

# Mountain P A S S A G E S

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## Rumney Climbers Association Secures Funds to Buy Final Frontier

### PRESS RELEASE

RUMNEY, NH—Rumney Climber’s Association (RCA) and Access Fund are excited to announce they have completed the second phase of protecting Rumney’s Northwest Crags (aka the Final Frontier). In just under a year, the climbing community rallied to raise over \$100,000, and RCA now owns the 85-acre property. Access Fund provided RCA with two loans to cover the gap in the purchase price, which RCA will pay back after they transfer the property to White Mountain National Forest. The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) New Hampshire Chapter and its Mountaineering Committee contributed to the initiative.

The Final Frontier property extends half a

mile along Buffalo Road and gains 600 feet up the forested slopes of Rattlesnake Mountain. It featured the final set of privately owned climbing resources at Rumney—including Northwest Territories, Buffalo Pit, Northwest Passage, Prudential, Asylum and the western portion of the Black Jack Boulders. This latest acquisition extends Access Fund’s and RCA’s legacy of land protection at Rumney, which began in 1994 when Access Fund purchased Meadows, 5.8 Crag, Monsters and the main parking area, which they later transferred to the US Forest Service (USFS) for long term protection.

“The Final Frontier is about preserving both climbing and natural wild spaces,” says RCA Co-President Dave Quinn. “If sold to a non-climbing friendly buyer for residential develop-

RCA, TO PAGE 4 

## OUR MISSION

The Appalachian Mountain Club is the nation’s oldest outdoor recreation and conservation organization, and promotes the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters and trails of the Appalachian region. AMC has more than 100,000 members, 16,000 volunteers, 450 full-time and seasonal staff. The New Hampshire Chapter is the second largest of the 12 Chapters within the Club.

VOLUME 43, NUMBER 2  
MARCH-APRIL 2017

## AIARE 1 Course Report

### CASY CALVER

NORTH CONWAY, NH—To increase my education for safe travel in avalanche terrain, and to help me better assist with the AMC NH Ski Committee’s annual Avalanche Awareness course, I spent January 6-8 at Northeast Mountaineering (NEM), taking an American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education (AIARE) Level 1 course taught by NH guide and AIARE instructor Dave Lottmann.

For many years, Dave taught avy education



*Calver skiing the John Sherburne ski trail. Photo courtesy of Brent Doscher for Northeast Mountaineering*

AIARE 1 COURSE REPORT, TO PAGE 3 



# AMC submits testimony to SEC against Northern Pass

Hearings to begin this spring



BRETT BILLINGS

While AMC staffers have until a scheduled March 15 deadline to submit final evidence to the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee (SEC) against Northern Pass—the controversial 192-mile, high-voltage transmission project proposed to cut through the center of New Hampshire’s White Mountains—the hearing process may be delayed by a month or more.

The AMC is one of a few key organizational players, including the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), among scores of interveners including individual property owners and municipalities opposing the proposed energy transmission project. The Club sought funding from chapters to support its efforts against the project as proposed, and the NH and Boston Chapters helped finance the testimony of Harry Dodson, of Dodson and Flinker, assessing the aesthetic impact of the project, which the AMC has made the focus of its opposition for

almost six years, when Northern Pass was first proposed.

“Similar proposed projects in the Northeast have been permitted in less than two years using 100 percent newer burial technology,” AMC Vice President for Conservation Susan Arnold writes.

After entering Pittsburg, NH from Canada, Northern Pass will traverse above ground north of the Kilkenny Ridge and through Whitefield to Bethlehem before passing underground for 52 miles through the White Mountain National Forest and under the Appalachian Trail thereafter traveling overhead again through the Lakes Region en route to Deerfield through Concord and the Merrimack Valley.

