies at the two camps and at the Perch, the building of an additional tent platform at the Perch, as well as the reconstruction of the Peeko Folsom Bridge on the Bee Line – which fall hikers know is already in place! Stay tuned for a kick-off early in 2026, and in the meantime you may contact fundraising chair Scott Meiklejohn with any questions: scottm04079@gmail.com.

Above, exterior views of Gray Knob (left) and Crag Camp (right) in summer 2025. John Tremblay photos.



2025 RMC Events

by Eliza Horton and Joan Ostergren

The RMC hosted a lively summer season full of cherished traditions, new gatherings, and community spirit. We had an estimated 919 attendees joining in the fun and we raised over \$4,495 for the Club.



On this page, a photographic look back at summer and fall events:

Beer, Bites and Bids; the **Fourth of July Tea;** the **Rendezvous;** the new **“Ravine House Mixer”;** the community **softball game;** **Songs for a Summer Evening;** the Annual **Picnic and Charades;** the **Barn Dance;** and the **Randolph Ramble.** Photos by Joan Ostergren, Eliza Horton, Franklin Stone Wenk, and Randy Meiklejohn,



Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, donated raffle items, baked treats, and helped make these events happen. Your generosity keeps our trails, traditions, and community thriving.



Here’s to another great season, and its first event will be the annual **Cabin Fever Reliever** contra dance at Town Hall on March 14, 2026, featuring Paul Cormier and his band “Better Late than Never”.





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1) Setting bog bridges at Durand Lake. 2) Maya Barnett and crew members on Lowe's Path. 3) Field Supervisor and trail crew with Lucille Lowe, Pattie Lowe Rousseau and Pattie's dog Molson. 4) Annalise Brinks rebuilding a Lowe's Path cairn in the alpine zone, in September. Photo 3 by Annalise, others by Owen Hoggard.

Trails and the Trail Crew, summer and fall 2025

by Deva Steketee

This summer, our trail crew completed a two-year effort on Lowe's Path to address areas of erosion and slipping hazards around the Log Cabin. These efforts resulted in a new pinned staircase below the Log Cabin (providing a safe route across a steep and slippery section of ledge) and two new sections of stairs and drainage that address continuing erosion in the same area. The skills of our six returning crew members were instrumental to making this technical work a success for the second year in a row. In addition, our three new members brought valuable skills from other outdoor organizations (including the AMC, VYCC, Utah Conservation Corps, and our very own RMC camps), making this year's crew an experienced and capable bunch. The Club benefits immensely from being part of a tight-knit trail community, both in the Northeast and nationally, who share our goals and commitment to safety, training, and a high standard of technical work.

The fall trail crew had the opportunity to complete some repairs in the alpine zone on Lowe's Path this fall, supported by a generous grant from the Waterman Fund, prepared by Christoph Geiss. We are grateful to the Fund for their continuing partnership and commitment to the alpine zone and we hope to do more important work of this type in the future.

Below left on this page, notes by the Field Supervisor about the alpine zone work.

"We really enjoyed being above treeline, taking in the views, enjoying the weather, and getting cozy at Gray Knob every evening. This work differed technically from much of the work we completed during our summer season, which was a great way to expand the skills of some of our members and gave us a welcomed change of pace. In rebuilding and constructing cairns, we hoped to provide clear visual guidance to hikers, allowing them to identify the path and follow it more closely. In rebuilding and constructing scree walls, we hoped to provide more explicit guidance to hikers by blocking off some herd paths and social trails and reestablishing the tread to the original corridor. We were able to close off some pretty clear, heavily-used herd paths, which will significantly decrease the impact and erosion hikers are causing. We also have the chance to do some brushing to clear the corridor and reestablish the tread. This allows hikers to find the original treadways much more easily and follow them without having to analyze or critically evaluate their path. We used the scrap branches to brush in some of the herd paths that we closed off with scree walls, making it even more clear that those paths should not be used."

