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Wayfinding in the Pemigewasset Wilderness: A Historical Perspective

BY: BECKY FULLERTON
ARCHIVIST, APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN
CLUB LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

Have you ever tried to retrace the steps of an explorer from before your time? Puzzled over old maps to figure out how they correspond, or don't line up, with the modern landscape? Wondered about how an area was originally explored?

The Pemigewasset Wilderness and the peaks and trails in the Wilderness provide a great area to explore these questions. We have a wealth of good source material which is either published or available within the AMC Archives, and the Pemigewasset Wilderness (or the Pemi as it is sometimes called) has remained more 'wild' over time when compared to its more tamed and

populated neighbors like Franconia Notch and the Presidential Range.

The Pemi Wilderness has been viewed over the ages as an impassible wilderness, an angler's and hunter's paradise, a breadbasket for the lumberman, a vast desolation of fire-blackened slopes, a magnificent stretch of pathless forest, and finally New Hampshire's largest wilderness. It has been many things to many people, but to me it still holds this element of mystery for all its secret places and all the history layered on top of it. We have published accounts, excerpts written by hikers on the ground, historical and contemporary photos, and maps that document the many attempts and misadventures of those who explored the Pemi Wilderness.

PEMIGEWASSET WILDERNESS, 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 48, NUMBER 1
SPRING 2022



Returning in 2022 AMC NH Chapter Excursions Spring School

April 29, 2022 7:00PM – May 1, 2022 4:30PM (Fri - Sun)

Cardigan Lodge, Alexandria, NH

Workshop Directors: Rick Silverberg; rsilverberg54@gmail.com or 603 455 9119, between 10:00 am and 9:00 pm; and Bob Humphrey bobh@mcttelecom.com or 603-456-3708 evenings after 6:30

The New Hampshire Chapter's renowned weekend workshops, covering almost every aspect of safe three-season backcountry travel, are designed for hikers of all levels! You will work with experienced volunteer instructors in small experiential learning groups. Our instructors

are all active trip leaders with the NH Chapter. Groups will be limited with a high instructor ratio (typically, eight participants and two instructors in each workshop). So, learning is fun and focused for you.

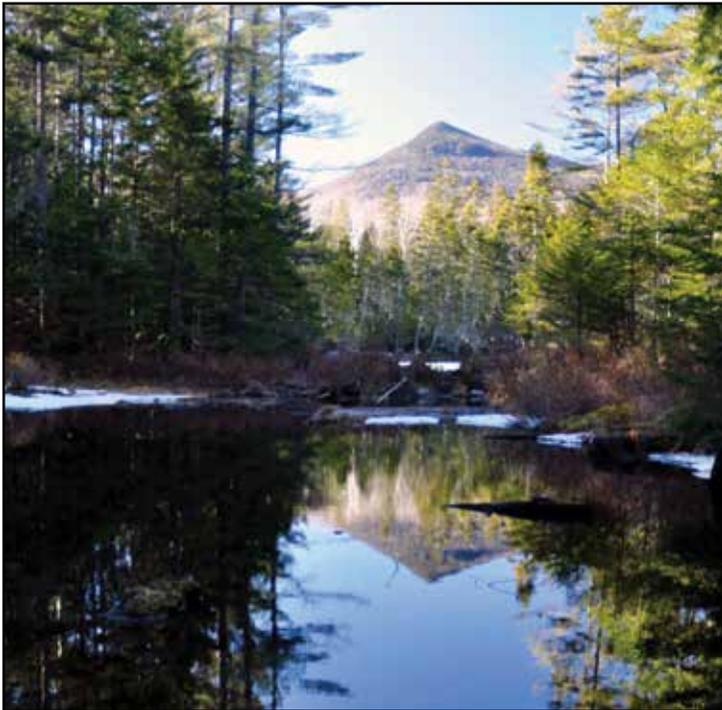
SPRING SCHOOL, TO PAGE 12 

Editor's Notes

This is the first issue *Mountain Passages* for 2022! We can all look forward to spring, even those of us who love snow sports. With any luck at all, 2022 will also mark the great reopening as we struggle to put Covid behind us.

One sign that Covid may be behind us is the announcement on page 1 that Spring School will return in 2022. Check it out and get your reservation in if you are interested.

If you are like me, the return of warm weather encourages the urge to find new places to explore. In this vein, Becky Fullerton's article, *Wayfinding in the Pemigewasset Wilderness: A Historical Perspective* invites us to visit and discover the secrets hidden in the vast federal wilderness area in the center of the Whites. Becky presented her research at the AMC Annual Summit this year, and agreed to turn it into an article for *Mountain Passages*. The article has extensive quotations from the original sources which are indicated by italicized text and indentation, and all of the graphics are provided by Becky from the archives unless otherwise noted. It is a fairly long article but it is fascinating and well worth your time!



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One of the perennial issues hikers get to experience every spring is mud. In going through old issues of *Mountain Passages* this winter, I stumbled on an article from 2006 that captured the essence of dealing with mud perfectly, and it is reprinted on page 14.

Other articles in this issue include advice concerning how to survive an unplanned night in the woods and another article about how to take great photographs on your outings with your cell phone. There are also three companion articles concerning our departing and incoming Regional Director. A new edition of *Where in the Whites?* appears on page 16.

Finally, we want to express our thanks to Jess Clifford, an artist, friend and all around great person. Jess has been the graphic designer working hard behind the scenes for over seven years to make *Mountain Passages* the beautiful publication it is. This is Jess' last issue of *Mountain Passages*. A brief appreciation of Jess is on page 20.

Thank you Jess and good luck in all your future endeavors!

We hope you enjoy this issue. If you have any suggestions or comments, you can send an email to MntnPassages@gmail.com.

MOUNTAIN PASSAGES

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Editor: Robert S. McLaughlin
MntnPassages@gmail.com

Graphic Design: Jessica Clifford, Graphic Designer,
Artist & Photographer.
jess.amcnews@gmail.com



Changing of the Guard Our Regional Director

For those who don't know, the Regional Director is a member of the Board of Directors of the Appalachian Mountain Club who serves as liaison between the AMC and its Chapters. Because of the number of Chapters, AMC has five Regional Directors. The Regional Director, North provides liaison for the Maine Chapter as well as the New Hampshire Chapter. John Mullens who has been Regional Director, North for the last six years has stepped down. Beth Zimmer, a New Hampshire Chapter member, is now Regional Director, North. John's farewell and Beth's introduction follow.

Thank You John for all that you have done, and welcome Beth!

Beth Zimmer - Regional Director, North



As your new Regional Director, North, let me both introduce myself and perhaps try to answer a question I am often asked, "What is a Regional Director?"

For a bit of AMC background, I came up through the ranks and have been an active, four-season hike leader and instructor on the NH Chapter's Excursions (Hiking) Committee since 2012. I enjoy sharing my love of the outdoors and over the years have led well over a hundred activities that ranged from hikes and backpacks, to map and compass, and navigation workshops.

While on my path within the AMC, I served for three years as Secretary for the NH Executive Committee, and later served for four years as Co-Chair for the NH Excursions Committee. Along the way I was awarded an AMC Volunteer Leadership Award - which I am very proud of. As I neared retirement from my job as middle school guidance counselor, I was fortunate to be invited to be a leader at AMC August Camp. And in 2018, I went to training to become an AMC Adventure Travel (AT) Leader, which allows me to share my love of the outdoors and hiking while leading both domestic and international travel.

I now embark on a new volunteer journey, serving as AMC's Regional Director - North (New Hampshire and Maine). Regional Directors (RD's) are members of the AMC Board of Directors, but have additional responsibilities that center on serving as a bridge between the Chapters and the larger AMC organization. RD's attend Board Meetings, Chapter Chair Meetings, and many more - always trying to help bring an organizational perspective back to the Chapters and volunteers, and just as important, to bring the volunteer and Chapter perspective back to the larger AMC Board of Directors and staff.

Beyond budgets, finance and facilities - there is much work to do. Supporting DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion), continuing our conservation efforts, and supporting club-wide leader development are just a few.

John Mullens, my predecessor, has left me with big shoes to fill. During his six years as RD he touched the souls of many. I want to thank John sincerely for his six years of tireless work and dedication as RD North - and for setting such a positive example for me to follow!

Beth Zimmer, Regional Director - North

John Mullens



Six years ago, I became AMC Regional Director-North to work with the New Hampshire and Maine Chapters, taking over from Sam Jamke. This year, the transition happens again as I say farewell and Beth Zimmer becomes RD-North. Although I feared differently at the beginning of my tenure, those six years have flown by in a flurry of meetings and decisions; working with the AMC leadership, staff, and many volunteers; helping Chapters grow and develop to meet the changing realities of AMC membership now in 2022; and, of course, Covid.

Certainly the biggest impact on our Board of Directors work over that timeframe was helping AMC and the chapters respond and adapt to the changing requirements of Covid. From fiscal concerns with the loss of income from the closed huts and lodges, to the changing requirements of Covid-era Chapter-level activities, to thoughtfully trimming AMC employees, the Board and staff spent countless hours adjusting to the new realities to keep the organization and its Chapters strong.

Perhaps the greatest personal learning during these six years has been directly observing the quality, sincerity, and intellect represented in AMC's volunteer Board. While there were certainly disagreements and heartfelt discussions, it was always clear that everyone wanted the best for the organization. To that end, Board members brought an amazing range of personal expertise to our deliberations and decision making.

