



## 2020 Year in Review

This year marks the fortieth year of the Friends of the Wapack. The Spring edition of this newsletter included a timeline of our many accomplishments over four decades to maintain and permanently protect the Wapack Trail. It's a record of which this all volunteer organization can be proud. The time line is posted on our website [wapack.org](http://wapack.org). I encourage you to check it out. The ever increasing popularity of the scenic and historic Wapack Trail is a testament to the value of our efforts. Thank you again to the hundreds of people who have done trail work, to the many who served on the board, and to our donors who have made our success possible.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic derailed our celebration plans this year, as well as our planned group work days. But that does not mean we have been idle. This year we published the second edition of our Guide to the Wapack Trail. Our Section Captains continued to maintain the

trails (see article next page). Our webmaster Jon McNerney has been doing a great job managing and hosting our website and the Trailwrights website as well. And as always we are in frequent contact with the many stake holders along the trail including state and federal agencies, private land owners, and five land trusts and committees.

It was a very busy and fun year working with Northeast Wilderness Trust at their Binney Hill Wilderness Preserve. We're excited about their Steel Addition Project, which will add fifteen acres to the preserve, maintaining the wilderness experience in this area and reducing development pressure close to the trail. (see next article)

There have been a few position changes. Gail and Gerry Coffey have adopted the Raymond Trail, and Anne Reed adopted the Kidder Mountain Trail. Anne Reed is now Ways

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## A Busy Year at Binney Hill

### Sawtelle Addition to the Binney Hill Wilderness Preserve Dedicated

There have been a lot of goings on this year at the Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT) Binney Hill Wilderness Preserve. For the past four years we've worked with NEWT on two of their projects which protected over a mile of the Wapack Trail and 535 acres in New Ipswich as forever wild. The first project,



*Shirley Sawtelle at Dedication Ceremony*

completed in 2017, protected 488 acres, creating the Binney Hill Wilderness Preserve. The second project, the Sawtelle Addition completed last year, protected an additional 47 acres, including the remaining unprotected shoreline of Binney Pond, and a short scenic stretch of the Wapack Trail.

On August 23, a small group gathered on the shore of Binney Pond to dedicate

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## Friends of the Wapack



The *Voice of the Wapack* is published twice a year by the Friends of the Wapack, Inc. The Friends are nonprofit volunteers dedi-

cated to the maintenance and preservation of the Wapack Trail System. Financial support is provided by member donations which are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. The Wapack Trail is a 21-mile skyline footpath from Mt. Watatic in Ashburnham, MA to North Pack in Greenfield, NH. Completed in 1923, it is the oldest interstate hiking trail in the Northeast.

The Friends of the Wapack, Inc. is recognized as a charitable corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the US IRS code.

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Friends of the Wapack

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*Once it's gone, It's gone forever*

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**Trail Master:** Mike Przybyla

**Web Master:** Jon McInerney

**President Emeritus:** Mitch Call

## Trail Maintenance During the Pandemic

With the pandemic, the Friends for the first time ever canceled all of the 2020 workdays. However, due to the pandemic a record number of people are using the trails. This is especially true for the higher use areas of Mount Watatic, Kidder Mountain, and North and South Pack. The shutdown coincided with mud season which wasn't ideal, and Massachusetts DCR closed the lot at Watatic for a number of weeks during that time, and has prohibited parking along Route 119. In New Hampshire, Miller State Park is operating under a reservations required mode.

With the organized trail days canceled, the hardworking trail adopters have stepped up, gotten out on the trail and kept the trails in good shape. Without them trail conditions could have worsened significantly. Neil Faiman and Lynne Pentler adopters of the section up North Pack, got their section in shape early in the year, Tom Brumaghin re-blazed the Sharon Ledges section, John Hills cleared down trees on Temple Mountain, Anne Reed reblazed the Kidder Mountain Trail, and Sean McInerney cleared downed trees on the Berry Pasture Trail.

Additional work reported thus far has been re-blazing of the Wapack Trail going up Pack in Miller State Park, trimming the section on New Ipswich Mountain, and downed trees removed on Mt. Watatic, the Raymond Trail, between North and South Pack and on the Spruce Knoll Trail. All trail sections have been monitored and basic trail maintenance continues.

We hope to resume workdays sometime next year. In the meantime we will rely on the trail adopters to continue their work. If you see any issues while hiking, e-mail the Friends at [info@wapack.org](mailto:info@wapack.org), ideally with a photo of the problem.

Once again, thanks to all eighteen of our trail adopters for all their hard work.

- Mike Przybyla, Trail Master

## 2020 Year in Review (continued)

and Means Chair. The big change is Mitch Call's retirement from the board after 24 years. His tireless work and sound advice will be greatly missed (see article).