Annalise Brinks



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Report from the Camps Committee

by Pete Antos-Ketcham, JP Krol and Cheryl Byrne

The latter half of this summer and the fall went very well at the camps. The summer drought lasted into the fall, delivering an excellent fall hiking season with endless sunny days. However that same drought caused the water source at the Log Cabin go dry, for the first time in recent memory.

Our big story of the fall was a successful airlift of general supplies: Bio-Bricks fuel for the Gray Knob stove, as well as maintenance items to the camps. With the airlift completed, we settled into the fall rhythm of working to get the big projects done while also preparing the camps for winter. For the caretakers this means completing compost runs at the camps' toilets, and then draining and shutting down the liquid management systems so they don't freeze. Water systems are disconnected and the solar system is tested. Additional fall projects included replacing signs and sign posts, repairing the Crag/Gray Knob spring box, and replacing the toilet riser at Gray Knob. The caretakers also completed general camps upkeep and maintenance such as oiling camp floors and the Perch tent platforms, and basic trail work (such as cleaning drainages) on the main approach trails to the camps.

Caretakers Sarah Geiwitz and Jack Buffington did excellent work this summer and helped make a good transition to the next season. Fall has been covered by new employee Ainsley Marsh and returning caretaker Declan Kiley. Winter duties will be shared by Declan and new employee Gerritt Bingham-Maas, who came to us from the AMC Huts. *See profiles of the new caretakers below on this page.*



Left, JP, Sarah, Annalise, Declan and Pete at Gray Knob in the airlift on Sept. 9; Owen Hoggard photo. Right, Gray Knob on Nov. 7, after one of the first snowfalls of the season; Ainsley Marsh photo.

While the logistical planning for 2026 is still developing, we know we have two busy field seasons ahead of us. The Club will be undertaking roof replacements at Crag Camp and Gray Knob, constructing an additional tent platform at the Perch, and conducting a significant upgrade to the composting toilets. The Perch--our camp closest to the busy Appalachian Trail route on the Gulfside--continued to see heavy use and overcrowding this season. Construction of a new platform there will provide an additional hardened site for camping and help reduce impact to the area. At Crag Camp, Gray Knob, and the Perch, we'll remove the non-functioning Bio-Sun toilet tanks and replace each with a traditional Batch-Bin collector under the outhouse. This will greatly improve liquid management and create optimal composting conditions for these high-elevation sites, allowing the Club to protect area water supplies and hiker health by safely and efficiently processing human waste.

The next two years will be very exciting for the RMC camps and we will be looking for volunteer assistance with many of these projects. If you are interested in joining the effort, please contact the Camps Committee for more information: camps@randolphmountainclub.org.

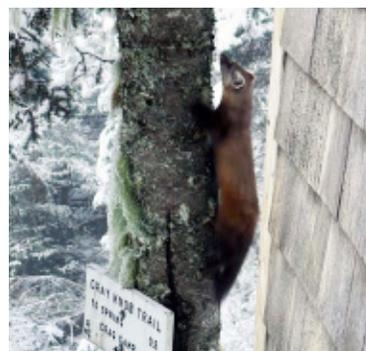


From our 2025-26 fall and winter Camp Caretakers

- in their own words -



Left and far right, courtesy photos of Gerritt and Ainsley. Right, the pine marten at Gray Knob, photo by Ainsley. Snowflakes: caltech.edu.



Gerritt Bingham-Maas: Hello everyone, I am very excited to be working as an RMC caretaker this winter! I'm originally from Middleboro, Massachusetts, and will be living in Jackson this winter. I've previously worked as a winter/fall caretaker for the AMC at Zealand Falls and Lonesome Lake huts, and I'm thrilled I'll be doing lots of skiing and climbing in the Northern Presidentials in the coming months. My goal for the coming winter is to learn how to ski telemark, and I'm hoping to get some practice in and around Gray Knob. My favorite snowflake is a stellar plate, which I'm sure I will be seeing a lot of!

