



THE COHOS TREKKER

The Newsletter of The Cohos Trail Association

LOGS ON: NEW NEIL TILLOTSON SHELTER IS UP AND RUNNING

PITTSBURG – About half way along the pathway that is the Round Pond Brook Trail on the CT, a long-awaited log shelter donated by John Ninenger of Vermont Log Homes was erected so hikers might have a place to bed down for the night between the distant Lake Francis State Campground and the Deer Mountain State Campground in this huge 300,000-acre township at the top of the state.

In June, volunteers fabricated what is now known as the Neil Tillotson Hut lean-to, named for the late centenarian patriarch of Dixville Notch who founded Tillotson Rubber Company and owned and operated the Balsams Grand Resort Hotel. On a bit of forested level ground in the southwest corner of the Connecticut Lakes State Park, the shelter was pulled together with the help of as many as twenty people over the course of two and a half days.

Today, the shelter is accompanied by a composting latrine fabricated by Jack Pepau and his son, Chad. The privy is the first of its kind on the Cohos Trail, in that it is American Disabilities Act compliant. It is considerably larger than the trail’s other composting latrines, allowing hikers with disabilities more room and freedom to move about inside.

The lean-to is poised next to the Round Pond Brook Trail on a rise above a nearby stream, so there is a ready water supply just down hill. The structure is rather easily accessed northwest of NH Route 3 by southbounders, and it is about two miles south of the



Round Pond Brook Road for northbounders. From either of the state campgrounds, the shelter can be reached within eight hours or less under most circumstances.

Much of the ancillary materials were donated, including the green metal roof and screws. It was a gift of Pride Roofing of Raymond, NH. The foundation blocks were donated by an anonymous Cohos Trail fan. Other support for the project came from an anonymous donor from Vermont, and from the Museum of the White Mountains in Plymouth, NH. The museum housed the log structure inside its heated four walls for nearly a year, allowing the heavy logs to dry out, making them far easier to move.

The Neil Tillotson Hut lean-to is the now the fourth complete shelter on the Cohos Trail built by the association. It is soon to be followed by a fifth (see related story).



PRO PHOTOGRAPHERS HELP CREATE STUNNING KIOSKS

JEFFERSON – Where foot paths in the Cohos Trail system enter and exit the 6,000-acre Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge in this community stand two free-standing sign kiosks fabricated by Jack Pepau of Stark. They are fairly typical, utilitarian trail kiosks with a Cohos Trail sign affixed, but there is nothing typical about the metal panels that adorn the face of these units. For each now carries a stunning photographic image of terrain in the park and views

from it. The colorful photographs are the master works of Chris Whiton of White Mountain Images (whitemountainimages.org) and John Compton of Bethlehem.

But that's just the beginning of the picture, so to speak. For there are graphic panels displayed from North Conway to Bartlett, from Jefferson to Stark, Dixville and Stewartstown, and on up into Pittsburg. There are still a few more to go up, but by hiking season in 2018 there should be eye-popping panels the entire length of the CT and all the way down to the EMS store in the Conways.

The work of Chris and John is joined by fine efforts from Robert John Kozlow, Ken MacGray (kenmacgray.org), Dan Szczesny, and Kim Nilsen. There are nine different panels in all, but some are reproduced two or more times.

The images were produced on aluminum substrate by MegaPrint of Holderness, NH that specializes in large high-resolution graphic displays for business.

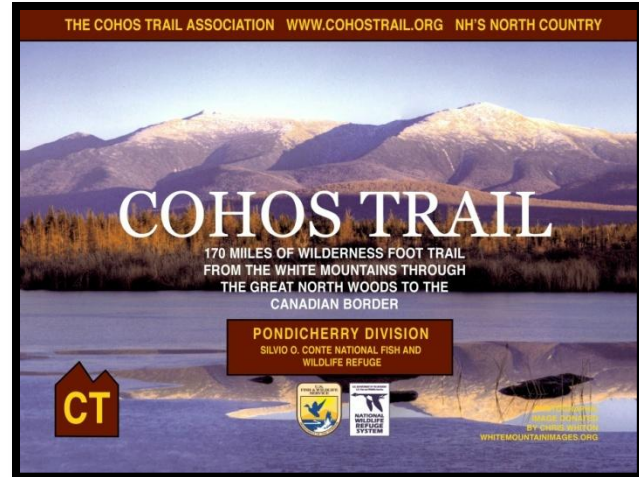
The purpose of the panels is twofold. They can be used by hikers to identify which of the numerous regions they are tramping in as they snake along on the Cohos Trail, and they are intended to strongly highlight the sheer beauty and local majesty of *all* of Coos County, NH, not just its high Presidential peaks.

