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### **OutdoorsVT: GMC scores with a pair of books 'Century in the Mountains' and 'Walker's Guide'**

[Darren Marcy](#)

The Green Mountain Club has released a small library of great books for outdoor enthusiasts who are fans of the Long Trail and hiking in Vermont.

That library grew even stronger this summer with the release of "A Century in the Mountains: Celebrating Vermont's Long Trail," and "The Walker's Guide to Vermont: Rambles for Half an Hour or Half a Day."

Those are two long book titles.

But, some things are just better long – like the Long Trail, the oldest long-distance hiking trail in the country; the Appalachian Trail, which shares some of the same territory in Vermont as the Long Trail; and members of the Green Mountain Club, who are used to going the distance when it comes to building, maintaining and promoting their beloved trails.

These books, like the other GMC offerings I've seen, are great additions to the GMC list of offerings. They are, however, completely different books. "A Century in the Mountains" offers a look back at the trail and the Green Mountain Club, while "The Walker's Guide to Vermont" is more of a guidebook, although, like other GMC guides, the details and descriptions are worth the price alone.

'Century in the Mountains'

"A Century in the Mountains," is a large-format hardcover book with 190 pages featuring 185 historic and contemporary photographs.

As you would imagine, like any book about hiking trails in Vermont, "A Century in the Mountains" features dozens of jaw-dropping vistas and scenery. For many of us, those views are a big part of the reasons we leave civilization behind — whether it's for a day, weekend or longer.

But one of the brilliant notions behind this book is that it pays homage to those who have made the trail what it is. The people who helped build the trail and those who have left a legacy borne out of sweat equity that created and maintained one of the nation's top long-distance treks.

To tell the tale of these folks would have been a great read. But to see their photographs — both in color and black and white — helps to fully understand the hardships under which they created the trail and have worked to maintain it.

Marketed as "the definitive book celebrating and documenting Vermont's Long Trail and the men and women who built it," the Green Mountain Club has produced just that.

There are eight chapters documenting the history of the 272-mile Long Trail and Green Mountain Club, which was founded in 1910, not to mention a notable forward and afterword.

Well-known writer and environmentalist Bill McKibben wrote the forward, "Remembering Who We Are." And to round things up, GMC Executive Director Ben Rose wrote the afterward, "The Trail Ahead."

In between is a great dose of history and information about the Long Trail and the changes that have taken place along the way.

The book's editor, Tom Slayton, wrote a couple of the chapters, with other chapters contributed by Reidun Dahle Nuquist, Katy Klutznik, Val Stori, Bryan Pfeiffer and Susan Shea.

After introducing us to the trail, the book immediately takes a look back at the last century and the changes that have taken place in the mountains over the course of its existence.

Readers are shown the mountain environment and unique alpine areas.

The book delves into the complexities of balancing access versus protection and educates readers about the role of caretakers in helping hikers and protecting the many fragile areas in the mountains.

McKibben writes, as he always does, eloquently about Vermont, its mountains and the Long Trail, in the forward.

"That line of the Greens has always seemed special to me for many reasons. For one, it's the place where the East ends and the rest of America begins. ... Look west and the rest of America begins: the confused and glorious jumble of the Adirondacks, the Great Lakes beyond, the Great Plains beyond that.

"But the hiking history, embodied in the Green Mountain Club, seems just as special. The idea that people would go take long hikes in the wilderness, which we think of as obvious, was not so clear when the club began," McKibben writes.

This book, will tell you how those people saw it as obvious, and more importantly, why.

At \$38.95, it's pricey. But it's a quality book. One you'll be proud to have on the table in front of the couch, or to give as a gift.

The book can be purchased on the GMC Web site at [www.greenmountainclub.org](http://www.greenmountainclub.org), the GMC's visitors center in Waterbury, or at many local bookstores.

'Walker's Guide'

"The Walker's Guide to Vermont: Rambles for Half an Hour or Half a Day," is more along the lines of the standard guide book that the Green Mountain Club has perfected.

At 248 pages, the book features color maps and photos of hikes covering hikes divided into six regions.

This book fills a niche often missed by other hiking guide books. Those short-to-medium day hikes that fall somewhere between a short stroll through the park or on a community trail, and the longer day hikes that tend to require a full day – or at least most of the day – to complete.

And, as the book points out, "Spectacular scenery doesn't have to mean an all-day trek to a mountaintop. No matter where you are in Vermont, 'The Walker's Guide to Vermont' gives you all the information you need for a short walk or a leisurely ramble."

All the usual guidebook details are included: directions to trail heads, trail descriptions with distances, color maps with regional locator maps, as well as local information from organizations and groups.

This book will slide nicely right between your well-worn copies of "Day Hiker's Guide to Vermont," and "GMC: Long Trail Guide."

I bet you'll find it useful.

The book is priced at \$14.95 and can be purchased on the GMC Web site at [www.greenmountainclub.org](http://www.greenmountainclub.org), the GMC's visitors center in Waterbury, or at many local bookstores and outdoor gear stores.

Darren Marcy is a local outdoor enthusiast. His Web site is [www.DarrenMarcy.com](http://www.DarrenMarcy.com). E-mail him at [darren@darrenmarcy.com](mailto:darren@darrenmarcy.com)

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