

CURRENTS & COMMUNITIES

FALL 2023



OUR MISSION

We promote and steward our water trail and support communities, waterways and paddling across the Northern Forest.

OUR VISION

An unrivaled network of paddling opportunities across the Northern Forest will inspire ongoing experiences and stories, enticing people to fall in love with the region. Their passion and commitment will contribute to the health of our communities, landscapes and waterways.

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Noah Pollock, Stewardship Director
Chris Morris, Communications Director
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CONNECT WITH US

Website: northernforestcanoetrail.org
Facebook: @paddlenfct
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Phone: (802) 496-2285

The paddling community continues to provide inspiration, joy and camaraderie.

The NFCT's 2023 season blew us all away. We kicked things off in May with our largest 'Round the Mountain race yet, with well over 100 paddlers descending upon Saranac Lake for our first race of the year. That event set the tone for the rest of the spring, summer and fall, which featured enthusiastic participation in and support for our stewardship and programming.

In June, we participated in Celebrate Paddling ADK, teaming with outfitters in the Adirondacks for guided trips, film screenings, lectures and more. We also partnered with NRS to host the Adirondack Paddling Symposium, which included instruction for paddlers of all skill levels and outings for youth from Chicago Adventure Therapy.

Elsewhere, our stewardship crew worked hard in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine to provide safe and environmentally responsible access to the woods and waters of the Northern Forest region. Read on for Noah Pollock's season wrap up.

Our small crew of year-round and seasonal staff works hard to take care of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail and engage with paddlers from all walks of life. But with this much ground — and water — to cover, we need your support to ensure our success. This year, you delivered in a big way, and we are grateful for all that you do.

— Karrie Thomas, Executive Director

Our rivers and lakes are constant, but the water that runs through them is ever-changing, constantly moving — our paddling community is no different.

In recent years, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail's community has grown and evolved, welcoming in new racers, new thru-paddlers, new stewards — the next generation that will carry on the traditions and spirit we hold dear. But it's not just the young ones: we've met families and older folks dipping their paddles into the water for the first time, too. And as always, the long-time members of the NFCT family have welcomed all comers with open arms.

In New York, Brian and Grace McDonnell passed the Adirondack Race Series on to the NFCT, ensuring that these grand paddling traditions will continue for generations to come. Elsewhere, business partners like Adirondack Lakes & Trails Outfitters and St. Regis Canoe Outfitters have transitioned to new ownership and are thriving, and the newly formed Guide ADK is emerging to join these longstanding businesses. In Vermont, NEK Guides has begun sharing their passion for the Northeast Kingdom. Northern Waters Outfitters, a celebrated New Hampshire institution and NFCT supporter, has been under new management since 2016. And in Maine, the Rangeley Adventure Company and Northeast Carry General Store have both undergone intergenerational transfer. The future, in short, is in great and capable hands.

Change is inevitable and not always easy — it's not unusual for generational shifts to create friction and strife. The NFCT counts itself as lucky that the transitions along the trail have been as smooth and as welcoming as the pristine waters we paddle every day.



Young paddlers from Hamilton College are all smiles as they cruise across the Day 2 finish line of the Adirondack Canoe Classic.

OF RIVERS & RESILIENCE: STEWARDSHIP SEASON IN REVIEW

*By Noah Pollock
NFCT Stewardship Director*

Each year, I approach our stewardship season with both excitement and trepidation. Will permits and funding fall into place? Will our interns and volunteers perform effectively? Will our infrastructure function as planned? And will the weather cooperate? I'm happy to report that despite numerous challenges, we had an incredibly successful season!

I am so grateful for all who make our work possible, especially our interns Ethan Israel, Jonah Yaffe and Kate Wimberly, and the 43 volunteers who joined us during seven waterway work trips. Thank you! Together, we completed 20 projects:

- *Installed steps and a privy at the Moore Primitive Campsite, along with stone steps at the Woodsville Community Ball Fields Access, both along the Connecticut River*
- *Constructed 35 stone steps at a paddlers' campsite on Lake Champlain's Valcour Island*
- *Repaired bridging and improved drainage with stone turnpike along NY's Indian Carry, and replaced docks and privies at four Upper Saranac Lake campsites*
- *Constructed two boat lock stations in Saranac Lake*
- *Installed stone steps at two river access trails along Vermont's Passumpsic River*
- *Installed stone and timber steps at the East Richford Access, Upper Missisquoi River*
- *Improved three access points along the Androscoggin River in Gorham, including constructing a floating dock and stone steps*
- *Maintained Maine's Rapid River Carry, including repairing bog bridging, adding stone-lined fords to protect water quality, replacing a bridge, and completing a trail re-route around a rocky section*
- *Established two new campsites on Moosehead Lake*
- *Reconstructed Moosehead Lakes' historic Northeast Carry, including constructing a gravel base and adding a gate to limit damage from spring motor vehicle use*



Staff and volunteers take a well-earned break after constructing new stone steps to a campsite on Lake Champlain's Valcour Island.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, dozens of volunteer site adopters served as our eyes and ears along the trail, making repairs from winter storms, and assessing impacts from summer floods.

Nearly 20 years of working along rivers has taught me to be observant, flexible, patient and humble. Our ability to complete this work despite family and medical emergencies that left us short staffed, coupled with one of New England's biggest flooding events in recent history, is a testament to the strength and resilience of our trail and the community behind it. I have learned that these traits are rooted in respecting nature, embracing teamwork and building community. Thank you to all who believe in our work and support our vision!