PIPE DREAMING: A HIKER HUT TO CALL OUR OWN

On paper in a cabinet drawer somewhere are two decade-old scribbling, words and sketches that speak to the development of a hiker hut/CT headquarters. From the very beginnings of the planning stages twenty years ago now, there is reference to building a trail with lean-to shelters anchored by at least one structure or a cluster of structures that would become the beating heart of the Cohos Trail and a home for the association that would fabricate all of it.



The small image to the left was taken of a model building created from cardboard and glue and printed graphic software



Top: image by Chris Whiton. Bottom left: image by Robert John Kozlow mounted on a kiosk at Young's Store, Pittsburg. Bottom right: image by John Compton on a Nash Stream Forest kiosk

Generated siding and roofing. It was mounted on simulated ground and superimposed into a photo of Dixville Peak. The photo is no less than sixteen years old now. There were even floor plans worked out for this faux structure. It was one of several different concepts (including a cluster of permanent tent buildings) kicked around.

The Cohos Trail is still evolving, of course. There are still a few sections of trail that could be built to bypass enduring problems, but most of the planned shelters are in place or soon will be, and the old back-burner idea of creating a home for the long thru-trail grows more compelling and seems more plausible with each passing year.

So, because the days are very short and the cold is coming on, here's a hot-stove fantasy for those who yearn for a double bunk bed to throw the sleeping bag down and kick the boots off after a long day on the trail.

Just outside the southeast corner of the Nash Stream Forest and just north of the northern boundary of the Kilkenny division of the White Mountain

National Forest stand three buildings off the Bell Hill Road in the mountain town of Stark. Two are small rustic bunkhouses tucked into the trees, each with two rooms fitted out with three double bunks. There are 24 bunks in all. Each structure boasts a wide porch and Adirondack chairs, but that's about it for amenities. Behind each bunkhouse is a bank of composting privies.

Nearby is a bigger multipurpose building whose design reflects the conspicuous twin Percy Peaks in the distance. This main structure features a large public space outfitted with rustic furnishings and a massive Fisher Grandpa Bear woodstove. At the north end of the building is a kitchen designed so hikers can prepare their own meals without interfering with others. Several dining and gathering-spot tables and benches occupy the space, too.

Above the kitchen is a modest space for an office, a caretaker hovel, and storage. The structure houses two bathrooms and one shower (for the caretaker); there are solar field showers outside, two for men, two for women. The buildings are illuminated at night by solar energy.

Hikers northbounding out of the Kilkenny region of the White Mountain National Forest can locate the hut compound in two or three minutes. Trekkers southbounding hit the Percy Road and walk five minutes to get to their destination.

Kayakers and canoeists on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (Upper Ammonoosuc River) can tie up and take a leisurely stroll up to the buildings. There is room for parking and racking bicycles by the road.

The Percy Peaks Hut as it's called, operates much like the Randolph Mountain Club structures on Mt. Adams. Overnight fees are low, amenities are quite basic, but camaraderie is high. In the evening, sometimes, there are talks and lectures, even acoustic music performances for an hour or two.

In the morning, everyone is rested and is gone down river or up mountains. That's as it should be.

Could such a rustic enclave for non-motorized recreation see the light of day in the future? Maybe. Guessing now, say four or five years. Certainly would be nice to have something of this nature (or maybe something else entirely) in place in the region before the Cohos Trail turns 25 years of age.

STORM WASHES OUT WORK ON THE NEW DEVIL'S REST SHELTER

STARK -- The Cohos Trail Association was banking on setting up its second shelter on the trail in 2017, but the project had to be scrapped until late spring of 2018 because a powerful early November storm,



one that wrecked havoc in North Country forests, made access to the shelter site untenable in the Kauffmann Forest just south of the southern border of the Nash Stream Forest. Fallen trees and saturated ground would have made hauling materials next to impossible, so the work weekend was called off.

