

BOOTPRINTS

Volume 10 Issue 2

March 2006

My First Winter Backpacking Trip

By Stephanie Busto

We met next to the Friendly\$ in Westfield for the start of our Jan 14-15, 2006 backpack adventure. John asked the two of us waiting to get in his van for a discussion as to whether we wanted to go or not. The weather was to be unfavorable and it was raining at the time, with snow in the forecast. We all decided to go for it. I knew that I had the gear necessary, but there is always that slim chance that I still had not got it right. I also felt prepared but I am also very slow on the trail and wondered if I myself could do it.



View from Tom Leanard Shelter before the Snow Storm

I loaded my gear into John's van. Rene drove his own truck as he had some shopping to do afterwards. We got to the parking lot and met up with another person Mike. Turns out one female, three men, I hoped I would be able to keep up quickly enough on the trail. We got our gear on and crossed the street and I felt as if I was finally getting the chance to accomplish something I had wanted to do for a long

time.

Backpack in the winter with snow. I am from Southern California.

I knew we were going to be in a shelter (Tom Leanard Shelter) so I felt good as I have tents for the snow but don't know how to set them up in snow.

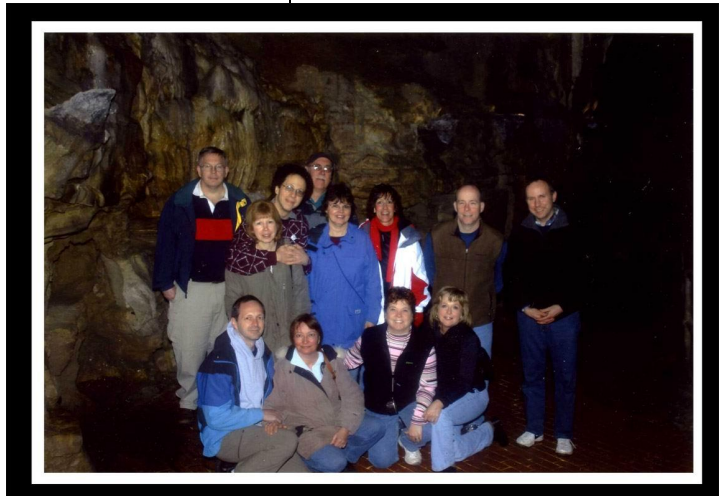
Granted we didn't have far to go just two miles. The stream crossings went ok. I always get weak knees on stream crossings and this trip was no different.

Thank god for good tracking poles. The up hill sections really slowed me down, but I think that having finally gotten the Yak-Trax to stay on really helped with the wet up hill sections that had leaves on it. Those scare me as I really did not want to slip and fall. There was one spot that we had to climb over some large rocks. I did end up on my hands and

knees. I really get nervous on those areas as I always feel as if I am going to fall

backwards. There was one other spot that I needed help with as I just couldn't get the momentum to get the big step up. Anyways we got to the shelter, looked around, not much of a view because of the fog. But there was a privy and a tent platform. Mike brought his tent, set it up, but then took it down in the blowing snowstorm later in the evening.

{continued on page 2}



Howe Caverns

By Cindy Taylor

On January 21, 2006, 12 hikers participated in the trip to Howe Caverns just outside of Cobleskill, NY. The leader/organizer was Gary Dolgoff.

For those of you who have not been to Howe Caverns, it is a large cave that was discovered by a farmer in the 1800s. He came across the entrance when he investigated why his cows always congregated at a certain spot in the pasture on hot days. Howe Caverns opened to the public in 1929.

Our group enjoyed a 1.5 hour tour of the cave. We saw many stalagmites and stalactites, but, alas, no bats. The tour included a pleasant walk, up and down pathways, as well as a boat ride along the cave underground river.

The weather in the caverns is always in the 50 degree range, which is more than I can say about the outside weather that day. It started out warm, then it was pouring out, and it became very cold later in the afternoon.

After our cave tour, we had a fine lunch at the Little Italy restaurant in Cobleskill. Our trip concluded with a visit to a local gift shop.

Unfortunately, we were unable to incorporate a visit to the nearby Iroquois Indian Museum on the same day, which is closed until March. Perhaps this can be incorporated into another hike on a future spring date.

-Cindy Taylor

BACKPACKING

{continued from page 1}

John brought the stove for all of us to use, was very nice as it did lighten my load a bit. We all ate lunch, then just dinked around the site. I went and took some pictures of the crick next to us. I also got my stuff set up in the loft, the guys took the bunks. I usually like to read at night and had brought something to read but by the time I got in my bag the candle I brought was burning down and was too hot to move. I got to see a better candle setup than the others had with them. John tried to get a fire going but the sky decided to start precipitating at about the same time, so much for the fire.

