



PUTNEY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

A volunteer non-profit conservation organization

P.O. Box 953, Putney, VT 05346

Newsletter, Spring 2003

PMA and WHPA Honored by BEEC

By Jacquie Walker

The Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, at its 2003 Annual Meeting, awarded its Paul and Dorothea Stockwell Environmental Award to the Putney Mountain Association and the Windham Hill Pinnacle Association.

Roger Haydock, in presenting the award, made these remarks: "When wild land gets preserved, it's usually [by the] government... or large private organizations like the Nature Conservancy or Vermont Land Trust.

It's unusual to find local, grassroots organizations rising up spontaneously to preserve significant amounts of wild land. Yet right here in Windham County, we have two such groups. In the past ten years or

so, Putney Mountain Association in Putney, and Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association in Westminster, acting in concert, have preserved more than 1500 acres on the long ridge known in Put-

they've purchased their land at appraised value. Sometimes land has been generously given to the organizations, and at other times, easements across properties have been kindly donated. The money

to do all this has been raised from private foundations, corporations, the State of Vermont, and numerous individuals. It is a great credit to the environmental awareness of Windham County that community support and involvement has been spontaneous, generous,

substantial and continuous."

The Board and Members of Putney Mountain Association thank the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center for this honor.

Paul & Dorothea Stockwell Environmental Award: 2003

The Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center
wishes to thank the hardworking and dedicated members of the:

"Putney Mountain Association"

In recognition of their outstanding efforts to preserve & conserve open land along the 15 mile ridge known as Windmill Hill & Putney Mountain, and to establish a trail system so the public may appreciate its natural heritage for years to come.

Preservation of these lands will have a far-reaching, positive impact on the health and spirit of our community for many generations. For this, we thank you...

Signature _____
Signature _____

Date _____
Date _____

A Monitor's Musings

By Phillip Hamilton

Last year I joined PMA's winter tracking program. It dramatically altered how I experience winter.

The tracking program was started in 2001 to monitor how trails affected the habitat use patterns of mammals. Each winter, volunteers take to the woods armed with compasses, tracking books and data sheets.

This year we monitored two transects running parallel to a man-made trail: one within half a meter of the trail, the other at least 200 meters away. Each transect was at least 500 meters long, and marked every 50 meters to keep you on course. We collected data on the tracks crossing the transect, and local vegetation.

Tracking is thoroughly enjoyable on many levels. First, there is the added anticipation that comes with any snowfall. Maybe tomorrow will be a good tracking day! Once out in the woods, you have the challenge of finding and following the transects. Compass in hand, you must follow a bearing while looking for tags on particular species of trees—an opportunity to brush up on your orienteering and tree identification skills. It's a bit like a scavenger hunt, and very exciting when you find your target.

While navigating, you must

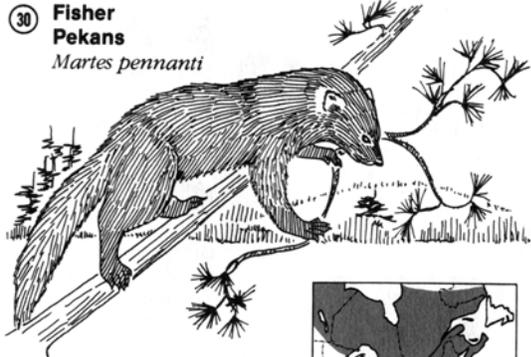
keep a keen eye out for tracks in the snow. The tracks provide a window into the life of the woods and it's fascinating to decipher the stories they tell. I was amazed at how much mammal activity there is in the woods, as evidenced by the tracks left behind by fisher, fox,

edges of its territory. The longer I walked, the more I began to see the woods through the fisher's perspective.

I strongly encourage you to participate in PMA's monitoring programs. The winter mammal tracking and the spring vernal pool

monitoring programs are wonderful ways to get outside and see the woods in a more intimate way. You get a sense of the cycle of life by monitoring the animals that use the woods. I enjoyed winter tracking so much that I was actually sorry to see this long winter come to an end. I miss following the lives of the woodland creatures. Maybe winter will come early this year. At least a guy can hope!

30 Fisher Pekans
Martes pennanti




Habitat: wilderness forest
Straddle: 15.5cm or larger
Leap: 73cm
Print: 6.5cm long
6.5cm wide

Fisher commonly tunnels into snow and its prints are likely to be found near water. It can climb trees and travel from tree to tree, but not as proficiently as marten.



Left front



Print in snow

From *Track Finder: A Guide to Mammal Tracks of Eastern North America* by Dorcas S. Miller, illustrated by Cherie Hunter Day. Copyright © 1981 Dorcas Miller.

coyote, deer, and even little mice. It can be difficult at first to determine what made the tracks, but if you follow a set of tracks long enough, you can frequently resolve the uncertainty.

I once followed a set of fisher tracks for over an hour. I discovered where it climbed a tree and then jumped off a branch back into the snow, where its walking pattern turned into a bounding pattern, where it snuck under some brambles leaving its soft fur as evidence, and where it left small scat as scent posts to reinforce the

If you'd like to become a monitor, we will teach you what you need to know. This year, Margo Guia from the Grafton Nature Museum and a member of the WHPA board led winter tracking monitors through the essentials of identifying tracks and scat, and interpreting the stride and straddle of mammals likely to be found in the Nature Reserve.