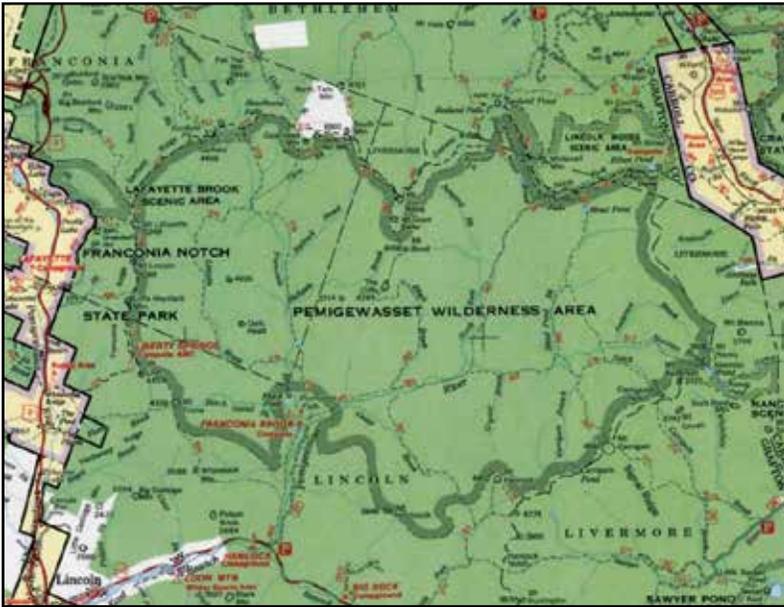
The overriding perspective of those years, however, was the responsibility and opportunity to provide the organization-wide lens to individual chapter decision making. Working with the NH Chapter leadership and Executive Committee in that process, I got to know the rich quality of active volunteers within the Chapter. Accepting and using the new and regenerative ideas of first-time volunteers to build on the institutional knowledge of longtime volunteers holds great promise for the Chapter's future vitality and growth.

Thanks to the Chapter Chairs during this time—Bill Warren, Frank Miller, and Rick Silverberg—for their help in keeping the NH Chapter vibrant. I do regret leaving now when Chapter Chair, Valerio Viti, and Vice Chair, Vince Kelly, are just starting to exert their own leadership style, but I look forward to hearing exciting things about the New Hampshire Chapter.

See you on the trails!

John Mullens, Regional Director-North

Retired!

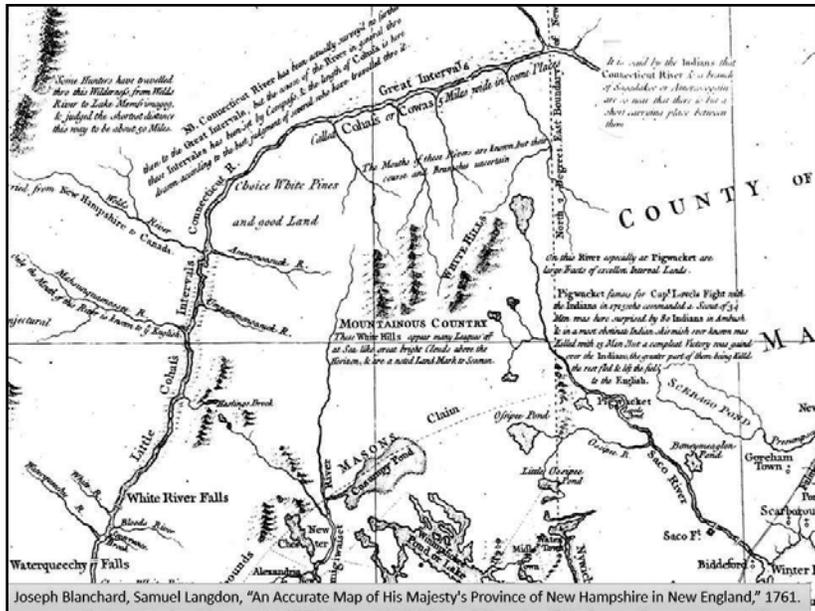


The boundaries of the Pemigawasset Wilderness area shown on the Forest Service map.

 PEMIGEWASSET WILDERNESS, FROM PAGE 1

The Pemigewasset Wilderness Area

The official Pemigewasset Wilderness Area was established as a federally designated Wilderness Area in 1984 and includes approximately 45,000 acres, most of the southern portion of the White Mountain National Forest. The Pemi Wilderness is bounded on the west by the Franconia Ridge, on the north by the Twin Range and Zealand Valley, on the east by Crawford Notch, and on the south by the Kancamagus Highway. The mountains around the Pemi Wilderness create a huge bowl or horseshoe with Owl's Head and the Bonds in the center. The streams in



Joseph Blanchard, Samuel Langdon, "An Accurate Map of His Majesty's Province of New Hampshire in New England," 1761. The Pemi Wilderness is nowhere to be found.

the Pemi Wilderness all drain into the East Branch of the Pemigewasset River. Except by following the East Branch, the Pemi Wilderness is a tough place to get into without climbing over a mountain range.

The Pemigewasset Wilderness, lacking the prominent peaks and river valleys and notches, was left largely alone by white settlers in the early years of exploration. However, the area making up the Pemi Wilderness is part of N'dakina, the homeland of the Abenaki Nation, which stretches from present-day Quebec as far south as Massachusetts. Bands of Western Abenaki, such as the Cowasuck and Pemigewasset, used the Pemigewasset River and Franconia Notch as a route for travel and trade.

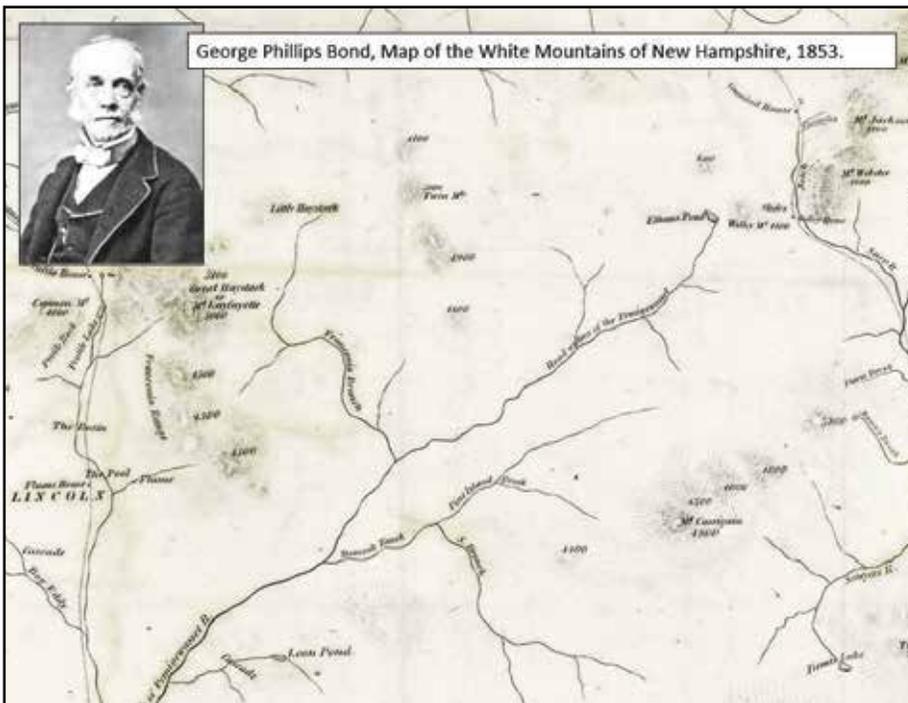
Early Maps of the Pemi Wilderness

Some of the first maps we see of the region leave the area of the Pemi Wilderness out entirely. Joseph Blanchard and Samuel Langdon's "An Accurate Map of His Majesty's Province of New Hampshire in New England," from 1761 notes the White Mountains, and the fact that they can be seen from the ocean, but the area in and around the Pemigewasset Wilderness is left almost completely blank. Early written reports of the area note that lots of streams come down from the mountains to join the larger rivers, but of any further details the surveyors were "uninformed." It would be almost a hundred years before the first map really showed the Pemigewasset Wilderness.

Based upon surveys he conducted in the two preceding years, in 1853 George Phillip Bond produced the first topographical map of the White Mountains and it showed the East Branch of the Pemigewasset River and its drainage of the Pemi Wilderness as well as surrounding summits. Many of these summits had no names. Three of these unnamed peaks are now named after George Bond and are known as Mount Bond, West Bond and Bondcliff.

Between 1869 and 1871, Charles Hitchcock, Joshua Huntington and eleven Dartmouth College students did a thorough survey of the area between the Saco and Pemigewasset rivers including the Pemi Wilderness. Of the 1871 survey season, Hitchcock reports:

On the seventeenth of June with the assistance of eleven gentlemen from the graduating class at Dartmouth college the exploration of the Pemigewasset country was commenced and continued uninterruptedly for a month. These gentlemen kindly proffered their services without charge and deserve the thanks of the community for their exertions in our behalf. [An early example of unpaid interns here]. . . . Some have imagined the party as enjoying the luxuries of the season in the cushioned seats of the well-appointed hotels about the mountains with every want eagerly anticipated by dutiful attendants. On the contrary, our houses were hastily extemporized sheds, our beds a few boughs or ferns placed upon boards; our food consisted of stale crackers and preserved meats, save a rare taste of trout and berries gathered in climbing mountains, and the luxury of an occasional basket of provisions sent by kind friends at the Profile house; and we were our own servants." [Okay, so it sounds more like unpaid non-profit interns].



George Phillips Bond, *Map of the White Mountains of New Hampshire, 1853.*

Some of the highlights included the discovery of a new lake which they christened Haystack Lake, as it was close to the Great Haystack and Little Haystack—the original names for Mount Lafayette and Mount Garfield. The lake is now known as Garfield Pond.

