



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Winter 2010, V. 24, No.1

From the President

Greetings, Here I was ready to give a nod to a January thaw but am instead watching the snow fall outside my window. Due to the limited snowfall this season, I am not going to complain! I will keep my fingers crossed that it will not turn to rain before the day is done.

Our winter activities began in December with a wonderful stretch of skating on Kilburn Pond. It tends to be a rare and short-lived treat, and we take advantage of getting out on the ice as much as we can. We do make sure that the ice is plenty thick and dress warmly for the cold wind that is sure to greet us as we head into the north wind. It is so peaceful to be out there, gliding around on the ice in such a beautiful place. Something to look forward to next year. Now it's time to strap on the snowshoes, step into the skies or hop on the snowmobile and enjoy the snow cover. Granted, there have been days when it was more fitting to be traveling in boots, sometimes with crampons, but it is looking like we just might be in store for a stretch of winter fun.

A great activity to enjoy at this time of year is to study the tracks in the snow. In addition to trying to identify the creature that made the track, ponder on what they were doing, where were they going? There are wonderful resources available in your local library, bookstore or ask around and you might find a guide to borrow as well as a companion to join you! There are also some resources available at the Visitor Center. The Center is not open as much as we would like, due to the Friends of Pisgah assuming responsibility for funding the staffing of the building on weekends. But thank-you Laurel and Brent for being there as often as you are! These guys are a wonderful resource themselves in providing information about the Park.

Tracking events can be found in the paper and allow you to take advantage of the expertise of some local trackers. I recently joined a group on a beautiful Saturday morning and had a great time wandering around the woods of Vermont with Lynne Levine. A couple of particularly interesting bits of information gleaned on that outing: the silver fox has retractable claws and can climb trees, [I always thought they looked more like a feline.]; at this time of year you can find the mating dance of fox in the snow (the fox also emits a skunk-like scent); gray squirrels are hardwood inhabitants, feasting on acorns while red squirrels are the ones feasting on pine cones. It was interesting to see how deer had munched on fungi along an old, downed tree. No matter what time of year you wander out the door, there is so much to capture the imagination! See information below about animal tracks in winter.

On the subject of the Pisgah State Park Management Plan, the Tech Team is getting ready to wrap-up the Natural Resources aspects of the project, with the final chapters being passed on to the Steering Committee for review. There will be public gatherings to comment on the document, but nothing is on the calendar at this time. Stay tuned to the state web site and postings at trail heads as well as newspaper announcements and then put it on your calendar to make sure you are there! The Recreation section is in limbo at this time, so please keep an eye open for any updates, using the previously mentioned sources. We are still waiting for the final document from the State regarding the State Parks Special Advisory Committee findings for the State Parks Strategic Plan. There will be time given for public feedback. So, again stay tuned and please, stay, involved!

Get outside, stay safe, and have fun! Cheers,

Kathy Thatcher

Animal Tracking in Winter

For a more complete discussion see Update, V 18, No. 1, Winter 2004. A most valuable book is Field Guide to Tracking Animals in Snow (Stackpole Books). Another source might be Scats and Tracks of the Northeast (Falcon/Globe Pequot), If you want more general guidance to the natural world in winter, try A Guide to Nature in Winter (Little, Brown and Co). This book by Donald Stokes provides information not only on animal tracks but also on insect patterns, birds, weeds and flowers among others.

Matt Donachie

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

Just a reminder, if you are looking for an interesting hike, snowshoe hike or XC ski trip, etc., you might check out the Park maps (see our web site and open the Trails section). We have published information on some trails in prior issues of the Update. We provide another description of trails in this issue.

Through-Ski (N to S) in the Park

For someone (or group) that wishes to make a relatively long but easy traverse of Pisgah, I can recommend a cross country ski trip from the Horseshoe Rd trailhead to the south side of the Park. You need to spot a car or cars at the finish before proceeding to Horseshoe to depart through the Park. The trails to be followed are not wooded paths as we generally think of them but simply the old roads in the Park.

