



Step by Step Into the Blue Hills

By Shannon Kelley (*see web for color version*)

Saturday morning found most of us gathering at 8 am for the drive up north where we met a few more folks. The beginning of our adventure was right at the Blue Hills Reservation parking lot: We walked through the Visitor Center area to find the loo and were happy to see a river otter and breathtaking white snowy owl on display in the little zoo.

Rain was threatened but never carried out. We remarked all day how fortunate we were to have both temperature and humidity which were perfect for hiking. Only the slightest breezes were felt and enjoyed while we were hot. Overcast skies kept us from worrying about sunburns and overheating. We were treated to sun and clear skies at the trail's end.

We started uphill from our cars and soon reached the tower. Here we were treated to the first mini-seminar about equipment and packing. Trip Leaders Steve Harrison and Sue Warthman both carried full-sized packs with everything needed for a serious North Country dayhike. They doled out a wealth of information about what is vitally important (adequate water), what is nice to have (coffee-brewing equipment) and how to put it all together. We could all tell that the voice of experience was speaking about how to make things easier on ourselves and how to be prepared for the worst-case scenario. Most laypeople would not consider bringing a sleeping bag, pad, stove and extra clothes on a dayhike but we were lead to understand why this is a good idea.

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Norman Bird Sanctuary Family Hike

By Terry and Catie Gaspard (age 10)



The Norman Bird Sanctuary is a great place to visit! One of the reasons it is so great is because it is quiet, so you can hear the birds. The Norman Bird Sanctuary protects over 300 acres of land containing a variety of eco-systems including ridges, fields, ponds, streams, salt marsh, and sandy beach. While you are visiting, you will observe a variety of native and non-native plant species which provide habitat for a thriving and diverse life. Another reason why it is so great is because it has lots of hiking trails, ranging from easy to moderate.

Our family enjoys outdoor activities and we have been leading local hikes for the Narragansett Chapter of the AMC since 1999. On June 7th, we lead a family hike at the Norman Bird Sanctuary. While we had a small turnout, we had a wonderful time. Since two of the children were under age 5, we hiked the Red Fox Trail. This 1.2 mile trail crosses over a stone ridge covered in oak, red cedar, and hickory. We observed views of Hanging Rock and the ocean. This is an enjoyable trail for young families because it is easy and includes a unique rock formation called "puddingstone" or Purgatory Conglomerate.

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"Go Local" New Member Welcome Weekend! ***Sept. 18-20, 2009***

Attention New Members! Join your Membership Committee for a New Member Welcome Weekend at the Highland Center in beautiful Bretton Woods, NH from Sept. 18-20, 2009. Meet other members and learn about sustainable living. Featured programs include day hikes, Green Technology Tours, Leave No Trace Workshops, Tips for Low Impact Hikers, a featured buffet dinner on Saturday night with all locally grown foods, a featured evening speaker and evening fireside social with trivia and games. All daily activities are guided and planned for adults and children ages 5+. Easy and moderate options for all abilities. Package includes meals, lodging, guides, transportation, instruction, off-site activities and complimentary L.L. Bean gear use. Cost for the entire weekend including taxes is only \$99.90 per adult in bunk room and

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Narragansett Chapter AMC Leadership Roster

Chapter Chair-Tom Eagan; tomeagan.amc@gmail.com

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Linda Pease; linda.pease@cox.net

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Technical Climbing Co-Subchairs

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Brian Phillips, 783-0133; bphilips38@cox.net

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bach@cox.net

Skating Co-Subchairs

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Young Adult Members, Vacant

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CHAPTER WEBSITE:

www.amcnarragansett.org

User Name: **members**

Enter the word "members"

(without quotes) as the User Name

Password: **ski1911**

\$82.62 per child (call for private room rates).

All activities are optional and advance reservations are required - please call the AMC Reservations Department at (603) 466-2727. For further info, please contact your Membership Committee: Robin Kuznitz at rmd@psh.com or Mary Bonaventure at mlb448@yahoo.com.

