



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Winter 2009, V. 23, No. 1

From the President

Greetings and Happy 2009! Looks like we are off to a great start with such fantastic snow conditions! I hope folks are finding the time to get out and enjoy the recreational resources of Pisgah. The cold doesn't seem nearly as bad when you realize it creates such excellent snow conditions! And though some probably do not want to be reminded of the ice storm, we hiked up the Pisgah Ridge Trail on the Sunday after the storm to enjoy a spectacular world of sun and ice. As far to the East as Monadnock and off to the Green Mountains in the West, the entire world around us was a shimmering, sparkling spectacle. Every surface area was encased in ice from boulders to pebbles, pine needles to entire trees. I would not wish such an event upon us or the natural world again, but what a sight to behold.

And speaking of the ice storm, a great deal of clean-up has been on-going in the Park and will continue for some time. Some work will have to wait until Spring to get to all the debris that is obscured or locked in a wintry blanket. We have had some great help from "friends" of the Park and appreciate any help that is given. So much of Pisgah's support comes through volunteer efforts and energies. Please feel free to contact me if you need more information on how you can help support this incredible resource. I can be reached at ktthatcher@gmail.com or 603-363-4482. Thank-you again, all who have already given of your time and energy!

Now an update on the Pisgah Park management plan. The Technical Team Committee is working on compiling data that will be used for the various chapter headings that will go into the management plan. Areas of focus are: Soils, Land Use History, Wildlife Habitat and Species, Exemplary Communities and Rare Plant Species, Recreational Use, Geology, Wetlands, Exotics and Invasive Species, Eco Systems and Natural Communities, Forest Ecosystem Services and Economic Resources. Much information has, and is, being gathered by a dedicated group of volunteers and employees of DRED (Department of Resources and Economic Development – the parent organization of the NH parks). The information then will be put into a format to be presented to the Steering Committee for review and comment. The process was discussed at the last Steering Committee meeting. Additionally we worked on a final Vision Statement which will be voted on at our next meeting. A few salient points of the Vision Statement: attention will be given to suitable locations for particular activities in the Park, research should be compatible with State public park objectives, having natural areas and managed areas allows for a great opportunity for comparison studies.

The Recreational Forum Public Survey results are expected to be presented at the Steering Committee's March meeting. A target deadline of August 2009 for completion of the Management Plan was proposed and will be discussed with DRED Commissioner Bald. Additionally, a fascinating presentation on Forest Management and Sequestering Carbon was given by Robert Perschel of the Forest Guild. A presentation summary will be posted on the Division of Forest and Lands website at later date [FYI, Steering Committee meeting minutes are available there as well]. For more information on the work of the Forest Guild you can go to www.forestguild.org/publications/2007ForestGuild_climate_carbon_forests.pdf. The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for February 3rd from 4 to 6 pm at Antioch New England Graduate School. In addition to a vote on the Vision Statement, current costs for funding Pisgah as well as future funding streams will be presented and discussed.

We also will address a request from the Bureau of Trails regarding the purchase of a piece of property adjacent to Pisgah in the town of Winchester located in the southwest corner. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Friends of Pisgah Executive Council who voted to commit to the funding of two positions to assist in the management report preparation and compilation of available GIS map data available on Pisgah. It is great to be able to help in the support of gathering information that supports the creation of a solid document to guide the management of Pisgah State Park for years to come. Get out and play in the snow!

Kathy Thatcher

Getting Around On Foot, Snowshoe or Cross Country Skis in Pisgah – Part II

The FOP has on occasion provided information about hiking, snowshoeing or cross country skiing in the Park. We have decided to try and publish such information more regularly in the future. For those of you looking for an interesting hike or ski, etc., you might peruse the Park maps (summer and winter editions) and make a guess. Unfortunately, the two dimensional maps do not quantify the elevation changes and the potential limitations for travel on some trails.

Some Sources of Pisgah Hiking Information

In addition to the official Park maps, hiking in Pisgah has periodically been mentioned in hiking books about New England and the northeast. See the Fall 2008 Update for a list of such books and our initial set of hiking reports. More hiking information on Pisgah can be found in Nature Walks in Southern New Hampshire, Older and Sherman, AMC, 1994. Our featured hike in this issue is the Kilburn Loop. For additional information, three references to hiking the Kilburn Loop can be found in the Fall 2008 Update issue of the Update.

