

The Journey of Lady Slipper and Heidi

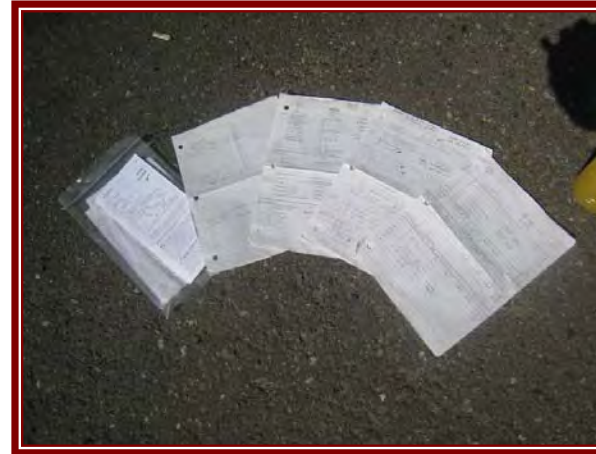
The Maine Section of the Appalachian Trail

Current overall status of my Journey as of Sept. 8, 2008

- Total Miles Completed: 1770 Miles
- Percent Completed: 81.4 %
- Average Miles per Day: 12.5 Miles
- Total Days Hiked: 142 Days



Start with good planning and full backpacks



Up until this part of my journey, I have been “Slack Packing” meaning using only a light day pack, since Command Central could pick me up everyday at road crossings.

Because Maine is remote and does not have many road crossings we carried full backpacks. Heidi and I planned our meals and food drops before we headed there. Heidi prepared lots of delicious dehydrated food to minimize weight. We weighed everything we would carry in our packs. During our trek we made modifications as we determined what we could live without.

At the start of our trip my pack weighed 37 lbs with 7 days of food and 2 liters of water. Halfway through the 100 mile wilderness, it weighed 32 lbs. We still trimmed more when we arrived in town where we could send stuff home.



Start at Katahdin and head south



Maine is considered the most difficult section of the Appalachian Trail for many reasons.

- Northern Terminus, Mt. Katahdin, elevation of 5268 ft.
- The “100 Mile Wilderness” which heading south starts at Abol Bridge and ends at the town of Monson. There are no public road crossings in this sections of the trail therefore it is very remote and you cannot easily get supplies. Note: There are a few private logging roads along this section.
- There are many mountains with very steep terrain both up and down in the southwest portion of Maine every bit as difficult or more so than the Whites of New Hampshire.
- Maine is home of the Mahoosuc Notch which is considered the “most difficult mile” of the whole Appalachian trail.

Some of our Maine Statistics:



Days Hiked in Maine: 25

Total Miles Hiked in Maine: 328

Average Miles per day in Maine: 13.1

Numbers of days it rained in Maine: 4

Number of Rivers Forged: Approx. 9

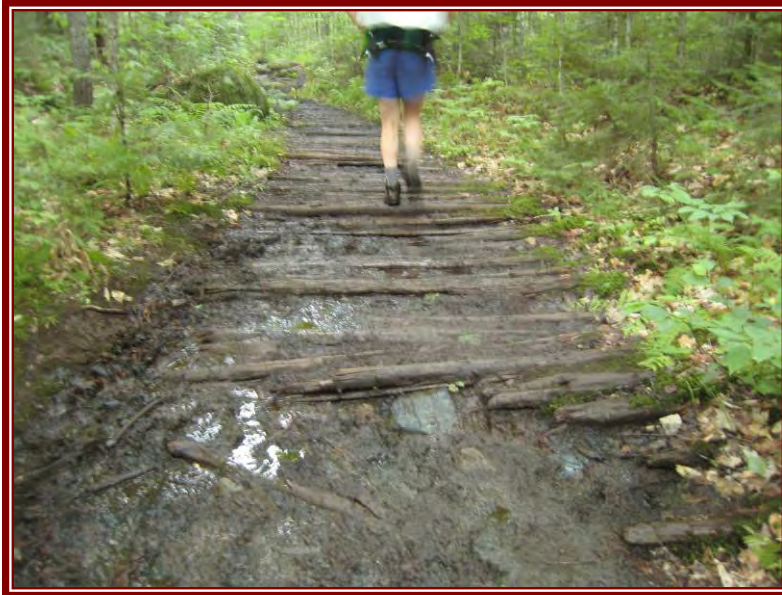
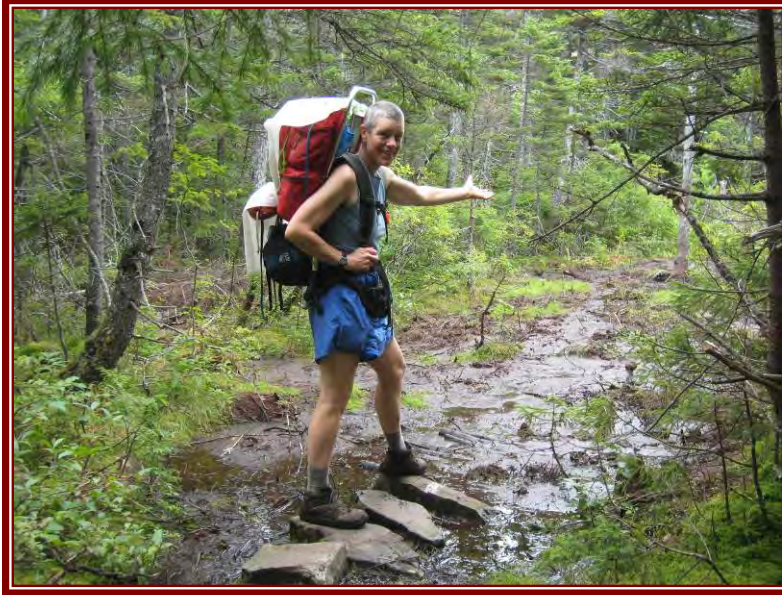
Started at Katahdin on Aug. 7, 2008

Finished at Gorham, NH on Sept. 1, 2008



It absolutely poured down rain the first two days we hiked in Maine. Even though we did not have rain most days, the rivers were up which made some fords very difficult. Also during this time the trails were very muddy almost throughout all of Maine.