It would have been another first for The Cohos Trail Association had volunteer crews been able to complete its second shelter in a single year. But it was not to be. Dana Southworth of the waterpowered Garland Mill in Lancaster, NH had seen to it that all the shelter materials had been milled out and ready to go. He had a crew of folks lined up as did the association. But storm intervened.

The new shelter, dubbed the Devil's Rest, was to be built in November on a level site a ten minute walk south of the Nash Stream Forest's Jimmy Cole Brook Road and the junction with the Old Summer Club Trail. That property is a beautiful forest tract managed by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and named for the man who spent leisure time for eight decades vacationing at Christine Lake and tramping the local woods and mountains.

The Forest Society granted the association permission to erect a new lean-to and a composting latrine, plus put up signage to direct hikers to the site. Once we get a chance to put up the fine handiwork from the Garland Mill, it will be the second Cohos Trail shelter on Forest Society lands, the other being up on north Sanguinary in Dixville.

The shelter and the accompanying composting latrine, built by Jack Pepau of Stark and his son, Chad, are in storage now awaiting the June effort.

In the spring we will begin posting dates and times for the project. We welcome everyone to come out to lend a hand.

The project was and will be made possible by funding from the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund, administered by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, and by a gift from an anonymous Vermont donor.

THAT MISSING FIVE MILES IN THE CT DATABOOK

This is embarrassing. In the southbound version of the Cohos Trail Databook, in the Deadwater region section, the mileage is listed at 18.5 miles. That's a typo, actually. The mileage should read 13.5. The five mile difference on paper threw a wrench into tramping the trail for some folks out there this past year.

Please make a note of it, scribble a correction in your book if you have it, and we'll correct the mistake going forward, as we will with a few other odds and ends in both databooks.

Also, the databooks do not make note of dozens of stealth camping sites along many of the trails, particularly in the Whites and the Kilkenny. These are not formally sanctioned camp sites, so we did not list them. But, for your sake, be aware that there are many many such sites south of NH Route 110 so there is no shortage of places to pitch a tent. North of Route 110, however, camping must be confined to designated areas and state or private campgrounds. It is illegal to camp on private land and within NH State forests. You may stay at the Cohos Trail shelters for free or set up a tent directly in the vicinity of the shelters. That's fine. Once the Devil's Rest Shelter is complete, there should be no trouble finding a place to camp legally north of Route 110.

WHERE TO STAY DIRECTLY ON THE TRAIL

1. Notchland Inn (private lodge, Harts Location)
2. Dry River Shelter (close by, WMNF)
3. Applebrook B&B (private lodge, Jefferson)
4. Mt. Cabot Cabin (WMNF)
5. Unknown Pond campsite (WMNF)
6. Rogers Ledge/Mill Brook campsite (WMNF)
7. Devil's Rest Shelter (June 2018, TCTA)
8. Percy Loop Camp (tent platform site, TCTA)
9. Old Hermit Shelter (TCTA)
10. Baldhead Shelter (TCTA)
11. Panorama Shelter (TCTA)
12. Coleman State Park (State) John Compton photo



13. Lake Francis Campground (State)
14. Ramblewood Campground (Private, Pittsburg)
15. Neil Tillotson Hut lean-to (TCTA)
16. Deer Mountain Campground (State)

TOM ADAMS, JOHN HIGGINS JOIN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the November directors meeting of the Cohos Trail Association at President Ken Vallery's residence in Lancaster, two new board members were seated. They are John Higgins, who owns a camp in Stark, known for his love of old-time Moxie soda, his strong desire to work on trails and trail structures, and access to shelter roofing materials. He is joined by Tom Adams (see separate story) from Sanford, Maine, who has hiked the Cohos Trail twice, grew up in Berlin, NH, and who has spent a good deal of time working the trails and helping build shelters.

Both men have a keen interest in shepherding the Cohos Trail into the future.

WHAT'S IN THE HEADWATERS FOREST FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest is comprised of big blocks of private timberlands in the towns of Stewartstown, Clarksville and Pittsburg, all of which are under State easement requiring the lands be open for recreational use. Management of the lands for uses other than timbering falls to the NH Dept. of Forest and Lands, who produce five-year plans to guide the development and maintenance of recreational resources with the forest tracts.