The most convenient finish point is the Visitor Center on Old Chesterfield Rd as it is easier to park cars there than at the exit from the Park on Broad Brook Rd. The trip is recommended as north to south as it is downhill all the way (if you leave Old Chesterfield Rd at Broad Brook and ski down Broad Brook to Ashuelot and exit the Park). If you go to the Visitor Center to finish the ski trip, then there is a series of 3 uphill sections after the Broad Brook Rd to reach the end point. The total driving distance from the Visitor Center around to the Horseshoe Rd trail head is about 22 miles via Hinsdale and Rte 63. The ski distance is in the order of about 7 miles. You can see the open fields below the Horseshoe Rd trailhead by going about 100 yds north of the Visitor Center, crossing the wall on your left into the upper orchard and looking to the NW.

The skiing is relatively straightforward. Snowmobiles usually leave a packed surface on the roads so, unless there is a very deep recent snow, the skiing is easy and may be too fast for some on the steeper downhill road stretches. To begin, head down the Horseshoe Rd from the trailhead, through a gate, to the bottom of the hill where the road forks. Taking the right fork brings you in ¼ mile or less up to the Old Winchester Rd where you may turn left and head downhill toward the Visitor Center. Bearing left along Horseshoe Rd at the first fork also takes you, in a few hundred yards, to the Old Winchester Rd. (You will have passed the South Woods Trail to your left shortly before reaching Old Chesterfield Rd). Turn left and head on the level or gently downhill. A small stream (if not frozen) will be seen crossing the road near this latter road junction.

After about 2 miles or less on the road another gate is reached (the Chestnut Hill Trail leaves to your right from a small parking area here. The road now is virtually on a level and in a half mile, after passing some ponds on your left, you reach a fork where a short road and a 100 yd trek through the trees will bring you to the shore of Fullam Pond. Back on Old Chesterfield Rd, continue ahead (now slightly east southeast) again past frozen ponds or marshy areas. Soon the Dogwood Swamp Trail departs on your right and very shortly ahead you cross Broad Brook. Now you are headed essentially south again, paralleling Broad Brook for a time then crossing another frozen marshy area and heading uphill for nearly then gently downhill again, passing the Snow Brook Trail on your left, to reach the intersection of Old Chesterfield Rd with the Broad Brook Rd.

At this point, if heading to Ashuelot, turn right and head south on the Broad Brook Rd, passing some old foundations and cellar holes, crossing Broad Brook (usually some open water and various ice formations here) on past other old foundations and an old dam, the Doolittle Trail on your left and along past a very large frozen marshy area formed by Broad Brook. Eventually after about 3 to 3 ½ miles you pass through a gate and onto the paved Broad Brook Rd in Ashuelot. Short walk will take you to the Fire Station at the junction with Rte 119. Descending the Broad Brook Rd from the Doolittle Trail area and nearly to the gate at the end of the road, you will note the South Link Trail departing to the right and uphill. Leaving Broad Brook Rd by the route will enable you to make your way over to the Reservoir Rd and then to connect to the trail down to the Ashuelot Rte 119 parking area. It is, of course, easier to park at that lot but if you can park down just off Rte 119 at the Broad Brook Rd junction, it is more convenient. Walking (skiing?) down from the Park gate you will cross Broad Brook once again before reaching Rte 119.

Back at the Broad Brook Rd junction with Old Chesterfield Rd, continue south on the latter road first going slightly uphill past Cheese Rock and then moderately downhill crossing Snow Brook and passing another old farmstead on your left. Continue uphill with some modest road turns to the junction of Old Chesterfield Rd with the Jon Hill Rd. Again continue south with small elevation gain on Old Chesterfield Rd past other historic areas (e.g. the Cider Mill on the left), crossing a brook (to the left is the recent logging excursion into the Park authorized by the State) and going uphill reasonably steeply again. A frozen marshy area is on your left just before you start up and a ravine to your left carries a stream flowing north into the marshy area. At the flat area you reach on the road, to your left you will see a small pond down below. Continuing south you pass the Doolittle homestead and the Doolittle Trail junction on your right. The final uphill starts just past the trail junction and you go uphill for about 200 yds, passing the Doolittle Orchard on your right. There is a gate at the top with the Barn to your left and the Visitor Center to your right. If you are lucky and traveling on a weekend, you might find the Visitor Center open for a little warming and chat with one or more Friends of Pisgah volunteers who occasionally work the building.