Ainsley Marsh: I was thrilled to join the RMC as one of the caretakers up at Gray Knob this fall. I recently moved to Randolph from Burlington, VT where I worked in small-scale agriculture. When I'm not up at Gray Knob, I love getting outside for backcountry skiing, trail running, gravel rides, and paddling. It's been a treat to get to know the mountain and its quieter residents — especially the pine marten who has stopped by to say hello. I'm looking forward to settling into life in Randolph and being part of the White Mountain skiing and running community.

Hiker Rescue at the Perch

by Jack Buffington

Summer 2025 camp caretaker Jack Buffington was called into action to assist a hiker experiencing an unknown medical condition at the Perch on the morning of Sunday, August 17. While it was fresh in his mind, he wrote this account of his participation in the response and submitted it to the editor on August 25. Future newsletter contributors are invited to beat Jack's record for promptness. You can read the official account of this and other mountain rescues at nhfishgame.com.

With an empty propane tank on my pack I had just headed down the trail to the valley from Gray Knob when I got a call at around 9:30 AM from a former caretaker and AVSAR member. Someone at the Perch had called 911, asking for help with a hiker experiencing "convulsions." I immediately returned to Gray Knob to grab the med bag, and I threw in some other personal gear, not knowing how long I would be out on the call. In fifteen minutes I reached the Perch and the patient needing assistance. There I met the patient's father, a doctor, who gave me a quick but detailed history of the patient and what the past 24 hours had looked like. On my rounds the night before I had met these folks, and at the time all had seemed well. By now the situation had changed, but fortunately others were also on hand: two brothers of the patient, and four other hikers who had spent the night with them.



I called AVSAR to notify them of my findings, and learned that NH Fish & Game had contacted the National Guard for a possible fly-out with the helicopter. Soon AVSAR called me back, saying the helicopter might not be able to airlift the patient out, and that I should return to Gray Knob and bring back the litter for a possible carry-out down the trail. I asked one of the four other hikers if he would be willing to help me do this, and the two of us made our way swiftly back to Gray Knob. Once there I checked my phone and saw that the helicopter had taken off from Concord airport at about 11:20 AM; that was the same time we had left the Perch. Knowing that the helicopter needed only 40 minutes to fly to the Perch, we quickly returned there via the Gray Knob Trail.

Just as we arrived we heard a roar, and within a minute the distinct Blackhawk helicopter came into view. We quickly moved the patient from a tent platform to the shelter, where more open space would allow a better pick-up. We secured belongings and covered our eyes, all the while watching the exciting action of the helicopter moving closer and lowering a paramedic. Once the paramedic was on the ground the helicopter flew away and hovered at a distance, waiting for a signal from the paramedic to come back in. The rotor wash from these machines is quite crazy, producing 70-mile an hour winds and kicking up dust and debris. After a few minutes, the Blackhawk reappeared, this time lowering down a litter to put the patient in. We learned at this time that the father of the patient would also ride in the airlift, to Androscoggin Valley Hospital. As soon as all were on board, the helicopter flew away.

The other members of the patient's hiking party had two extra-large backpacks that needed to be carried down to their car parked at the Appalachia trailhead. Thankfully the other group of four, who had helped out all morning, were more than willing to carry some extra stuff out of the woods to Bowman (where they had a car) and then to shuttle the other two brothers of the patient back to Appalachia. I was super grateful for their help in keeping the situation as calm as they did, and in carrying out close to 70 pounds of gear in addition to their own.

From left, the rescue scene at the Perch: the hiker walks, with assistance from two others, towards the pickup point; the paramedic drops from the hovering helicopter; and the paramedic moves across the ground, head down. Photos by Jack Buffington and others at the rescue scene.



After everyone left I took some time to sit at the Perch and, in the quiet, process everything that had just happened. This was my first time being on scene at a wilderness rescue. Being a caretaker in the Northern Presidentials definitely comes with a lot of responsibility, and I understand why the RMC caretakers get called on for these rescues. Because we're on the mountain all year round, we often have the easiest access to places where hikers get into trouble, and we're able to get eyes on the scene hours before other rescuers can get there. We are not obligated to help out in these calls, but I do feel a good deal of responsibility to get information back to dispatch as quickly as possible. Thankfully the transport of the patient via the NH Air National Guard helicopter made this a relatively easy rescue. If not for them we would have had to carry out the patient by litter, which could easily have gone all day and into the evening, possibly into the night.

