



Carolina Mountain Club

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eNews | Hike . Save Trails . Make Friends.

January 2021

Hunting Season: Public Comment Period - Open For Sunday Hiking on Game Lands

Given our interest in Sunday hunting on game lands, we are being notified that the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission's public comment period for the 2021-2022 annual rulemaking cycle is open through Feb. 1, 2021. This annual cycle includes the proposals to allow Sunday hunting on select game lands.

To review proposed changes and submit comments, visit the agency's [Public Comment Portal](#) or [Proposed Regulations](#) web page, and see [Game Land proposals G17-G20](#).

For background information and agency research on Sunday hunting on game lands visit ncwildlife.org/SundayHuntingGL.

Review: *100 Favorite Trails of the Smokies and the Carolina Blue Ridge*

by Barbara Morgan

In last month's eNews, you saw Danny Bernstein's excellent article about the publication of this great trail guide. Back in the '70s, I had and extensively used the original version of *100 Favorite Trails* by Bernard Elias and found it to be an incredible resource. Somewhere along the way, my copy started falling apart (it was published on very lightweight paper), and I must have tossed it. I missed it as a resource but also knew that an update was needed – lots of things change in 50 years!

So, I was really pleased when Steve Pierce and Steve Kemp took up the task to re-create the map; modernized, updated, and on durable paper. After Danny's article, I immediately ordered

two copies – one for home and one to have in the car, and I got them this week. The new version is wonderful – like the original, the hikes are well chosen and the information on each is precise and concise. Just what you need to be able to choose, find, and navigate each hike, without having text so small that you need a magnifying hike to read it! The map on the other side shows the location and name of each hike, along with a red line marking the trail.

It was a huge project, and I can't imagine the hours and miles Steve Pierce and others put into *100 Favorite Trails*, but I thank you. In case you want to order one (or more!), here is the info from Danny's article. You won't regret the \$12.95 purchase.

"Carolina Mountain Club and Great Smoky Mountains Association (GSMA) just published a map of 100 favorite trails of the Smokies and the North Carolina Blue Ridge. The map, published on waterproof paper, is available in the Smokies stores and online. See <https://www.smokiesinformation.org/100-favorite-trails-map>"

Attention Trail Maintainers!

Dear CMC Member:

At Friday Crew, Paul Curtin and Mike Phillips have discussed new CMC shirts. Mike has business connections which enable us to purchase shirts at very reasonable costs. Under Paul's direction, I am compiling the shirt order for Mike.

There are two types of shirts:

#1 Smooth Shirt: has a smooth finish, 100% Microfiber and 4.1 ounce in weight, moisture wicking, UPF Sun protection is 30+ and comes in sizing XS—4XL.

- Cost is \$ 7.30 for the Long Sleeve
- Cost is \$ 6.30 for the Short Sleeve
- Color is Neon Yellow



#2 Waffle Shirt: has a "waffle" texture, 100% Microfiber and moisture wicking, UPF Sun protection is 40+ and comes in sizing XS—4XL.

- Cost is \$ 9.40 for the Long Sleeve
- Cost is \$ 8.40 for the Short Sleeve
- Color is Hi-Vis Yellow
- Waffle Shirt Comes in a Ladies Cut



4.7 once in

Both shirts will have the CMC logo printed on the front and CMC Trail Crew across the back.

Can you please complete the following order and return to me by e-mail by Friday, 15 January 2021. Please indicate the number of shirts you want after the shirt type. We will collect payment when the shirts are delivered, sometime in the first quarter. If you pay by check, please make the check out to Mike Phillips.

Name: _____

Men's Size _____ Women's Size _____

Smooth Shirt **Long** Sleeve _____ Smooth Shirt **Short** Sleeve _____

Waffle Shirt **Long** Sleeve _____ Waffle Shirt **Short** Sleeve _____

Joe and I wish you and your family a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Donna Bange

donna.bange@gmail.com

Mel Skiles – Amazing trail maintainer

By Danny Bernstein

If you hike the Mountains-to-Sea Trail just west of the Hendersonville Road overpass, you will find a perfect trail. No rocks, roots, no impediments. You have Mel Skiles, a CMC trail maintainer, to thank for the conditions of this trail.

Mel was born in the Missouri Ozarks and grew up in Elkhart, Indiana. He graduated high school in 1963 and felt he had received a good education. After Central Missouri State College, he entered medical school at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

“If you have the desire, you can learn from any institution. It doesn't have to be a highfalutin school.” Mel is a perfect example of this philosophy.