Matt Donachie



Hikers on A. D. Little Story Circle Hike



Arthur D. Little Story Circle Hike Participants
Hikes were held with the Chesterfield Historical Society (April 2009) and the Hinsdale Historical Society (Oct 2009)



Story Circle Hike Group at A. D. Little Site



Hikers on Wessels Hike November 1, 2009

**A.D. Little Hike Photos courtesy of Ellen Edson
Wessels Hike Photos courtesy of John Hudachek**



Hikers on Tom Wessels Hike at Kilburn Pond Area November 1, 2009



The Wessels Hike Attendees Gathered to Listen to Information on the Flora and History of the Kilburn Pond Area



(below and above) Tom Explains the Area



Around the Park with the Friends

Friends of Pisgah Web

Stay informed at the FOP website: www.friendsofpisgah.com. Check out Park & FOP information: programs, history, user trail maps, & pictures.

Visitor Center Hours

The Visitor Center is open most Saturdays, Sundays and Holiday Mondays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. thanks to the generosity of FOP and volunteers. It is located at 520 Old Chesterfield Road in Winchester. Visit the museum in the post & beam house & barn on the weekends as you pass by to hike, snowshoe, ski, or snowmobile. Come inside to warm up, share a story or get information.

Annual Meeting Summary

The annual FOP meeting at the Chesterfield Town Hall, held on Nov. 17, 2009, in conjunction with the Chesterfield Historical Society, was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by President Kathy Thatcher. After the business meeting, Ken Demarais, Administrator, Forest Management Bureau, Div. of Forests and Lands was introduced and Ken spoke on "A Management Plan for Pisgah State Park." Ken reviewed the management plans that have been done since the Park was acquired by the State of NH about 40 years and that none had ever been fully implemented due to lack of funding. He also described vegetative management and recreation trails for the Park. Questions were asked about a number of concerns, including Visitor Center manning, iron rangers for the park, and funding for the park operation. Ken stated more public forums are needed to get feed-back from people regarding the management plan. All were encouraged to participate in public forums exploring the various aspects of the Management Plan. Those present seemed to feel it was a very informative presentation. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM. Refreshments then were served.

Bob Smith, Secretary

Hiking

Sunday, November 1, 2009 – Exploring Less Disturbed and Older Forests

Professor Tom Wessels from Antioch New England Graduate School and at least 52 other friends of Pisgah Park met at the Kilburn parking lot on Route 63 on a beautiful, sunny fall afternoon to hike and explore the less disturbed and older forests between Route 63 and the Pisgah Ridge Trail. Tom began by explaining that the 2 1/2 mile hike would be in an area never open to agriculture, a fact which explains the absence of stone walls.

Tree and shrub growth was identified and explained for a number of varieties. The area near Kilburn is dominated by hemlock and old growth hemlock and white pine 300+ years were identified. At the Kilburn Pond Trail junction, damage from the hurricane of September 1938 was identified. More evidence would be seen on the Pisgah Ridge. This area was logged at one time for the New England Box Company. Tom pointed out spiraling tree trunks. Trunks would spiral when the tree was waiting for the canopy to open. A spiraled trunk would strengthen a tree. The oldest trees today have an approximate 3 foot diameter. Before logging activity, white pine could be found 8 feet in diameter and 230 feet tall in ravines, protected from lightning and wind.

The Pisgah Ridge Trail led us through a pocket of deformed hemlock - a result of porcupine browsing. We saw an old black birch, cored at 305 years, protected by the ridge. American Chestnut trunks from trees that died in the early decades of the 20th Century were seen. Tree trunks typically rot from the inside out and since the outer part of the chestnut tree is loaded with tannin making it rot resistant, dead chestnut trees last for decades, in this case approaching 90 years and still there..