We all had dinner and had been feeling the temperature drop throughout the afternoon and with it starting to snow I decided to try and warm up and got in my sleeping bag. Blasted jacket kept slipping out from under my head, not good, need to get something better to use as a pillow. Had to get up twice to go to the bathroom, man was it cold and blowing. Heard the guys get up in the morning. When I got up there was a fine dusting of snow inside the shelter covering everything. Appears there is a space between the roof and the walls of the shelter, and the wind had been really blowing all night. Got up and got dressed as quickly as I could as it was really really cold out and I needed to go to the bathroom. My hands started to hurt real fast because of the cold. But the sight that I saw when I came down from the loft was gorgeous. We had gotten 4-5 inches of snow and it was beautiful. Even at the overlook it was so neat to see everything in white, still foggy though.

I eat breakfast. Then packed up. I am always the last one ready but not too badly late this time. One of the guys tied a string on my Yak-Trax so they would not fall off. I still have that string on them as it works when I wear the trax. We hiked out, that was so neat to be tracking through the fresh snow and seeing everything turn from dead brown leaves one day to fresh white snow the next day. Nothing had melted off yet so all the branches and evergreens still had the snow on them and weighting them down. Every once in a while the snow would fall and the branch would spring back up. Even the trees creaked under the weight of the snow and slight wind.



We got out to the first road and then walked along it, as two of the guys went ahead and got a car to pick us up as we didn't know how the bigger stream would be in the morning with how the weather had been. I actually was hoping to stay on the trail all the way back, but walking on the road way was easier.

Would I want to go again, most definitely. Oh, forgot about the snow that blew in on the sleeping bags. I moved around at one point during the night, reached out with my hand and grabbed a crunchy icy coating on the bag, not good I thought. Also glad that I did not have a down bag. I felt a bit cold at this point so I just crawled down farther into my bag and warmed up and went back to sleep. I need to find a better pillow and some waterproof mittens.

~Stephanie Busto

Rattlesnake Hill

By Mike Carrier

There was kind of a joke between some of the members on how no one goes on my hikes. Three previous hikes that I had listed on the schedule no one signed up

for. Mostly due to inclement weather or so I had hoped. Well I guess my luck has changed, because on Sunday January 29th on a relatively mild day for January, twenty-one people decided to chance one of my hikes, my wife included.

Most of us met at Brooks in Holyoke and car pooled up to Quabbin Reservoir gate 29, where we met the rest of our party. Our goal was Rattlesnake hill an 838-foot rise near the northern most end of Quabbin.

This was approximately a 5-mile hike over an old Quabbin road, and then a short uphill climb where we were awarded nice views to the north and south. There was not a lot of snow but we did have ice in some sections to be wary of.

After a snack or lunch for some we made our way down the hill to the shore, a large part of Quabbin was still frozen over even with the mild winter. Then the group split up, some went back while the rest of us made our way further down the trail. We did see what I thought were Bobcat tracks in the snow. Figuring that the WEU pool and pizza party was that evening, and the time it would take to get home, we decided to head back. On the drive home it started to rain.

I thought the whole hike went well; maybe the course is over. I will be leading another Quabbin hike on April 2nd with Cindy Dirico hope to see you there.

~Mike Carrier



Rattlesnake Hill - Quabbin Reservoir

A Bad Day in the Whites

By Dick Forest

I went on Richard Harris's Winter Wonderland weekend to the Whites. Bob Morgan drove - I hitched a ride with him - for four hours to the Highland Center. The Highland Center is the AMC's relatively new jewel of an inn or set of buildings located at Crawford Notch. I like Bob's moniker for the Highland Center: "The Hiker's Hilton". The AMC has spared no expense when it came to building this set of buildings, and not without a lot of local (NH) controversy, either. You have to see it for yourself.

Originally, Bob and I wanted to spend one night in the bunkhouse, relatively cheaply. However, the bunkhouse was full, and I didn't mind paying a little extra to stay in the main building. As an AMC member, Bob paid \$64 for the one night lodging and two meals, and I, as a non-AMC member, paid \$76 for the same. We lodged in a four-person bunkroom, which we had to ourselves because the other two men who also reserved our room didn't show. That was nice! I'm sure they didn't show because of the weather prediction for Saturday and Sunday was rain on Saturday and snow on Sunday.

Because of the rain on Saturday, we initially decided not hike, but to drive home after breakfast. In fact, the previous night's dinner was also one of the two meals provided, but we got up to the Highland Center too late to take advantage of it. So we went down to breakfast, and we ran into Laurie Mahoney, alias "Dreamcatcher", and Mike Carrier, who were hoping to run into other members of the Winter Wonderland party. They were staying at a hostel in Conway, NH. (We saw Carla Lecompte the night before, also staying at the Highland Center, and Richard Harris, the weekend organizer, was spending the night at Zealand Hut. Don't ask.) The five of us had breakfast together, and chatted for a while before Laurie, Shari, and Mike left to drive home. They didn't wish to hike in the rain.

Checkout time was 10:30 a.m., so I decided to go back to bed after breakfast. Bob took a walk around the

facilities. When he came back a half hour later, I proposed to Bob that we should do a hike anyway in the rain. Bob decided on Mt. Tom (NH), a 4000-footer, but he wasn't sure that he wanted to hike in the rain. (Bob's sole purpose for coming up on this particular weekend was to bag some peaks over 4000 feet. I was just along to do a little hiking, with nothing better to do on the weekend.) After a little pleading and cajoling, Bob agreed to hike up to Mt. Tom with me.