The Kilburn Loop

As the snow piles up outside, it seems the perfect time to encourage folks to take a ski trip on the Kilburn Loop. Just in case there are folks out there who are unfamiliar with the trail, it is accessed from the Kilburn Parking lot located on Rt. 63, just south of the Chesterfield line in the town of Hinsdale. Taking the Kilburn Rd. Trail down to the beginning of Kilburn Pond, you will see the Trail marker for the Kilburn Loop on your right. The trail will be marked with purple diamonds and is approximately five miles long. Fellow outdoors-man and FOP member, Tom Duston agreed to join me for a trial run in order to time the journey and assess any trail damage that might have occurred during the ice storm. We started from the parking lot at 10:30, returning by 1:30. We traveled at a comfortable, steady pace. Obviously times can vary with a snowshoeing venture taking quite a bit more time.

Please take your mode of travel and time of day into consideration when you start your trip as well as the fitness levels of the folks involved. There have been people who have gotten lost or misjudged available daylight on the Kilburn Loop, so go prepared, and it is best not to go alone. We did feel the trail was well marked and if visitors precede you, you can follow their trail, while also keeping an eye on the trail markers. You will travel along on a pretty level stretch of trail as you meander through the woods alongside Kilburn Pond. Continuing on past the end of the Pond, you will begin a gradual, long downhill run. It is good fun, with a number of stream crossings, most of which you come upon quite suddenly! One area we traveled through has remnants of a previous, big blowdown. Perhaps the hurricane of '38 caused it? Towards the end of our downhill glide, as we rounded the southern-most end of the trail, we made our way across a couple of bridges and a lovely stopping place for pictures and snacks. At this point we were the time had come to begin our uphill climb. The trail is a pretty steady, manageable incline as you wind your way back north to where you connect with the Pisgah Ridge Trail. There is a wonderful variety of forest communities that you will travel through as well as some entertaining twists and turns along the way especially at the northern end before one turns west to head back toward the Kilburn Rd Trail and the parking lot.

We did notice blow downs from the ice storm, some on the trail itself but easily avoided. [There will be a need for clean-up crews after the snow melts {and before the bugs fly!}. Any helpers out there??] Tom and I did have a discussion about the best way to approach a ski excursion on the trail, coming in the way I have described so far or accessing the Loop from Pisgah Ridge Trail. We decided that the approach we used had fewer downhill twists and turns through the trees. [Ed. Note: I agree!] You will have your opportunity for a little bit of tree skiing as you continue to wend your way along the trail, eventually coming to the intersection with Pisgah Ridge Trail. Turn left onto Pisgah Ridge Trail, continuing a downhill run that will bring you to the bridge that puts you back onto the Kilburn Rd.. Take another left, cruising along on level terrain until you find yourself back at the beginning of the Kilburn Loop. Head up to your right to return to the parking lot. The Kilburn Loop is also a beautiful hiking trail, but allow yourself more time and journey out when the bugs are not in season!

Kathy Thatcher

Kudos to Some of Our Park Volunteers

The Friends are very appreciative of the many folks who have helped out in the Park, not just those who regularly show up on "official" days but also those who just show up to help anywhere from time to time! We particularly appreciate the efforts of Walter Slowinski and his son Sam from Vermont and Jeff Scott from Chesterfield.

Around the Park and with the Friends

Tentative Events and Dates for Historical Workdays and Events in 2009

(see note below in this column)

- February 8 - Story Circle & program about ice harvesting in Pisgah and surrounding area.
- March 22 - Research for history hike and design display for barn of AB Little Dynamite Explosive Testing Area
- April 26 - Story Circle and hike in to A.B. Little Dynamite Testing Site in Hinsdale (Location to be determine)
- May 24 - Program with Harry Prouty - logging tools
- June 28 - unknown
- July 26 - unknown
- August 23 - unknown
- September 27 - Stonewall program in Hardscrabble
- October 25 - Pumpkin Festival participation
- November 22 - unknown
- December 27 - Work on transcripts of previous programs or Story Circles & prepare Calendar of Events for 2010

FOP Historical Meetings

Until further notice, the meetings held on the third Wednesday and fourth Sunday of each month will be suspended due to the challenging winter conditions and the unpredictable road maintenance to the Visitor Center. Special events or programs will be held at other facilities throughout the winter. Look for announcements of these events in the *_Keene Sentinel, Monadnock Shopper and Brattleboro Reformer_*. Advertisements of FOP events are always posted at all Pisgah Trailheads as well as on bulletin boards throughout the area. Feel free to contact Laurel Powell at 336-7479 or email lpowellbks@comcast.net for information.

Laptop Now Available for Council Use

Through the generosity of members and donors as well as the fund raising efforts of the FOP Council, the Council voted to purchase a laptop computer. A Dell "Vostro" will be used to: format then maintain and update the FOP web site now under development (see below); store and preserve pictures of all historic sites and FOP events; document the membership on a database; chronicle the history of Pisgah; record and document the antiques, tools and farm equipment in the Visitor Center and Barn Museum; and conduct research on all aspects of Pisgah's natural elements, culture and history.