Leader Profile: Ed Poyer

Lives in Richmond, married to Denise who is also active in AMC.

Occupation: Computer Programmer Analyst.

AMC member for 17 years, trip leader for 16.

Roles in AMC - Northern Hikes Leader, Mountain Leadership School Instructor, Inactive Major Excursions Leader, ADK Winter Mountaineering School Instructor, Wilderness First Responder. Previously Leadership Development Chair for about 5 years.

AMC awards: 1999 Narragansett Appie of the Year; 2009 AMC Volunteer Leadership Award.

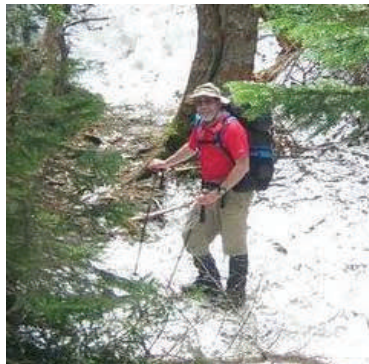
Why lead? I lead because I enjoy taking people out into the outdoors where they can enjoy the beauty of the mountains. I also enjoy the camaraderie that develops in the backcountry.

Favorite places: Whites, Sierras, Rockies, Grand Canyon.

Hiking achievements: I met my wife Denise while leading trips: she signed up for one of my overnights to Galehead Hut. Aside from that, I've enjoyed leading to all 48 4,000 foot New Hampshire peaks in winter.

Suggestions for aspiring leaders: Start off slowly and enjoy the ride. You can learn something on every trip. Learn as much as you can from other leaders, and take the courses available (WFA, Mountain Leadership School, NOLS, etc.) You get out of it what you put into it.

Perfect outdoors moment: Sleeping under the stars in the Sierra; skinny dipping in an alpine lake.



Never leave home without a water bottle of some sort.

Future trip goals: Glacier NP, Bitterroots, Never Summer Range, Cascades, Olympics, the list goes on and on...

DISCOUNT AT COLEMAN

AMC Members get a 40% discount at Coleman. Log into the Member Center www.outdoors.org/membercenter and scroll down to "AMC Discounts" on the lower right of the page to click on the live link. Coleman sells top quality outdoor equipment and at 40% off you can easily get tremendous value for your dollar. If you have problems logging into the member center please contact AMCInformation@outdoors.org.

AMC Fall Gathering October 16-18, 2009- Save the Date

The 2009 AMC Fall Gathering will be held in the beautiful Berkshires October 16-18, during peak foliage season! Hosted by the Berkshire Chapter, at Becket-Chimney Corners in Becket, Mass., the event will run from Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon. Hikes, bike rides, paddles, cliff/wall climbing, rope courses, workshops and presentations, Contra-dancing, campfires, socials - we'll have it all! Bring the family - the program is "kid-friendly."

For more information go to www.amberkshire.org/gathering, or amcfg2009@gmail.com.

ACTIVITIES

Sat Aug 1 Redhead and a Brunette Ninigret Flatwater Paddle, Charlestown.

Meander Ninigret Pond Late PM to avoid mid-day sun. L Linda Pease (351-2234, linda.pease@cox.net), L Antoinette Breed (751-5086).

Sat Aug 1 Newport Bike Ride: 30-35

miles of scenic rolling hills, Newport coastline to Portsmouth countryside. Intermediate 12-14 mph pace. 10am start. Helmets

req'd. L Sid Wax (849-2595, sid_w@yahoo.com)

Sat Aug 1 Great Outdoors Pursuit. The RI Great Outdoors Pursuit is a twelve-week contest that will have you decoding clues, discovering state parks & participating in fun activities & challenges. The activities will vary at each event but will focus on living an active outdoor lifestyle. Go to www.amcnarragansett.org & click on "Notices & Reminders" for dates & details.

Sat-Sun Aug 1-2 Burlingame Family Camping/Events Weekend. Sat- learn basics of camping, setting up a tent, campfire cooking & more. Optional free Sat. overnight camping & campfire storytelling for children. AMC family hike. Non- AMC hayrides, hike & mountain biking activity organized by other groups. Free time available for other optional recreational activities. Must register in advance with leader Chris Shafer (789-8331, 7-9pm).