A final decision regarding Northern Pass is expected from the SEC in September 2017, though the process could be further extended. All testimony currently submitted to the SEC can be accessed at [http://www.nhsec.nh.gov/projects/2015-06/2015-06\\_pre-filed\\_testimony\\_2016-12-30.htm](http://www.nhsec.nh.gov/projects/2015-06/2015-06_pre-filed_testimony_2016-12-30.htm)

## Harry Dodson

Dodson and Flinker, Inc.  
Ashfield, MA

[Northern Pass] will have an unreasonable adverse effect on aesthetics...Its overall visual impact is not comparable to any other single infrastructure project existing in the State today... [Dodson and Flinker] identified 57 additional viewpoints where the proposed transmission corridor would be visible. These are scenic resources as defined by SEC rules.

[Northern Pass’s Visual Impact Assessment (VIA)] fails to address the unique and fragile aesthetic character of undeveloped lands and pastoral farm landscapes of New Hampshire, and discounts the potential of relatively distant changes in the landscape to exacerbate visual impacts.

The project’s scope and scale are so extensive that available mitigation measures will be ineffective in achieving a

significant reduction in aesthetic impacts. Burial of the project offers the only means of significantly reducing the project’s unreasonable adverse aesthetic impacts.

## Dr. Ken Kimball and Larry Garland

AMC Director of Research and AMC Staff Cartographer Pinkham Notch, Gorham, NH

AMC is concerned about energy infrastructure’s sprawl impinging on New Hampshire’s diminishing open spaces and is a strong advocate of requiring best practical measures to minimize project impacts.

[Northern Pass’s] ultimate conclusions are based upon a systematic under-inclusion of significant scenic resources and the injection of unarticulated, subjective valuations of scenic resources...AMC identified 82 scenic resources...within three

NORTHERN PASS,  
TO PAGE 6



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## MOUNTAIN PASSAGES

Volume 43, No. 2  
March/April 2017

Mountain Passages is published six times a year by the New Hampshire Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club.

**Submissions.** Members may submit articles or photos (hi-res jpegs) to [newsletter@amc-nh.org](mailto:newsletter@amc-nh.org). Articles may be edited at the discretion of the editor to meet space and style requirements. Publication is on a space-available basis. While Mountain Passages does not pay for submissions; a byline or photo credit is given. Contact Mountain Passages for reprint permission.

**Advertising.** The AMC NH Chapter members enjoy the outdoors year-round by hiking, paddling, skiing, backpacking, climbing and biking and more.

For information and the Ad Rate Sheet, send an email to [newsletter@amc-nh.org](mailto:newsletter@amc-nh.org).

We reserve the right to refuse any submission, photo or advertising that is not consistent with the mission of the AMC.

**Address Changes.** Address changes or other changes to your membership must be made through AMC Member Services at 5 Joy St. Boston, MA 02108; 800-372-

1758; [outdoors.org/membercenter](http://outdoors.org/membercenter)

Please note: Member address updates cannot be handled by AMC-NH officers, committee chairs, or the newsletter editor.

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You’ll get added resources not available to print subscribers: direct links to emails, forms and online information, color photos, online registration forms.

To sign up, go to [www.outdoors.org/membercenter](http://www.outdoors.org/membercenter) and set your AMC-NH Chapter newsletter preference to online.

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**NEM** AIARE 1 COURSE REPORT,  
FROM PAGE 1

for Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS) and this was his first year with NEM and also the outfit's first avy course. Besides Dave's expertise, the greatest benefit of taking the course through NEM was the on-site lodging in the NEM bunkhouse provided to all students, which led to great group bonding, cost savings and convenience. It was basic hostel-style living, but it was comfortable and clean. For the record, you can book a bunk there even if you're not taking a course for \$20 per night, which is a steal!

The course began on Friday with a half-day lecture, explaining snow science and the causes and types of avalanches. Then we headed to Jackson Park to do some beacon searches in the snowdrifts. The most interesting aspect of this experience was a simulated companion rescue, in which we took turns digging out a buried beacon, pretending it was a person. If we didn't already realize how much effort it takes to move several tons of snow in a short period of time, this exercise brought it home! Day two began with another morning indoors, learning about trip planning and how to use the AIARE planning note-

book. This little blue monster brought back bitter high school memories of exam blue books, and I know I'll need a lot of practice to master the nomenclature for weather observations, snowpack assessment and route planning. It's a very helpful tool, however, and should be part of the planning of any serious tour.