The laptop also will be used as a presentation tool for events such as Story Circles, Annual Meetings plus picnics and educational programs. It will be used to create all announcements and signage for events or for the FOP Information Boards. Thanks to all of you who have made contributions to FOP. We welcome your input and suggestions regarding the creation of the website and the use of the computer. ***John Hudachek & Laurel Powell***

Friends of Pisgah Web Site Under Development

A decision has been made to create a web site for the Friends of Pisgah. John Hudachek has volunteered to develop such a site and we are looking forward to improving our service to the Park and FOP members through this new project. We envision that the web site will contain:

- Home Page describing *The Friends of Pisgah, Inc.*
- FOP Events
- FOP News Letters (including all since 1997)
- Park Maps
- Park Trail descriptions
- Photos of the Park and FOP events
- FOP membership information
- FOP Council members
- Contact information
- Pisgah History

Winter in the Pisgah Area

An Icy Winter Wonderland

Sometimes it is hard to see the wonder through the disasters of this winter of 2009 yet we have survived the first half of the season enduring tests administered by Mother Nature. This year especially, has brought forth many hardships; growing snow banks, elongating icicles that evoke wonder yet trepidation, downed power lines that darken our homes and thawed stored food. We have risen to these many challenges allowing qualities of the past to emerge and be reevaluated. We have returned to times where the value of silence, simple conversations, family time and contemplative fireplaces remind us of times gone by. You may have found that once forgotten traditions of winter may have invaded your corner of the world.

During my tramps to the far corners of Pisgah, my most contemplative moments in the woods have been at natural ice sculptures formed by the ice storms or the slowing waters of brooks and streams. Looking through the clear windows of ice to the underworld of burbling water as it winds through a maze of ice often magnifies objects otherwise overlooked like bubbles of air and sparkling mica. Ice formations of every size and shape dangle from exposed roots or low hanging branches created by splashing waters. Crystallized snowflakes are frozen in time in the clear ice or hanging from the dark soil of the stream banks. The layers of snow and ice gradually build up on inclined areas near waterfalls like icy frosting on a tall wedding cake.

These observations of Pisgah's beauty add to my new found admiration of those in our communities who long ago used ice as a crop to harvest. Ice harvesting in Cheshire County and beyond was a vital industry that spurred great feats of ingenuity and invention.

I have not found any evidence of any ice harvesting businesses that profited from the waters found in Pisgah but most certainly, the residents enjoyed the fruits of the waters of neighboring bodies of water: Spofford Lake, Forest Lake, Watermaker Pond and the Connecticut River. At these, and many other frozen ponds, lake and rivers, the area was bustling with activity during the coldest parts of winter. Ice businesses with names like Burnham and Secord served the area filling the iceboxes or ice houses of homes, hotels, stores, businesses and railcars. The farmers and other hardy men from local communities spent 10 hours a day harvesting ice cakes, earning ten cents an hour and working in the severest weather conditions earn our utmost respect especially as we attempt to live in a higher developed time with many conveniences close at hand.

The process of Ice Harvesting is much more complicated than first meets the eye. During the winter lull, a single farmer stocking the ice house behind the barn for the upcoming summer months would take his family and neighbors out onto a nearby pond with tools and their horses or oxen to cut blocks. Surrounded by playful children, the group would cut what was needed. These smaller ventures were adventuresome moments infused with gaiety and fun activities such as ice skating, ice fishing and ice boating.

On the other end of the spectrum, entrepreneurs who collected ice for profit needed to cultivate the ice as a gardener nurtures his crops. Gaining access to the ice by removing the snow to expose the ice was the first order of business. Companies also would need to accelerate the ice formation to insure that the crop would continue to provide multiple harvests. They knew that they could not rely on Mother Nature to do that reliably and predictably. Horses were critical to this business as they provided the power to remove the snow and pull the markers, scorers and ploughs that prepared the ice for cutting. Sawyers often worked as a choreographed group sliding their long saws through the ice in a circular motion. Breakers freed the cakes and pickers managed the floes of ice through channels to a predetermined location for pick up. The 100 pound ice cakes were pushed or pulled up ramps to waiting sledges or wagons. Teams of oxen and horses pulled the mounds of ice cakes off the ice to the storage areas. As the efficiency of the operation improved, the ice channels went directly to ramps equipped with conveyor belts that deposited the ice into huge ice houses on the shore of the lake, pond or river. There the local Ice Man picked up a load of ice in his horse drawn wagon to deliver to the townsfolk weekly. A special sign hung in a window of most homes indicating the size of cake desired. The Ice Man expertly chiseled the block to the desired dimension, slung it over his shoulder onto a protective apron and placed it in the ice box. The children were always close at hand waiting for slivers of delectable ice, a treat that was precious and appreciated in the hot summer months.