The Cohos Trail Association produced a plan of its own for inclusion within the State five-year plan, in the hopes that some or all of the provisions would be adopted and work could go forward in the future creating and improving trails.

In the Cohos Trail document, consisting of copy and maps, the association sought five different trail development projects. Two different threads of thought underpin the five projects. One of our goals is to move any and all foot paths off ATV active lanes in the region for numerous reasons, the most important being safety, quiet, and quality of pathway underfoot. The other goal would be to greatly improve the nature of the trail in the headwaters region by moving the trail off existing ways of any sort, attaining higher ground, reaching new and interesting features, and obtaining a direct and remote foot trail route to the Canadian border.

Probably the most critical proposal of the five is finding a suitable route and developing a new trail due north out of Coleman State Park in Stewartstown to the two bridges over the twin inlets into Lake Francis on the Clarksville/Pittsburg town boundary line. As the crow flies that's a distance of over seven miles. Within that realm is a panoramic view of wooded peaks and high ridges to the east and into Maine, a black spruce bog, the dull summits of Whipple Ridge, and the Deadwater Loop Road. This trail concept, if it were ever to become a reality, would eliminate miles and miles of road and ATV corridor walking and eliminate the future need for yet another shelter on the Cohos Trail system, because the State campgrounds at Coleman and Lake Francis would be in reach within an easy day's march.

Perhaps the most doable project of the five would be to create a 3,500-foot summit trail atop Deer Mountain five miles from the Canadian border that would descend from the top of the peak where the old firetower steel infrastructure still stands to a log yard well down the northeast flank of the mountain. There the old access way to that log yard would provide a path to the valley floor and Sophie's Lane (an old logging road that is part of the Cohos Trail).

This short new path would make it possible for the Cohos Trail to leave Sophie's Lane on the valley floor for more than two miles. The treadway would then ascend the Deer Mt. Firetower Trail to the summit and, instead of ending there, would descend on the new path and the logging lane all the way to the valley once again but two miles farther north up the line.

This development has a bigger cousin within the plan, one that would be more difficult to create and possibly be more difficult to gain permission to undertake. Once on the northeast flank of the mountain, we envision building all new trail along the north-running ridgelines to the vicinity of Wright

Pond and the three Perry Ponds. From there the route would climb slowly but steadily toward the Canadian border and intersect with the loop path around Fourth Connecticut Lake.

The benefits of such a trail would be apparent to southbounders immediately, as it would link Fourth Connecticut Lake with other high country ponds and the summit of Deer Mountain all within the first five miles of the border.

To improve access to Lake Francis Campground, we proposed an alternate route into the state facility, by utilizing an existing angler pathway along the banks of the Connecticut River north of the campground and out to the Carr Road bridge upstream.

The final idea spelled out in the plan would be to run the Cohos Trail directly into Deer Mountain Campground. The trail now skirts the campground on nearby Sophie's Lane. But a route through the campground and north would be a simple matter to create with existing paths, except for the fact that a bridge would have to be built across the very narrow Connecticut River on top of or below Moose Flowage dam near campsite #28 in the campground.

There is yet another project we would like to undertake eventually that does not fall within the headwaters tract, but is to the south of it some ten miles. The Kelsey Notch Trail from Baldhead Shelter down to the Kelsey Notch Road (ATV corridor) could be rerouted in its lower section to turn abruptly north and then northeast to link Baldhead Mountain to Dixville Peak directly, instead of using ATV lane and wind turbine service road to reach high on Dixville Peak.

A new plan calls for dropping down the Kelsey Notch Trail to the north until it reaches the Columbia town line/Nash Stream Forest's eastern boundary. Instead of heading east, a new trail would turn abruptly north and follow the town line (blazes in the



woods) north to the Kelsey Notch Road some half a mile west of the point where the trail now reaches the road. Once at the Kelsey Notch Road, the new path would cross directly over it and continue north and then northeast to reach two 3,000 foot summits on the southeast arm of Dixville Peak. Once over those summits, the new path would enter a thin wishbone-shaped band of land that is managed by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. The new route would snake along inside that boundary until it reaches the existing Dixville Bypass path on the west upper flank of that mountain.

