

*You may keep this brochure
or return it to the box for others to use.*



*red-tail
hawk*


HELEN W. BUCKNER Memorial Preserve at Bald Mountain

TRAIL GUIDE

Welcome to Tim's Trail

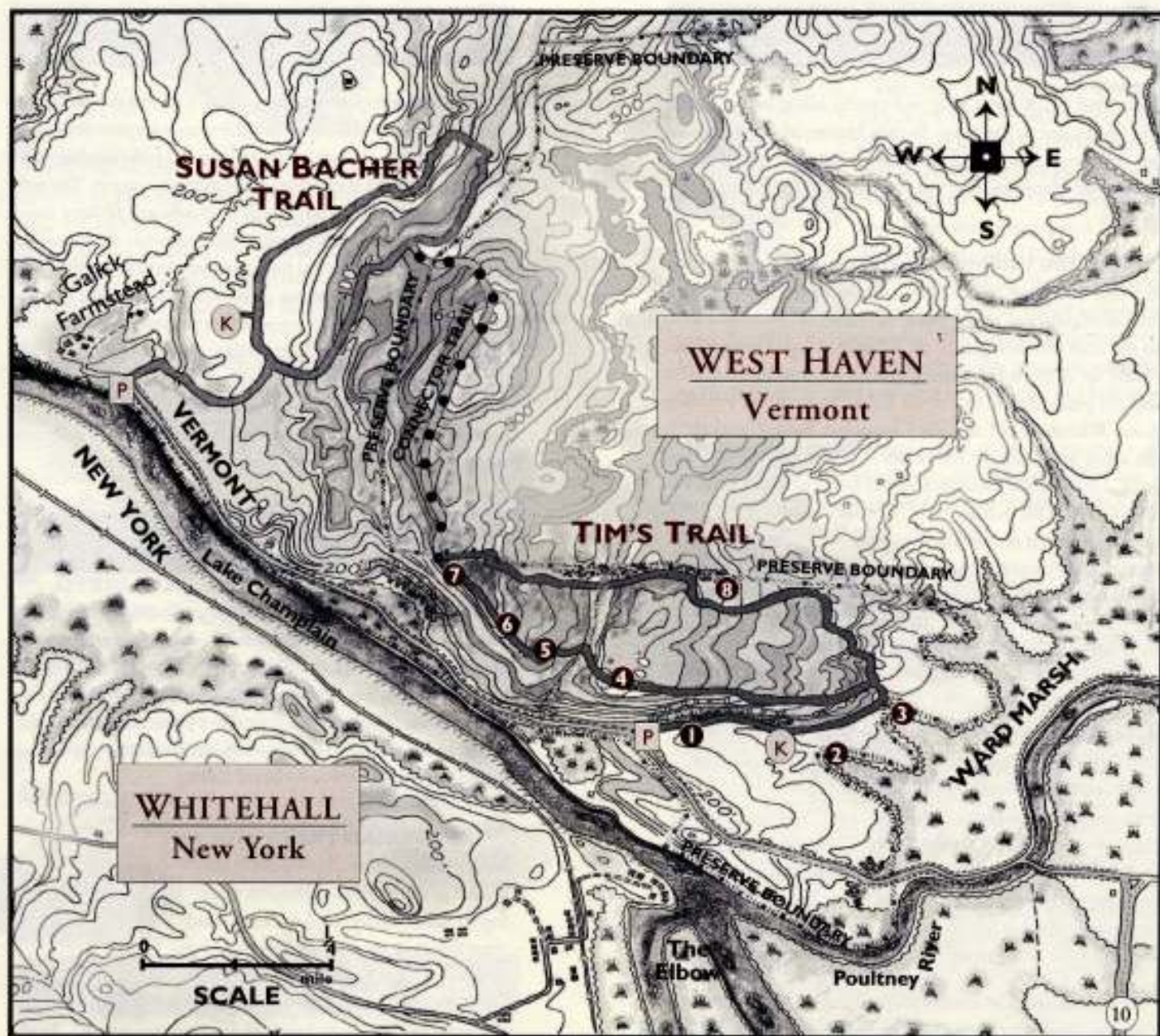
At 3500 acres, The Buckner Preserve is the largest and most ecologically diverse nature preserve The Nature Conservancy owns in Vermont. The Buckner Preserve, located in the town of West Haven, encompasses much of the peninsula of Vermont that is surrounded by New York State.