Ice Harvesting in the Pisgah Area

On Sunday, February 8, 2009, the Friends of Pisgah will present an Ice Harvesting Story Circle and Program. Local experts will share their knowledge and folklore. We have been able to locate many photographs and a few artifacts to showcase. Stonewall Farm has lent us a video that documents the progression of man-powered to machine-powered ice harvesting. The Friends of Pisgah Museum has a wonderful collection of ice harvesting tools that will be on display for the program. Their use will be demonstrated. //Friends of Pisgah invites all those who remember, who are willing to share stories, pictures, and artifacts or who are curious and intrigued by this unique and intriguing industry to come. Bring a friend or two. The stories shared will be archived and saved to share with future generations.//The event will be *held at the ELMM Memorial Community Center in Winchester from 1 to 3 pm.* Refreshments will be served. Call Laurel Powell for additional information or with questions at 336-7479 or email lpowellbks@comcast.net

This program was initially planned for Jan. 25 at the Pisgah State Park Visitor Center in Winchester and postponed due to road conditions

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President Kathy Thatcher & Secretary Bob Smith at the Annual Picnic



Past Treasurer John Larson & Park Manager Norma Reppucci at Annual Picnic



An Attraction Provided by Bill Roberts (white shirt at left) at the Annual Picnic Was a 6 hp 100 yr old Abenague Engine (right), Running an Antique Water Pump Using a Belt Drive. This Engine is the Same Model as Used by Rod and Fred Doolittle's Father on the Doolittle Farm Which Sat at the Bottom of the Hill Below the Visitor Center.

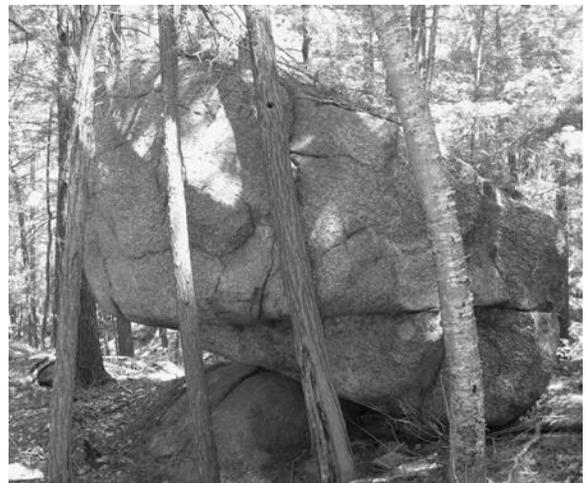


Ginny Knapp and John Hudachek At Area of Glacial Rocks



Annual Picnic Burger and Hot Dog Chef, John Herrick

(Pictures on this page courtesy of Ginny Knapp and John Herrick)



Glacial Boulder Near Dogwood Swamp Trail

Friends of Pisgah, Inc.
 PO Box 134
 Chesterfield, NH 03443-0134

First Class Mail

Please use the form below and send to the address shown if you wish to join FOP, renew membership or give one as a gift .
 The Friends of Pisgah maintain a nominal dues structure with the intent being to encourage as many individuals and families as possible to join. Over half of the student/single/family dues provides for printing and mailing the Update and the Annual Picnic notice, as well as for the fine food at the picnic. Dues are as follows: student - \$10, single - \$15, family - \$20, group (club) - \$30.
 Cut here -----

If you are joining or renewing, please use this form. Your dues support our Park efforts.

Date: _____	<u>Category</u> (Check applicable boxes)	<u>Willing to Assist On Committee for:</u>
Name(s): _____	◇ New	◇ Annual Picnic
Address: _____	◇ Renewal	◇ Educational Programs
_____	◇ Gift	◇ History/Archaeology
_____	◇ Student (\$10.00)	◇ Membership
Phone: _____ (Home)	◇ Single (\$15.00)	◇ Newsletter Articles
Phone: _____ (Work)	◇ Family (\$20.00/address)	◇ Planning & Strategy
E-mail: _____	◇ Group (\$30.00)	◇ Fund Raising
	◇ Donation \$ _____	◇ Public Relations/Park Info
Questions? Call Bill Roberts (603- 336-5462) or Matt Donachie (603-239-6590)	Name/Address of gift giver	◇ Rails to Trails Advisory
	_____	◇ Trails/Maintenance
Send form and check to:	_____	◇ Wantastiquet-Monadnock
Friends of Pisgah, Inc.	_____	Greenway
PO Box 134	_____	◇ Other _____
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