Sun Aug 2 Family Day at Lincoln Woods Climb-Hike-Picnic Meet at 10 am (site TBD). Top-ropes will be set up on some easy kid-friendly climbs. Open to everyone in the AMC & families of climbers & hikers who may be interested in joining us for the day. Bring a picnic lunch & chairs. L John Fontaine (johnfontaine1@verizon.net, 354-6032), CL Jeannine Peterson (surnurse@yahoo.com, 949-4453).

Tuesday Aug 4 Local Hikes Meeting at 6:30pm. Peak hiking activity will be coming soon for fall & winter & no one wants to miss it. All hikers & leaders meet at Stop & Shop in North Kingstown. Call Herrick Spencer (723-1974).

Tues. Aug 4 Kayak Rescue Practice at URI Bay Campus: 5:30pm start, but late arrival OK. Wet exits & rescues to be practiced. Come & watch or participate. Short paddle after possible. Reg/w L Mike Krabach (333-5350, mkrabach@cox.net), CL Ray Bucacci (822-1407).

Wed Aug 5 Hike / Social in Narragansett. Meet at the Towers Court Yard at 6pm. For information call L Sue Bol & (783-7461).

Thurs. Aug 6 Full Moon Family Paddle at 6-8pm. Enjoy an easy paddle on the Wood River with the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association. Learn about dragonflies & mayflies while you explore the edges of the river as the sun sets & the full moon rises. This program is appropriate for people new to kayaking & children eight & older. Fees cover rental of small, single person kayaks,

Norman Bird Sanctuary Hike (Continued)

The AMC and local Family Outings Committee are committed to fostering a strong connection between nature and physical activity through our No Child Left Inside Initiative. Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in America and families need to unplug T.V.'s, video games, and computers. Overall, participation in outdoor recreation is increasing, but the connection to nature among kids is declining. Results of a 2008 survey of over 60,000 Americans ages 6 and older by the Outdoor Foundation, show that there is a decline in participation in outdoor activities among kids (ages 6-17). According to the report, 50 % of Americans participated in outdoor recreation (i.e.; visiting a park) in 2007, but there has been an 11% decline in participation in outdoor activities such as hiking.

Our family would like to encourage more AMC members to join us and other family outing leaders for local hikes, flatwater paddling, and more. We hope to see you at our September 19th hike in Little Compton.

PFD's, & paddle instruction. L Denise Poyer 539-9017 or email denisepoyer@gmail.com. Costs \$20 per person. Limit 15.

Fri-Sun Aug 7-9 Hike Mts. Willey & Field, NH. Strenuous 7 miles, 3200 ft elevation gain over two 4000 ft. peaks in Crawford Notch section of the White Mountains. For intermediate hikers. Shorter hike on Sunday leader's choice. \$100 fee includes 2 nights lodging, 2 breakfasts & 1 dinner at the Ski Wheelers Lodge in Conway, NH. L Sue Warthman (270-3363, SWarthman@cox.net), CL Bob Janus.

Sat Aug 8 Wickford/Wakefield Bike Ride. 32+ mile ride, intermediate pace, some rolling sections, partly on S. County Bike Path. Lunch in Wakefield, 10am start. Helmets req'd. L Nancy Baker (737-3052 6-9pm), CL Dick Schaffner (781-6310).

Sat Aug 8 Annual Black Tie Sea Kayaking. Join us with time to spend on the beach & dining in style, bring plastic stemware. **Flat water** start from Grosvenor Camp, L Herrick Spencer (723-1974), L Antoinette Breed (751-5086). Flat water rentals only-call Steve Morra 231-5365. **Sea Kayakers** start from bridge on Rt. 1A in Narragansett, L Bill Rush (941-4983 call 8-10 pm weekdays), CL Ray Bucacci (822-1407, rbucacci@netzero.net).