The spur trail to Mt. Tom is on the same trail that is used to go to Zealand Hut in the winter. The trailhead started a couple hundred yards from the Highland Center, behind the old train depot. We had to climb about 2000 feet from the trailhead on ice and snow to get to the top. We both had hiking poles, I had instep crampons and Bob had on ice stabilizers. We had several stream crossings, but there wasn't a lot of water in them, at least on the way up. Because of the steady rain, we got soaked, but it was, fortunately, relatively warm for winter due to the warm front that was coming through. Well, it took us about two and one half hours to climb to the top of the mountain. Most of the elevation gain happened before the spur trail, so the half-mile off of the main trail on the spur trail to the top was relatively easy. But we had to keep moving in order to stay warm.

After high-fiving at the top of Mt. Tom, and after Bob took a few pictures while on the summit, we rapidly descended on the snow and ice. I never thought ice would be my friend, since anywhere off the packed trail we would posthole. At least on ice you wouldn't sink down. And so we got at least two-thirds of the way down uneventfully. Then we came upon a raging torrent of a brook or stream. Going up, there wasn't much water in the stream; coming down, it was a totally different story.

Bob and I didn't like the looks of the stream because it was literally a raging flood. From my perspective, it was dangerous. I wasn't sure whether if you put your foot in, that the force of the water wouldn't knock you off of your feet. Not only did I think it was dangerous. I was scared. We both went up and down the stream looking for a safer way across from the point at the stream where the trail led us. After many anxious minutes scouting up and downstream, Bob decided that the best place to cross was that point on the

stream where, in fact, the trail actually led us. (I'd have to say that Bob had the cooler head, and had more courage that I did in this tense situation. I honestly thought that I might die.) We both realized that we couldn't stay where we were, we were getting cold. It was literally do or die.

Bob led the way over rocks that were partially out of the water, and walked across a large branch that surprisingly held his weight. I followed, and it was surprisingly easy, though tense. Two hiking poles were absolutely necessary for balance. If either of us fell in, we could have been swept away to our deaths. It was that serious.

So we crossed that hurdle, and I thought we were safe for the rest of the way down. I was mistaken. We came upon another stream also at flood stage and running very fast. The same stream but a little further downstream. The width of this portion of the stream was wider than our first crossing. Same scenario. This time we went up and downstream a little ways looking for safe passage across. There was none. It was just as tense - but more dangerous than the first stream crossing. We had no alternative. We had to cross the stream, no ifs, ands, or buts. So again, Bob went first. This time we had to place our boots in the raging stream, and we had to have our hiking poles support us. If Bob went in and was swept away, it would be a moment of truth. Do you jump in and rescue your hiking companion and risk death, or do you let him be swept away to his death? I'm sure it occurred to Bob, as well. Bob got one boot completely soaked on the way across. He had to step into the raging stream. He was able to step onto large rock in the middle of the stream and jump onto a larger rock close to the far side. He made it across.

Seeing Bob jump across the stream gave me confidence, but I was still shaking in my boots. So I put both boots completely in the water in the edge of the stream and braced my body with my hiking poles. Somehow I managed to get my left, downstream boot

onto the large rock in the middle of the stream, and did exactly as Bob had done before me, jumped onto a larger rock on the far side. I am sure that my instep crampons helped me stay on the rocks in the stream. I jumped out the stream off the last rock into Bob's arms, and said, "Hold me!" Meaning, don't let me fall back into the stream. It was a tense moment, something I don't ever want to do again. Bob confided later that the stream was a lot stronger than he expected. Thankfully, this stream was surprisingly close to the trailhead, and we didn't have any more terrifying stream crossings.

Let me make my long story short. Nowhere were there signs posted as to the danger of swollen streams after a rain like the one we had. Of course, every hiker should know the dangers of hiking in winter; I am sure that some would say that I am naive. The second hazardous stream that we encountered on the way back was within a quarter mile of the Highland Center. Something should be done, like the construction of a bridge, in the near future. To emphasize my point, we found out that Richard Harris over this same weekend, hiking alone (a separate issue), tried to cross a stream one half mile from Zealand Hut, fell into the water, hit his chin, got completely drenched, managed to get out of the stream, and make his way back to Zealand Hut, where the hut master took care of him, and where Richard spent an extra night.

One more thing, I asked the main desk at the Highland Center after the hike where I might be able to change. There were nine employees behind the desk in mid-afternoon. The night before there was only one. One AMC employee said that I could change in either of the two bathrooms on the main floor. I have now changed three times in the bathrooms at the Highland Center after a hike. You would think that an architect, and that someone from the AMC would have insisted upon it, would have designed a changing room for visiting hikers in the heart of White Mountain hiking country. But no. I can't say that I have any love for the AMC, or that I'd join the club any time soon.

~Dick Forrest



Winter Wonderland Adventure

January 13 & 14

By R. