



Spring / Summer 2009

Voice of the Wapack

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Issue #83

From the President

A few days ago, when the temperatures reached into the 50's and 60's, most of us were hoping for a soft entry into Spring, but Mother Nature did her thing again, and we received another four inches of snow.

Hopefully this will be her closing argument for this season. She left in her wake some serious damages to the trail from the ice storm of December, but there is good news from our Trail Master and his many trail stewards and helpers – the entire main trail is open. It's not in the pristine condition that we strive for, and we recommend caution when hiking.

There are still many hanging branches and downed limbs, but these can and should be avoided with care. Some of the blazes are gone, and Mike has developed an ambitious plan to restore the trail to the condition we have learned to expect. His priority is to secure the main trail and then proceed to work the side trails. Please read his article and plan to help whenever and wherever you can.

We have all heard of the invasion of the Asian Longhorn Beetle into the Worcester area, and the drastic measures that are being



Wapack Trail, Temple Mountain. Three days after the ice storm. Photo by Mena Schmid

taken to eliminate this invasive species. Worcester is not far from the Wapack region, and the beetle isn't the only exotic species that are invading the area. With the assistance of the Forest Health Section of the NH Division of Forests and Lands, a broadside that been developed illustrating the four most problematic

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Courtesy on the trail

- *Foot travel welcome.*
- *Leave NO trace.*
- *Be quiet near houses.*
- *Stay on blazed trails.*
- *Respect trailside property.*
- *Park cars so others can pass.*

From the President

(Continued from page 1)

species – the Asian Longhorn Beetle, the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Elongate Hemlock Scale and the Emerald Ash Borer. None of these are native to the area and all are serious problems for the continued health of the forests. The broadside was designed for you to carry with you on your hike as a reference, and a color version is available on our website at www.wapack.org. If you spot something, take a picture and email it to jweimer@dred.state.nh.us giving a concise loca-



Ice Storm damage along the Wapack Trail - Binney Pond State Forest

tion, possibly using a photo of the Wapack Map with the location indicated. DRED will review every submission and will respond to you with results. If you don't have a camera readily available, email a report to them, with a copy to info@Wapack.org so that one of the stewards can follow up. Your vigilance could be very important to the future health of the

area.

- Mitch Call, President

Friends of the Wapack

The *Voice of the Wapack* is published twice a year by the Friends of the Wapack. The Friends are nonprofit volunteers dedicated 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.

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Friends of the Wapack

P.O. Box 115

West Peterborough, NH 03468

Website: <http://www.wapack.org>



FOW Board Members

Officers:

Mitch Call, <i>President</i>	(603) 924-7544
Sherisa Sterling, <i>Vice President</i>	(978) 827-3272
Wendy Christensen, <i>Secretary</i>	(603) 878-1000
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Directors:

Joanne Buck	(603) 532-7386
Dwight Horan	(603) 878-3779
Jan Miller	(978) 386-5318
Ollie Mutch	(978) 386-5318

Archivist:	Jeannette Baker	(603) 525-5262
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Newsletter Distribution, Membership Coordinator, Map/Guide Sales:

	Wendy Christensen	(603) 878-1000
Trail Master:	Mike Przybyla	(603) 878-3350
Web Master:	Rick Blanchette	(603) 878-1464

Trail Work Days - Ice Storm clean up plans

Two days after the Ice Storm of December 2008, I hiked up to the section of the Wapack I maintain to survey the extent of the damage. Needless to say things looked bleak. The extent of damage looked overwhelming and my first thought was that if the whole trail is like this it will never get cleaned up.

Three months later, I'm happy to say that the majority of the trail is passable. There is still lots of work to do, but with help from our trail maintainers and others much of the trail is in a condition that I initially thought would take many months to achieve.

In some ways we are lucky. Unlike the ice storm of 1998, the major damage seems to be at the lower elevations from 1200 to 1600 feet. The sections of the trail along the higher ridges have damage more like what you would see after a bad winter. Of course, the damage at the lower elevations is several orders of magnitude worse than in 1998. At these locations, virtually every tree has significant damage.

Due to the damage, we will be doing something different this year for workdays. Once the snow and ice is gone, we will be having workdays every weekend (weather permitting) until the majority of the trail is cleaned up. We will meet at the NeWest mall in



Ice Storm damage (Widow Makers) on the Marion Davis Trail, Pack Monadnock, Miller State Park. Photo by Neil Faiman



Ice storm damage, Wapack Trail, Pratt Mountain Photo by Mike Przybyla

New Ipswich on Turnpike Road at 8:00 AM. Depending on the turnout we will split up into groups of three or four made up of one chainsaw operator with the rest of the volunteers having hand saws to clean up the stuff the sawyer cuts and to pick up the smaller branches. Our first priority will be cleaning up the main trail with the side trails a secondary priority.