We also used some online tools, such as CalTopo.com, a free service for viewing and printing maps that include overlays denoting slope angles, trails and other features. Dave is developing a webinar on this that should be out in late spring 2017, and I think will be another useful tool. He recommends printing (and laminating) all maps, since technology is susceptible to failure in the mountains.

In the afternoon, we skinned down the railroad tracks from the Highland Center at Crawford Notch and made some observations of past avy activity and looked at some of the facing aspects to determine whether they were capable of sliding.

Dave introduced us to some really interesting tools for the smartphone, including Mammut Safety 2.0, which has many avy-related features (and

is free) and Theodolite (<http://hunter.pairsite.com/theodolite/>), which can take a photo of a slope and will spit out a bunch of data on it, in real time. Dave reviews these apps on his website: <https://northeastalpinestart.com/2015/10/26/outdoor-apps-reviews-part-2-snow-safety-apps/>

These tools don't replace maps, compasses, inclinometers, etc. but are useful supplements to them.

We ended the day with some pit digging and compression tests. The highlight was the large fisher cat that ran down the slope next to our pits! Sunday, we concluded the class with a student-planned and executed tour into Tuckerman Ravine under adverse conditions. The high summits forecast was for wind chills of -50, and it was definitely one of the coldest days I've been in the mountains. After reviewing the MWAC avy report all weekend, and based on the limited touring experience of some members of our group, we planned a route to Hillman's Highway. However, upon arriving at HoJos, we saw that there was some serious wind-loading at the top of Hillman's and at least seven people already hiking up a bootpack that appeared to be

in harm's way. We altered our plans and instead skinned up to a position in the sun partway up Right Gully, where we dug pits and saw some really interesting wind slab layers. Dave also demonstrated an extended-column test.

The finale of the weekend was, of course, the ski down from the Bowl to Pinkham Notch Visitor's Center. The Sherbie was in excellent condition, especially for early January, which I hope is a good sign for the rest of the season. We were lucky to have Brent Doscher, a professional photographer, along with us on this last day. Dave posted a short report with more photos on his blog ([nealpinestart.com](http://nealpinestart.com)).

It was exciting to take this next step in my avalanche and outdoor leadership education, building on all that I've learned (and continue to learn) from AMC NH Ski Committee leaders Jed, Marty, Tony, Thor, Valerio and others.

This article originally ran in the web-based 2016-2017 AMC NH Chapter Ski News #4. To subscribe to the newsletter, contact Al Grimstad at [agrimstad@mail.com](mailto:agrimstad@mail.com)



## AMC Honors Granite Staters with Volunteer Leadership Awards

### PRESS RELEASE

BOSTON, MA—The AMC honored Nancy Damboise of Deerfield, Deborah Shigo of Rochester and Beth Zimmer of Meredith with its Volunteer Leadership Award at the 141st AMC Annual Summit held January 28 in Norwood, Mass. The award recognizes AMC's outstanding volunteer leaders who share their time and expertise in pursuit of AMC's mission.

Damboise serves as a program volunteer at both Highland Center and Pinkham, on programs including AMC's Women's Cross Country Ski weekends, many 4000 Footer weekends, and more. She is an extremely competent outdoor-spersion, and is able to share her skills with participants in a friendly, educational way. Damboise commits countless hours, weekends, and energy to help AMC deliver these great programs.

Shigo serves in AMC's huts and lodges as an Information Volunteer, Volunteer Naturalist, and Program Volunteer. She also helps with special events, helps volunteers during spring training weekends, and serves as a Mentor for new volunteers. Shigo began volunteering in the huts and lodges in 2008 and has contributed hundreds of hours toward helping AMC's overnight guests, day visitors, staff, and other volunteers. She primarily volunteers at High-

land and Pinkham, as well as Cardigan and the backcountry huts. Shigo is passionate about the outdoors and embodies the AMC mission by helping others learn about the natural world and enjoy their time in the mountains. She enthusiastically shares her knowledge about backcountry trails, safety, gear, and natural history, and she is always eager to help.