Since we did not have our annual meeting to report our FY 2020 financials, here they are in brief. Our finances are in good shape, with a net worth of \$47,692, putting us in a good position for the next trail protection opportunity. Total Donations were \$8,309; Total Sales: \$4,434; Total Income: \$13,934; Total Expense: \$12,463; Net Gain: \$1471. Expenses were higher than usual due to the printing of our 2nd edition trail guide at \$4,788, and our \$5,000 contribution to NEWT for the Sawtelle Addition. Other outlays included newsletter, telecom and sales expenses. Send a request to [info@wapack.org](mailto:info@wapack.org) if you would like the full Treasurer's report. Thank you for your donations and merchandise purchases!

Hopefully next year we will be able to see you at work days, our annual meeting and other events. We hope that you are all staying well during this difficult time, and that you are able to get outdoors and enjoy the healthful experience of encountering nature, on the trail.

- Rick Blanchette, President



## Binney Hill (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

the addition. Participants included Sophi Veltrop from NEWT, Shirley Sawtelle and members of her family, several members of the FOW board, and other contributors to the project.

The dedication sign installed at Binney Pond includes the words in the box above.

### Interpretive Kiosk Installed along the Wapack Trail at Binney Hill



The Friends assisted with the installation of this beautiful kiosk on October 16 at Binney Hill. This description of the kiosk is provided by Sophi Veltrop, Outreach Coordinator at Northeast Wilderness Trust. “Northeast Wilderness Trust designates certain places it protects as ‘Ambassador Preserves,’ where there are trails and frequent use by the local community. Binney Hill Wilderness Preserve, which is crossed by the historic Wapack Trail and flanked by other privately and publicly protected lands, is a perfect place to connect people with the concept, values, and experience of wilderness. Many in the area already have a deep connection with this place—memories of through-hiking the trail, picnicking at the lookout, catching a glimpse of wildlife. The kiosk at the entrance to the Rewilding Meadow will serve to deepen existing connections to this land, welcome newcomers, and encourage a culture of reciprocity between people

**IN HONOR OF SHIRLEY  
SAWTELLE AND THE  
FRIENDS OF THE WAPACK,  
and many donors, volunteers, and  
friends who helped protect this land!**

and nature. The Rewilding Forest sign illustrates the process of transformation a forest undergoes as it ages and is allowed to follow its natural trajectory to become an old-growth forest. As a former log landing that was restored with a tree and wildflower planting in 2016,

the Meadow will also host a rewilding photo point, where visitors can contribute photos to an ongoing virtual monitoring progress that tracks the evolution of this rewilding ecosystem.”

### Moose Encounter



Mike Przybyla encountered this bull moose while exploring the Binney Hill Wilderness Preserve this fall. Though this big bull only has one antler, he looks healthy.

### Steel Addition Project



Our friends at Northeast Wilderness Trust are raising funds to add 15 more acres to the Binney Hill Wilderness Preserve. A mile of the Wapack Trail passes through the preserve. While the trail

does not pass through this addition, enlarging the Preserve will increase the protected land around this forever wild section of the Wapack Trail, while adding another key property to the protected land along the Wapack Range. Please consider a donation to the Northeast Wilderness Trust Steel Addition project. You can make a donation at [newwildernesstrust.org/projects/steel/](http://newwildernesstrust.org/projects/steel/) Thank you!



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## Mitch Call Retires from FOW Board after 24 Years

Mitch Call has retired from the FOW Board of Directors after 24 years, 13 of these years as President. He also served as Vice President and Way and Means Chairman, Membership Coordinator, and on the Trail Guide Committee. Mitch negotiated with the AMC to obtain their Wapack Trail Fund, which was given by Tom Cabot for maintenance and protection of the Wapack Trail. This enabled us to double our contribution to the Wapack Wilderness conservation easement and to the creation of the Temple Mt. State Reservation, providing further protection for the trail. He strengthened our association with regional conservation organizations, such as the Monadnock Conservancy, NEFF, and Northeast Wilderness Trust. As Vice President, he worked on our effort to protect the trail on the South end of the Temple Mountain ridge under the NH Municipal Trails Act. He arranged our agreement with Monadnock Work Source to handle distribution of our merchandise. Mitch also represented the FOW at numerous events, setting up and manning our table and display at the Peterborough Greenerboro annual event, EMS Club Days, and many conferences. Few have done more for the FOW and the Wapack Trail.



*Mitch awarding door prize at the 2008 annual meeting.*

To honor Mitch's service, the FOW Board of Directors have voted to approve the following. "In recognition of his 24 years on the Friends of the Wapack Board of Directors, 13 of these years as President, and in appreciation of his successes in protecting the Wapack Trail and numerous other accomplishments, and recognizing his continuing importance to the organization, the Friends of the Wapack gratefully honor Mitch Call with the title of President Emeritus."

Thank you Mitch!