As we approached the Mount Monadnock Vista, Tom explained that the granite bedrock contains fragile lichen and moss communities that take many years to develop. One must be careful to stay on bare granite when hiking such areas. A structure foundation that had a root cellar was observed. Tom has studied this site and determined that it was abandoned in the late 1800s (1870's or 1880's). It is located 2 1/2 miles from any other discovered sites, possibly belonging to an Abenaki family that did not want to assimilate in society after the Indians of New England were dispersed and reduced in numbers as a result of warfare during the 17th and 18th centuries. As this point the hike concluded and all returned to the Kilburn parking lot. The return trip was scattered with the last hikers returning after dark. Some photos of this outstanding hike can be found on pages 3 and 4 and more are available on the FOP Web.

John Hudachek

Pisgah Trails Maintenance

Saturday, November 14, 2009

Unfortunately we were rained out of our customary “second” or sometimes “third” Saturday maintenance work-day/hike. We schedule these days virtually every month of the year and encourage you to join us. Bring a lunch and wear appropriate clothes for the weather. See the FOP website (see page 4) for event schedules.

Saturday, December 12, 2009

John Herrick, Wendy Jacobs, Bob and Nancy Miller and Kathy Thatcher met at the Horseshoe Road Trailhead on a cold winter morning. We walked about 8 miles and did only a little trail work. We hiked down the Reservoir Trail and removed a couple of trees across the trail, then on to the North Ponds trail where we removed a couple of trees and one large overhead snag. Hiking was strenuous with 7 inches of snow and only a little crust on top. Wendy’s dog had bloody paws from it. By the time we got back to the trailhead at 3:30 we were all were pretty tired and running late. We did accomplish a good deal and had an enjoyable time.

Saturday, January 16, 2010

It was a cold and windy day, but very pretty. Competition from a tracking hike in Vermont limited attendance so it was just Nancy and Bob Miller with their dog and I. We went into the Kilburn Pond area and did some walking around the swamps on the back side looking at spruce trees. There seems to be a lot of new spruce coming in so we continued all the way around the pond and came back on the trail, finishing our day at noon.

John Herrick, Trails Chair

Advisory Council

The State’s Planning System

State Parks are administered under the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). A few years ago, the State Park System Advisory Council was created by enactment of Senate Bill 74. DRED was charged with the task of creating an overall Park System Master Plan to carry the state forward for the following ten years. At about the same time, DRED also established the Pisgah Park Management Plan Steering Committee, comprised of area residents of varied interests and backgrounds, as a format for public dialog in the creation of the final comprehensive management plan that will be officially sanctioned for the Park by the state. In addition, a group called the Pisgah State Park Technical Team was created to assist the NH Division of Forest and Lands (DFL) in creating a long term management plan for Pisgah State Park. The Technical Team is collecting ecological, cultural and recreational use data to be incorporated into such a management plan.

Advisory Council December Meeting

The State Park System Advisory Council (SPSAC) held an open meeting on December 14, 2009 at DRED offices in Concord and discussed the public input effort and work done by staff to complete the draft Strategic Plan. The attendance for this statewide discussion was a little disappointing (only 78 people attended). It was agreed that the SPSAC public sessions provided for a good debate forum for getting information from the public..

If you have an interest in this ongoing effort, you may wish to check the SPSAC meeting notes on the State Parks website. Parks Director Austin says the Strategic Plan will have been placed in final form during January. The SPSAC will hold a joint session with the Trails Advisory Committee sometime in 2010. Please also check the State Park's website regularly to see various House and Senate bills that might be introduced to the Legislature this year and their progress in the legislative process. The SPSAC will establish three subcommittees to have work sessions according to the obligation of the Council. Legislation, Friends Groups, Agreements and Leases are the expected subcommittees. Non-council members may be included in these subcommittees. Another SPSAC meeting was scheduled as we go to press. Go to <http://www.nhstateparks.org/about-us/commissions-and-committees/state-park-system-advisory-council.aspx> for more information.