Sat-Sun Aug 8-9 Rock Climbing Rumney, NH. Climbers comfortable on 5.8 or better. Camp at local campground. Reg/w L Joe Goudreau (334-0425, joejudig@hotmail.com), CL Chris Tate (742-4289, christi01@yahoo.com).

Sat-Mon Aug 8-10 White Mountains Trails/Hiking Weekend, Gorham, NH. Improve trails at Pinkham notch Sat/Sun- no experience req'd. Tools provided; intermediate hike Monday. Lodging/most meals at Camp Dodge. Reg/w L Chris Shafer (789-8331, christopher.shafer@dem.ri.gov), CL Maria Earley.

Sun Aug 9 Ft. Wetherill Sea Kayaking. Intermediate trip, open water conditions. Weather determines route. L Ray Bucacci (822-1407 call

evening, rbucacci@netzero.net), CL Mike Krabach (333-5350, mkrabach@cox.net)

Tues. Aug 11 Narragansett-Galilee Mid-week Bike Ride: 18 miles along the shore, flat & scenic. All welcome. 6 PM start. Helmets req'd. L Sid Wax (849-2595, sid_w@yahoo.com).

Wed Aug 12 Hike/Social at Ryans Park in N. Kingstown. Meet at 6pm at the entrance on Oak Hill Road. From North take Rt. 4 & go to the first traffic light, turn left & go to the second park-entrance. From South take Rt. 4 & go to the second light, turn right onto Oak Hill Rd. & go to the second park-entrance. For information call L Dick Sullivan (338-2880).

Sat Aug 15 Buzzards Bay Brewery Ride, Southeast MA. 30 miles, through Westport & Dartmouth, intermediate pace 12+ mph. After ride, picnic at the Brewery. Tours of the brewing process available after the ride. Bring lunch, water & snacks. Helmets req'd. L Larry Rollins (521-7188, 6-9:30pm, RollinsLF@excite.com), CL Susan Rollins.

Sat Aug 15 Easy Riders Attleboro/Rehoboth Bike Ride, MA. Easy Rider 20+ miles, w/potluck after hosted by CL's complete with c&elabra. Afternoon start. New members welcome. L Linda Pease (351-2234), CL Christine & Rich Ayres (sunbird20@comcast.net).

Sun Aug 16 Bay Isl& Hop Kayaking. Paddle to all the isl&s in East Passage. Intermediate, open water paddle, weather determines route. L Ray Bucacci (882-1407, rbucacci@netzero.net), CL Bill Rush (whr0316@msn.com).

Wed Aug 19 Pasta Challenge/Rehoboth Bike Ride: Southeast MA. **Two rides:** easy pace & faster pace. After ride, all the pasta you can eat at Hillside Country Club. L Linda Pease (351-2234,

linda.pease@cox.net), L Bill Rush.

Thursday Aug 20 Trails Committee Meeting 6:30pm. We will meet to plan out & schedule trail projects for the year. Everyone is welcome! at 152 Fishing Cove Rd. N Kingstown. For information & teleconferencing please contact Elise DelBarone (edelbarone@yahoo.com). For directions contact Marge Gaunt (295-7101).

Fri-Sun Aug 21-23 Double C-Hiking Weekend, Conway, NH. See the best views in the Whites on Mt. Carrigain (4,700') on Sat. & Mt. Chocorua on Sun. For fit experienced hikers. Stay at ski lodge in Conway for \$90 pp., includes 2 nights lodging, 2 breakfasts & 1 dinner. L Steve Harrison (270-3363, hikersteve@cox.net), CL Sue Warthman.

Sat Aug 22 Arcadia Trail Hike: start 8:30 am for a 7 miles one way hike though a couple of boulder fields & some streams. L Maria Earley (789-8331 call 7-9pm), CL Paul Wynn.

Sat Aug 22 Tiverton-Westport Bike Ride: 36 scenic miles along coastline. Flat except for one hill. Intermediate 13-14 mph pace. 10AM start. Helmets req'd. L Sid Wax (849-2595, sid_w@yahoo.com).