Maine = Mud



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Maine = Mud



100 Mile Wilderness Section

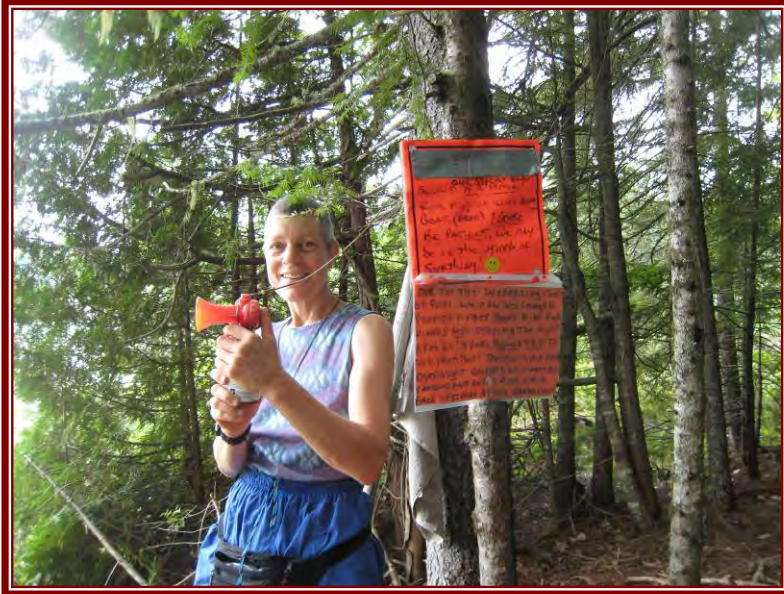


This is the sign at the start of the "100 Mile Wilderness"



This is the sign at the end of the "100 Mile Wilderness" it warns you to have 10 days supply of food before entering, we took only 7 days to do this section and therefore only carried 7 days of food.

White House Landing



So here in the 100 Mile Wilderness section there is a side trail which goes to a lake. There is a horn, blow once, and across from the lake, Bill, comes to get you with his boat, and brings you to his cool camp where you can lodge or just have lunch. Heidi and I partook in having lunch. The camp is called Whitehouse Landing. We ate 1 lb cheeseburgers and brownies, YUMBO! Such luxury right in the middle of the wilderness!

White House Landing

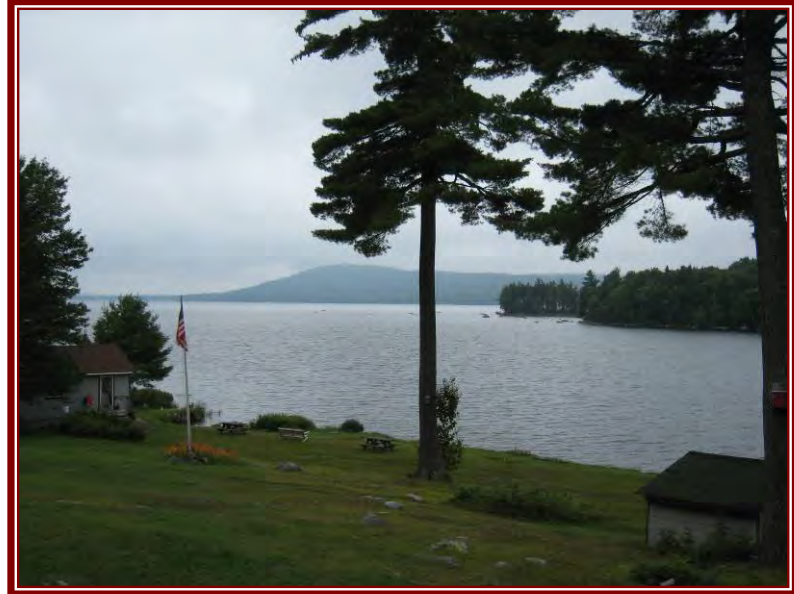


This is us and a couple of other thru hikers getting shuttled across the lake.

White House Landing



1 lb cheeseburgers!



White House Landing



Heidi and I grow Moose antlers
after being in Maine for a week.

Maine = Mountains



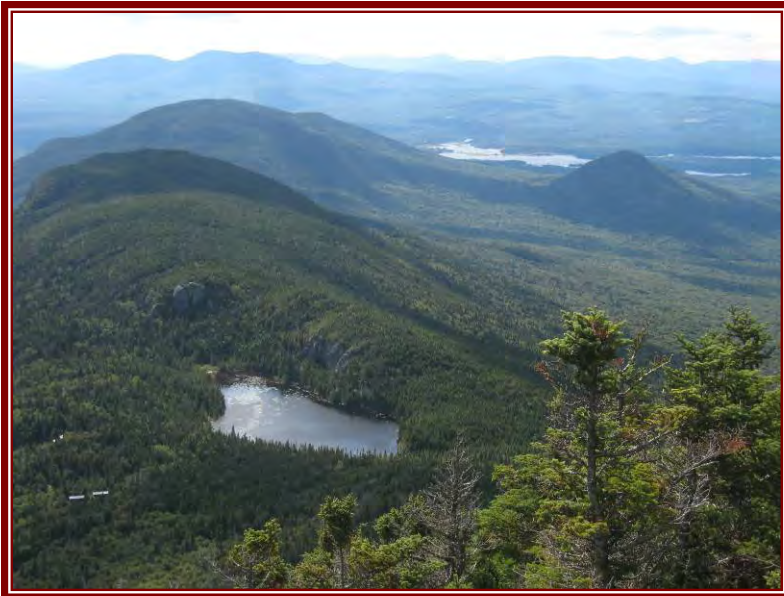
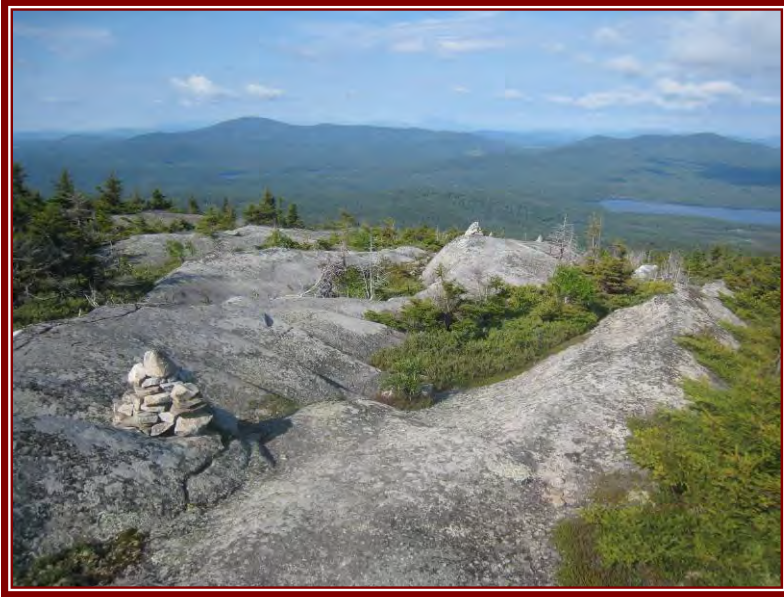
This is on top of Bigelow Mountain (a.k.a. Bitchalow Mountain), where it was very windy and cold. This mountain has several peaks, i.e. Avery Peak, West Peak, South and North Horn.