This peninsula is bounded on the east by the Poultney River and on the west and south by Lake Champlain. The Nature Conservancy has preserved a large portion of this biologically diverse landscape through the generosity of the Helen W. Buckner family. In all, the uplands and aquatic features of the preserve provide habitat for 11 rare and uncommon animal species, 18 rare and uncommon plants and 10 rare and uncommon natural community types. Tim's Trail is 2.8 miles long and traverses fields and several types of forest. A wide variety of trees, wildflowers, birds, reptiles and other animals may be seen from the trail.

*The Nature
Conservancy* 

SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

WEST HAVEN, VERMONT



• MAP KEY •

Tim's Trail loop = 2.8 miles
 Connector Trail = 1 mile
 Susan Bacher Memorial Trail loop = 2.5 miles

(K) Information Kiosk and Map **(P)** Parking Area and Trail Head

(2) Trail Marker Area of Interest

- (1)** Talus slopes **(2)** Amphibian traps
- (3)** Overlook of Ward Marsh
- (4)** Overlook of Whitehall, New York, the Poughkeepsie River and Birdseye Mountain in Vermont
- (5)** Lichens and mosses are plentiful here.
- (6)** Dry oak-hickory-hophornbeam forest
- (7)** Overlook of South Bay and Lake Champlain
 The mile-long stone wall forms the north boundary of this part of the Preserve.

• PRESERVE GUIDELINES •

Please keep these things in mind when visiting the preserve.

- For your safety in the woods, please stay on marked trails.
- Please always carry a map and compass with you.
- Please do not remove plants, animals, artifacts or rocks from the preserve.
- Camping and fires are not allowed on the preserve.
- Please do not litter; help us control littering by picking up whatever litter you may see on the trail.
- Please leave your pets at home. Seeing Eye dogs are welcome.
- Hunting is allowed by permission from Oct. 1- Dec. 31, and during May. In season, please wear bright colors.
- Please keep group size small.
- Rattlemakes live here. As a precaution wear long pants and ankle-high boots. Watch where you walk and always inspect the area before you sit or place your hand on the ground.

Tim's Trail

Tim's Trail is 2.8 miles long and can be hiked in 2-3 hours. The connector to the Susan Bacher Memorial Trail is about one mile and takes roughly an hour to hike one way. The Susan Bacher Memorial Trail is 2.5 miles and can be hiked in 2-3 hours.

From the trailhead, the trail goes east along the base of a cliff and steep talus slope to the kiosk (.2 mi). The trail then continues east past a pond and views of Ward Marsh to an old road which begins at the fence opening. The trail then climbs up to the ledges through mixed hardwoods and white and red pines. At the top of the ledge, views of the Poultney River, Whitehall, NY and the Champlain Barge Canal are to the south and Birdseye Mountain is to the east. Continuing on, the trail passes through a mixed forest of white pine, red cedar, red and white oak, hickory and

hophornbeam. It then descends steeply along rocky outcrops shaded by large hemlocks. Porcupines and other animals make their home here. After crossing a small brook, the trail climbs, then turns southwest through the dry oak-hickory-hophornbeam forest which is dominated by

Pennsylvania sedge on the forest floor. After winding through the woods, the trail comes to an old stone wall which marks the junction with the north side of Tim's Trail, the connector to the Susan Bacher Memorial Trail, and the overlook to South Bay and Lake Champlain.

The connector trail has views of Lake Champlain and Black Mountain to the west. The trail passes two small wetland pools and then climbs to the top of Austin Hill (elevation 641 feet) which is dominated by a grove of chestnut oak. The trail then heads west and descends steeply to the junction of the Susan Bacher Memorial Trail. The connector trail passes through private land for about one mile. Use of this trail is generously allowed by the landowner.