Thank You to Our 2023 Volunteers

Mark Blackwood • Henry Blanchette • Katy Bland • Jim Bourne • Lorraine Brink
Cassandra Burdyslaw • William Conner • Allison Courtemanche • Quena Crain
Margaret Curtis • William Eiseman • Anne Eiseman • Jim Farrell • Chris Fithian • John Freeman
Paul Glasscock • Gary Golden • Rachel Gordon • Kristen Grant • Worth Gretter • Eric Hanson
Martin Hatcher • Steve Hern • Tim Hille • Jaci Kessler • Griff Keating • Marshall Kim • Chip Kimball
David Kocieniewski • Kelly Lagrander • Bob Lagrander • Delia Lagrander • Teddy Lagrander
Bruce Lindwall • Laurie Lindwall • Stephen Magneson • Sara Mele • Pamela Mitchell
James Mudie • Jim Noland • Emily Pettit • Bethany Poulin • Peter Roderick • Bryon Rosenberg

Thank You to Our 2023 Partners

Lake Champlain Basin Program • Athletic Brewing • NYSDEC • Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund
Great River Hydro • Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund • Quimby Family Foundation
Maine Bureau of Public Lands • Maine Recreational Trails Program
NH Charitable's Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund
UMATR • Town of Gorham • Vermont River Conservancy • The Davis Conservation Foundation
Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust • Northern Waters Outfitters • Huber Resources
Maine Appalachian Mountain Club



The NFCT's stewardship crew installed a new floating dock at the take-out above the Gorham Dam on the Androscoggin River, part of a larger effort to enhance access to the river for paddlers, anglers, tubers and other users.



NFCT INTERNS: MAKING MEMORIES & FINDING COMMUNITY



"When I first learned about the NFCT internship program, I saw it as an opportunity to become part of something much greater than myself. I was excited about a summer job that combined everything from carpentry to paddling. Being able to venture into the woods for 10 weeks and travel around the Northeast seemed like a vacation, not a job. Indeed, working on the canoe trail has been one of the most memorable and rewarding experiences I have ever had."

— Ethan Israel



"Spending each week in a different location gave us the opportunity to become part of a community not based on location, but on a shared love of paddling, the outdoors and giving back to the trail. Everywhere we went we encountered generous locals willing to feed and house us without a second thought, even though we were complete strangers!"

— Kate Wimberly



"Volunteers, neighbors and strangers from upstate New York to Northern Maine are what made the summer possible and are the people who left me with the most to think about. Throughout the summer I heard stories from countless volunteers who left me with thoughts in my head about everything from my career path to the future of our planet."

— Jonah Yaffe

FALL AUCTION FEATURES AWESOME SWAG, BENEFITS NFCT

This year's Online Auction runs from Nov. 15-30 and features incredible outdoor gear and experiences, donated by our generous partners and supporters. This year's auction includes a beautiful cedar strip canoe donated by NFCT friend and supporter Grant Faller, gift cards from L.L. Bean, gear from NRS and much more. People, companies, nonprofits and businesses all support NFCT through the auction by purchasing or donating an item or service. Visit bit.ly/nfctauktion2023 or scan the QR code to learn more.



SHORT STROKES

Trail Feedback: No rest for the wicked! We're already busy planning our stewardship projects for 2024 — and we need your help. It's nearly impossible for our team to keep tabs on every mile of the NFCT. By providing your insight on needs and opportunities, you can ensure that we put together the best plan possible for the upcoming season. Visit bit.ly/trailfeedback23 to add your info.

Save the Dates: Our 2024 event schedule is already set. Visit bit.ly/nfctevents to mark your calendar for next year.

Voices from the Trail: It's impossible to fit all our news, adventures, trip reports and other updates in one newsletter. Be sure to check out our website and make sure you don't miss a beat: bit.ly/voicesfromthetrail.

Get in Touch: If you have a story to share or a photo to show off, we encourage you to reach out anytime at chris@northernforestcanoetrail.org.



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

CLASS V



CLASS IV



CLASS III



CLASS II

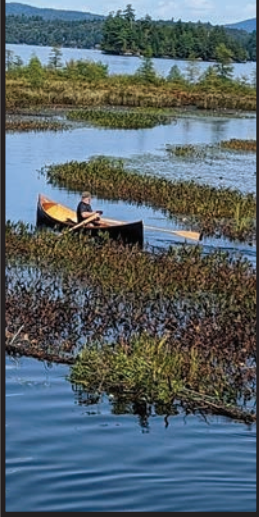


SUPPORTERS





PO Box 565
Waitsfield, VT
05673



HEADWATERS CAMPAIGN

A new partnership is enhancing environmental stewardship of the Raquette River Watershed. The Headwaters Campaign is an effort to address the unique challenges faced by lake associations in the headwaters of the St. Lawrence River as they strive to stop the spread of invasive species and meet other critical stewardship needs. The partnership is led by the Adirondack Council and the NFCT, and includes the Long Lake Association, the Blue Mountain Lake Association and the Raquette Lake Preservation Foundation.

The Headwaters Campaign is facilitated by Rebecca Sutter, a professor at Paul Smith's College. In her role as coordinator, Rebecca is working to build capacity among local stakeholders to best address watershed health across multiple jurisdictions. She can be reached at **headwaters@northernforestcanoetrail.org**.

The campaign is funded in part by a grant from the New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program, with additional support from private donors. To learn more, visit **northernforestcanoetrail.org/headwaterscampaign**.