



DHASH Winter 2021/2022 newsletter

In this issue:

- [Message from the President: Backcountry Season Is Upon Us!](#)
- [Fall 2021 Work: New Line Opens at Dutch Hill](#)
- [Cross Country Ski News: the Catamount Trail and Beyond](#)
- [Join Us this Winter for Tours at Dutch Hill and on the Catamount](#)
- ["Hey, What's the Snow Like at Dutch Hill?"](#)
- [Malcolm More Named One of CTA's 2021 Volunteers of the Year](#)
- [Trail Tools and Plowing and Boring Administrative Stuff](#)

Message from the President: Backcountry Season is Upon Us!



To all that support DHASH—members, our volunteers, and those interested in what is being accomplished at Dutch Hill—the backcountry season is finally upon us. After a very busy fall work season with an amazing turnout of volunteers, we are ready to make some turns!

First, a big **Thank You** to all of you who donated your time and labor this fall. It's one thing for those of us to draw up plans and present them to the Forest Service for approval, but without your commitment of time and effort, what was accomplished this year would simply not have been possible. The DHASH Executive Committee is very grateful for your help.

The big news is that the Christiana Trail—the “Christie” if you grew up skiing Dutch Hill back in the day—has been completed and should be a blast to ski, especially once we have ample snow cover. The Christie in the early days of Vermont skiing was considered one of the more difficult expert trails in the East when it was cleared from side to side.... and now it's a glade! The Christie is short and sweet and exits into the Ski Lark, which was also reopened this year and of course a glade as well. We would appreciate your feedback on how the Christie and Ski Lark feels in terms of the glading. We are at the point where more trees could be removed, but if the consensus is that it skis well as is, that's great, let us know.

So have a wonderful season wherever you ski and ride and hopefully when you are at Dutch Hill we get to say hello!

Stay safe out there,

Bill Beattie
President, DHASH

Fall 2021 Work: New Line Opens at Dutch Hill



glading the Christiana at Dutch Hill

Backcountry enthusiasts know that a winter filled with fun doesn't happen without an autumn filled with work. DHASH is blown away by the commitment you—our members and supporters—have shown us this fall. At our Dutch Hill work days we had people who made the long drive from as far away as south of Boston, and people who made the short walk from, literally, across the street. We had people pitch in who not only haven't skied yet at Dutch Hill, but who've never backcountry skied ever (but plan to this winter). Even those who only snowshoe at Dutch Hill spent time with us.

What did 50 different people, working a total of 358.5 hours, over nine days, get done? They walked every trail and glade, clearing blowdowns and fallen branches and limbs. They also cleared some ice storm damage from the cross country ski route out to the true, backwoods summit of Dutch Hill. More work was done on the glade dropping from Yankee Doodle to Dyke. And in keeping with the Forest Service's goal of maintaining the vista at the top of the ski hill, sawyers removed a few trees that are beginning to block the view.

DUTCH HILL FALL 2021
50 people **over 9** days
worked 358.5 hours
getting the slopes ready for you

Perhaps the most exciting accomplishments this fall are opening up a portion of the old Ski Lark trail and additional clearing on the upper portion of Christiana. Make no mistake—these are not your typical cleared ski trails, but are gladed runs, and the “Christie” is still steep, tight, and rough. But the effort gives visitors another (exciting) way down the mountain. While the Christie and upper Ski Lark are for experts only, the lower part of Ski Lark is fairly moderate terrain.

What do we have planned for next year? We'll be working with the Forest Service and hope to get approval for a couple more top-to-bottom glades at Dutch Hill. Should we get approval, we'll have a lot of work ahead of us to open up this new terrain. We hope to see you on the mountain next fall.