They traversed all the major peaks – the Twins, the Bonds, and Guyot – all rarely or never visited before then. Hitchcock states in his report that the region held “Scarcely any mountains more difficult to reach than these, on account of the stunted growth near their tops.” All the first parties into the Pemi noticed the terrain, its ruggedness, and especially the scrubby tops of its mountains.

This ruggedness continued to discourage people from exploring the area further. But not everyone was discouraged. In Samuel Adams Drake’s 1882 book *The Heart of the White Mountains*, he paints a picture of the area for us, looking from the more civilized notches and roads around the Pemi Wilderness into its center:

On one side all is beauty, harmony, and grace; on the other a packed mass of bristling, steep-sided mountains seen storming the sky with their gray turrets. Could we but look over the brawny shoulders of the mountains opposite to us, the eye would take in the vast untrodden solitudes of the Pemigewasset forests, cut by the East Branch and presided over by Mount Carrigain; a region as yet reserved for those restless and adventurous spirits whom the beaten paths of travel have ceased to charm or attract. But an excursion into this forest primeval is to be no holiday promenade. It is an arduous and difficult march over slippery rocks, through tangled thickets, or up the beds of mountain torrents. Hard fare and a harder bed of boughs finish the day, every hour of which has been a continued combat with fresh obstacles. At this price, one may venture to encounter the virgin wilderness or, as the camp phrase is try “roughing it.” It is a curious feeling to turn

your back upon the last cart path, then upon the last foot path; to hear the distant baying of a hound grow fainter and fainter; in a word to exchange, at a single step, the sights and sounds of civilized life, the movement, the bustle, for a silence broken only by the hum of bees and the murmur of invisible waters.

Drake is really not selling the Pemi Wilderness, except perhaps to a very specific type of person. Fortunately, the Appalachian Mountain Club attracted just the type of person who would find these words enticing and they began to enter the Pemi Wilderness with exploration and trail building in mind.

The 1882 Augustus Scott Expedition

In 1882, a small group, led by Augustus E. Scott, an AMC member and lawyer from Lexington, Mass., decided to traverse the Pemi Wilderness and cross as many summits as possible. He wrote a full report of the trip for *Appalachia* journal, teasing the reader with the allure of this deep place:

The Twin Mountain Range has long been regarded by Appalachians as an interesting field for exploration. Many times, we have looked longingly from higher summits, especially from Lafayette, upon its bare ledges and wooded ridges, and resolved at an early day to make their more intimate acquaintance; but the summits are so distant from the clearings, and the reports of those who had attempted to reach them and failed were so discouraging, that it was difficult to find anyone who cared to join the undertaking.

Scott hired a woodsman as his guide. The woodsman talked with someone else, and word reached a “gentleman somewhat prominent at Bethlehem” who spoke to a female friend of his, and she expressed an interest in joining the expedition if there were any other ladies who were going.

Scott goes on:

I replied at once that I had failed to find any man who wished to undertake it, and it had not occurred to me as among the possibilities that any woman would desire to do so. But I added half in jest, whenever I hear of a woman who desires to explore wild places and to see the old forests as they exist far away from ordinary routes of travel, I am filled with an equal desire to assist her in doing so. If Miss X is capable of enduring long continued and fatiguing work, can endure thirst perhaps for hours, can sleep without blankets or possibly without shelter of any sort, can force her way through scrub of the most fearful kind, where the clothes may be torn to shreds, can endure extremes of heat and perhaps of cold, can go all day in a storm drenched to the skin, if she can endure these things, and after my assurance that these and even greater hardships are probable on the proposed trip, still wishes to make the attempt, I will invite the only lady I know for whom the undertaking is feasible to accompany her.

By the returning mail I was informed that notwithstanding all my discouragements Miss X was exceedingly anxious to go on the exploration. While reading this last letter in the presence of another lady member of the Club she at once enthusiastically

 PEMIGEWASSET WILDERNESS,
FROM PAGE 5

asked to join the party. I was fairly caught. I had painted the probable difficulties of the proposed exploration in glowing colors and had rather disdainfully expressed a willingness to invite ladies to accompany me if they dared attempt it, and here were three ladies who not only dared, but were eager to go.

And so, off they set on an August day, from a point along the Ammonoosuc River down the road from the Twin Mountain House – where the junction of routes 3 and 302 are now. After crossing a field, they were in the woods. Though there were a few logging roads to be followed, it was probably dense woods. This is before the era of the logging railroads. The Little River Railroad, which would be built in 1893, was not yet there to clear the virgin forest.

The party was made up of Augustus Scott, two guides – a man of sixty and a young man – a lady doctor, a female medical student and a “special correspondent” who later published her account of the trip in the *White Mountain Echo*, which was published in Bethlehem. Though the names of the ladies are not published in Scott’s account in *Appalachia*, or the *White Mountain Echo*, they are in a short column about the trip published in *Among the Clouds* on August 24th. They were:

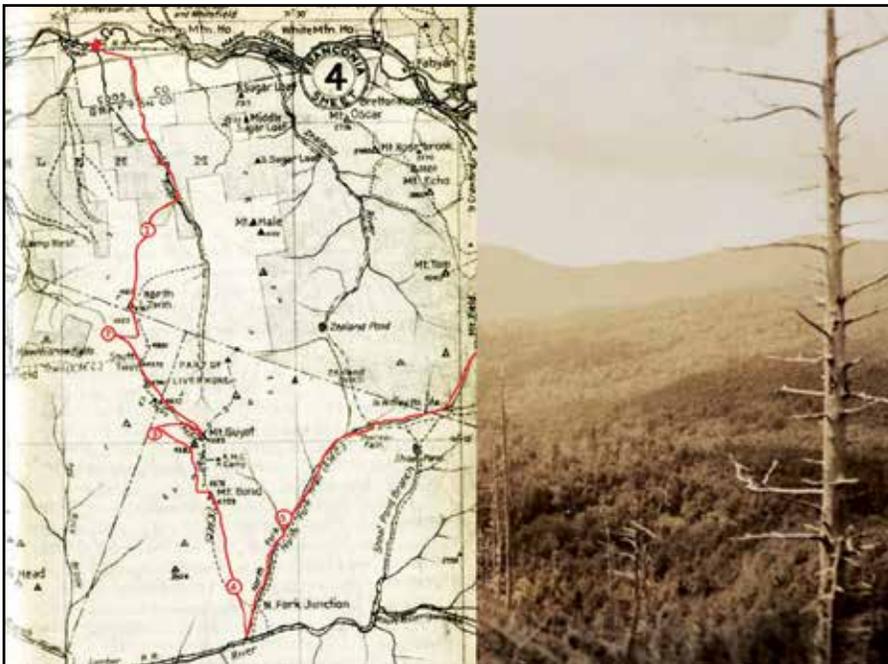
- Martha Fairfield Whitman, an enthusiastic AMC member – she joined the club shortly after our founding and published a story about a harrowing trip through Tuckerman Ravine in



Hikers at Hermit Lake Shelter in the 1920s. While we do not have photographs of the shelters used by the earliest explorers in the Pemi Wilderness, this may resemble the shelters they used.

harsh weather in the third issue of *Appalachia* journal – at the time of this Pemi Wilderness trip she was studying medicine at Boston University, where she graduated in 1884. Sadly, she died of typhoid fever that December after graduation. An obituary published in the *New England Medical Gazette* describes her as having “unfailing and contagious cheeriness that seemed to bring sunshine into the dark places of disease and suffering.” Whitman seems to have brought the same light into hiking, as evidenced by several accounts of her hopping rock to rock in Tuckerman Ravine, and wading through freezing mountain streams, yet smiling and expressing delight in all of it despite the addition of a driving, freezing rain, and imminent darkness as the sun sets. Truly someone you want on your hike, if for nothing else than having a non-stop cheering section.

- Laura Maxwell Porter, MD, born in Scituate, Mass in 1839. She spent the first part of her career as a teacher, but eventually decided to become a physician. She graduated from the New York Woman’s Medical College and Hospital in 1878 and returned to Boston to practice homeopathic medicine.
- Charlotte E. Ricker, the special correspondent, was probably born in Topsfield, Mass. around 1849. Though she stated in her request to join Scott’s party that she had much mountain experience, this trip turned out to be a bit much for her – she dropped out early after several rough days of bushwhacking and camping out. And at the end of an extensive three-part account of



A.E. Scott 1882 route plotted on the 1916 White Mountain Guide Map.

the journey published in the *White Mountain Echo* she pronounces “Exploration unsuited to woman,” though she commends the other ladies on the trip for sticking with it.

This was a trip that would test any of us.

Scott gave a detailed description of where they were, by compass directions, by naming streams they were following, by what he was seeing, so we can get a general idea of this five-night excursion. I have plotted what I consider their approximate route on a 1917 map. When studying the map, ignore all the trails and most other details because they did not exist in 1882. The Pemi Wilderness in 1882 was a wild, mostly untouched place with not a lot of pleasant ridge walking and basically no trails to speak of. The group followed streams a good bit of the time - i.e., they hopped rock to rock or waded through them.