RMC Trail Adoption Program in 2025

by Christoph Geiss

In the past year, the Club's trail adoption program has grown significantly. We currently have fourteen enrolled trail adopters who take care of thirteen trails, ranging in length and difficulty from Will's Way and the Short Circuit to the Watson Path and the Chemin des Dames. For spring, summer and fall 2025, our trail adopters have spent a total of 180 hours on the trail, brushing, blazing and cleaning water bars, thereby helping us to keep out trails in tip-top shape.

Adopting a trail is easy: Fill out a volunteer application at <https://randolphmountainclub.org/trails/trail-sponsorship/> and we'll get back to you within a few days, for a discussion of suitable trails and trail adopter responsibilities. If you're still game, we'll have you out on the trail in no time at all!

On the opposite page is a current list of the adopted RMC trails and their adopters. As you can see, many more trails remain for those interested in this volunteer opportunity.



Adopters on the job in 2025: Left, Nate Sobol brushing on the Howker Ridge Trail; Christoph Geiss photo. Right, Amy Patenaude trimming branches in the wooded section of the Chemin des Dames; Danielle Normand photo.

Izzy, Wyatt, and I have been tackling the project this week. We hauled all of the lumber to the bridge site and stored it on the left side of Bee Line as you approach from the West. ... We also hiked out all of the old lumber, except a couple 2x8s that John T. told us to leave out there, which we added to the pile of lumber that we hauled. The old bridge materials that we hiked out of the woods are stacked on the side of the Mays' driveway. We drilled into the stone and pinned together the side of the foundation that is not poured cement. We put in 4 pins, each about 16 inches deep. We drilled as deep as we were able to with our drill bits and came a bit short of the 18-inch ideal depth. We cut the pins flush so they shouldn't be an issue.

Field Supervisor Annalise Brinks to John Phinney et al., Aug. 20

Peeko Bridge, continued from back cover

From the perspective of 2025 we can say that Phyllis Peek Folsom (nicknamed "Peeko" in her youth) was in the middle generation of a family that has called Randolph home for seven of them--over one hundred fifty years. William H. Peek (of the eponymous path created in 2014, in the Community Forest) was among the town's early pathmakers and Peeko's great-grandfather; and some of Peeko's own great-grandchildren marched or were carried in the bicentennial parade in 2024. She spent summers here all her life, marrying Henry T. Folsom ("Hank", a member of another Randolph summer family) in 1949 and then raising their children Henry, Randy and Ginny in a cottage on Randolph Hill.

Today the Folsom family's houses are in the Valley, not far from the trailhead of the Bee Line, and Ginny and her husband Rick Umiker now live there year-round. At Thanksgiving their entire branch of the family gathered again in Randolph and posed for the group photograph on the bridge that appears on this page. Other photos from Ginny's collection and from the RMC Archive show Peeko as many here remember her: happy to be in Randolph, and at home on the mountains we share.



Above left, the bridge during its reconstruction in September; John Tremblay photo. Right, Jack Stewart, Hawley Rising, Peeko and (standing) George Furness, all about 20 years old, on a hike in 1947; from the Peeko collection in RMC photo archive. Below, Ginny & Rick Umiker and their children, daughters-in-law and grandchildren on the bridge; photo by Julia Umiker.



My mother adored her life in Randolph, where the mountains were a source of great joy. Growing up, hikes on the RMC trails were a requisite and deeply treasured part of our summers. We are fortunate that our grandchildren continue to share my mother's love for both Randolph and its mountains. - Ginny Folsom Umiker

RMC Trails and their adopters, as of November 2025

Carlton Notch Trail (Josh Gleiner, Alex Roberts)
Chemin des Dames (Danielle Normand, Amy Patenaude)
Cliffway (Megan Carey)
Crescent Ridge Trail, east (Jeremiah Hawkins)
Diagonal (Howie & Sue Wemyss)
EZ Way (Heather Wiley)
Howker Ridge Trail (Nate Sobol)
Ice Gulch Path (Josh Gleiner, Alex Roberts)
Kelton Trail (Megan Carey)
Owl's Head Trail (Ed Clark)
Short Circuit (Howie & Sue Wemyss)
Watson Path (Christoph & Oliver Geiss)
Will's Way (Lynn Hunt)

Right, the Bee Line in the Community Forest.