Above left: Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts students lend a hand. Above right: "swamping" the glade on Ski Lark



Above left: crew at the vista. Above right: crew at the true summit

Cross Country Ski News: the Catamount Trail and Beyond



re-decked bridge, Catamount Trail Section 2

It takes a lot of work to keep over 30 miles of cross country ski trail open for use each winter. So if you ask a CTA Trail Chief "what's new," there often isn't much new to report; they are hard at work many days each fall just keeping the existing trail clear. The middle of Section 4 along Somerset Reservoir is such a long walk in that trail chief Heidi Pancake uses a canoe to ferry a brush cutter to the site; keeping the hobblesh at bay there is a never-ending task.

What is new on **Section 4** is that the US Forest Service will be improving drainage and installing puncheon on the portion around Grout Pond. This work will keep hikers' feet dry and undoubtedly improve skiing as well. It builds upon the work the Forest Service did at Grout Pond last year installing new signs and maps.

Section 3 trail chief Alan Binnick reports that three bridges spanning significant brooks north of the East Branch/Somerset Road access trail have been replaced by Great River Hydro (see photo to the right). The old bridges were damaged by flooding and are unsafe, and crossing the mostly-frozen brooks was a tricky proposition.



On **Section 2**, Sam Bartlett led a team to re-deck a 35-foot bridge between Route 9 and Medburyville (see photo at top), while Great River Hydro did the same on a 22-foot bridge. This work should provide safe passage for many years. A minor reroute was made near Route 9 to reduce future trail work needs.

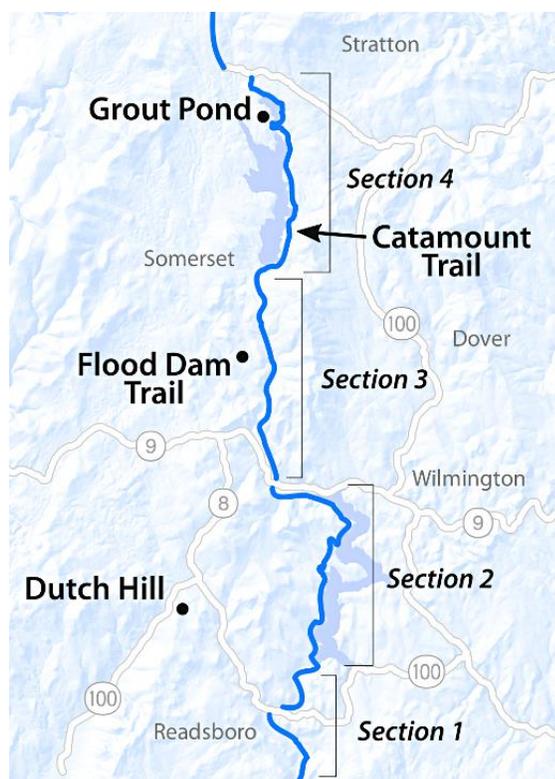
And down on **Section 1**, there's now a new highway sign proudly marking the Catamount Trail at the Readsboro Route 100 trailhead (see photo to the right).



A DHASH crew continued to work on the **Flood Dam Trail**, a side trail near Section 3 in Searsburg. They cleared a short bypass for skiers around a steep, eroded section of trail, and worked on drainage improvements. After several years of work cutting back brush, constructing some bypasses, and re-blazing, the trail is now suitable for intermediate-level cross-country skiers and more enjoyable for hikers in the summer months.

If Alan Binnick wasn't busy enough on his own Section 3, he also finds time to work on the **West Side Trail**, which follows the west shore of Somerset Reservoir. (No wonder he was named CTA's Volunteer of the Year in 2018!) The trail will be closed this winter for logging, but Alan and others will be working on it next summer, making it ready for you to ski in 2023.