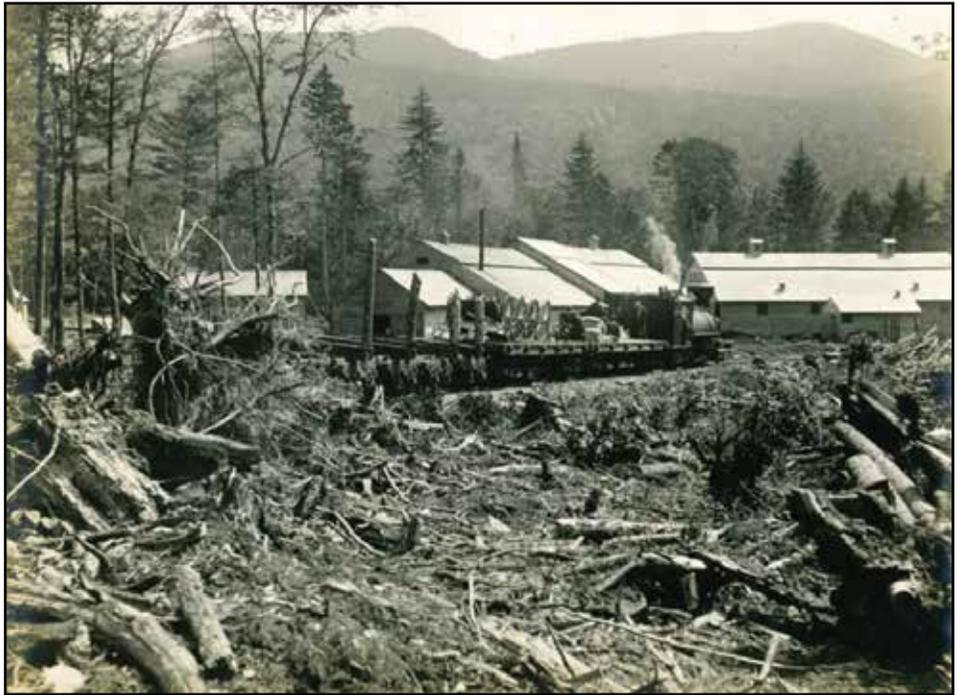
To reach the summits, they had to thrash their way through krummholz – the short, very rigid spruce that grow at tree line. This was really no fun at all: they tried walking over the tops of the trees and fell in; they tried crawling underneath and got all scratched up; they tried hacking their way through it with a hatchet, which was better, but not great. On their second day out, climbing to the summit of North Twin, it took them two hours from the time they reached the krummholz (or scrub as they call it) to reach the summit. Based on later trail descriptions and maps, this two-hour struggle covered only a quarter to a half mile. The next time you climb imagine trying to make your way through the krummholz surrounding the trail.

Also, it was hot. They were well above any source of water.

And there were blackflies! As rain clouds approached, they hoped to catch enough water in their mouths, but all the rain did was make the scrub wet. So, their trip down the other side of the mountain was just as bad, but also soaked their clothes.

They built camps wherever they decided to quit for the night. Frequently these were stick frame lean-tos covered in bark which the guides assembled through hard labor, or they slept wrapped in a blanket wedged between rocks. While they carried some food, they largely depended on the skills of the guides to catch fish in the streams near their camps. The guides cooked, too, but some of that was a disaster, like when the handle of a pot of oatmeal melted right off and the whole meal was lost.

Was the expedition a success? Well, most of the party made it up North and South Twin, Guyot, Bond and Bondcliff, then up over the Willey Ridge, down the slopes of Avalon and over to the carriage road up Mount Willard, before appearing, bedraggled and hungry at the Crawford House. Despite all the struggle, they must have done enough hacking and trail blazing to leave signs of their route and a way through. An AMC party of 22 members followed pretty much the same route less than one year later and reported none of the difficulties encountered by the Scott party, such as wading through miles of scrub.



The turn of the century brought lumbermen to the Pemi Wilderness. This is J.E Henry & Sons, East Branch and Lincoln Camp 8 about 1900.

Visitors to the Pemi Wilderness in the Late 1800s

Despite these early expeditions through the 1880s, visitation to the Pemi Wilderness was a rarity. In Ticknor’s *The White Mountains: A Handbook for Travellers* 1888 edition, the region is described as

still in a condition of primeval wildness and has not been invaded by clearings, roads, or trails. Clear to the Franconia Notch extends this untracked and unvisited realm of Nature who yet holds one fastness in the heart of busy New England, with its glorious falls not yet harnessed as waterpowers and its stately trees yet undeveloped into sashes and blinds. ...The inner solitudes should be entered only under the guidance of experienced foresters and travelling will be found terribly slow and arduous.

However, this “untracked and unvisited realm” was coming to an end and would never be described in such terms as primeval, untouched, or trackless again.

Logging in the Pemi Wilderness

Logging had been going on at the edges of the Pemi Wilderness. For example, most of the descriptions of hikers in the Whites mention following logging roads at some point. But these early logging efforts were small man and horse operations, slowly chipping away at the forest edges.

It was not until 1870 that logging railroads arrived in the White Mountains, and their first decades saw them established to the north at places like Jefferson, Lancaster, and Gorham.

In 1884, the Zealand Valley Railroad appeared – where the Zealand Road is today – and made inroads into the forest as far as Ethan and Shoal ponds. It was the beginning of the long and blackened legacy of timber baron James Everell Henry. His later East Branch & Lincoln Railroad would be one of the most destructive forces in White Mountains history, and it irreversibly



Harold King's hiking group camping in the White Mountains in the 1910s.

PEMIGEWASSET WILDERNESS, FROM PAGE 7

changed the Pemigewasset Wilderness.

One of the last parties to record their trip in the Pemi Wilderness before it saw widespread logging was a group of four young men – Robert P. Booth, Henry F. Hollis, Edward H. French, Avery Rand, and a French-Canadian logger named Pete who acted as a porter. The party set out from Lincoln on June 5th, 1889, riding a train owned by lumber baron J.E. Henry. They hopped off and started into the woods essentially where the Lincoln Woods Trailhead is today. There were no logging rails laid along the East Branch of the Pemi, but there was apparently a bit of trail along this first section of the river. They camped the first night where the river split, presumably near the junction of the trail to Franconia Falls.

The next day they worked their way along what would become the route of the Wilderness Trail which today follows the route of one of J.E. Henry's rail lines built in the 1890s. The party worked their way across dubious river crossings, through blowdowns, and around tricky scrambles, sleeping in lean-tos and camps left by others. As evidence that the area had become much more known and used, they met anglers and men collecting spruce gum in the woods - a small trickle of people arriving to mine the many resources of the woods. At a spot now known as Stillwater Junction, just below Mount Carrigain, they camped for several days, and made a day hike to climb Carrigain by its southwestern flank where the Desolation Trail would be cut 45 years later. Leaving their wilderness camp after four nights, they moved through Carrigain Notch before emerging at Sawyer River, where logging roads and

rail corridors led them back to civilized terrain.

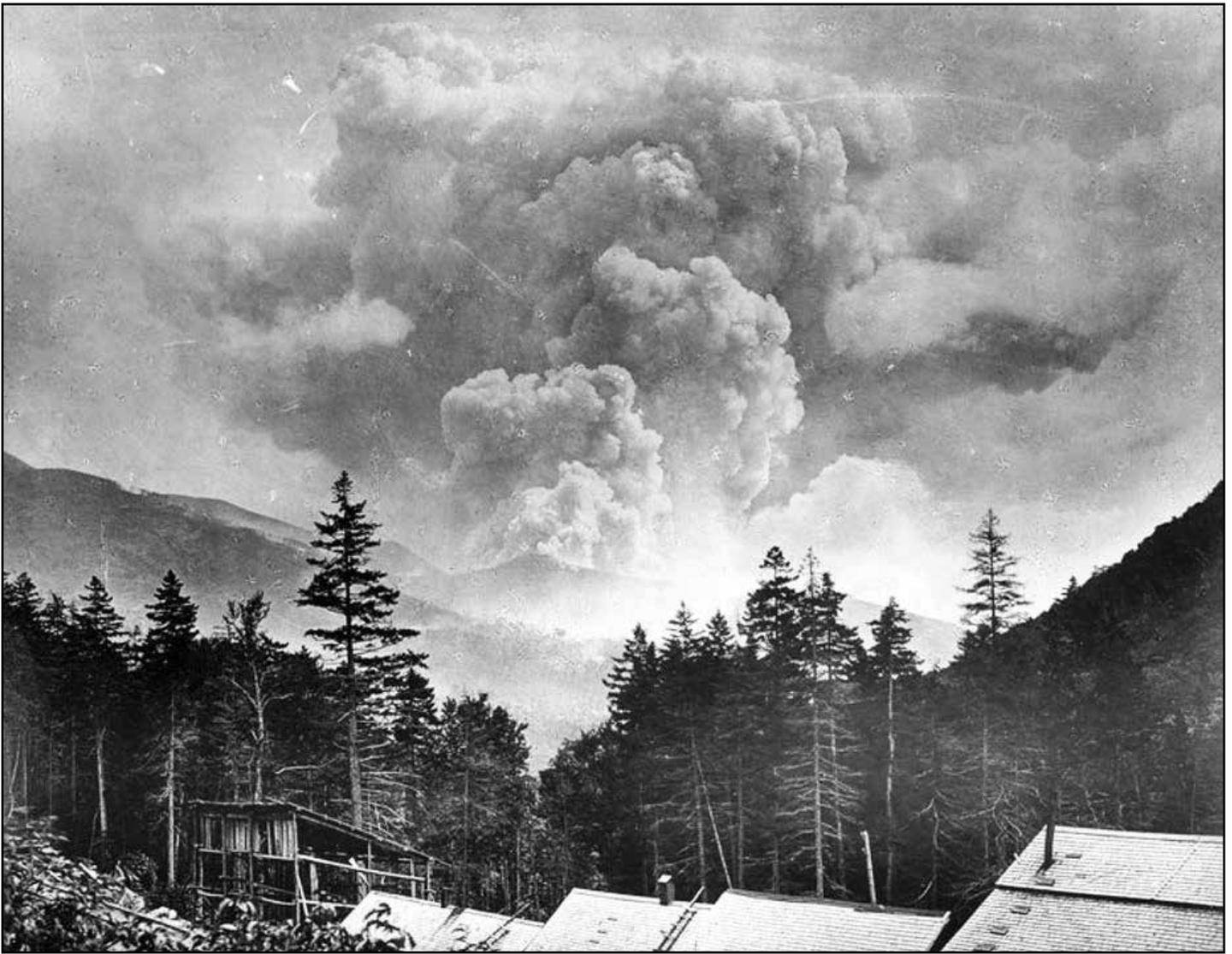
By the early 1890s the tone had changed in writing about the area making up the Pemi Wilderness. In an 1893 issue of *The Century*, a journalist notes:

Year by year the lumbermen have been cutting their way into the White Mountain region till now they threaten to destroy those tracts which are its greatest glory, and which constitute the chief charm for the thousands of visitors who resort thither year after year from all quarters of the land. Contracts were made several months ago under which the Pemigewasset wilderness, that magnificent stretch of pathless forest, was to be invaded by the destroyer with his gangs of cutters and his steam sawmill. Another assault was also planned upon the region about the Flume and still another

upon Albany Intervale. These attacks, if carried out, would completely strip the mountains of their magnificent and imposing vesture, depriving the region of its glory and beauty, and taking from the rivers of the State their supply of water. Small wonder that the threat of such appalling devastation - nay more, such desecration - aroused the whole country, and those appeals were sent from all quarters of the land to have the hand of the destroyer stayed.