Sun Aug 23 Great Outdoors Pursuit The RI Great Outdoors Pursuit is a twelve-week contest that will have you decoding clues, discovering state parks & participating in fun activities & challenges. The activities will vary at each event but will focus on living an active outdoor lifestyle. Go to www.amcnarragansett.org & click on "Notices & Reminders" for dates & details.

Sat Aug 29 Pawtucket/Seekonk/E.Providence Bike Ride: 22 mile easy intermediate ride of new neighborhoods, local historical places, & future bike path locations. Hybrid bikes welcome. Helmets req'd. L Herrick Spencer (723-1974 or spencer295@cox.net).

Sun Aug 30 Providence Industrial Waterfront Kavak Tour. Bold Point launch, intermediate open water level. Weather determines route. L Mike Krabach (333-5350, mkkrabach@cox.net)

Wed Sep 2 Hike/Social in Wickford. Meet at 6pm in the Municipal parking lot opposite the old Ryan's Market. For information call L Dick Sullivan (338-2880).

Fri-Sun Sep 4-6 Lake Winnepesaukee Multi-Activity, Labor Day-Weekend, NH. 3 intermediate activities each day: 2 hikes 5-8 miles, 1 bike ride 25-40 miles, 1 paddle.

New location-see www.campwinaukee.com. Lakeside cabins w/ plumbing. Incl. 2 breakfasts, 2 trail lunches, 2 dinners, lodging \$140 p/p. Contact CL Linda Pease (351-2234, linda.pease@cox.net), or CL Herb Kingsbury (207-439-6449). L Jack Schempp (331-4553 or jschempp1@msn.com). Mail full payment-check payable to AMC Narragansett Chapter, to Debbie Mitchell, 2945 Mendon Rd., Cumberland, RI 02864 & include phone number/email address.

Wed Sep 9 Hike / Social in Narragansett. Meet at the Towers Court Yard at 6pm. For information call L Sue Boland (783-7461).

Fri-Sun Sep 11-13 Annual Trails/Recreational Weekend at Burlingame State Park, Charlestown.

Sat. trail projects & swimming, potluck supper. Sun. 8 mile hike. Free Fri./Sat. camping. Rain-date Sept 18-20. L Chris Shafer (789-8331 call 7-9pm or christopher.shafer@dem.ri.gov), CL Maria Earley.

Fri-Sun Sep 11-13 Hike Baldface Loop, Evans Notch Valley, Chatham, NH. Strenuous hike for fit experienced hikers comfortable on rock & rugged trails. Approximately 11 miles with 3,400' elevation gain. This long & challenging hike provides great views. Sunday hike is leaders' choice. Lodging at ski lodge in Conway, cost \$90 pp, includes 2 nights lodging, 2 breakfasts & 1 dinner. L Steve Harrison (270-3363, hikersteve@cox.net), CL Peter Broderick.

Sat Sep 12 Discover The Lloyd Center, Dartmouth MA, over 55 acres. We'll do a 1.5 hours easy meander of woodland, swamp and shore side trails & view a nature video & explore the center. See a whale & lots of other neat stuff. **Families & new members welcome.** Visit www.Lloydcenter.org. L Linda Pease (351-2234).

Sat-Sun Sep 12-13 Rock Climbing Cannon Mt, Franconia, NH. Climbers comfortable on 5.8 or better. Contact L Brian Phillips (783-0133, bphillips38@cox.net).

Wed Sep 16 Hike/Social in Warwick City Park. Meet at the Park entrance off West Shore Rd. at 6pm. For info call CL Virginia Calabrese (782-6518), L Herrick Spencer.

Fri-Sun Sep 18-20 Paddling/Camping on Moon Island, Squam Lake, NH. Annual weekend of kayaking & camping on Moon Island, enjoying last days of summer on this pristine lake. Cost \$35. Contact L Bill Rush (whr0316@msn.com).

Sat Sep 19 Blue Hills Ridge Hike, MA: Hike the ridge starting at the ice rink & ending at the visitors center. A tough, all day 9mi-hike with

beautiful views & lots of ups & downs, includes a car spot. Reg/w L Marcie Madsen 364-6538. CL Steve Harrison.