Maine = Mountains

These are photos of Heidi on top of Chairback Mountain. She likes to orient herself whenever she gets on top of mountains to determine which ones we have climbed and which ones we will do next.



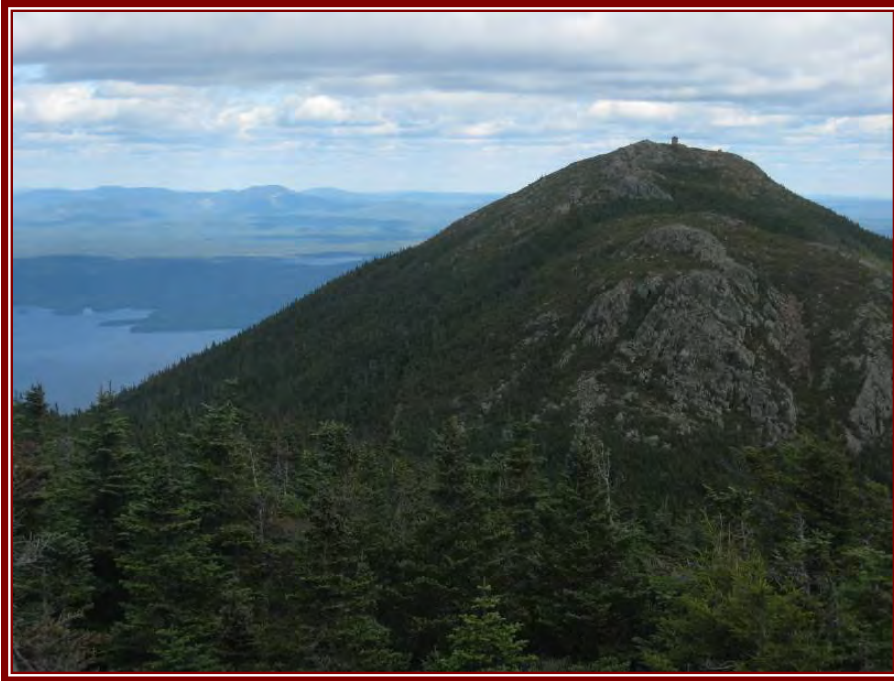
Maine = Mountains



A highway takes your car to the
country, a greenway your mind.

Charles Little

Maine = Mountains

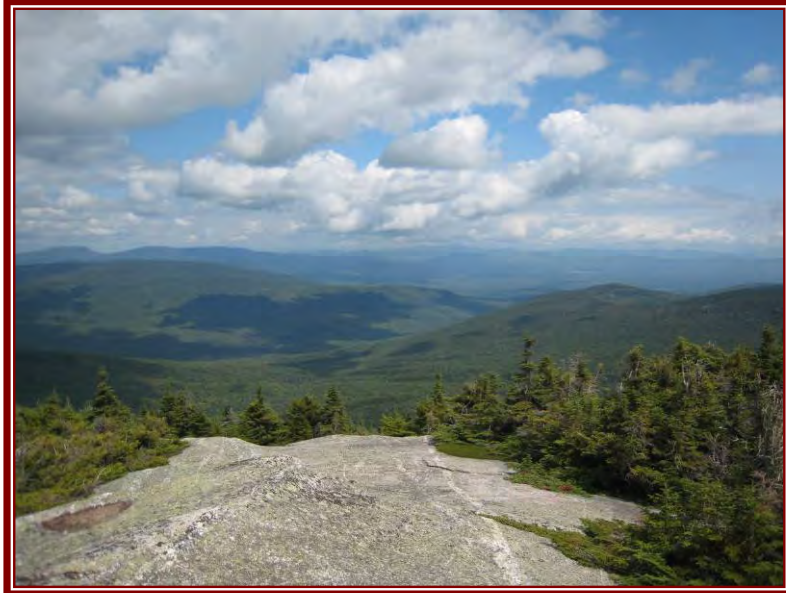
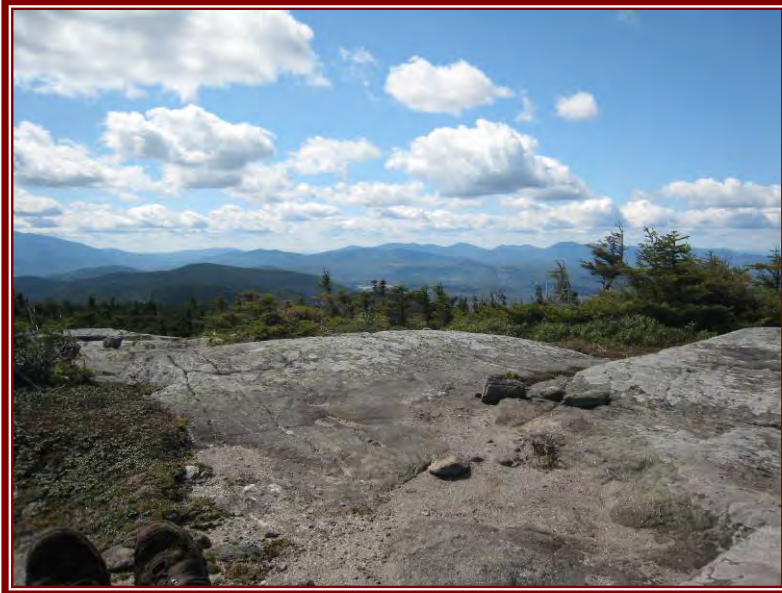
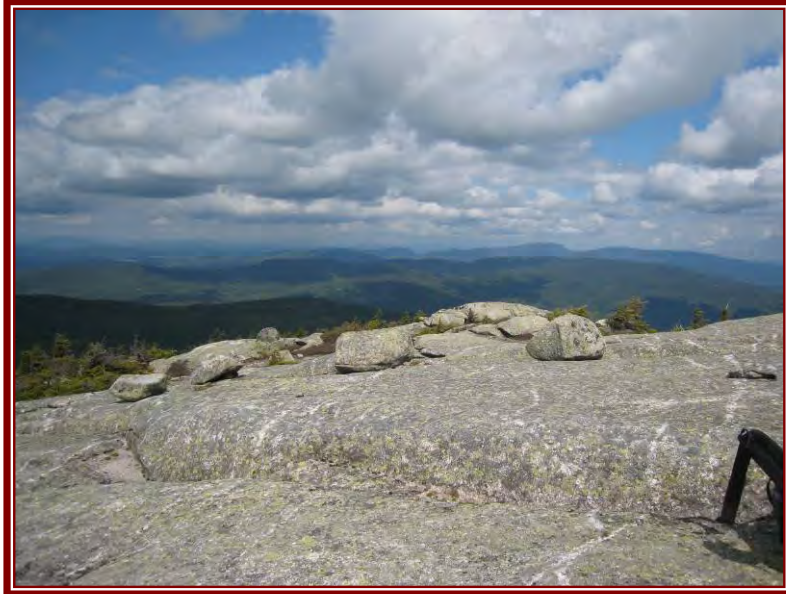


Go as far as the eye can see, and
when you get there, look farther.