Bill Roberts

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On Kilburn Pond

Winter time in New Hampshire is a time of reflection. During this time of year we look back at the year behind us and anticipate the new year to come. The dark frigid nights and gray days drive us to seek warmth and refuge indoors. Our bodies tell us to slow down, as they are in tune with nature's rhythms. This past week brought warmer weather and the freshly fallen snow has already melted and drips off the house in ever changing cadences.

Those of us who live in Southwest New Hampshire are lucky enough to live near one of the greatest places for sun basking and inner reflection I know, Pisgah State Park. A few days ago I was feeling antsy so a friend and I decided to explore around Kilburn Pond. This was my first time exploring the Pond because I usually hike up the ridge in search of scenic vistas and old growth trees. As we headed down the Kilburn Loop Trail I noticed ski tracks going off trail toward the Pond. We followed the tracks and soon found ourselves standing on the middle of Kilburn Pond. It is eerie to think that a few months ago a person (tougher than me) could be swimming in the same place. We explored the far side of the pond and found an unmarked trail that passed many rocky ledges with sweeping views. These ledges provide excellent swimming holes in the warmer months.

After crossing the brook at the pond's outlet we followed the officially marked trail south when I spotted another pond down the hill to the left. The pond looked frozen so we traced the edge for a few minutes before finding out that this was not the case. As we rounded a bend I put my foot through the ice but was lucky enough to grab a stump nearby to right myself. Having been given our adrenaline rush for the day we retreated to land and soaked in the afternoon sun. We decided to hike the entire loop and after a few miles of quiet we both spotted an odd trail of brown snow in the distance. A closer look revealed that it was an animal trail that led into a large rocky opening. In any other season we would never have known it was there. At the mouth of the den there were mosquitoes lethargically buzzing around. We excitedly chatted about what animal could be using the den. A little searching turned up scat nearby that proved to be from a porcupine. An hour later when we arrived at the car exhausted after 7 miles of hiking in the snow I thought about how lucky we are to have such a beautiful place to which to escape. So shake off the winter blues and get out there to enjoy the park!

Brent Huntsinger

New Logo for the Friends of Pisgah?

Our present logo, a beaver, has represented the Friends of Pisgah for some 15 or so years and is quite recognizable to many folks. However, Council members have wondered if a different logo now might be in order. So, art students at Keene High School and Hinsdale High School have been working to create a possible new logo for FOP to use on our stationery and other items. No decisions have been made. Stay tuned for more information on the logo status.

Ginny Knapp

New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation Ten-Year Strategic Development and Capital Improvement Plan

The State released their final plan on Friday Jan. 21, 2010. When you review it on the website, you may wonder what will become of Pisgah. Citizens of Cheshire County are fortunate to be able to give feedback to the State as Pisgah State Park's Management Plan is developed. If you too are concerned about the future of our Park, please become involved and attend the monthly Pisgah Steering Committee Meetings held in Keene. FOP will notify you via email or check our website for postings of the meetings. Come and let your voice be heard and bring a friend. The State web with the plan is <http://nhstateparks.org/planning-development/development-plan.aspx>.

Laurel Powell

Keeping Up with FOP

FOP not only has a web site (see *Around the Park With the Friends* on page 4) but we also have an email account for use in keeping members informed of events such as Trail Maintenance activities, Historical Story Circles, Hikes and New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation plans and meetings that affect Pisgah Park. Please send your email address to FriendsOfPisgah@gmail.com if you want to receive our email updates on meetings, etc. of concern to the Park. Feel free to contact us at any time with your questions, concerns and suggestions.

John Hudachek, Webmaster

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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 -----

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 Kathy Thatcher (603-363-4482) or John Hudachek (603-363-8897)	Name/Address of gift giver	◇ Rails to Trails Advisory
	_____	◇ Trails/Maintenance
Send form and check to:	_____	◇ Wantastiquet-Monadnock
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