Trail Adopter, continued from page 1

How much time do you spend, and how often?

I have spent anywhere from one to four hours at a time working on the EZ Way - approximately six separate times over the summer.

What work do you do on the trail?

Scouting is the first task - checking for large blow-downs or other major issues with the trail.

Brushing is next - using loppers to clear encroaching branches or small trees and removing brush.

Repainting blazes was also part of trail adoption - after a "lesson" from Christoph I was on my own with a wire brush, a template and paint!

Have you encountered trail problems that you refer to others in the RMC?

The only trail problems have been large blow downs which were reported for trail crew to manage.

Do you go out on your own, or bring a friend to work with you?

Both! Most often I go alone when it suits my schedule but have also had friends join for the brushing.

How important is it to you that Randolph has a public trail network within the town, that people can use for short local walks and everyday recreation?

We are so fortunate in Randolph to have a myriad of trails on which to hike. I think of the generations of people before me who



Randolph Hill Road at the top of the EZ Way; R. Meiklejohn photo. Below, the trail on the RMC map.



have spent countless hours creating and maintaining these trails. I am grateful and happy to be able to give back in a small way.

You're a year-round Randolph resident, so you have probably walked this trail in all seasons. Tell us about some of the changes you see on it throughout the year.

The EZ Way is a relatively short but interesting trail with several junctions. Its easy to moderate inclines and connections with Diagonal and Pasture Path make it an ideal trail to hike varying loops. From pretty open hardwoods to mixed softwoods it's truly a gem in all seasons.

For someone who's considering volunteering for this, what have you learned about it that they should know?

Do it! If you are at all physically capable and have some time, then this is a great volunteer opportunity. Trail adoption can be done on your own time, so you do not have to join a group on a set schedule. And Christoph is a wonderful, supportive and appreciative teacher and mentor, who will show you everything you need to know and answer all your questions.

What's your favorite thing about this trail, and/or your new responsibility for it?

I have thoroughly enjoyed the adoption of the EZ Way so far. It's very satisfying to see, at the completion of my work, a beautifully cleared and well-marked trail! There is a real sense of ownership and pride in knowing that a small piece of the RMC trail network is going to be well taken care of for, I hope, years to come.



RMC Photo Library Appeal

by Steve Chase

Far left, Ted May at the 2016 Gourmet Hike to Pine Mtn.; Jenn Scarinza photo. Left, Phil Knight's photo of former caretaker Peter Wallace, Bill Womble and Phil's dog Goldberry, at Emerald Bluff in 1986. (The Campbells' yellow lab Strider was Goldberry's sire.) Right, Bob and Anne Wells tending the coffee on the island at the 1994 Picnic; Renee Dunham photo, RMC Archive.



Thanks to the efforts of Al and Judy Hudson, assisted by many people in the Club, the RMC has the start of a fine photographic archive. The current digital collection includes scans of hundreds of images of Randolph, RMC events, and of our paths and camps. Al and Judy's collecting focused primarily on images from decades past, and it was necessary to scan the prints or slides created then. More recently, however, most of us have shifted to digital photography, and we hope that will make it easier and quicker to continue building the archive with contributions from members, employee alumni and others. A larger collection will allow the Club to share the visual history and stories of all the RMC's decades -- people, paths, events, mountain locations, and camps.

