

## THC celebrates its 90th Year, 1932 - 2022

In celebration of the 90th anniversary of the Taconic Hiking Club we thought it would be of interest to provide some history of the Club, beyond what is found on the website.

In August of 1932, several people interested in the outdoors met to discuss the possibility of organizing a hiking club in the Troy area. By November of that year, the Taconic Hiking Club (THC) was formed. The purpose stated in the new Club's Constitution was the following: "To bring together lovers of the out-of-doors; to promote good fellowship and good sportsmanship: to provide an out-of-doors program including hiking, nature study, the routing and clearing of trails and associated activities."

Growing beyond the expectations of its organizers, the THC held over two hundred planned hiking trips, primarily on weekends, during the first ten years of its existence.

In the 40's, WWII took its toll on the Club as many members joined the armed forces and defense industries. Many of the remaining members offered their services as civil air patrol workers, nurse aides, etc. The small group carrying on found their destinations limited by gas rationing, so they used train and local busses to reach the mountains.

In 1948, the club began the development of the [Taconic Crest Trail](#). With the participation of many volunteers and associated agencies such as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the trail eventually grew to twenty-nine miles in length, from Berry Pond in Pittsfield State Forest to Prosser Hollow in Petersburg. Over time new access trails like Mattison Hollow and Robinson Hollow were added, and the trail was extended to Rte. 346 in North Petersburg. In June 1987, DCR asked the club to assume responsibility of the six miles of "Skyline Crest Trail" from Berry Pond to Rte. 20. The Board approved the plan that August. The trail was rerouted from the severely eroded Skyline Trail and this new section was completed in 1994. Today the trail is thirty-seven miles long.

In 1966 the Club started the "[End-to-End Challenge](#)," with the goal to hike the original twenty-nine miles of trail in one day (Berry Pond to Prosser Hollow). Participants who completed the trek were awarded an "End-to-End One Day" patch. Club members were also awarded the "Order of the Hot Foot" badge, named in reference to muscle aches. The "Order of the Hot Foot" badge was originally a large, handmade patch made of red felt in the shape of a foot, embroidered by hand. The patch was also known as and is currently called the "Bloody Foot" patch in reference to blisters. In 2015 the "Bloody Foot" patches were commercially made for the first time. According to a report of the May 1994 End-to-End Challenge, the participants were treated to refreshments and champagne at the end of the trail! It is unknown if champagne was ever offered again!

The trail mileage was originally measured by a volunteer pushing a bicycle wheel with an odometer attached! Initial pocket-sized THC TCT Trail Guides included in-depth trail hiking descriptions and hand sketched maps. This evolved to a larger pamphlet in 2002, complemented by 7 US Geological Survey Maps; the trail had been GPS'd by volunteers who then noted the trail on the survey maps. The trail was GPS'd by volunteers again in 2013/2014 for the latest one sheet, water resistant, 36" by 12" combination "[TCT Map and Guide](#)." A cartographer assisted in the latest map development.

We are grateful for all of the volunteers that came before us! THC's long history and endurance is due to the hard work and commitment of its volunteers who continue to promote protection of the trail, who maintain it, and who bring their hardy spirits to outdoor activities.