Zimmer is a leader, instructor,



**VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP  
AWARD, TO PAGE 5**

## RCA, FROM PAGE 1

ment, the resource could have been lost forever.”

In January of 2016, Access Fund lent RCA \$10,000 to secure an Option Agreement on the property, giving them one year and the sole right to purchase the property. The two organizations worked together to launch a large-scale fundraising campaign to raise \$300,000 to purchase the property and make stewardship improvements. The climbing community stepped up in a big way: The AMC New Hampshire Chapter and its Mountaineering Committee and the Boston Chapter and its Mountaineering Committee collectively donated over \$40,000 to match and fuel additional donations.

“The AMC is proud to support the Final Frontier,” says Tom Sintros of the AMC NH Mountaineering Committee. “The project contributes to recreation opportunities, access protection and conservation goals—all consistent with AMC’s mission.”

Access Fund provided RCA

with a second loan of \$110,000 from its Climbing Conservation Loan Program to finalize the fundraising and allow RCA to apply more funds towards stewardship improvements. Now that the purchase is complete, RCA will take advantage of its short-term ownership by constructing a new parking area, toilet and trail system to the Northwest Crags. These improvements will help alleviate crowding at the main parking area and crags.

For the final phase of this project, Access Fund will help RCA transfer the property to the USFS within the next two years for permanent conservation. The USFS, with support from RCA and Access Fund, is seeking federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to complete the hold and transfer, match climbers’ donations and return loan funds so that Access Fund can re-invest the Climbing Conservation Loan money to protect other important climbing areas around the country.

“Thanks to the remarkable support of the Rumney climb-



View from the Final Frontier. Photo courtesy of David Quinn for Rumney Climbers Association

ing community, we met the fundraising goals and secured the Final Frontier,” says Access Fund Executive Director Brady Robinson. “We are now set to initiate stewardship improvements and complete the process with RCA and the USFS.”

“The White Mountain National Forest is very excited

about this acquisition. This property will provide new climbing opportunities,” says District Ranger of the Pemigewasset Ranger District Jon Morrissey. “We look forward to working together with RCA on this final phase of land protection at Rumney Rocks.”

## Bike Leaders Needed!

Are you cycling in your local area on a regular basis during the warmer months? Would you like to share your cycling enthusiasm with others? Have you considered volunteering as an AMC NH Chapter Bike Leader?

The AMC NH Chapter Bike Committee has been in existence now for a few years, offering cycling opportunities for the community. Unlike other AMC committees, the Bike Committee has learned that cyclists tend to be interested in riding in their local area and will not often drive long distances to participate in organized rides.

We currently have leaders

in the Monadnock, Nashua and Seacoast areas of the state but are in need of bike leaders in other areas especially Concord, Manchester and Lakes Region. We are also in need of single track mountain bike leaders in all areas.

Becoming a leader is a simple process of completing the short training session, followed by leading a ride with one of our current bike leaders. Then just continue with your usual cycling and invite others along by posting your rides on the AMC-NH website.

If you are interested, contact our Bike Committee at [amcnhbike@gmail.com](mailto:amcnhbike@gmail.com).



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 **VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AWARD, FROM PAGE 3**

and Co-Chair of AMC's New Hampshire Chapter Excursions Committee. She leads many trips each year and has developed a Map & Compass workshop and a GPS Workshop.

Zimmer is an instructor for leadership training workshops as well as the Winter Hiking Series covering leadership, map and compass, and outdoor winter travel. Zimmer served on the New Hampshire Chapter Executive Committee for over