COULD THE DEER MOUNTAIN FIRE TOWER BE RESTORED?

PITTSBURG – Decommissioned in the Sixties and its cab, stairs and railings removed, the Deer Mountain firetower steel still stands on the north summit of that peak some five miles south of the Canadian border. The tower once possessed a commanding view of three states and Quebec province. Restoring that lost view would be a worth project wouldn't it?

Such an idea is not fantasy. The firetower atop Vermont's Mt. Monadnock, across the Connecticut River from Colebrook village, was fully restored a decade ago. Nearly 70 volunteers assembled to make that restoration a reality. Could such a feat be accomplished at Deer Mountain?

There are some distinct differences between the two towers. On Mt. Monadnock, that tower still retained its steel cab and some existing decking. Deer Mt. tower has none of that. But there need not be a cab rebuilt atop the steel. A viewing platform would do the job, would it not?

There is some dispute, as we understand, as to what party actually owns the summit, the State or private timber owners, upon which the tower stands. If that can be worked out, interest fired up, dollars raised, and volunteers rounded up, perhaps that fine view from atop the mountain could be had once again.

COHOS TRAIL PATHS UP FOR ADOPTION

The association's Trails Coordinator, Susan Wentworth of Lancaster, has posted a list of paths within the Cohos Trail system that could be adopted by merciful souls who love a lonely path in the forest enough to take care of it.



Here is a short list of Cohos Trail Association maintained trails that Sue says could use a helping hand:

1. Kelsey Notch Trail in northern Nash Stream Forest
2. Moose Alley Trail in Pittsburg
3. Ramblewood Link in Pittsburg
4. Pike Pond Link path to a parking area near the southeast corner of the Nash Stream Forest.

The Old Summer Club Trail and Sugarloaf Mt. Trail were open just a week or two ago, but they have since been adopted, the former by Tammy Hirschorn and the latter by Gina Foremeister.

On White Mountain National Forest lands in the Kilkenny, administered in this region by the Androscoggin Ranger District office in Gorham, there are a number of trails that could use pampering.

1. Kilkenny Ridge Trail, Mt. Waumbek to Mt. Cabot
2. Kilkenny Ridge Trail, Mt. Cabot to South Pond
3. Devil's Hopyard Trail south of South Pond
4. Cherry Mountain Trail, from Cherry Mt. Road to the summit of Mt. Martha

On White Mountain National Forest lands in the Presidential Range region there are several pathways that would take a dedicated soul to keep in shape.

1. Isolation Trail, west leg from ridge to Dry River
2. Eisenhower Trail, Dry River to Crawford Path

Again, White Mountain National Forest Trails are under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service and not the Cohos Trail Association. Their adoption would have to be approved by Forest Service personnel at one of the various district headquarters that service various large tracts within the White Mountain National Forest.



A FIRST: GRANDDAD AND HIS GRANDDAUGHTERS FINISH CT

FOURTH CONNECTICUT LAKE -- This is a feel-good story if ever there was one.

Tom Adams of Sanford, Maine and his two young granddaughters completed a thru-hike of the Cohos Trail in 2017 in two weeks, hoofing it from southern Crawford Notch to Fourth Connecticut Lake sometimes in bare feet.

Tom, now a member of the board of directors, planned on section hiking, but the granddaughters would have none of it. Supported by Tom's wife, Pat, shadowing the trio in a supply car on occasion, she made sure they had the necessary supplies to see them through on their journey.

Here is their story, courtesy of Granddad Tom:

My oldest granddaughters, Misty, 11, and Annalee, 12, and I started backpacking in the summer of 2016. We had section hiked the Cohos on weekends, northbound. As spring approached I asked if they were still interested in hiking, and the younger of the two said if we were doing the Cohos Trail again could we do it all at once, nonstop. Her older sister agreed to join us after we summited some 4000 footers. We chose the first two weeks of August.

This would be our first real attempt of a thru hike. We would have my wife, Pat, drop us off at the Canadian border and meet us at Lake Francis State Park, Coleman State Park, and Hermit Shelter, plus leave a supply box at Applebrook Bed and Breakfast.