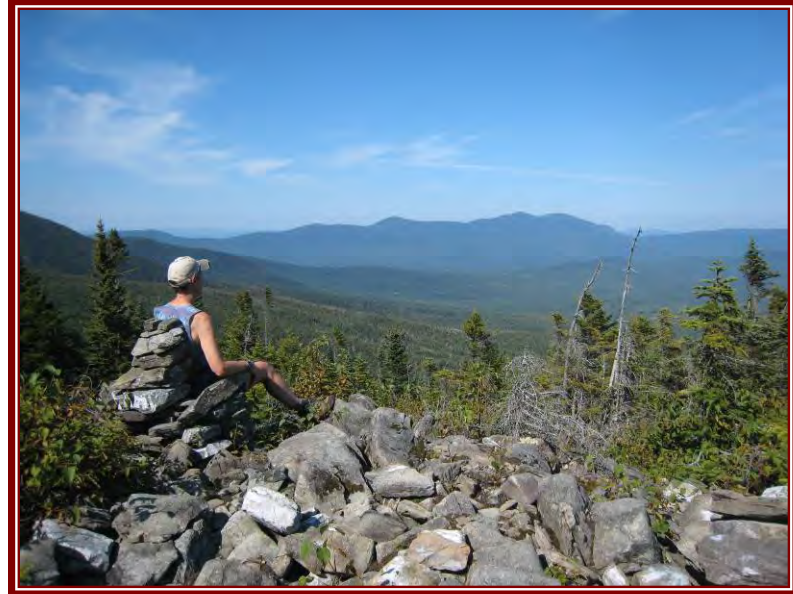
Dag Hammarskjold



Maine = Mountains



Maine = Mountains



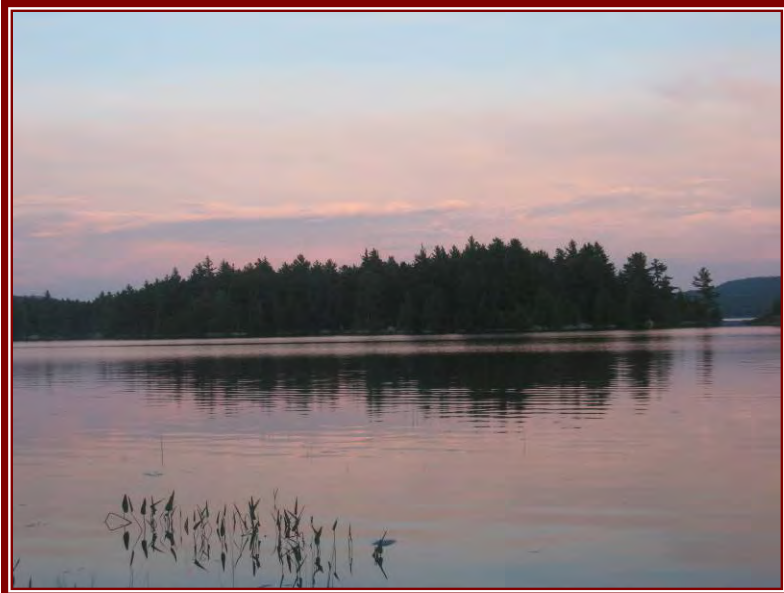
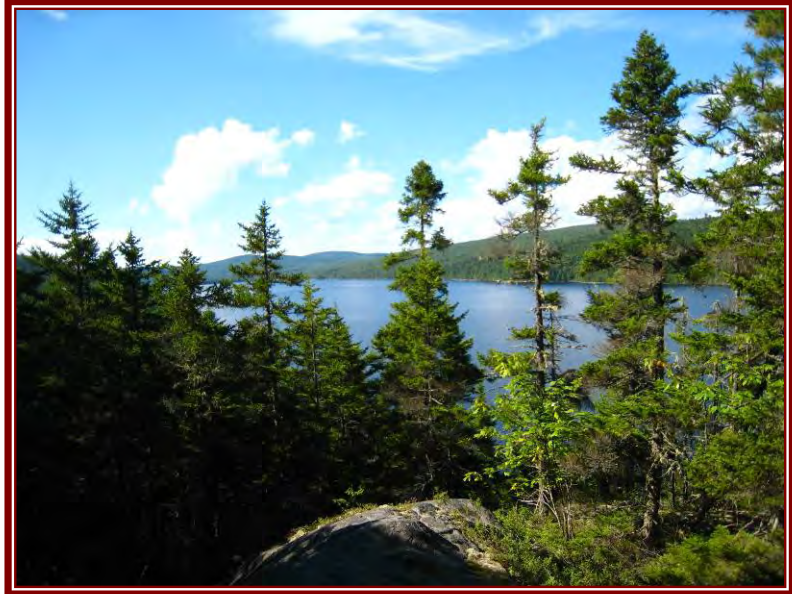
Maine = Mountains



Blueberries!



Lakes and Ponds



Maine is graced with many beautiful lakes and ponds and we pass many along the Appalachian trail.

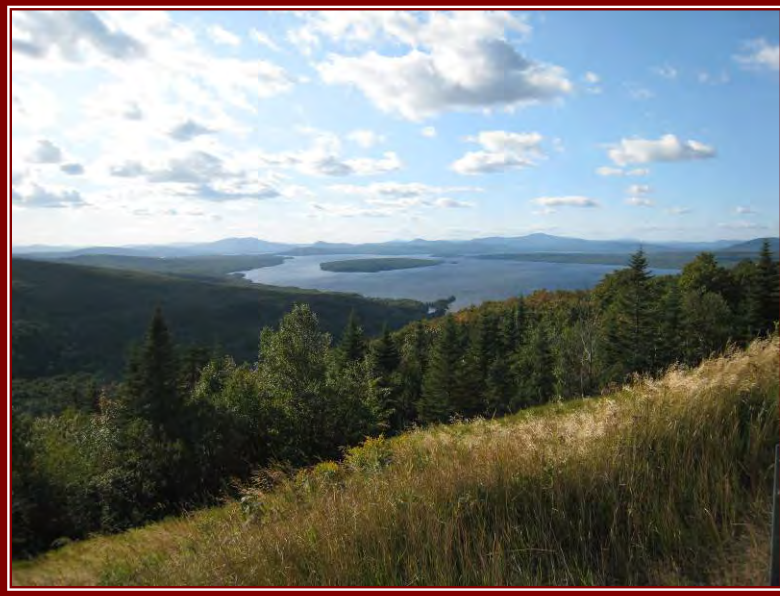
Lakes and Ponds



We also come out to learn about ourselves. The biggest prize in long-distance hiking is the gift of time. Time to look. Time to think. Time to feel. All those hours you spend with your thoughts. You don't solve all of your problems, but you come to understand and accept yourself.