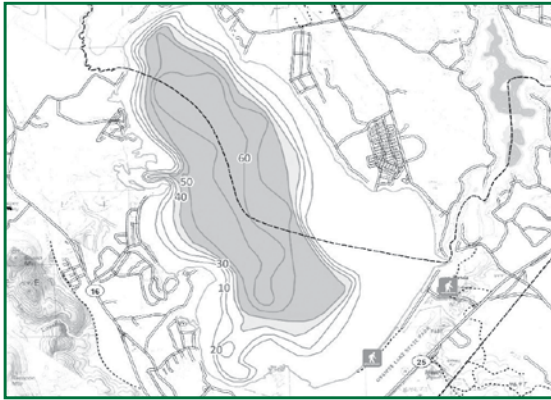
two years as Secretary, and now serves on the committee in her role as Co-Chair of the Excursions Committee. She adds value at every Executive Committee meeting with thoughtful comments and advice. Zimmer is always looking for new ways

to provide training and new opportunities to members and volunteers including her Annual Women's Trail Work Day. For more information on AMC's volunteer awards, visit [www.outdoors.org/volunteers/awards](http://www.outdoors.org/volunteers/awards).



# Save The Date!

## OCTOBER 13-15 2017



**NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER**  
YOUR CONNECTION TO THE OUTDOORS

## The NH Chapter will be hosting the **2017 Fall Gathering**

*You are in for a good time!*

**Registration Begins July 1, 2017**

**— UPCOMING EVENT —**



*Saturday, April 22, 2017, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.*

## Staying Found Workshop for Families

WANDA RICE

Hosted by the Beaver Brook Association and Appalachian Mountain Club's New Hampshire Chapter Family Group, this free workshop is an educational program for children, ages approximately four to ten, and their families with a presentation by New England K-9 Search and Rescue.

Learn how to avoid getting lost and what to do if you become lost.

The focus of this program teaches children how to stay safe in a situation where they are separated from a group or find themselves lost off the trail. When that happens, there are several things that children can be taught to improve their chances of safely reuniting with their party. Children need to

know how to be safe in the woods and parents need to be sure that every outing is appropriate for the child's ability and interest level, while respecting the abilities and limitations of each person.

Bring your kids and learn the basics of staying found in this free workshop. This program is designed for four- to ten-year-olds, but all are welcome. There is no cost, and there are no materi-

als required. The Beaver Brook Association is located in Hollis, NH.

Pre-registration is required. To register, please go to [www.amc-nh.org](http://www.amc-nh.org) and click on the "Family" tab, then click on Staying Found Workshop. Then click on the registration link.

For more information, contact Wanda Rice at [wandarice603@gmail.com](mailto:wandarice603@gmail.com).



## NORTHERN PASS, FROM PAGE 2

miles of [Northern Pass] that were not evaluated for scenic significance.

[Northern Pass] did not conduct any form of public outreach to measure what expectations and reactions the public – residents, second home owners, tourists and recreationists – would have for their experiences if they encountered this proposed Project on New Hampshire’s landscape. Public and town officials’ testimony in this proceeding... document overwhelming dissatisfaction with the proposed Project... 78 percent expressed opposition to the project as proposed... 53 percent specifically articulated their opposition was based, in part or whole, on potential aesthetics (visual) impacts.

### Dr. Dave Publicover

AMC Assistant Research Director and Senior Staff Scientist

Pinkham Notch, Gorham, NH

[Northern Pass] would have a significant adverse effect on an exemplary occurrence of the rare Northern Hardwood

Seepage Forest Natural Community. This occurrence is one of only two in the state... Given its size, condition and the presence of eight rare plant species, this occurrence must be considered a very significant component of the state’s natural biodiversity. [Northern Pass] would destroy one-quarter of this community occurrence through corridor clearing and degrade an additional 20 percent to 40 percent of the occurrence through edge effects.

[Northern Pass] would [also] impact... three potentially exemplary rare natural community occurrences, 33 occurrences of four other rare (S3) natural communities and 20 separate populations of nine rare plant species... [and] would be the largest fragmenting feature in the greatest expanse of undeveloped forest in New Hampshire outside of the White Mountain National Forest.

[Northern Pass] has failed to take best practical measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate these impacts. In particular, the applicant has failed to utilize an alternate route that would avoid these impacts in their entirety.