Starting out the first day, we had a lot of wet grass and weeds to walk through and a thunderstorm to content with before ending at Neil Tillotson Hut. The 2nd day started off sunny and the girls insistent they could hike barefoot, I agreed thinking they would not last long, but they made it all the way to within sight of Route 3 at Happy Corner. We had three heavy thunderstorms pass over us that afternoon that made

for wet going. We stayed at Lake Francis State Park that night and left for Deadwater Trail junction, where my wife would meet us. The 4th day was a wonderful walk through the McAllester Farm area to Coleman State Park. It was the first day without showers or storms. The 5th day is when we saw other hikers, Trish Herr with her girls Alex(14) Sage(12) going NOBO, four guys ending at Coleman SP, Karl and his son Aloysius(11) going SOBO. Karl and his son stayed with us at both Panorama and Baldhead Shelters as we ventured south. Between these two shelters we took in the Table Rock viewpoint in Dixville Notch, a must to see right on the trail.

We said goodbye to Karl and Aloysius on the 7th day, as they were going to pick up the pace. We stayed at Old Hermit Shelter on Sugarloaf Arm and meet my wife for our re-supply. Our 8th day was a short hike to Percy Loop Camp tent site, (we saw 2 guys going NOBO there) where the girls got to try their hammocks/tarps out in the rain. I slept under one of them in a bivy. The 9th day we meet a couple heading NOBO. We bypassed the spurs to the Percy's because I wanted to get as far into Killkenny as I could. We found another couple camping out near us and had another stormy night but stayed dry.

On Day 10 we were hiking through the Pilot Range in the Killkenny in the rain once again, using trails that see more use than the Cohos. We saw other hikers fairly often in the Unknown Pond to Mt. Cabot stretch. We spent a dry night in the Willard Notch, traversed the Pliny Range, and headed into the town of Jefferson for a stay at the Applebrook B&B. The trail between Willard Notch to Mt. Waumbek is a path less traveled on, but we encountered no blow downs this time through.

We stopped for pizza and subs at the Old Country Store before arriving at the Applebrook. We stayed an extra night at Applebrook and called my wife to bring up Annalee's sneakers as her hiking boots would not dry out and were coming apart from the inside out. Our supply shuttle would meet us in two days on Route 302 at Faybans. We started our 13th day under a heavy overcast sky but it turned into a nice cool sunny day to go through the Pondicherry Wildlife Preserve, over Owl's Head and Mt. Martha and out to camping spot near Cherry Mountain Road. The trip downhill to Bretton Woods and up Edmands Path can be a quick walk but mostly dirt road and Route 302 until we you got to Edmands Path trailhead. We camped out in the woods on the side of the ridge in heavy winds. The next day heavy winds of the night before and the threat of heavy rain prompted us not to try for Dry River Shelter. We turned around and headed off the Southern Presidential Ridge, and did it pour on us on the way out. We had the wettest hike of our trip that day.

This has been a remarkable adventure for the three of us, to spend two weeks alone with each other. It has been years since I have spent this much time away from home, and the girls have never been away from their mom this long. We traveled through open hardwood forest, thick pines, fresh logging operations, crossed brooks and even small ponds on bog bridging (Kilback Pond), dusty dirt roads, ATV and Snowmobile trails, wonderful old farm roads, even a fragile alpine area at the top of Edmands Path.

We meet a lot of nice people along the way, hikers, ATVers and people passing by on the road to see if we were alright. Finished reading the Hobbit to the girls by flashlight. The girls learned a new card game by flashlight playing with Aloysius. It was a great pleasure listening to the woods come alive in the morning.

If you are already a hiker I don't have to convince you about the benefits of hiking. Don't think kids can't do this, that their too young, either boys or girls. You do have to have a good sense of what you and they can handle. A thru hike would not be the first step to try an overnight hiking trip. But the Cohos would be a good first thru Hike to try when you're ready. Karl and his son finished in 9 or 10 days, Trish and her girls I think did less than the two weeks we took to complete the journey. Our only disappoint (other than ending our hike a day early) was only seeing one deer and a fox. We did see plenty of ruffed grouse and some little creatures. Also no coyotes calling at night.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY.

We'll hold a trail maintenance event on Saturday, June 2nd. Stay tuned for details, but mark the date on your calendar.