If you would like to help please send an email to info@wapack.org with the words "trail clean up" in the subject field. You will be notified by email of our trail clean up days.

If you can't make these workdays, one thing you can do when out on the trail is to pick up and toss to the side the smaller branches that have fallen. There

are a seemingly infinite number of branches down and they will continue to fall. So if you're hiking spend a little extra time and pick up the smaller stuff that has fallen. **DO NOT TRY TO CLEAR ANY HANGING BRANCHES.** They are called "Widow Makers" for a reason. We'll try to clear these but there are many and some will not come down until they decay. If you see any particularly hazardous ones, let us know where they are and we'll try to clear them or re-route the trail around them.

- Mike Przybyla, Trail Master

Friends of the Wapack 2009 Calendar

All are welcome to attend the following meetings & events

Check our website for updates and additions www.wapack.org

Board Meetings— First Thursday of alternate months. (May 7, no meeting in July, September 3, November 5). All are welcome. Shieling Forest Barn, Peterborough, NH. 7:00 PM.

Ice storm clean up Workdays - Running most weekends this Spring

We are taking a different approach to trail work days this year. Due to the wide spread ice storm damage to the trails we will be working most weekends starting at the end of March or early April until we are done. Plans are to target different trail sections with small teams of 3 or 4 people with one person operating a chain saw and the others clearing off the debris. If you would like to help please send an email to info@wapack.org with the words "trail clean up" in the subject field. You will be notified by email of our trail clean up days. Thank you! See "Trail Workdays" article in this issue for more details. Contact Mike Przybyla (603) 878-3350.

Friday, August 7 – HIKE, Kidder Mountain, New Ipswich, NH

Hike with Lee Baker and Ben Haubrich on one of their monthly Friday hikes. The Kidder Mt. Trail is a side trail off the Wapack Trail and provides great views from the summit of Kidder Mt. The hike is 3 miles roundtrip with a 400 foot elevation gain. Meet at 10:00AM at the Ocean State Job Lots parking lot in Peterborough at the intersection of Routes 101 and 202. Back by 2:30PM. For more info call Lee (603-525-5262). Co-sponsored by the Harris Center.

Saturday, September 5 – HIKE, Wapack Trail End to End!

Hike the entire trail in one day! Group will meet at 6:00 AM at the trail head in Greenfield. Please call leader Tom Brumaghim to register and for details (603) 878-6167.

Saturday, October 17— FRIENDS OF THE WAPACK ANNUAL MEETING, Town Meeting House, Sharon, NH

Details for our annual meeting, including guest speakers and morning hike, are being planned. Watch for a special mailing to all members, or check our website, www.wapack.org, for details.

September 1—EDITORIAL DEADLINE for Voice of the Wapack Issue #84. Send your letter, article, photo or artwork to Renee Blanchette, P.O. Box 90, New Ipswich, NH 03071, or email to weaver11@mac.com. We reserve the right to edit for content and length.

Notices

Board members wanted - Interested in participating on the Friends of the Wapack Board of Directors? If so please contact Mitch Call at (603) 924-7544. We are also looking for someone to fill the role of Wapack Historian.

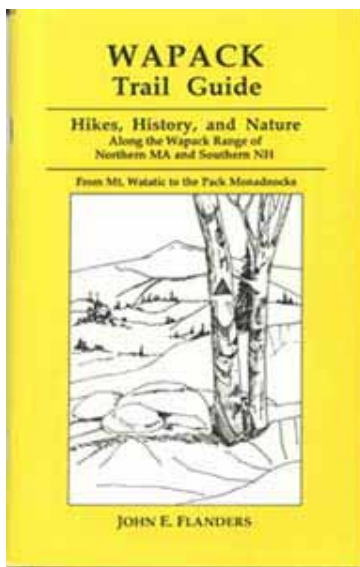
Voice of the Wapack newsletter on line - If you would rather read this newsletter on line, send an email to info@wapack.org and let us know. Rather than receiving the paper newsletter you will get an email notification when newsletters are posted on our website www.wapack.org.

On the Lighter Side by Lee Baker

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE
BY LEE BAKER



Friends of the Wapack General Store



Send me ___ Trail Guide & map pkg.(s) @ \$11.00
ea.

Send me ___ Friends patch(es) @ \$4.00 ea.

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Prices include postage and handling.

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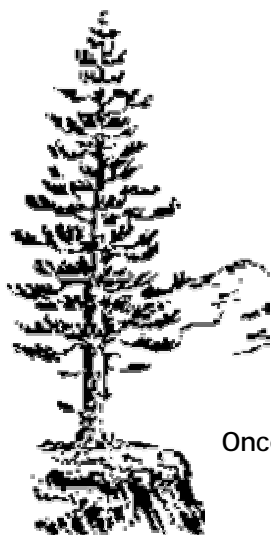
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