Cindy Ross

Lakes and Ponds



In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.

Boben Dioum

Camping

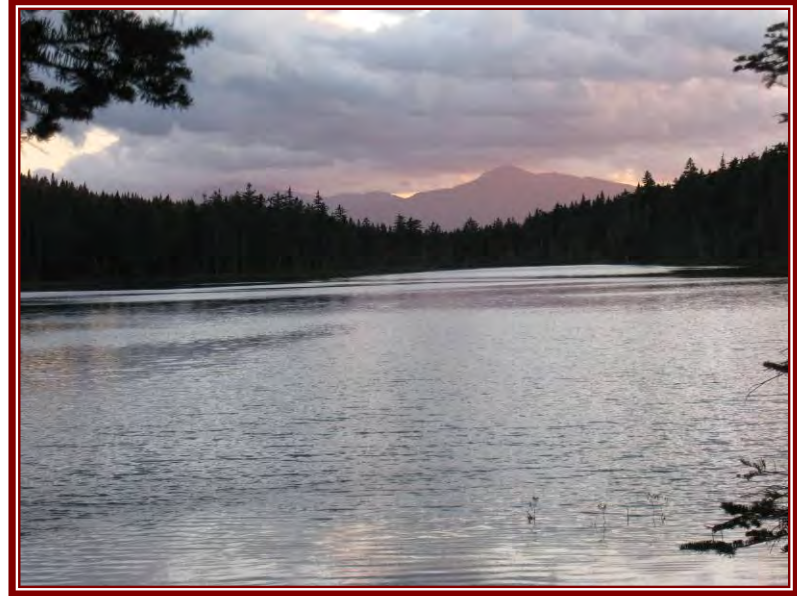
If you go with me to the mountains
And sleep on the leaf carpeted floors
And enjoy the bigness of nature
And the beauty of all out-of-doors,
You will find your troubles all fading
And feel the Creator was not man
That made lovely mountains and forests
Which only a Supreme Power can.
When we trust in the Power above
And with the realm of nature hold fast,
We will have a jewel of great price
To brighten our lives till the last.
For the love of nature is healing,
If we will only give it a try
And our reward will be forthcoming,
If we go deeper than what meets the eye.

Emma "Grandma" Gatewood at 67 she was the first woman to thru-hike the A.T. (1955)
1887-1973

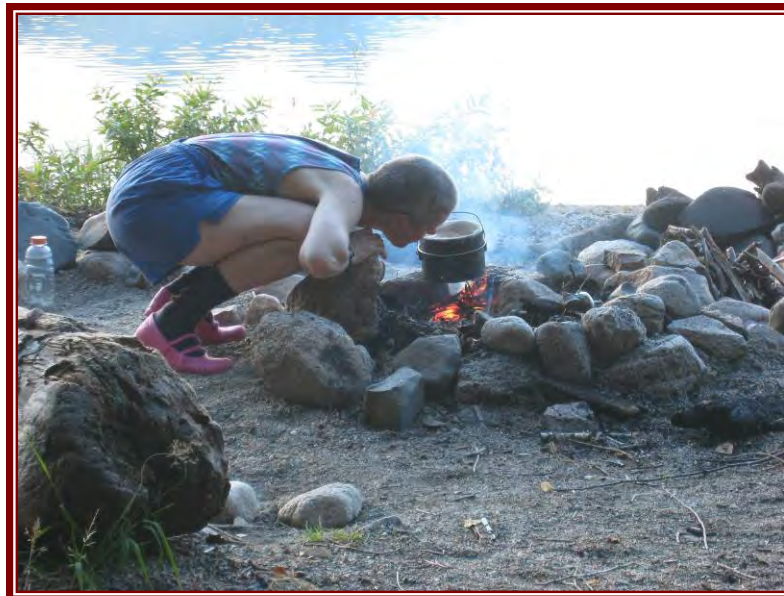
Some of our camps



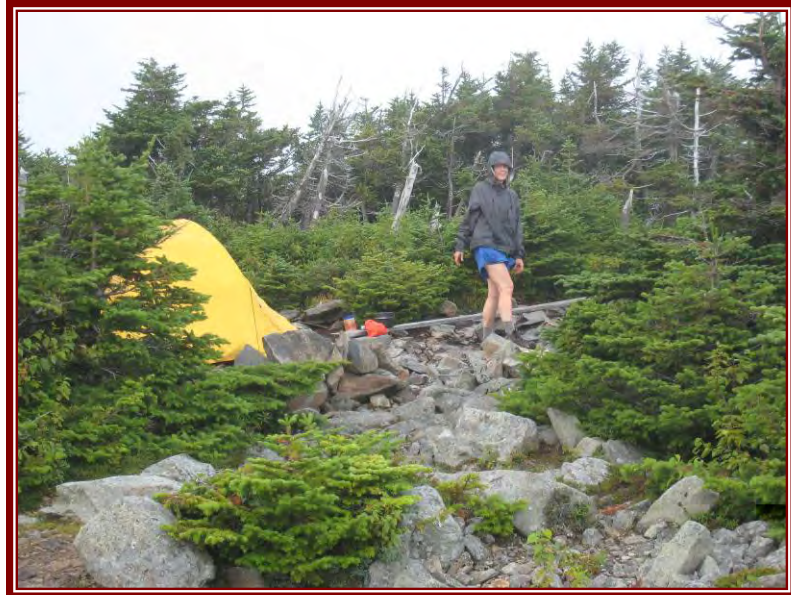
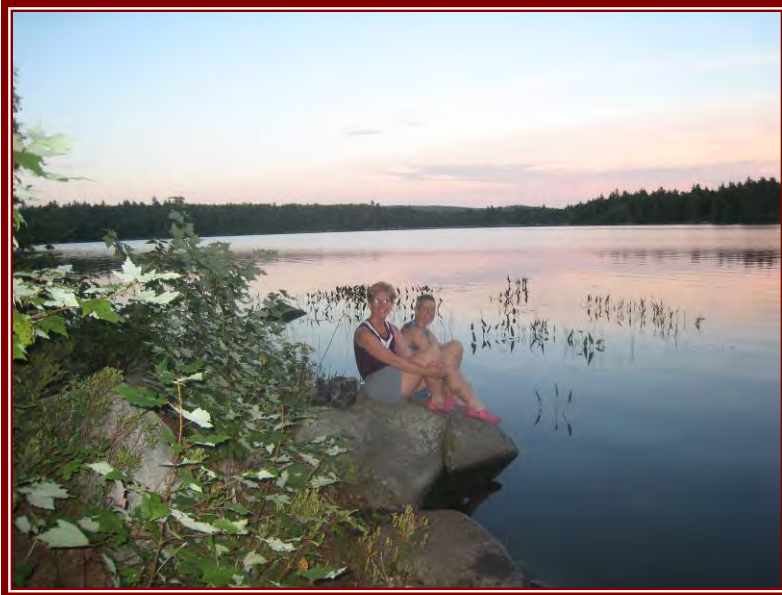
Some of our camps