Do you have photographs of the mountains, RMC camps, paths, and Club gatherings that you have not shared in the past? Whether you have slides, prints, scans of photographs, or digital imagery, we would love to add them to the RMC photo archive. The best pictures show people in the mountains hiking, climbing, skiing, and enjoying the views from places like Knights Castle, The Inlook, Emerald Bluff, or the summits, in all seasons. The base archive has very few winter photographs, something we would especially like to build more from that season in the collection. The photographs do not have to be historic; any era is fine. In most cases we'll also want to record each photograph's date, location, photographer, and the names of any people in it. You've seen photographs from the archive in this newsletter, in our other publications and online, and we'll continue that in the future with new images you contribute.

If you do have a scanner, or a phone full of images, contributing digital media is best. You can send them to me on a thumb drive. If you have prints or slides, we can arrange to scan your photos. Either way, please contact me for more information or to arrange to send us photographs, at historian@randolphmountainclub.org.

Treasurer's Report

by Adam Berger

	Admin.	Camps	Dev't.	Stearns	Trails	Trails Grants	Total Actual
Revenue YTD 10/31/25:	\$46,072	45,115	100,135	-	-	21,000	212,322
Expense YTD 10/31/25:	\$43,768	64,056	2,817	8,724	34,279	65,728	219,371
Net Operating Income:	\$2,304	(18,941)	97,319	(8,724)	(34,279)	(44,728)	(7,049)

As of November 2025 the Club remains in a solid financial position, thanks to generous individual donations and foundation and government grants for work on Lowe's Path. However, revenue from camp fees is running significantly behind past years, as well as behind the current year budget, and revenues from membership and merchandise are also down slightly. On the other hand, we have continued to enjoy increased interest and dividend revenue from investment of our memorial, reserve, and surplus operating funds in higher-yielding money market accounts, and donations to the memorial funds have also been strong this year. Once all grant money and year-end donations are received, we should meet or exceed the budgeted operating revenue of approximately \$273,000.00.

On the expense side, most costs have stayed relatively stable from last year. The only major cost increase (other than expected wage increases for the trail crew) has been for the camps airlift. We are hoping that entry of new helicopter firms in the market will help bring those costs down next year, in time for extra airlifts to support planned construction and roofing work at the camps. With most of the year's major expenses already paid, we should end the year below the approximately \$254,000.00 budgeted for expenses in 2025.

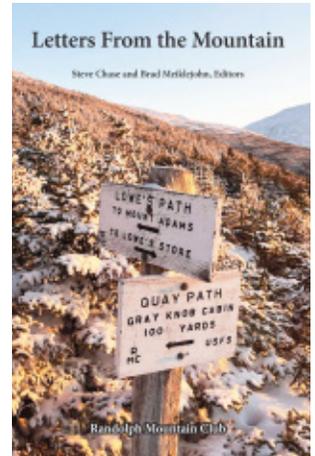
Overall, we expect to end the year with positive net income in the mid-five figures and begin next year with a solid cushion of liquid assets, which is important given the upcoming capital costs for the camps. (Note that the table above does not yet show as revenue the grants we've been awarded, because the funds have not yet been received.) We also appear to be in a strong position with respect to continued grant support of trail work. To ensure the long-term financial health of the Club, we will also undertake efforts in the coming year to restore and enhance income from camp fees, membership dues, corporate donations and other revenue sources.



From the RMC online store
by Michele Cormier & Randy Meiklejohn

December's featured merchandise item is a book published by the RMC this summer: Letters from the Mountain, a collection of camp caretaker essays. Its two editors, Steve Chase and Brad Meiklejohn, are alumni of RMC camps and trails, and they gave a public reading at Randolph Town Hall on October 20, attended by many former caretakers. You can read more about this Randolph Public Library event in December's Mountain View, published by the Randolph Foundation. Below are excerpts from two essays, selected by Steve.

Left: Brad and Steve reading to an audience in Town Hall, in front of the 2024 bicentennial quilt. Photo by Red Dempster.