View across Pemigewasset Valley from Mount Anderson. The Twin Mountains and Mount Bond in the background in 1906.



Owl's Head Fire. Devastation followed in the wake of the loggers.

So, we can see in the writings and photos the wave of logging crashing over the region. Few hikers seemed to venture into the Pemi Wilderness from the 1890s to 1910s, but a few come close and described what they saw.

For example, Harold King passed through the edge of the Pemi Wilderness in 1910. King hailed from Cambridge, Mass and knew the mountains well. King was well prepared to lead his small group, and their route was quite ambitious. They began with Mount Chocorua, and over the next two weeks, headed for Car-rigain, skirted the Pemi Wilderness, crossed the Presidentials, and swung back to see the Franconia Range as well. We have a little bit of writing from the trip, and his descriptions of our area of focus are telling for the era:

The next day's route led us over the peak [of Chocorua] and down the other side. This has been recently lumbered over and is covered with what is known as slash – that is the branches and debris scattered around and piled up like jack straws. After we had chopped our way through, we came upon a little brook, warbling on its way down the mountain side. From here to Passaconaway, it is an easy walk and a beautiful one. But when we had left the

village, we entered some of the original forest that had somehow escaped the lumberman's axe. It is a treat to see such woods. As we walked along under the towering trees, twilight descended and in a little open spot we made camp. The picture of this describes it better than I can. It is bedded with fragrant balsam boughs, which invited us to a good night's rest. All too soon it was morning again, and after making a little detour to see Sabbaday Falls, we continued up the trail to Swift River. The granite bottom of this river is so smooth that we would sit down on it and be carried along by the current. It was here that we had a real shower bath. My! But the water was cold! After crossing the river, we followed all the way to Livermore an abandoned lumber railway, which followed along the banks of the foaming river. This is in the heart of the lumber country, and all about us was the ruin of past year's greed, while on our left were Kancamagus and Hancock with hardly a bush standing on their scarred sides. The woodsmen say that lumber companies did not leave enough for a good toothpick. As we walked along, we came on some horses out in the forest, miles away from the nearest dwelling. They were very shy and ran away when we appeared. Late in the afternoon we came into

Livermore, a typical logging town, full of the screaming and wailing of the saws and of the scent of wet logs and sawdust. It is great fun to go through such a place but a relief to get back into the silent forest.

Imagine passing through these kinds of scenes in the Pemi Wilderness today.

From the late 1890s through the next few decades, the Pemi Wilderness was the territory of the logger. Following in their wake, forest fires sprang from the logging slash, making the region even less attractive and difficult to navigate. The 1916 edition of AMC's White Mountain Guide cautions hikers that:

In the previous edition of the Guide it was stated that the region about the headwaters of the East Branch of the Pemigewasset contained one of the largest tracts of virgin forest in New England. Since that date much of this fine timber has fallen before the lumberman and the only remaining stand of any considerable size is that on the North Fork. Accordingly, while the following descriptions are based on the latest information in the hands of the writers, it is impossible to speak with certainty since conditions change rapidly in a field where active lumbering is in progress.

Trail descriptions in this edition use phrases like “barren, burned country,” “charred trunks still standing,” and “desolate.”

In 1937, an article in *Survey Graphic* reports “one looked into the East Branch wilderness, once the last great area of virgin forest in the state. The lumber companies have hacked their way through now. A spindly, ragged second growth is all that is left of those great pines, spruces and hemlocks.”

After the loggers left, it would take a long time for the forests to come back to the point that visitors would again call the Pemi drainage a wilderness. Hiking through the area making up the Pemi Wilderness in 1929, after much of the logging was past and second growth had started to come in, Robert Underhill describes the area as

a wasteland covered with rank grass and pitiful second growth, with scars of fire on the surrounding hills, its openness of desolate outlook stirs the imagination in more subtle fashion than does the more normal scenery of the White Mountains. It is as if one had penetrated into a forgotten no-man's-land between the accepted routes of travel and come unsuspectingly upon a hidden devastation fascinating in its very extent and utterness.

The Slow Recovery of the Pemi Wilderness

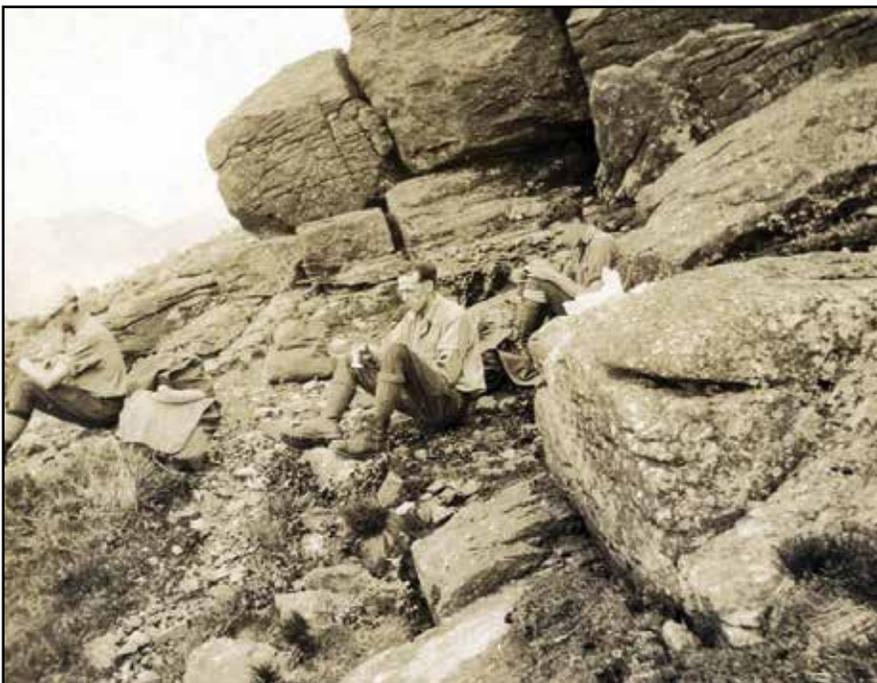
As logging finally ceased, the National Forest was created, and tracts were added to it, trails slowly wove into the Pemi Wilderness or were made from abandoned rail beds. Maps of the time showed more possibilities for complete routes through the area. One could, theoretically have done what is today known as a “Pemi Loop” -circling over the Franconia Ridge, Twinway, Bonds and around back into the East Branch Pemigewasset River Valley - using the 1928 edition of the White Mountain Guide map. However, even with trails in place, the more popular “epic traverse” remained crossing from the Franconia Notch side to the Crawford Notch side of the Pemi. This remains a rugged and challenging, multi-day traverse today, though eased somewhat by the huts and campsites along the way. Through the 1920s, camping at log shelters was the way to go, but one party writing about their hike through the Pemi Wilderness witnessed firsthand the next phase in the life of the wilderness.

Knowlton Wood, a Dartmouth student, was an avid hiker and recorded all his mountain climbs and camping trips in journals. He completed the route from Franconia Notch to Crawford Notch in 1929. He talks of using logging roads in some places, and old rail routes, but he and his companions hiked mostly on established trails. The Pemi Wilderness had come full circle to a place hikers wanted to go, and the ways were cleared for them to follow. Wood describes climbing the Old Bridle Path and coming upon the construction site for the Greenleaf Hut which would be opened the following year. Later in the trip he stayed at Galehead Shelter which would soon be a hut site. Despite the better shelter, crossing the Pemi Wilderness was still difficult.

It is interesting to compare Wood's entries to those made by the Scott party in 1882. Though now traversing mostly second-growth forest and not the primeval wilderness of old, he sets down a stream-of-consciousness section that channels some of Charlotte Ricker's complaints (or really any of us hiking the Twinway or thereabouts):

Flies. Flies. Flies. I wonder if we will ever be free from flies again. What makes this pack so heavy? This must be the trail, where this log has been cut through. Flies. Wish I could wet my handkerchief in some water and keep 'em off. Hope it does not rain before we reach Garfield Pond. Chocolate ice cream soda would be good. Dumb egg that built the trail might have gone around these hills instead of over them. Flies. Look out for holes between rocks. Ain't nature grand?