*View from Signal Mtn Rd in Millsfield, NH, showing proposed changes, resulting in high aesthetic impact.*

### Chris Thayer

AMC Director of North Country Programs and Outreach  
AMC Highland Center, Crawford Notch, Bretton Woods, NH

Tourism and four-season outdoor recreation are important industries in the economy of New Hampshire, and are especially significant to the small communities that count natural scenic beauty as a critical asset to their economic survival... travel and tourism is NH’s second largest industry in terms of

jobs supported by dollars from out of state...

In 2002, [New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism] initiated a third party study of the state’s tourism image... study respondents ranked New Hampshire as number one among New England States in: Fall foliage, scenery/natural beauty, access to mountains, lakes and rivers, quaint towns and villages, parks and forests and outdoor sports activities.



## AMC Honors Jamke with Distinguished Service Award

### PRESS RELEASE

BOSTON, Mass.—The AMC honored Ruth “Sam” Jamke of Bedford with its Distinguished Service Award at the 141st AMC Annual Summit held January 28 in Norwood, MA. The award recognizes those AMC volunteers who have contributed outstanding efforts to the mission of the organization, for a sustained period of time, and at the very highest levels. This award recognizes long-term commitment to enhancing and sustaining the integrity of AMC’s conservation, education

and recreation mission. Jamke joined AMC in 1983 and is well known throughout the club through a range of volunteer communities and staff departments. Her volunteering began in the New Hampshire Chapter where she is a hike leader and Instructor. Jamke served as Chapter Chair starting in 2006 and stepped up as Regional Director in 2010 representing the northern chapters on the Board of Directors. She is a respected Adventure Travel leader and recruits new leaders and participants by sharing images and stories from her many trips abroad with audiences

inside and outside AMC. Jamke currently serves as Chair of August Camp – a popular full service camp that changes its location year after year. In all of her volunteer roles, Jamke has advocated for the visibility of volunteer programs as integral to the organizational identity both internally to members as well as in our outward facing communications to the public. Jamke is a member of the Club Advisory Board and is a Lifetime Member of the AMC. She



*Jamke joined AMC in 1983 and is well known throughout the club through a range of volunteer communities and staff departments. (L-R, AMC President John D. Judge, Jamke and AMC Board Chair Rol Fessenden) Photo courtesy of Dodson and Flinker.*

recruits people to the Summit Society and serves as a mentor for many new volunteers. For more information on AMC’s volunteer awards, visit [www.outdoors.org/volunteers/awards](http://www.outdoors.org/volunteers/awards).

# Photographing Waterfalls

PAUL HOPKINS

The spring runoff will soon begin, and waterfalls and cascades will be at their most spectacular.

Photographing waterfalls and flowing water is all about using various shutter speeds to control the amount of motion blur. In general, faster shutter speeds are used to stop the flow, capture the spray, and add some excitement. Slower shutter speeds capture the flow lines and impart a more pastoral calm effect. Very slow shutter speeds result in a shapeless 'cotton ball' surreal effect.



*Avalanche Falls at 1/15th second*

The amount of smoothing relative to shutter speed is somewhat unpredictable. Water speed, lens length, and distance from the camera are the controlling factors. Therefore, use shutter speed bracketing to be sure that at least one shot will be the one wanted. Shutter speed bracketing is simply taking a sequence of shots each with a different shutter speed.

My recommended speed

bracket sequence is: 1, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/15, 1/30 second in that order. If unfamiliar with the technique, you might want to add 2 and 1/60 second(s). Note that the included examples were taken at different shutter speeds.

For best results, you will need the following equipment:

- A camera in which the shutter speed, aperture size (f-stop), and sensor sensitivity (ISO) can be controlled by the photographer.
  - A variable neutral density (ND) filter having 1-9 stop range, or a polarizer with some fixed ND filter(s) of at least 4 stops. These filters reduce the amount of available light, without changing the color balance, enabling long shutter speeds in full day-light.
  - A tripod for rock solid stability. It is not possible to "hand hold" at the required shutter speeds.
  - Recommended: A remote shutter release.
  - Optional: water shoes for wading as may be necessary for the 'best' shot.
- The general procedure is to set the camera to capture the scene, and then manually adjust the variable ND filter to modify the amount of available light such that the camera selects

the required shutter speeds for the correct exposure. This procedure will maintain picture quality for all exposures.