Sat Sep 19 Family Outings Hike at Simmons Mill Pond. Join us for a 2-3 hours of walking on this beautiful state management area full of great wildlife viewing. Reg/w Terry or Craig Gaspard (683-7828 or gaspard782@aol.com).

Wed Sep 23 Hike/Social in Jamestown. Meet at town dock at 6pm. For information call L Sid Wax (935-5466 or email sid_w@yahoo.com).

Fri-Sun Sept 25-27 Cape Shores, Golden Season, Naturalist Walks, Bike, Kavak. Explore National Seashore & 1400 acre Audubon refuge, bike paths, walks, Bay kayaking. Camp at Wellfleet Audubon. Arrive Friday 2-8 pm. Naturalist walks Sat & Sun am, afternoons free. Possible evening walk. **Families welcomed.** Optional group dinners Fri & Sat. Cost \$65 pp, food not included. Res/w CL Mike Krabach 333-5350, L Jack Schempp 331-4553, mail check to J. Schempp, 47 Arbor Dr., Providence, RI 02908.

Fri-Sun Sep 25-27 Hike Mt. Mansfield, Stowe, Vermont. Join us for a weekend of challenging day hikes in scenic Vermont. Saturday hike to summit of Mt. Mansfield, the highest peak in Vermont, on the challenging Hell Brook Trail, then head south through the Subway & the Canyon, returning north on the scenic summit ridge along the Long Trail. Sunday-Leader's choice. For experienced, well-conditioned hikers. Cost \$150 includes 2 nights lodging in Stowe, 2 breakfasts, 1 dinner. L Charlie Killam (508-252-4349, Charlie.Killam@gmail.com), CL Ed Poyer.

Sat Sep 26 Older Male Members Canoe/Kavak at Potowomut River. Open to all members with appropriate experience & proper equipment. See details at <http://members.cox.net/garywhitney3/AMC/Potowomut-2009.htm>. Reg/w L Gary Whitney (539-0922, garywhitney3@cox.net), CL barbara flagg (487-4376, bakayaker51@verizon.net).

Wed Sep 30 Hike/Social in Lincoln Woods & Blackstone Bike Path. Meet at Lincoln Woods at 6pm. Ask about carpooling. For information call L Herrick Spencer (723-1974)

Fri-Sun Oct 2-4 Autumn Splendor at AMC's Cardigan Lodge. Join us for day hikes in Mt. Cardigan Reservation during this beautiful hiking season. Moderate

hiking with time to enjoy views & company; 6-10 mile hikes with 1500-2000' elevation gain. \$145 fee includes 2 nights full service hut lodging, meals & social hour. L Jim Dunn. Reg/w CL Tom Grasso (860-878-4099 or email thomas.grasso@pw.utc.com)

Sat Oct 3 One Hundred Acre Cove Full Moon Paddle. Barrington. Join us for a paddle as the sun sets & the moon rises in the crisp fall sky. Bring water, snacks & bug spray. Must have appropriate lights. Suitable for all size boats. L Gregg O'Brien 245-0677 goh243@aol.com, L Antoinette Breed 751-5086 scenicroute@verizon.net

Sun Oct 4 Haines Park Sea Kayaking. Haines Park launch, paddle either up or down the coast. Intermediate open water paddle. Weather decides route. L Mike Krabach (333-5350, mkrabach@cox.net)

Sat-Sun Oct 10-11 Rock Climbing, Gunks, NY, New Paltz, Catskills: climbers comfortable on 5.5 trad routes. Reg/w L Dave Curry (401-739-2604, dmcurry13@yahoo.com), CL Bill Baxter (mitzielkramer@yahoo.com).

Sat Oct 17 Hike Mt. Holyoke & the Seven Sisters, South Hadley, MA. Come & name the seven sisters with us & enjoy great views of the CT River Valley. Begin the day at Atkins Farm with pastries & end the day with dinner. Suitable for intermediate hikers, 7.3 miles that you'll swear was 15 miles. L Steve Harrison (270-3363, hikersteve@cox.net), CL Ed Poyer.