Yes, not a stream of thought specific to the Pemi Wilderness— it is fit for most long, tough hikes in the White Mountains. However, it is encouraging



Knowlton Wood Party resting on Old Bridle Path on Mount Lafayette, June 22, 1929.

to see hikers in the 20th century focusing on their own struggles rather than noting the ruination of this place. A sure sign that nature is coming back.

The Pemi Wilderness Today

The Pemi Wilderness has had a hard journey to what it is today. With the historical resources on hand, the work of so many explorers, mapmakers and hikers just putting down their thoughts and telling us what they see, we can step into the history and get an inkling of what this region was like in the past.

Should you find yourself deep in the Pemigewasset Wilderness or traversing the krummholz covered peaks that ring this area, stop, close your eyes, and imagine the landscape covered by a seemingly endless swath of thick, dark spruce forest. There are no trails, no roads, no rails. The trail you are walking on has vanished and you must find your way through a solid mass of waist-high krummholz.

Then shift your thoughts to those decades around the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Visualize the forests cut back to the steepest slopes the loggers can reach. Hear the chug of a train, hauling logs on flatbeds out of the valley; hear the scream of a sawmill and the bustle of men in the woods with axes.

Then return to our own time and see the Pemi Wilderness green again, a mosaic of forest – mostly second growth, with a few hidden pockets of ancient trees, crisscrossed by barely perceptible roads and tracks, dotted with campsites, full of hikers. Appreciating the living landscape and its many past lives will only improve your wonder when you look out on the scene yourself or next time you study a map to do your own wayfinding.

As Knowlton Woods put it: “Ain’t Nature Grand!”



A current view of the Pemigewasset Wilderness from Mount Garfield; Photo by Bob McLaughlin.

Choose from one of seven available workshop sessions, each filled with field exercises, instruction, lectures, and discussions. *If you're not sure which class is right for you, ask our workshop directors.*

Basics of Outdoor Safety:

Beginner section: For those just getting started with mountain hiking. You will hike approximately 3.5 miles per day and spend about 5 hours outside each day.

Intermediate section: For those with some experience in the mountains. Expect to learn while on the trail for about 6 miles per day and up to 6 hours a day outside.

Map and Compass

Covering everything you want or need to know about map and compass use, this group will spend the weekend together reviewing and learning the details of map and compass skills, culminating in field exercises that will include off-trail (bushwhack) navigating.

Backpacking

Backpacking 1: Spending two nights out in tents, travelling not more than 3 miles and cooking breakfast outside on Sunday.

Backpacking 2: For those with some backpacking experience wanting to take it to the next level of longer hikes with more nights out spending two nights out in tents setting up a second camp site on Saturday night about 3 miles from the lodge. You will be outside most of the weekend cooking dinner Saturday and breakfast Sunday in the back country.

Leadership and Mountain Skills

For those who have good three-season hiking skills and wish

to enhance them and/or wish to run trips. Exercises will include planning, organizing, and conducting trips with an emphasis on leadership techniques group decision making, handling difficult behaviors and group dynamics. Learn by doing through outside experiential methods. Also covered will be accident scene management, medical considerations, and off-trail navigation. Plan to spend about 5 hours on Saturday and 4 hours on Sunday outside bushwhacking and practicing leadership and compass skills. This course is also designed for those who may desire to become an AMC NH Chapter Volunteer Trip Leader.

Trail Work Instruction

Spend a fun weekend learning basic trail maintenance and working on an advanced project. The basics: using tools safely, clearing drainage, keeping brush in check, and removing blow-downs. The project: hardening a backcountry trail to help with drainage problems. Begin by hiking Cardigan's Back 80 Trail to evaluate the trail while taking care of brushing and drains. Return to fix the larger problems we found. Get the basics done and learn some advanced skills! Find out about adopting a trail and participating in other AMC volunteer events. All tools provided. Class limited to 6 participants.

Application:

ALL WORKSHOPS are for any adult (18 or older) who wants to learn and have a great time! The weekend begins Friday evening at 7:30pm and ends Sunday afternoon at 4:30pm.

Cost is \$210/members and \$230/nonmembers, and includes lodging, excellent meals, materials and instruction.

Registration Website:

<https://amcnhexcursions.regfox.com/2022-spring-workshop>



AMC New Hampshire Chapter Winter School 2022

BY: VALERIO VITI

It was a different year for winter schools in 2022, or should we say another different year!

Despite our hopes and Rick Silverberg's careful and detailed planning, we reluctantly decided we had to cancel the traditional two and half days Winter School schedule, and follow hybrid format with initial online sessions followed by a single day on-the snow.

With this change, we managed to hold both Winter School Sessions with some cancellations due to weather. Major kudos to Rick Silverberg for being able to pivot on a dime and redesign both events in a 2-week period over the holidays. And thanks to Scott Taylor and all of the other leaders for being flexible and making it happen during this second year of Covid restrictions.

So, on Saturday, February 26th, pupils and ski masters descended on Cardigan Lodge for a live, on-snow, ski day. Because of the fresh 12 inches of fresh snow we had a few cancellations which was unfortunate but understandable considering that some folks were driving over 5 hours in questionable conditions for just one day of skiing.

We formed two groups, beginner/intermediate and advanced down mountain, each with 2 students. Larry Veal and Tim Linehan with me as a squeaky third wheel led the former while Martino and Sean led the down mountain group. It was a fabulous learning environment for all!

We did not have the usual de-briefing in the lodge since it was off-limits for non-guests, but we did use the boot room. That might have been extremely



There is nothing that really compares to the peace and quiet on a cross-country trail.





Be Prepared: What if you have to spend the night in the Woods?

BY: BOB MCLAUGHIN

No one wants to get lost, get injured or otherwise be forced to spend an unplanned night in the woods. However, whenever you venture into the backcountry you should be aware of this possibility and have the equipment and knowledge you need to make through an unplanned night in the woods.

I assume you are carrying the 10 Essentials and know how to use them. If you want to learn more about the 10 Essentials, take a look at the articles that appeared in *Mountain Passages* in recent years. For example, the Summer 2020 issue included an article *Take the Time to Check What's in Your Pack* and the May-June 2018 included *What's In Your Pack?; The Ten Essentials Revisited*. These issues can be found at www.amcnh.org/newsletter/archive.

This article will focus on some of these essentials and strategies to use them effectively. This article is not a substitute for hands on training, but is intended as "first aid" to help you if you need to spend an unplanned night in the woods.

The first thing to consider is why you might need to spend an unplanned night in the woods. First, you or one of your party may be injured and not able to make it out of the woods before dark. Second, you may have misjudged the time a hike would take or ran into unanticipated obstacles that make it too difficult or too hazardous to make it out before dark. Third and probably worst is you may have gotten completely turned around and cannot make your way out of the woods before dark.

The most important first step is regaining your composure. If you or someone in your party is injured or if you are lost and don't know how to find your way to a trailhead, it is easy to become upset. However, if you are upset, you will not be thinking clearly, and will not be able to approach the solution of your problem effectively. No matter how many "essentials" you are carrying, your most valuable tool for survival is your brain! Before you do anything else, stop, take some deep breaths and regain your composure. Once you are calm and thinking clearly, you will be able to do everything else you need to do.

Once you are calm, consider whether there is any way to get out of the woods before or only slightly after dark. While you may not be able to get back to the trailhead where your car is parked, can you make it to any other trailhead? Before you commit, think

about whether the alternative trailhead is really reachable. Are you going to have to go over a mountain to reach it, or is the trail a difficult or impossible descent? Consider what it would be like to try to descend the Flume Slide Trail on the Franconia Ridge in the dark!

If you determine that it is not possible to get out of the woods before dark and you and your party are not up for tramping through the dark for the time it would take, don't put off the decision too long. If you will not be able to get out in time, it is much better to make your arrangements before dark. It is important to recognize your situation and take steps to prepare for the night.

Once you have determined that a night in the woods is the better of the bad options, decide what is most important to your survival and take actions based on this decision. You may have seen a reference to the rule of threes for survival. You can survive about:

- 3 minutes without air;
- 3 hours without warmth and shelter in bad weather;
- 3 days without water; and
- 3 weeks without food.

While we can quibble with the details, the rule of threes is a good guide for prioritizing the most important issues for your survival.

Shelter. Assuming you are not bouncing down a river in the rapids or trapped under the snow in an avalanche, your most critical need will probably be providing shelter and warmth.

In the ideal situation, you have a light weight emergency shelter in your pack. A Mylar tube tent weighs less than half a pound and can retain 90% of your body heat. Combined with a Mylar sleeping bag, for less than a pound in your pack, you can be packing a shelter system that will make it through all but coldest nights. While you may be sweaty in Mylar, you will be warm, and the alternatives are much worse.

If one pound is too much, you can try to get away with a regular Mylar space blanket. You will spend a less comfortable night, but the space blanket will probably be adequate. With two space blankets and some rope you can even rig a shelter and have a second blanket to wrap around your body.

