

Interview with Walt Weber
4rth Quarter Lets Go 2006
By Stuart English

Many CMC members own the book

Trail Profiles: The Mountains to Sea

Trail. *Those that do not should consider*

buying a copy (available by sending \$5 to

CMC, P.O. Box 68, Asheville, NC 28802).

It has a wealth of information about our

club, the building of the Mountains to the

Sea Trail, as well as an easy to understand

profile map of the trail as it follows

the Blue Ridge Parkway. Recently we interviewed the man who wrote the book and did a lot of the work on the trail.

How long have you been involved with trail maintenance?

I can only guess, but I have been a member of CMC since around 1992, about the time that I started working with the Dick Roberts Monday work crew.

They were constructing the Pisgah Ledge section of the MTS at that time (the MST was then known as the MTS).

What led to your work in measuring the MST?

I started measuring hikes with a wheel

and an altimeter in the late 1980s for
the purpose of determining accumulative
elevation ascent and descent and
percent of grade for our hikes as we had
been using
only net elevation
change.

From the data
gathered during
these surveys

I started
preparing trail
profiles, which
are quite
similar to the
Track Charts

with which I
was familiar
during my 33
years with a
railroad.

When did you start on your first book?

I started
measuring the
Pisgah Ledge section in 1994 during
its construction period and after it was
completed in 1996 I continued on north
on the Shut-in Section and completed
the entire survey in 1999. During 1997
and 1998 I started researching the origin
of the trails occupied by the MST and

began preparing the Trail Profiles book for the CMC. Through the energies of Howard MacDonald, the Club was able to bring it to publication in 1999.

What do you remember most about the experience?

The most memorable event during this survey was measuring from Mt. Mitchell down to Black Mountain Campground with Bob Johnson in a rainstorm. I discovered that my tape recorder had stopped recording and we had lost about 1500 trail feet of data. Fortunately I had a "Write in the Rain" notebook and we continued on with me calling out the numbers and Bob writing

them down. We returned
later to pick up the missing
1500' and also the
Higgins Bald re-route of
the MST.

What are your future plans?

In 2005, I oiled up the
wheel and as part of a
joint CMC/Park Service
GPS undertaking I have
profiled our new section
of the trail from Balsam
Gap (South) to Beech
Gap (NC Route 215),
32.7 more miles, and have

now GPS'd all of our
MST to Black Mountain
Campground. Once completed,
the 14 miles from Heintooga Road
to Balsam Gap will also be measured and
profiled. Who knows, we may end up with
another Trail Profiles book for publication
by CMC, complete with routing neatly
laid out on topo fragments.

I have been blessed with the assistance
of many, many CMC members and nonmembers
through the years measuring
all of the sections of our trail and I salute
them for all of their efforts.

– *W. W. Weber, Jr.*