Sat Oct 17 Slatersville Reservoir Fall Foliage Flat Water Paddle in Harrisville, Northern, RI. L Linda Pease (351-2234), L Janet Huntley (789-8842).

Sat Oct 24 Hike a New Trail in the Wood River Area deep in the woods of Pawcatuck Borderlands, ablaze w/ fall colors w/ 3 secluded ponds, about 5-6 miles. Contact L Jack Schempp for details (331 4553).

Sat Oct 24 Fall Foliage Paddle on the Pawtuxet River. Escape civilization on the Pawtuxet River From Pontiac Mill's to Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. Ice cream or coffee/soup after. Reg/w L Bill Rush (whr0316@msn.com), CL Linda Pease.

Sat Nov 7 Rock Climbing Lead Workshop. Must be an experienced climber who has seconded on multi-pitch climbs. Reg/w L Brian Phillips (783-0133, bphilips38@cox.net), CL Peter Barlow (860-675-3772, freeclimb@aol.com).

Blue Hills Hike (continued from page 1)

For those who have not yet visited the Blues, the Reservation is a chain of 22 hills over 7,000+ acres just west of Boston. 125 miles of trails cover the terrain. The original people living here, the Massachusett, were the source of – well, you can guess the rest of that one. Sixteen historic structures and a weather observatory dot this landscape, one of the first parcels of land to be set aside for conservation in 1893.

The education continued at rest stops throughout the day and more tips were passed on as we walked. Use of hiking poles, proper clothing and footwear, safety, hiking etiquette, food/hydration, first aid and especially Leave No Trace ethics were some of the most prominent categories covered. Sue and Steve kept the lectures fun and full of practical advice.

The landscape of the Reservation is typical Southern New England hiking with rocky ascents and bus-sized boulders to leapfrog. Leaves were just beginning to show in shades of extra-bright-new green during our visit, the color enhanced by diffusely lit skies. Only a few wildflowers were peeking out so far. Swamps, marshes and ponds also lie in wait throughout the area but we stayed in mostly dry areas. We saw a few distant birds but none of the Reservation's more interesting residents such as coyotes and rattlesnakes.

We stopped for lunch at the top of Buck Hill in full glorious view of Boston, the harbor and islands. Ron and Steve entertained the rest of us with tales of hiking glory/terror. No, Steve was not wearing a black kilt today but hiking shorts with gators. He made sure we were all jacketed in the cool breezes of the open summit, another example of good hiking practices. To the same end Sue reminded us to snack and drink at every rest stop.

We were halfway around the Blue Line Trail at this point so we headed back towards the cars. A quick map demonstration showed how we would pass by some hills we had already scaled in favor of somewhat flatter ground. Several times the upcoming Map and Compass Workshop was impressed upon us as an important part of our hiking education. The group expressed a lot

of interest in future Step-By-Step hikes and was also encouraged to attend June's Wildflower hike in NH to further whet our whistles for the really hard stuff.



The Step-By-Step program is meant to educate novice hikers in all the skills we learned today. Hikes start at the easier end of the scale, like this one, and gradually increase in difficulty as the summer passes. Additional hiking with other groups is recommended to further enhance cardiovascular fitness and muscle-building. With these tools under a hiker's hip

belt, the best (read: hardest to get to) areas of the glorious White Mountains are much more accessible and fun.

Our last 45-or-so minutes were spent in lovely unexpected sunshine. It felt good in combination with the cool gentle breeze and perked up the forest with new energy. Or maybe that was just our tired spirits. We all left feeling well-schooled, happy and only a little sore, looking forward to a full hiking season. For everyone who has wanted to venture outside their RI (read: mountain-free) comfort zone and get serious about hiking, the season is still very young. This program will give you the tools and confidence to start checking places off your life list. Get out there!

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THE AMC GANSETT GAZETTE AUG/SEP

View from the Blue Hills (page 1)