The north side of Tim's Trail follows the stone wall through the sedges. As the open forest ends, the trail begins a slow descent through hemlocks and mixed hardwoods crossing a seasonal stream and then a small brook. After crossing the brook, the trail winds uphill and joins an old woods road which follows a stone wall. After a short distance through hemlocks and mixed hardwoods, the trail leads to another old woods road which the trail then follows as it descends the hillside back down to the fields overlooking Ward Marsh. Turn right down the woods road to return to the original trail leading back to the kiosk and trailhead.



Geology

The dramatic topography of the trail is due to the geology of the site. The steep cliffs and vertical fractures are present because of the particular minerals (mostly quartz and feldspar) that make up the rock, which is called quartzo-feldspathic gneiss. The rock here is composed of small crystals of quartz and feldspar interspersed with thin bands of mica. Mica minerals are sheet-like, and give rise to the vertical fractures that characterize the cliffs. The mica layers form planes of weakness in the rock that are then exploited by weathering processes to create these fractures. This rock belongs to the Adirondacks, a very old group of rocks that were metamorphosed 1.1 billion years ago. Just to the west of the trail, and in most of the Champlain Valley, these very old metamorphic rocks are covered by a thick sequence of sedimentary rocks such as limestone, sandstone, dolomite and shale.

Keyed Trail Features

1 TALUS SLOPES Open talus is the accumulation of rockfall below a cliff. The depth of the rock piles prevents most vegetation from growing and provides a stable temperature for animals, particularly reptiles. Although the rock piles do not form as quickly as they did during post-glacial Vermont, in the winter or spring when the freeze-thaw cycle is at its peak, rocks can often be heard falling.

2 AMPHIBIAN TRAPS You may notice some short aluminum fences buried in the ground. Biologists working at Middlebury College have used these fences to monitor the health and size of the frog population in this area. Many of the spotted frogs you may see jumping through the grass are Northern Leopard Frogs (*Rana pipiens*). In the past, there have been years when many of these frogs were deformed and were missing legs or portions of their legs.



3 OVERLOOK of WARD MARSH The Ward Marsh Wildlife Management Area is owned by the State of Vermont and is an emergent wetland dominated by cattails. Wetlands are essential habitat for an abundance of wildlife including many species of birds, fish, amphibians and insects.

4 OVERLOOK of WHITEHALL, NY, the POULTNEY RIVER and BIRDSEYE MOUNTAIN in VERMONT Whitehall, the birthplace of the US Navy, is the southernmost town on Lake Champlain. Here you can see the Champlain Barge Canal which links Lake Champlain with the Hudson River. It was built in the 1830s for commerce. Today it is used mostly for recreation. The Poultney River, which begins in Timmouh, Vermont, can be seen as it flows into Lake Champlain. Birdseye Mountain, spanning the towns of Castleton and Poultney, can be easily identified by its dramatic south-facing cliff.



goblet lichen

5 LICHENS and MOSSES Lichens are an unusual combination of two organisms: fungal filaments and algal cells. They are nature's first step in establishing a layer of topsoil upon rocks. Mosses are closely related to lichens in that they both depend upon external moisture to transport nutrients. Because of this they both prefer damp habitats.

6 DRY OAK-HICKORY-HOPHORNBEAM FOREST Found on hilltops where bedrock is close to the surface and soil is thin, these forests are uncommon in Vermont. Vegetation is sparse and the ground is largely covered with woodland sedge, creating an open, park-like setting. The trees are mostly shagbark hickory, red oak, and hophornbeam. Red cedars grow along the edges of the cliffs.

7 OVERLOOK of SOUTH BAY and LAKE CHAMPLAIN South Bay, a shallow extension of Lake Champlain can be seen from many of the overlooks at the westerly end of the trail. From Whitehall, the lake flows north, eventually reaching the Richelieu River in Canada. The railroad line connecting New York and Montreal can be seen as it crosses the mouth of South Bay.