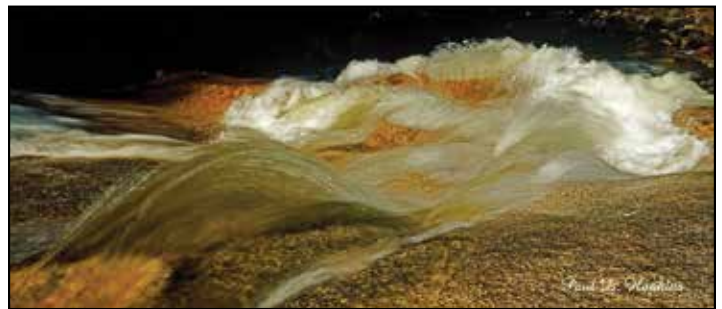
1. Set the camera for aperture priority, the lowest possible



*Bemis Cascades at 1/2 second*

ISO sensitivity, and a small f-stop, (f/11, 16, or 22).

2. Shutter speed bracketing with a variable ND filter.
  - a. Set at minimum optical density, rotate, (loosen). the



*Rooster Tail and Ruffles at 1/8th second*

entire filter to remove unwanted specular reflections. Do not rotate more than 1/2 turn from snug.

- b. Holding the inner ring, rotate the outer ring until maximum density, or the desired longest shutter speed is obtained and take the first photo. Rotate the outer ring to minimum, density, (maximum light), stopping to take a picture at each desired shutter speed.

3. Alternative shutter speed bracketing with fixed value ND filter(s):

- a. Stack the ND filter on the polarizer and rotate to remove unwanted specular reflections.
- b. Use a combination of larger f-stops, (smaller numbers), increased ISO, or less dense ND filters for each bracketed exposure.

This process may perceptually modify image quality.

4. Examine the bracketed series on your computer. Keep the preferred few and discard the rest.

## AMC NH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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## 'Mountain Passages' is only the beginning...

From hiking to biking, AMC's New Hampshire chapter has it all. Visit our website at [amc-nh.org](http://amc-nh.org) and read more about us and our many year-round events.

## Notes From The Chair

### Hear the Sounds of Nature

BILL WARREN

I recall a situation a few years ago when my niece came to visit us in our small, rural town. She grew up in small cities and had recently lived in a very large city.

She visited in August, when the blackberries were ripe and huge. So we went to a special place I knew, where there were more berries than we could possibly use. While we were busy picking berries, my niece explained how she loved being out in the wilderness where it was so quiet and peaceful. I turned and looked at her.

"What are you talking about?" the expression on my face said.

I took a moment and real-

ized she was visiting a world I have lived in most of my life that was somewhat foreign to her and I needed to share it with her. "Quiet?" I asked.

"Yes," she said cautiously. I asked her to listen very carefully. "Tell me what you can hear."

The forest seemed alive with sounds she had not been hearing. The pines whispered softly to each other through a gentle breeze, a woodpecker drummed out a song on a long-dead tree, birds whistled beautiful melodies to each other, a frog sent a love song to any female who would listen, a red squirrel chattered his disapproval of our visit, a small brook babbled about something...

In the distance, we could hear a truck and an airplane.

Finally breaking her silence, she said she had never really stopped to listen to the beautiful sounds of nature surrounding her.

We all just need to take a moment to listen.

Being in the outdoors is a wonderfully sensuous experience. You can see the landscape surround you, feel the sun on your skin, smell the flowers, hear the sounds. And everyone knows food always tastes better outdoors.

In the small, rural town where we live, the sounds we hear each evening, in about the third week of April, in almost any swamp, almost deafen us when the peepers and frogs sing their annual mating rituals. It is an annual event for us to go and listen. We try to recognize each frog in the choir. Sometimes we



*Photo courtesy of Bill Warren*

count six or seven different members from bass to soprano.

We all have busy schedules. But next time you hike along a trail, paddle across a lake or ski through the woods this spring, I urge you to stop, be very quiet and listen. You might hear some new friends.