Of course, you can also pack a regular lightweight sleeping bag if you don't mind the weight and the bulk. You can find a light

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AMC NH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chapter Chair chairnh@amcnh.org
Valerio Viti

Vice Chair vicechairnh@amcnh.org
Vince Kelly

Treasurer treasurernh@amcnh.org
Ron Janowitz

Secretary secretarynh@amcnh.org
Robin Diamond

Biking bikenh@amcnh.org
Tom Patterson

Conservation & Education .. conservationnh@amcnh.org
Paul Hopkins

Excursions excursionsh@amcnh.org
John Williams & Dan Heon

Membership membershipnh@amcnh.org
Jamie Gillon & Yun Swanson

Mountaineering mountaineeringnh@amcnh.org
Jennifer Dickinson & Amanda Knight

Paddling paddlingnh@amcnh.org
Roscoe Diamond & Bill James

Programs programsh@amcnh.org
Susan Zielinski & Ashley Phelps

Skiing skinh@amcnh.org
Valerio Viti, Casey Calver & Jillian Willard

Trails trailsh@amcnh.org
Richie Holstein, Bill Foster & Frank Miller

Communications communicationsh@amcnh.org
Jennifer Kimball & Robert S. McLaughlin

Web Committee webchairnh@amcnh.org
Paul Berry

Young Members nhamc2030@gmail.com
Lucretia Witte & Selene Berube

Past Chapter Chair pastchairnh@amcnh.org
Rick Silverberg

Regional Dir. NH/ME regionaldirectornh@amcnh.org
Beth Zimmer

AMC NH Chapter website: www.amcnh.org

Address changes and membership renewals:
AMC Member Services
10 City Square, Boston MA 02129
617-523-0636 or
www.outdoors.org/membercenter



A Look Back: Spring Hiking: Becoming One with the Mud

BY: MR. TRAIL ETIQUETTE GUY

Editor's Note: *In looking back through past issues or Mountain Passages I came across this article from the April 2006 issue on dealing with muddy Spring trails. This is an issue we have to deal with every Spring, and I thought the author, known to me only as Mr. Trail Etiquette Guy, did a great job of presenting the quandary and that the article was worth another look. I hope you enjoy it!*

Spring hiking is fraught with uncertainties, but the one thing you can always rely on is MUD! Most hikers aren't sure how to deal with it. Many do their best to simply avoid it-which usually means going around it. That may seem like a good idea at first glance, but we need to take a longer term view.

OK, here's a typical situation: You're bebopping down the trail on a lovely spring day. Birds are chirping, trees are budding, trilliums are smelling like wet dog... you get the picture. You come around a bend and there's a big muddy mess in the trail. It might be 6 feet long or 60. Whatever the case, it's too big to jump over and there's no bridge. So that do you do? Like I said, your first instinct may be to find a way around it so you can keep that showroom shine on your boots. But wait! This should always be your last, absolutely no other choice, under pain of revoking your 4000 footer patch option. I'll explain why later, but let's first look at what you SHOULD do.

The first thing to do is stop. A bit of reconnoitering is in order here. If it's a perennial trouble spot, it's likely that stepping stones have been set in the trail. Look carefully, they can be hard to spot in the mud. Some probing with a trekking pole should reveal them. Once they're located, do the rock-hop-mambo to the other side. Instead of rocks, maybe some logs or big branches were laid down. This is rarely an ideal set-up, but with some nimble footwork you can usually make it across relatively unscathed. Take care; wet wood is usually slick. And if the mud is deep, the log might submerge at the touch of a boot. Again, a few pokes with a pole should reveal the booby traps.

What? You can't find any stepping stones or logs? Well, this means it's time to search your soul, bite the bullet, show your commitment to the wilderness, and wade right in. That's right, I said WADE RIGHT IN! Remember that part two paragraphs ago where I said I would explain later? Well, here it is:

Hiking trails aren't a natural phenomenon. They're made by people. Dedicated people with a few basic tools, a lot of sweat, and the knowledge that if they do their job right, hardly anybody will notice their work. I've dipped my toe into the trail work pool a few times and I've come away with respect for those who do it. I'm not saying I understand them; some things are even beyond my ability to grasp.

Nearly every trail in our mountains gets so much traffic that it's almost unsustainable. Hiker's boots paw at the soil. Then the melting snow and falling rain pushes the soil down the trail. Trail designers have made the decision to sacrifice the small area that is the trail so that the rest of the area you're hiking through (forest or alpine) can be preserved. You can best help them in this effort by not spreading your impact beyond the boundaries of the trail.

Trail Maintainers work very hard to keep the water off the trail and soil on the trail by designing trails, installing water bars, steps, etc. But it's hardly an exact science. Conditions like snow and rain amounts vary from year to year. Something as simple as a fallen tree can divert normal water flow. So, where mud shows up can change from year to year.

"That's just peachy!" you say. "But how does that help me get past this swamp?" As I said before, if there is no way to stay on the trail and out of the mud, your best option is to wade right through the middle of it. Let's think about the alternatives and their effects. Skirting the edges may seem a practical option, but that just contributes to the problem. Your boots will chew up the edges of the muddy area causing it to get bigger with each hiker who attempts it. So, you end up with a 10 foot wide quagmire where a 2-foot puddle used to be.

"OK then, I'll just cut through the woods giving the mud such a wide berth that I won't be adding to it!" I'm sure you aren't the first, or the last, to think that. It's likely that you'll find a rough path around such obstacles, commonly called "herd paths," already there. That path now makes a 2nd trail where only one used to be. It opens another corridor for erosion and another path for water to flow. It's likely that this new path will become an even muddier than the original trail. Given enough time, the two can merge together making one

huge muddy mess.

I'll bet you didn't know that such a simple thing like mud could be so complicated. But you can't just think about yourself. You need to consider the person behind you, and the 100 others after that. This is why staying in the middle of the muddy trail is always your best option. This is also why proper footwear is so important. Wear boots that laugh at the sight of mud. Get Gore-Tex® lined boots and put them to the test! Or make sure to apply a fresh coat of waterproofing to your leather boots before hitting the trail. Don't forget to wear your gaiters too. They'll provide another barrier between you and the mud. Waterproof socks can be another addition to your arsenal.

Don't worry about what others may think. It's a small price to pay for preserving our trails for everyone to enjoy for years to come. Make muddy boots a fashion statement. Show off your mud spackled legs as a badge of honor. It says you've been there, you've done that, and you don't need any lousy t-shirt to prove it! Besides, your boots, gaiters, and body can all be easily washed when you get home.





WINTER SCHOOL 2022, FROM PAGE 12

unlawful and when the AMC police asked for my ID, the first name that came to mind was Scott Taylor. And yes, I did shave my moustache! So, there you go; if you don't hear from Scott for a few months, he's probably been arrested, transferred through extraordinary rendition to who knows where, and locked up in the AMC dungeons!

As one participant wrote:

I just want to thank you as well as Larry and Tim for helping Bob and I become more proficient at Nordic Backcountry XC skiing. Not only was it super instructional but you guys spent so much time helping us by first correcting our past habits but giving us plenty of time to practice as well. The knowledge you all shared was timely, welcomed and greatly appreciated. Having half the day doing drills and then applying it after lunch on a mini tour was the icing on top. Again thanks for the support, your keen eyes observing where we're at and making us feel welcome and supported and moving us forward. Hope to see you all again on another occasion.

A big thank you to everyone who made Winter School work so well! A special big thank you to Marty and Sean for filling in as instructors on such a short notice!

Only eleven months to go to the 2023 edition of the New Hampshire Chapter's Winter School!



Winter School is not all Work!



Nothing about skiing easy, but if you practice you can do it.



NIGHT IN THE WOODS, FROM PAGE 13

weight sleeping bag that weighs less than a pound and a bivy sack that adds about another pound. You will probably be much more comfortable with a "real" sleeping bag and bivy sack, but it will double the weight and take up more space in your pack.

I can be confident that I will always carry the smaller lighter Mylar alternatives on every hike, but would tend to leave the heavier bulkier options for hikes when I expect I might be spending the night in the backcountry. In fact, when I am planning an overnight, the lighter Mylar alternatives are also in my pack. They are a regular component of my "survival kit" and it is easier to just put the kit in my pack.

The important thing is to have some form of shelter in your pack that you can use in an emergency. While it is possible to rig a shelter from found materials, it takes more time and energy than you will probably want to expend. You could also try to stay warm by putting on every scrap of clothing in your pack, but you will probably be facing a long uncomfortable night or worse.

The second element of shelter and warmth is fire. As a general rule, fire at an impromptu campsite should be used only when it is really needed for warmth or to signal your location. If you are not lost or dealing with an injury, you should only consider a fire if it will be so cold during the night that you will not be able to rely on insulation to keep you warm enough.

If you build a fire, you cannot build it just anywhere. Ideally, you should find a surface that will provide a fire proof base. Rock slabs and gravel or sand surfaces are best. If that is not possible, be sure to clear leaves and debris from the area and try to avoid highly organic soils. Needless to say, this can be a challenge in New Hampshire. So, you should consider fire to be one of your last choices for surviving the night. You should be prepared to build a

fire, but also reluctant to do so unless really required.

Water. The next issue for survival is water. Fortunately, in New Hampshire it is usually easy to find a source of water. But is it safe to drink? You should always carry some means of purifying water. Probably the cheapest and easiest approach is to carry water purification tablets. All you need to carry is the small jar of tablets and a container to treat the water in; typically, your water bottle will be perfect. Even if you have a water filter system, a small jar of water purification tablets is good insurance. Finally, remember that while giardia and other water borne illnesses are long term problems, dehydration is a more immediate threat. If your choice is dehydration or drinking untreated water, the untreated water is the better bet. You may be lucky and not pick up any pathogens, but even if you do, you will be alive to deal with the problems they will cause.

Food. While adequate food will help maintain your energy level, ultimately food is the lowest priority in surviving an unplanned night in the woods. Food is a good and pleasant thing to have, but it is not essential. That said, it is always a good idea to keep a few energy bars or other long shelf life items in your pack. They don't weigh much but can make sure you keep the hunger pangs at bay.

Summing up, an unplanned night in the woods is never fun, but can be managed without too much pain if you are prepared. It is worth the planning and slight extra weight in your pack to be sure you are ready if you ever need to spend an unexpected night in the backcountry.

Where In The Whites?

**Where was this photo taken and what are the major mountains?
Be as specific as possible!**



Last issue's mystery photo taken from the Mt Osceola Trail on East Osceola. Photo by Paul Hopkins.