8 STONE WALLS The mile-long stone wall forming the north boundary of this part of the Preserve is like others built during the 1800s by farmers as they cleared the land for agriculture. Stone walls provided logical property markers and fencing.

If You Encounter a Rattlesnake

The Buckner Preserve is a haven for reptiles that are normally found in warmer climates. The best known resident is the Eastern Timber Rattlesnake, an endangered species in Vermont. A rattlesnake will not strike unless it feels threatened. People are bitten if they intentionally harass a snake or step directly onto one. If you come upon a rattlesnake, stay calm and back away slowly. Give the snake a berth of about 20 feet and then continue on your way. If you want to avoid the possibility of a rattlesnake encounter, visit the preserve from early October until late April when the snakes are in hibernation.

In the unlikely event that someone in your party is bitten, it is very important to keep the victim calm. An elevated heart rate helps to circulate the venom. Call 911 via cell phone or send someone to use a phone at the nearest residence. Snakebites are dangerous, but immediate medical attention can lessen the risks associated with them.



chestnut oak

Tim



Timothy Cameron Kuehn was born on July 24, 1979, in Rutland, Vermont. He grew up in West Haven and graduated in 1998 from Fair Haven Union High School where he played varsity soccer and tennis and was a member of the track team and Community Service Club. Later, at the University of

Vermont, Tim was selected as a member of honor societies in both education and geography. He was also a leader of the UVM Outing Club and the Little Buddy program, completing his B.S. degree in December of 2002 the day before he died.

Tim's passion was educating others about the natural environment of Vermont, whether on the slopes of Killington, in the classroom, or through the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps.

From Tim's Journal:

Many times I have sat on the ridge, ever since I was old enough to go out and play on my own. I look out onto the fields first, curious as to what I might see...a red-tailed hawk soared past me, leaving me in complete awe. I watch him as he slips in and out of sight through the trees. Not long after I lost him, he flew almost directly at me. We were almost eye-to-eye, but then he drifted off and out of sight again. For that one second, I thought I had been discovered, but he didn't seem to have noticed me...The only thing that seemed to notice me at all was the monarch who kept its distance with its brilliant colors mixing with the fall foliage in the background. This time spent writing here has given me great opportunity to relax, taking in the breeze which feels incredibly good and observing the beauty that I am intruding in... Another afternoon on the ridge, never seeming to change. Something I can trust and will always love to do.

Heartfelt Thanks to:

- The volunteer crews who*
 - scouted, cut and marked the trail
 - designed, donated materials, and built the kiosk

The more than 80 individuals and groups who donated funds to make this all possible

All who walk this trail and care for it through the years

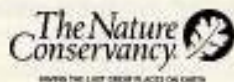
Part of a Larger Protected Landscape



The Buckner Preserve is part of the Southern Lake Champlain Valley Program. Three chapters of The Nature Conservancy – the Eastern New York Chapter, the Adirondack Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Chapter – have protected over 9,000 acres in the valley on both sides of the Vermont/New York border. The three chapters have conserved six preserves. Four are in Vermont – the Buckner Preserve, the Lower Poultney River Preserve, Shaw Mountain Natural Area and the Hubbardton River Clayplain Preserve – and two are in New York – the Lower Poultney River Preserve and Saddles Mountain Preserve. Together these six preserves include miles of undeveloped lake and river shoreline, extensive wetlands, cliffs and several mountains.

Preserve Directions

From Whitehall, NY, take Route 4 East. From Rutland, VT, take Route 4 West. Then turn north onto Route 9A just across from a small shopping plaza where there is a garden center. (Please note that the signs for Route 9A and Bittersweet Plaza are small and easily missed!) Travel about 1 mile on Route 9A, and then turn left onto Rte. 9 at the T intersection. Take the first right onto Route 10 (Doig Street). Drive a half mile, then turn left onto the dirt road (the paved road curves right). Cross the bridge and turn left. Tim's Trail parking area is .7 miles down the dirt road on the right. The Susan Bacher Memorial Trail parking area is another mile down the road on the right. Please be advised that this road is often flooded in the spring.



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