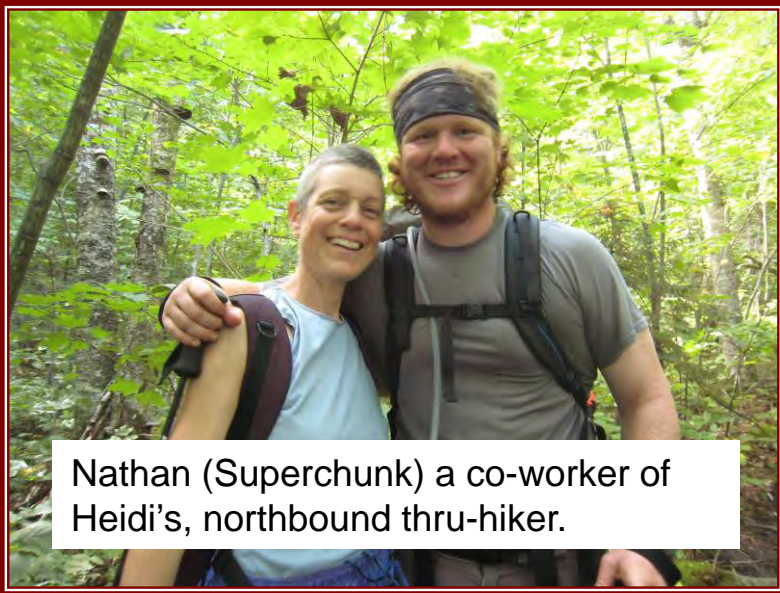
Some of our camps



Some of our camps



Hiker Friends Along the way



Nathan (Superchunk) a co-worker of Heidi's, northbound thru-hiker.



Henny and Tarn, Southbounders we hiked and camped with several times.



Jennifer and Andrew, Southbounders we hiked and camped with.

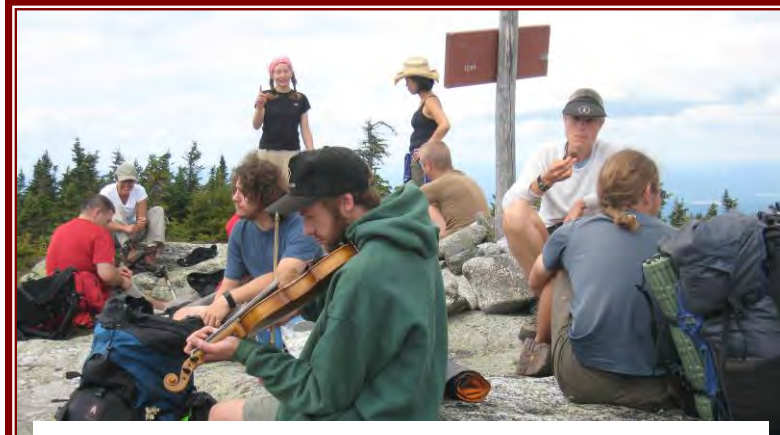


Sam, a section hiker from Wisconsin we hiked and camped with a few times.

Hiker Friends Along the way



Identical twins, First Shadow and Whimsy, thru-hikers I met in the Whites and here we meet again!



Stopping for a lunchbreak on top of Baldpate mountain (I think) and enjoying blue grass fiddle.



Remix (blonde guy) I met last year in PA, he thru-hiked the A.T. in 2007, here we meet again!



Mike a northbound thru-hiker and Frank an ice climber we met in Gorham, NH.

Water and Springs



If there is magic on this planet,
it is contained in the water.

Loren Eiseley

When I slack packed I usually carried my water, but when you hike like a thru-hiker you get your water all along the trail at springs, rivers, and lakes. You try to only carry what you need since water weighs a lot! 1 gallon of water = 8.33 lbs

It is important to drink at least 2 liters of water a day. I often drank 4 liters.

Heidi and I used a pump or chemicals to treat our water. We did not treat water that came directly out of a spring right at the source.

Water sources are very sacred, it is very important to keep them clean and pure.

Water and Springs



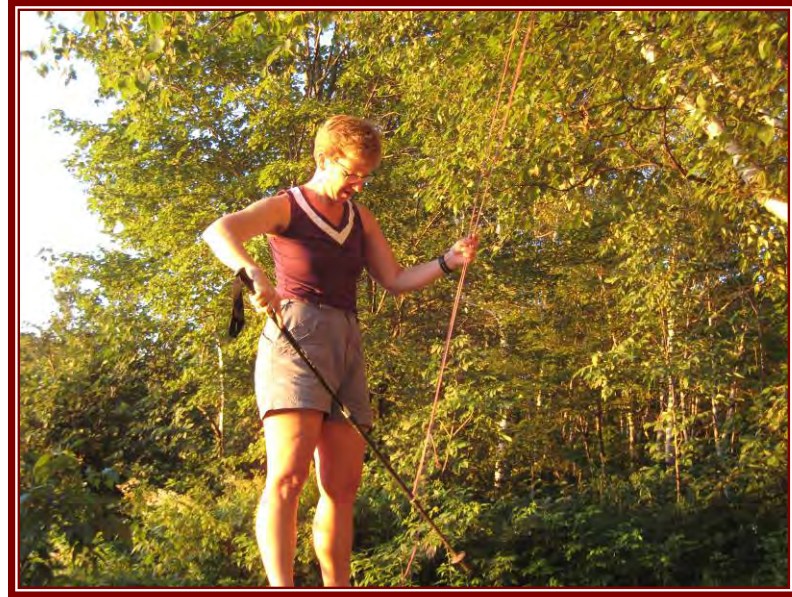
Here is a spring and river where Heidi is collecting water. The water from the river she is pumping through a filter.