DEVIL'S REST SHELTER PROJECT

In late spring, we will erect our new Devil's Rest Shelter and composting latrine in the Kauffmann Forest. We'll let you know where, how, and when later this winter.

THE LAST WORD

Here is where we jot down bits and scraps of news that need some fanfare.

Ken Vallery replaced worn out bog bridging on the East Side Trail in the Nash Stream Forest with new spans of pressure-treated 4x4s. No one keeps a trail in better shape than Ken.



The Cohos Trail and the Northern Forest Canoe Trail cross at the Bell Hill bridge over the Upper Ammonoosuc River on the eastern reaches of Stark township.

Trail adopter Bruce Brekke reported that blowdowns have been cleared on the Col. Whipple Trail in the Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge.

Lainie Castine reported that the heavy October storm did not affect the Pittsburg region quite as much as the White Mountains to the south.

During the October flood, the Saco River reached within a few feet of the bottom of the high cable-stay bridge at Harts Location that provides a starting point for the Davis Path and therefore the Cohos Trail system. Amazing. Dry River Campground downstream was heavily damaged by the raging waters and Route 302 was severed for more than a week.

52 With A View has put the Percy Peaks on the map, for sure. Lots of traffic on North Percy from folks trying to peak bag the summits on that list.

If you need a composting latrine for any reason, for a trail or for the back 40 at your place, get a hold of Jack Pepau in Stark. He has been fabricating them for the Cohos Trail for more than a decade.

By a large margin, more hikers tramped the Cohos Trail end to end in 2017 than at any time in its history. Maps are selling briskly, as are our publications.

There may be bear boxes in our future. We'll be looking into the cost of these necessities with an eye toward eventually placing them at each shelter.

As the year rolled over to 2018, the Cohos Trail Association turned 20 years of age. Although there was some tinkering at the edges in 1997, formal efforts to put together an association and begin building a trail really got underway in 1998.

Early Cohos Trail advocate and North Country Trailmaster youth trail maintenance crew program founder David Dernbach passed away this year. David's young charges put a great deal of effort into opening up miles of new pathway within the Cohos Trail system. Those of us with gray hair will miss David and his love of trails.

Yvan Guay of Jefferson, pictured here to the right with a young yet veteran tramper who had just completed redlining all trails in the AMC guidebook while on North Percy Peak, has been a board member of the Cohos Trail Association for just about the entire life of the organization. He has also taken care of the Percy Loop and Percy Loop Camp for just about that length of time, too. Kudos to Yvan, and thank you.

The Devil's Hopyard Trail, near the northern end of the Kilkenny Ridge Trail, leads to a haunting domain, a gulch with sheer cliff walls, boulder strewn path, shadowy recesses, an underground stream, a rare plant community, and ice hiding among the rocks in just about every month of the year. If you have never taken the side trip into the Hopyard, you have missed one of the small jewels along the Cohos Trail.



Dixville Notch is heavily fractured and falls and slides readily.

Can't find a parking spot in summer at trailheads in Franconia Notch or in the Route 2 lots below Mt. Madison and Mt. Adams? Forget traffic! Find your way to the Cohos Trail in the Great North Woods.

Baldhead Shelter is now 15 years young. Its latrine, which will get some needed attention this year, is two years younger. Use caution on aging bog bridging, particularly in Gadwah Notch and the Sims Stream Valley. The old log spans can be very slippery in wet and icy weather.

Nothing like the sound of eastern coyotes, sometimes called coydogs or coywolves, howling from afar when the full moon is on the rise.

Almost forgot. You can make the Cohos Trekker newsletter that much better in the future by sending along your photos and Cohos Trail related stories to cohos@cohostrail.org or by posting to Friends of the Cohos Trail on Facebook. It is easy for us to lift photos (provided you give us permission to run them) and copy from a Facebook post. We'll credit you, of course. We can always use your very best of the best shots on our website, too, by the way.



Baldhead Shelter in snow. Photo by Gator Miller.

Five or six years ago, Jennifer Tate of Nashua somehow survived a fall of some 50 feet to the rocky floor of Huntington Falls on the eastern side of Dixville Notch after the ground at the edge of the ravine gave way. Please be aware that the rock in