To participate in PMA's monitoring programs, contact Jacquie Walker (387-5387 or sidehill@sover.net), or Carol Westing (westing@sover.net).

Trail News

By Steve Anderson

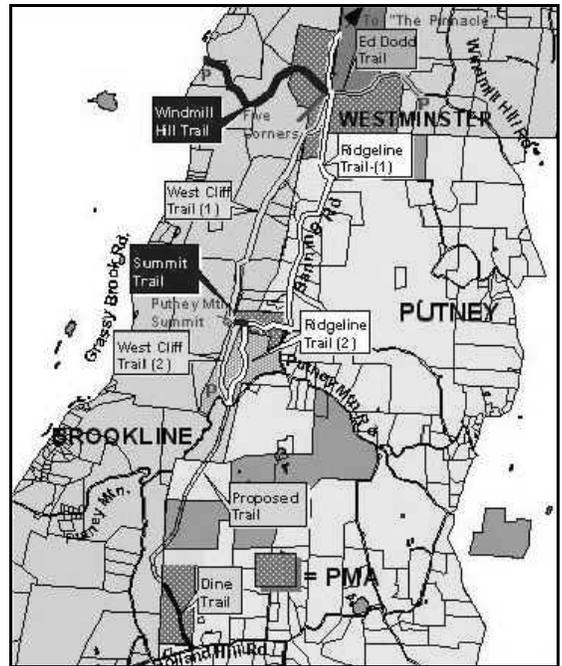
As you can see in our new Trail Guide, there've been some important additions to the trail system in our part of the Windmill Ridge Nature Reserve. These include two new access points, a new Nature Trail, and the West Cliff Trail. All PMA trails are now marked with permanent round colored markers.

There are now two small parking areas at the eastern end of the Ed Dodd Trail and the western end of the Windmill Hill Trail. Maps in the Trail Guide show the exact locations. Either trail will bring you to the ridge. At Five Corners you can connect with the Ridgeline Trail or the new extension of the West Cliff Trail.

The Nature Trail begins at the Putney Mountain Road parking area. You follow the West Cliff Trail to the Summit, and return to

the parking area via the Ridge Line Trail. Along this route are twelve information stations. A printed guide describes what you can observe at each station. The Nature Trail is 1.5 miles long, takes an hour to walk, and makes a great outing for kids and classes.

The West Cliff Trail runs north-south for 2.8 miles just west of the ridge, from the Putney Mountain Road parking area to the Five Corners. This foot trail is rated "strenuous" due to its switchbacks and steep sections, and shouldn't be attempted in rainy weather or icy conditions. For the ambitious, it offers some splendid western outlooks. From Five Corners you can continue north to the Pinnacle on another foot trail through the



The trail map on PMA's Web site lets you click on a trail name for details on its length and difficulty.

wilderness that runs 2.6 miles.

When using the Reserve trails, please remember our simple guidelines: no trash, no fires, no motorized vehicles, and no out-of-control pets.

For more information about the new trails, or about Putney Mountain Association, you can visit our new website at www.putneymountain.org.

Financial Report for 2003

By Steve Anderson

PMA must cover the cost of managing its portion of the Windmill Ridge Nature Reserve. Our 2003 budget of \$5,700 is broken down as follows:

Stewardship costs (trails, parking, insurance, mapping)	\$2,000
Printing, mailing, and other office expenses	1,500
Local taxes	1,900
Contingencies	<u>300</u>
Total	\$5,700

We obtain about \$2,200 per year in interest from our Stewardship Fund, but must raise the remaining \$3,500 from the public, in the form of grants and donations. We've written a grant to cover some of the cost of the new Nature Trail, and we'll also be selling caps and t-shirts at local events throughout the year. But for the bulk of our budget we look to you—our members and supporters.

Please make a donation and/or find a new member or two for us. The membership form in this newsletter can be used for both gifts and memberships. Thank you!

Many Thanks...

A basket full of thanks is due to a group of Putney School students who, under the direction of their teachers and PMA board members Cathy Abbott and Mick Baisley, designed and built the Nature Trail on Putney Mountain. The brochure and information stations they created will be appreciated by visitors to the Reserve for years to come.

We are also grateful to Chittenden Bank for donating the printing of the brochure.

Putney Mountain Association Membership Form

Date: _____

Name #1: _____ Name #2: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____ fax: _____

_____ I enclose \$25 per person lifetime membership fee, payable to Putney Mountain Association.

_____ I am making an additional contribution of \$ _____ for on-going projects.
Any amount over the membership fee is a tax deductible gift and very welcome.

_____ I am enclosing \$25 each for the following gift memberships:

Mail to: Claire Wilson, PMA Membership; 26 Spring Hill Road; Putney, VT 05346

PUTNEY MOUNTAIN CLEAN-UP DAY!

June 14, 2003

10am - 1pm

Bring tools, lunch, family, and friends.

Meet at Putney Mountain Summit.

Please let us know if your address changes.

The Putney Mountain Association
P.O. Box 953
Putney, VT 05346
Address Service Requested