Hanging Food

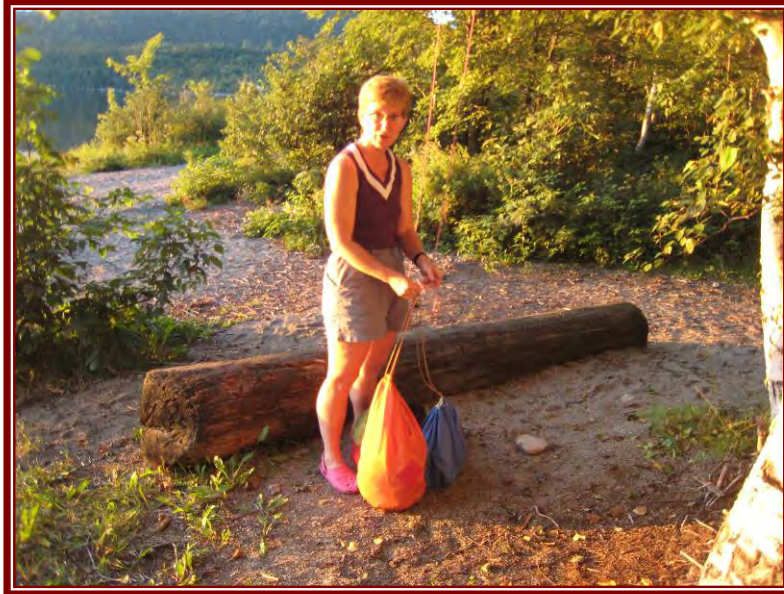


When we camp, we hang our food to keep critters from eating it. We hang the food on a branch some distance from the trunk and some distance up in the air so animals cannot reach it. These photos demonstrate our method. It is really hard to find decent branches sometimes.

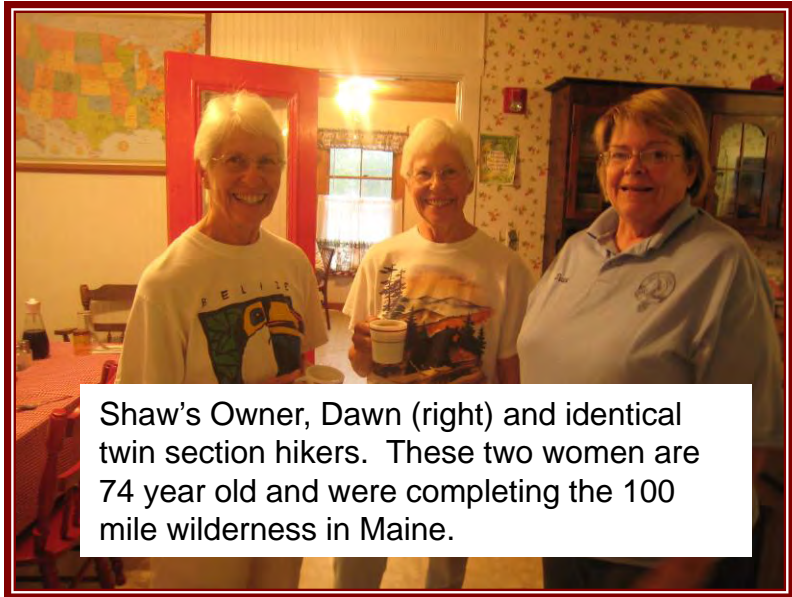
Hanging Food



Hanging Food



Towns and Hostels – Monson, ME



Shaw's Owner, Dawn (right) and identical twin section hikers. These two women are 74 year old and were completing the 100 mile wilderness in Maine.



Shaw's Hostel in Monson, had a great breakfast!



Towns and Hostels – Stratton, ME



When we come to towns along the trail, we stop, get supplies, eat fresh foods, pick up our mail drops at the post office, do laundry, make phone calls, sleep at hostels in real beds, and take hot showers. These are some of the towns we stopped in at along the way throughout Maine.

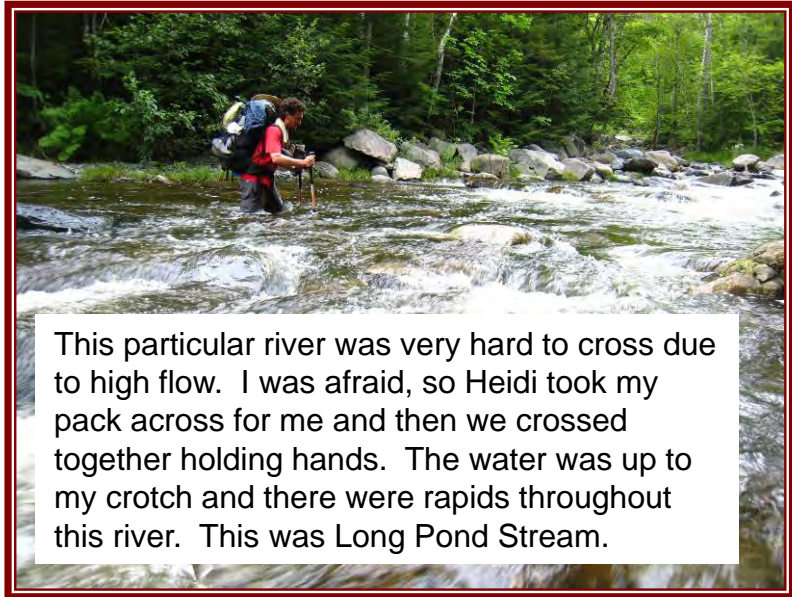
Towns and Hostels – Rangeley, ME



Towns and Hostels- Andover, ME



Fording Rivers



This particular river was very hard to cross due to high flow. I was afraid, so Heidi took my pack across for me and then we crossed together holding hands. The water was up to my crotch and there were rapids throughout this river. This was Long Pond Stream.