*** **Section 2 closure** *** Due to logging, the portion of Section 2 from Woods Road (in the Medburyville neighborhood of Wilmington) south along Harriman Reservoir will be closed at some point during the winter of 2022. You can check the Section 2 web page on CTA's website for details before you head out to ski this section. <https://catamounttrail.org/ski-the-trail/ct-section-list/section-2-harriman-dam-to-route-9/>



Join Us for Tours at Dutch Hill and on the Catamount



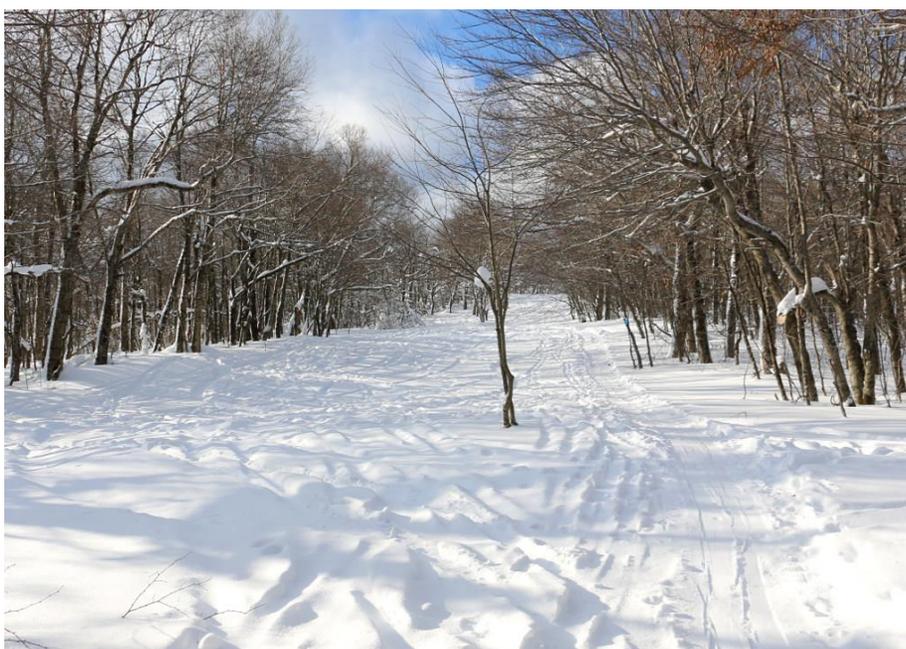
Last year the pandemic and accompanying travel restrictions put a damper on backcountry tours. This year the coronavirus is still with us, but with outdoor gatherings being much less risky, we've got a number of tours scheduled around Southern Vermont. It's a great way to learn the terrain at Dutch Hill, or explore the Catamount Trail safely in a group (not to mention others in that group will help with the trail breaking!).

Here's what's on tap for 2022:

- **Intermediate/advanced tours of Dutch Hill** will be held every first and third Sunday during January, March, and maybe even April.
- **Beginner tour of Dutch Hill** for those who feel less confident about their downhill skills on February 19.
- **Catamount Trail Section 2** tour (easy/intermediate) from Harriman Dam to Route 9 (Whitingham/Wilmington/Searsburg) on January 8.
- **Catamount Trail Section 1** tour (easy/introductory) from Harriman Dam to Route 100 (Whitingham/Readsboro) on February 5.
- **Catamount Trail Section 3** tour (easy/introductory) from Route 9 to and out the Flood Dam Trail (Searsburg) on March 5.
- **Catamount Trail Multi-Day Tour on Sections 1-8**, February 19-27. Skiers are welcome to sign up for as many days as they wish, even one.
- **Backcountry Tour** somewhere in the Southern Green Mountains. When? Where? We're not sure yet. The snow will dictate.

For more details, visit <https://www.dhash4vt.org/events>, or <https://catamounttrail.org/events-tours>