But mentoring is so important, Mel emphasizes. “I will never forget my 7th grade teacher who said, ‘When you become a doctor, I want to be your patient’.”

Skiles chose radiology because he thought of himself as an introvert. “You have less patient contact in this specialty, though you do have some,” Mel underscores. Radiology also involves physics and math, two of his favorite subjects.

After the required internship and residency, Mel and his wife Sandra settled in Madison, Indiana, a small town between Louisville, Kentucky and Cincinnati, Ohio with a 140-bed hospital. He worked as a radiologist for 36 years in what Mel refers to as the golden age of radiology.

From interpreting x-ray film, Mel went on to work with nuclear medicine, ultrasound, cat scans and MRI. All these changes kept him

on his toes. “Am I staying on top of all of this?” he asked himself throughout his career.

But it wasn’t all work. Mel bought a 90-acre tobacco farm in the area where he could have been paid not to farm under the U.S. government tobacco subsidies program. Instead he planted 7,000 walnut trees. Every few years, he mows the rows between the trees. “Maybe I should not have planted all the same trees,” Mel says, “but I’m not going to cut them down now.”

Mel and Sandra have two daughters. Kristina is a STEM teacher in Boulder, Colorado. Tamra, a professor of nursing at WCU, lives in Asheville with her husband, a sports medicine doctor, and children. When Mel visited Tamra and her family, he thought, “Wow, I love this area.”

As soon as Mel retired in 2011, he walked the Appalachian Trail. All was going well until he fell in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and broke several ribs. He was off the trails for seven weeks while he concentrated on healing. Then he returned to the A.T. as soon as he could and continued where he had left off. He wanted to be an A.T. thru-hiker. He finished on Mt. Katahdin at the end of September of that year, qualifying him to be a thru-hiker.

The next year, Mel and Sandra moved to Asheville and Mel found Carolina Mountain Club. “I wanted to give back,” Mel says. “It’s a cliché, I know, but I so appreciated good trails when I walked the A.T.”

He quickly joined the CMC Thursday trail crew and also adopted an MST section. Though he had been a practicing physician for decades, he makes sure to stay on top of his Wilderness First Aid certification, sawyer certification and other accreditation for trail maintainers.



2 MST - Mel's section

Mel, now 75 years old, feels very lucky. He's made a point of staying fit his whole life. A couple of years ago, he was interviewed by WLOS (the ABC-TV affiliate in Asheville) and told them, "My mind is free and I feel I don't have any aches or pains," he said. "I'm fortunate and I feel gratitude for that."

Currently Mel's MST section is the two miles between Fishpond Road and Highway 25A. His section passes the back of the Deerfield Retirement Community, where he and his wife live. "I try to get the roots and rocks out of the trail to encourage the old folks to walk here," he says. Though hikers (including this writer) tease him about how wide the trail is, Mel insists that he did not widen the trail. "That's the way it was when I got the section," he says.

Once he pulled out all the rocks, he made a lovely entrance way to the MST from the road.

Now during the pandemic, Mel still goes out with the Thursday maintenance crew. They work in small groups of three or four, properly distanced. Their priorities are “safety, having fun, and oh yes, get some work done.” There’s lots of camaraderie with the trail crew.

Mel emphasizes that he feels pride in being different. He’s been a practicing vegetarian for a long time. When he was 18 and signed up for the draft, he requested “conscientious objector status” even though he did not belong to a traditional pacifist religion. It wasn’t easy or popular as the Vietnam war was raging at the time.

Now Mel spends much of his time maintaining trails on the MST and on the Deerfield property. He works on one trail or another four to five times a week – that’s his job. “I can walk to the trail, go home for lunch and go back out again.”

“Some people feel the rain, others just get wet,” Mel says, quoting Roger Miller, a country music singer. “I’m grateful for what I got.”

Carolina Mountain Club eNews is published on the first Friday of each month. Send your news to eNews@carolinamountainclub.org. Articles are due on the last Friday of the previous month. Please limit articles to no more than 1,000 words. You may send up to two photos as jpg attachments.

To join Carolina Mountain Club go to : www.carolinamountainclub.org. Click on "Join CMC" on the right side. Follow the instructions. For all address and email changes, log in, select "Modify Profile", make changes and click on "Update Member" or email Dennis Bass at dbass3607@gmail.com. Your email changes will be automatically reflected in eNews delivery.

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