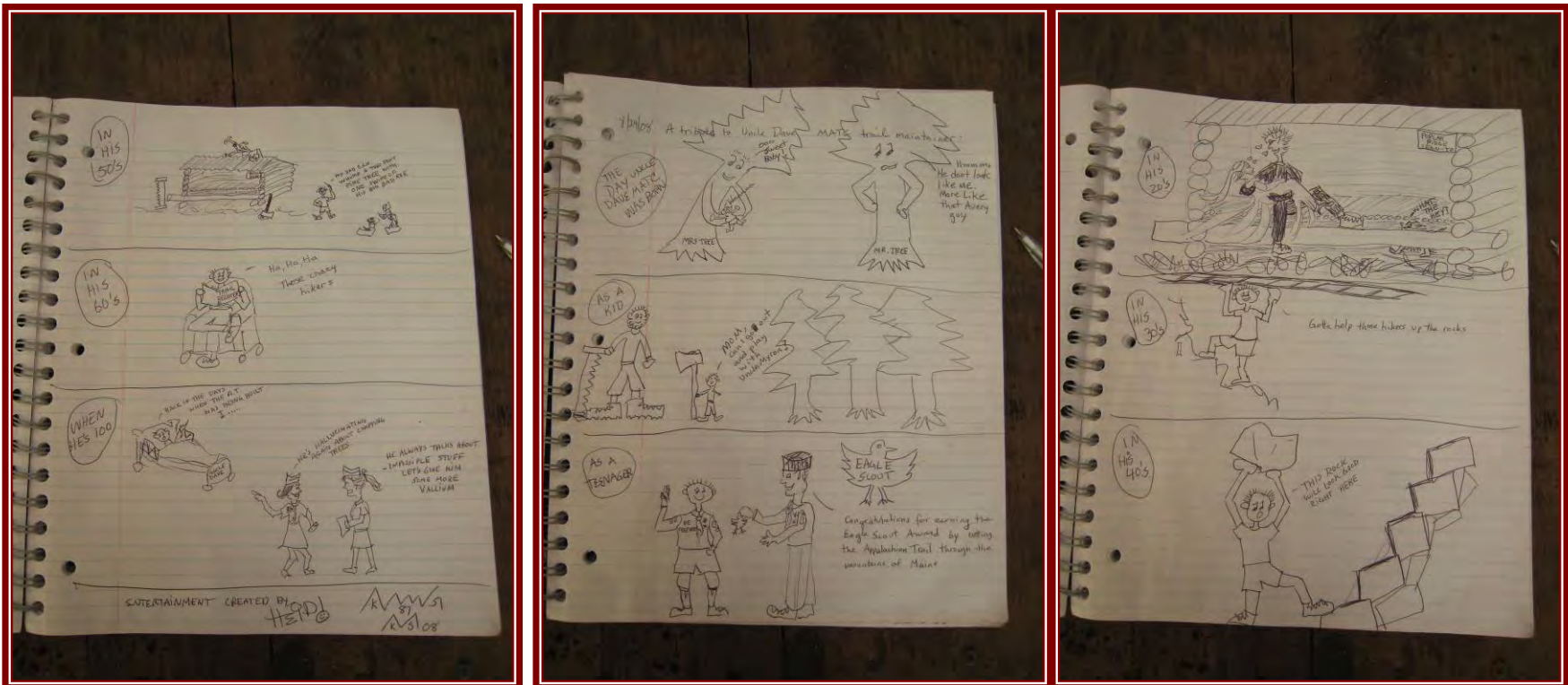


Fording Rivers



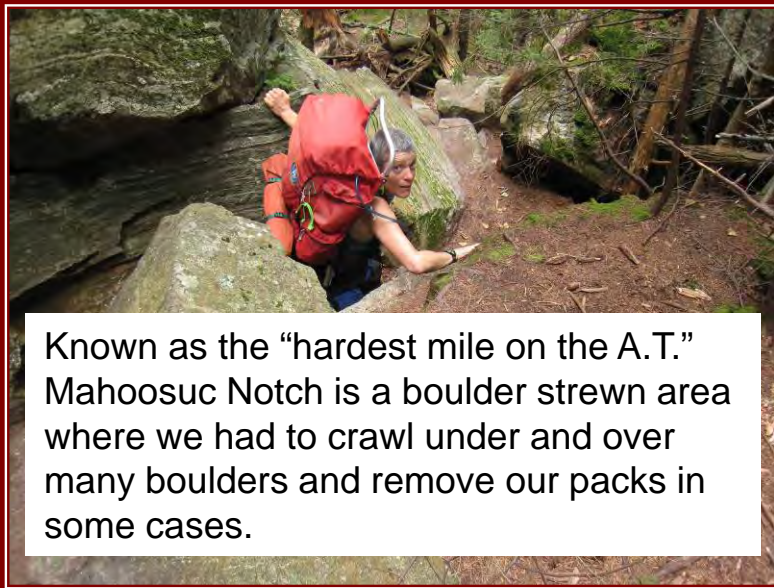
This is the Kennebec River crossing on the Appalachian Trail in Carratunk, ME. It is a dam controlled river and it is strongly advised that hikers use the ferry shuttle. This ferry shuttle is the “official” way to cross this river.

Tribute to "Uncle Dave"



The section of trail in Maine between Rt. 17 and Orbeton Stream (approx. 26 miles) is maintained by a man named Dave. This man has maintained this section of the trail and its shelters (Poplar ridge and Piazza Rock lean-tos) for over 50 years!!!! He created a very informative laminated trivia booklet located in the Poplar ridge lean-to answering several questions posed by hikers from the registers. Heidi created this tribute to this dedicated volunteer who's love for the outdoors and preservation of the A.T. are exceptionally honorable.

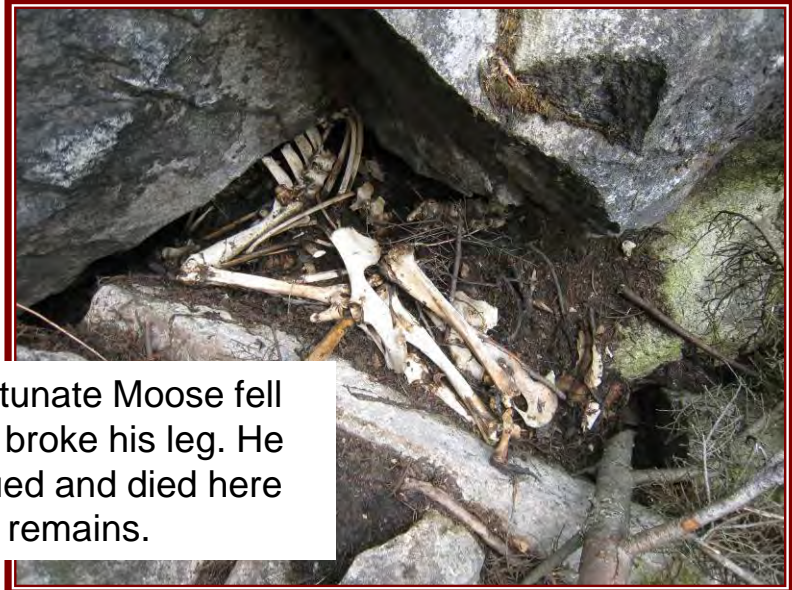
Mahoosuc Notch



Mahoosuc Notch



This year an unfortunate Moose fell into the notch and broke his leg. He could not be rescued and died here where its skeleton remains.



Mahoosuc Notch



Fungus



Fungus



Fungus



Wildflowers



Pitcher plant *Sarracenia purpurea*

Wildflowers



Hobblebush, *Viburnum lantanoides*



Closed Gentian, *Gentiana andrewsii*



Joe-Pye Weed, *Eupatorium* sp.



We made it to the NH/ME border!