Abigail Lown, from the first winter of the COVID shutdown in 2020-21:
"I wasn't sure what to expect of this odd pandemic caretaking in Randolph, but told myself that whatever the circumstances, I would stick it out. Infrequent human sightings, breakfast, lunch, and dinner wholly alone. My quiet winter had its lows and boring days, but most of the time I made the most of my life up on the ridge. The hours stretched before me on snowy days, confined to my little abode in the clouds. I checked in on Crag Camp daily, rarely any change, save for a dumping of snow or the passing through of a pine marten and a few snowshoe hares. I shoveled privy platforms and porches, knocked down my own meager outhouse cone, and hauled water for the use of just one. I developed a sustainable rhythm of daily life that became comforting, tranquil. The quarter mile to the water source between Gray Knob and Crag became a meditation and a memory game. ... I never saw a single soul on the path between Crag Camp and Gray Knob, so it really felt like an extension of my living space. Wherever I went and whatever I did, I was alone inside my mind."

Phil Knight, caretaker in 1984-85:
"I am haunted by mountains. A few nights ago, I returned to the Gray Knob cabin in a dream. While it looked different, as places often do in the dream world, I knew full well where I was. There are not many places I go to repeatedly in my dreams. My childhood home is one. Gray Knob is another. That makes it a home for my soul. ... Gray Knob ruined me. After working for the Randolph Mountain Club, I would never be fit for a desk job. I would never be truly at ease without mountains to ramble in."



Work trip volunteers kicking off the 2025 season, brushing in May on the Pasture Path: Tim Mather, Bob Drescher and a fellow volunteer, 2025 trail crew members Owen Hoggard and Wyatt McAbee, and Andy Vilaine. Photo by Benzo Harris.

Volunteer Work Trips for 2025
by Benzo Harris

This year's volunteer presence was small but mighty, and the RMC expresses its thanks to super volunteers Cristoph Geiss and Sally Micucci! Some trails such as Four Soldiers received much-needed major brushing, while on others such as Cabin Cascades volunteers did routine maintenance. For the 2026 season we are seeking members willing to lead one these enjoyable and useful work trips. If you're interested, please reach out and we will find a time to train you and, if needed, pair you with a more experienced leader. The trip schedule will be finalized in spring, and there will be many opportunities to volunteer on the "hill side" – trails within Randolph and on the Crescent Range. To lead, join a trip, or be put on our mailing list and receive updates, contact me at: worktrips@randolphmountainclub.org.

Reconstruction of the Peeko Folsom Bridge

Notes about the bridge project and a profile of its namesake, by the editor; thanks to Ginny Umiker, John Phinney, John Tremblay and Annalise Brinks

As of October, the Peeko Folsom bridge on the Bee Line is open again! Former camp caretaker and RMC go-to contractor John Tremblay completely rebuilt the structure this fall, after it had been swept away by raging floodwaters in a storm on December 18, 2023. Some of the wood parts of the bridge were later found in the Moose River on the south side of Route 2, but fortunately its two steel beams were less buoyant and came to rest above Mossy Glen. The trail crew retrieved the beams and carried in new lumber in late August; see the Field Supervisor's notes about the work on page 8.

First opened in the late 19th century, the Bee Line originally connected Randolph's two largest hotels, the Ravine House and the Mt. Crescent House, and has long been the most direct route from the Valley to Randolph Hill. It is a well-graded trail, with few steep sections, and residents have come to rely on it as a year-round route for short walks, visits to neighbors, getting to another trailhead, or for outings on skis or snowshoes. Along with the Town's Nepalese Bridge in Mossy Glen, the Peeko Folsom Bridge spans Carlton Brook, the only stream north of Route 2 wide enough to require bridges for RMC trails to be passable in winter and spring. Because the bridges are made mostly of wood, they are rebuilt from time to time, and the Bee Line bridge had been scheduled for replacement in 1995. That was the year Peeko Folsom died, at only 67 years of age, and the RMC subsequently received many donations in her memory. The family agreed to the Club's proposal to use the funds for the bridge, and it was then named in her honor.



Peeko on the Mahosuc Range Trail in 1983; courtesy of Ginny Folsom Umiker.

Top left, the steel beams are re-anchored to the abutments; A. Brinks photo. Middle, the 1995 plaque, salvaged and re-installed; Ginny Umiker photo. Bottom, the Bee Line, on L. F. Cutter's 1917 AMC map.

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