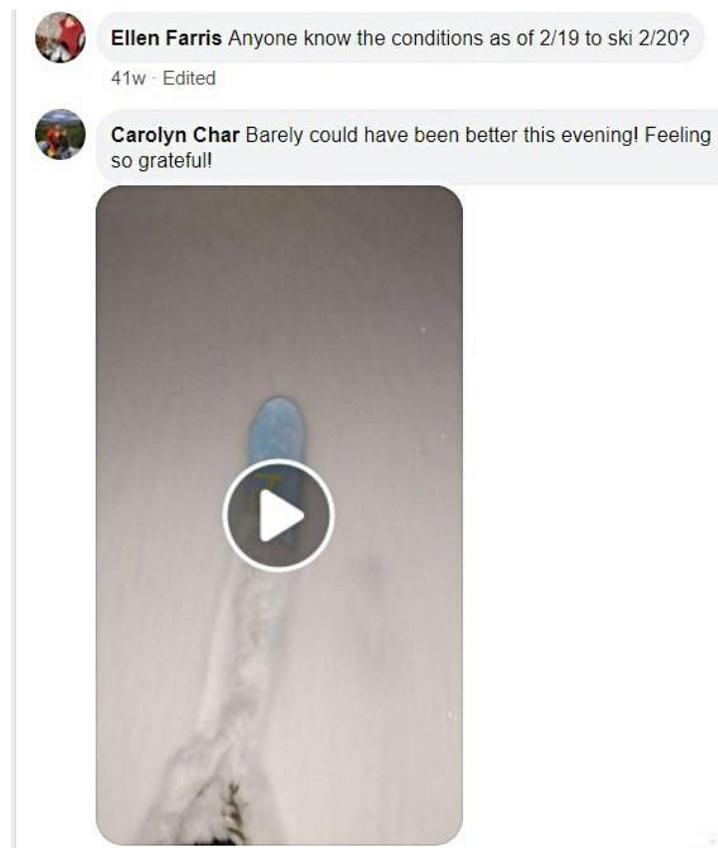
“Hey, What’s the Snow Like at Dutch Hill?”



Good cover on the upper Dyke

You're used to having daily snow reports from downhill resorts and cross country touring centers. Dutch Hill is a backcountry area, however, and DHASH can't be expected to monitor and post conditions. But you can! Share your experiences at Dutch Hill through

our [Facebook page](#). We've made a post to which the public can add comments with their observations. Another source for information about not just Dutch Hill but other areas in the Southern Greens and Northern Berkshires is the Hoosac Range Skiing Google Group, <https://groups.google.com/g/hoosac-range-skiing>, a good alternative to Facebook with a chance for more back and forth discussion.



some stoke from last winter on our Facebook page

Malcolm Moore Named One of CTA's 2021 Volunteers of the Year



Malcolm taking a break on Section 4 along Somerset Reservoir

He was there at the beginning. He participated in our first on-site visit with the Forest Service at Dutch Hill in 2015, and he was a part of our meeting in 2016 where we came together to form the organization now known as DHASH. And he was there just hours before being named one of two Volunteers of the Year at CTA's Annual Meeting on November 11, 2021, doing work that morning on the Catamount Trail's Section 4 at Grout Pond.

Malcolm Moore, a resident of Marlboro, Vermont nearly his entire life, is a true fan, and supporter, of outdoor recreation. In his early years he summited Alaska's Denali and Mt. St. Elias, and founded the Outdoor Program at Marlboro College. More recently he's been tremendously devoted to trails, not just around Brattleboro and Marlboro but also along Sections 1-4 of the Catamount Trail. He's often found working with previous Volunteer of the Year recipients Sam Bartlett (Section 1 & 2 trail chief and DHASH executive committee member) and Alan Binnick (Section 3 trail chief). Congratulations Malcolm!

Trail Tools and Snow Plowing and Boring Administrative Stuff



brush cutters

It takes a lot to keep our little organization running. In the past couple years we've purchased brush cutters and a chainsaw. We pay to have the Dutch Hill parking lot plowed after each storm. Then there's the boring administrative stuff like web sites and email services.

Let's not forget the boring administrative stuff that the Catamount Trail Association (of which DHASH is a chapter) provides us. But that stuff actually isn't so boring. DHASH probably wouldn't exist without CTA. They are our financial agent. They provide us with liability insurance. They advocate for and grow the sport of cross country skiing and backcountry skiing and riding here in Vermont. They even manage a great youth ski program called Ski Cubs.

If you haven't done so already, please **become a member** of the Catamount Trail Association and choose a chapter affiliation (we hope you'll choose DHASH). You can do that here: <https://www.dhash4vt.org/join-dhash> Thank you!