In the Spring 2020 Edition of Mountain Passages we introduced a new photo identification contest, *Where in the Whites?* We asked readers to guess where the photo was taken and what mountains were in the photo. We promised to print the names of the first 10 respondents with the correct answer.

Last month's photo taken by Paul Hopkins is reprinted here. It is a view from the Mt Osceola Trail on East Osceola showing Mad River Notch, Mt Huntington, the Hancocks and Mt Carrigain. This photo was a real challenge and only one reader, Rich Gould, identified the location and mountains correctly. Great Job Rich!

This issue's photo may be a challenge too, but that is what makes this contest fun!

Identify the mountains in the photo and where it was taken. Be as specific as possible! Take a guess and submit your answers to WitWamcnh@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing your submissions.

📱 Photography: Effective Use of Cell Phone Cameras

BY: BOB MCLAUGHLIN

I have been using Nikon single lens reflex cameras for over 50 years. During that time, I have gone through six camera bodies, four for film and two digital. I still reach for my Nikon when I am going out for a serious photography outing, but now I find that I am taking more photos with my smart phone. In fact, I have been known to take pictures with my iPhone when I am packing my Nikon.

Why? Well, the simple answer is the cell phone takes great photos, and the best camera for taking a photo is the one you have. I never take a hike without my cell phone, but because of the weight and bulk of my Nikon I rarely pack it unless the purpose of the hike is to capture images rather than covering ground.

Recognizing this reality, I concluded I better learn how to take advantage of all the features my smart phone packs. I have an iPhone 13 Pro, which Apple claims can effectively replace a film crew. While I cannot vouch for that, I can attest that the phone

has a superb camera. While you may have a different smart phone, you probably have an awesome camera in your pocket. Unless you have gone out of your way to find tips and instructional videos on the internet, you probably don't know all of its features.

Learning more will help you take the best photographs possible.

Here are some tips that I have found useful.

- **Tip 1:** Learn as much as possible about the camera in your phone and how to use it effectively. Knowledge is power, and the best way to take full advantage of the technology you bought. Obviously, as a first step you can visit the website of your phone's manufacturer. Most manufacturers have useful tutorials describing and demonstrating the features of your phone. Beyond that, a web search will likely reveal a wealth of online tutorials geared specifically to the features of the camera built into your phone.
- **Tip 2:** Explore third party applications for the camera built into your phone. While you may be satisfied with the camera app that came with your phone, app developers have worked to improve on the built-in software. If you check them out, you may find that these improvements are just what will make the camera in your phone work better for you.
- **Tip 3:** When you use the camera in your phone do not forget the importance of composition. Most if not all phones have the option of displaying a grid dividing the preview screen into thirds. Use it! It can help you to keep the horizon level and if you place the primary point of interest on an intersection you will be going a long way to a pleasing composition. Also, do not ignore the background. You



Cell phone cameras may be able to take long exposures if you know how. Photo by: Bob McLaughlin

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don't want to have a tree growing out of your subject's head!

• **Tip 4:** Be careful using optical zooms. Many modern smart phones have more than one lens and are configured to provide telephoto or wide angle shots at full or close to full resolution. However, you need to remember that because it includes a

smaller area, the telephoto lens is more sensitive to vibrations and hand shake. If you use your telephoto lens be particularly careful to hold the smartphone steady. You might want to consider using a tripod or stand to keep the camera still. To limit potential vibration to the greatest extent possible, consider using the timer built into your camera app or a remote function, such as a voice activated assistant or Apple watch app, to trigger the shutter without touching the smartphone.

• **Tip 5:** While you need to be careful with optical telephotos on a smartphone, you should completely avoid digital zoom. Smart phones achieve digital zoom by reducing the resolution of the image to make it appear bigger. So, when you use digital zoom you are reducing the quality of your image at the same time you are increasing the risk of shake and vibration. This a lose-lose situation! It is a much better to take the photo at normal resolution and then crop the photo in a photo editing program if you want bring part of it closer.

• **Tip 6:** Keep the lens on your smartphone clean and protect the lens from scratches. This is an unavoidable problem with smartphone camera. Unlike a full size camera which spends



*Sometimes the photo is there and your big camera isn't. Your cell phone is the perfect solution-
Photo by: Bob McLaughlin.*

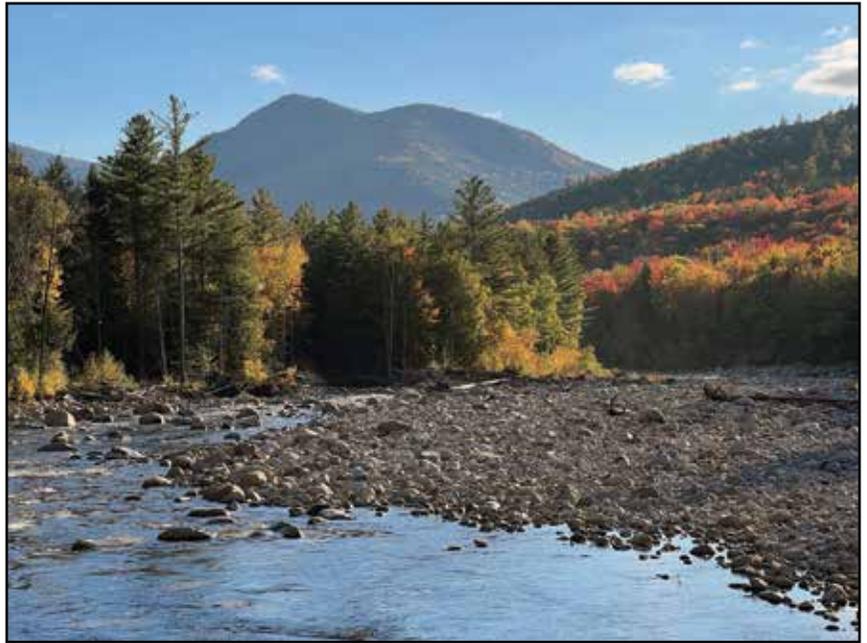


Panorama shots are actually easier to capture with a cell phone. Photo by: Bob McLaughlin.

most of its time in a protective case and maybe with a lens cap, a cell phone is more likely to be stuffed in your pocket. If you want to get the best pictures possible, clean the lens each time you use the camera in your cell phone. It is worthwhile to carry a lens cleaning cloth with you and keep it clean and free from contaminants. You don't want to scratch your lens when you are trying to clean it.

• **Tip 7:** Turn off the smartphone's flash and make sure that there is sufficient light to take the photo. Unlike a good camera flash, the LED flash in a smartphone is not well designed to provide flattering light. Also, like any camera mounted flash, the single source of light can create harsh lighting and odd looking shadows that can destroy the appeal of a photograph. There is a good reason that portrait and art photographers use multiple light sources and bounce effects to achieve the lighting they need.

• **Tip 8:** Don't ignore your phone's Settings! The phone's camera app has a lot of variables that can only be controlled in the Settings for the phone. In the Settings, you can select the format of the image files your camera will record, whether a grid will be displayed in the view screen, whether lens correction will be used to avoid distortions created by the lens, and whether your settings will be preserved when you shut the cell phone off. There may be other useful settings as well. Also, consider the screen brightness control in Settings. If your screen is too dark in the field you may be tempted to overcompensate by adjusting exposure. For photography, you should keep your screen as bright as possible. Finally, if you use third party



A cell phone is always there when you want to take a photo. Photo by: Bob McLaughlin.

camera apps, don't ignore the Settings for those apps. Typically, they default to settings on the native camera app but you may be surprised. Bottom line, get familiar with the settings for your cell phone camera and decide which settings will work best for you.

In conclusion, if you take the time to learn to use the advanced features of your smart phone's camera, you can use it to capture great images on your hikes, paddle and ski outings and any other time. While a smartphone will never be able to capture the quality achieved by a full size full featured camera, it can come close, and will allow you capture the great photographs you see when all you have is your phone.

Have fun out there!





Appalachian Mountain Club
NH Chapter
PO Box 1348
Lincoln, NH 03251

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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 amcnh.org and read more about us and our many year-round events.



Jessica Clifford: Mountain Passages Graphics Designer; Thank You and Fare Well

Jess' Editors: Bob McLaughlin (2018-present), Brett Billings (2015-18), Ron Janowitz (2015) and Michell O'Donnell (2015)

Jessica Clifford has worked tirelessly behind the scenes as our graphics designer for over seven years to make *Mountain Passages* the publication it is today. Jess started with the first issue of 2015 and has worked on every issue until now. This spring 2022 issue of *Mountain Passages* will be her last.

During that time, Jess worked with four different editors and managed the growth of the newsletter from eight page issues containing mostly announcements to issues of 20 plus pages containing primarily feature articles and lots of photographs. She also managed the transition from black and white printing to full color. Throughout it all, Jess' "can do" attitude, has made it all possible and even easy. Jess will be missed!

But, Jess is so much more than our graphics designer. From horseback competitions, to snowboarding and skiing, to participating in her College's crew team, Jess has always kept active. She climbed the NH 48 in four years from 2014 to 2018. Jess also has learned to appreciate the quiet times that life has to offer. As Jess puts it she simply enjoys "sitting outside in the sun in summer watching and listening to the birds at my family's house" and values "spending time with friends and family learning to love and respect the world around her."

These attributes plus Jess' obvious talent as an artist, photographer and graphics designer have made *Mountain Passages*

what it is today. They have also made her a pleasure to work with over the years.

Thank you Jess, and good fortune in your future endeavors!



Jessica Clifford in her natural element.



Photo by: Jessica Clifford. Wild horses.

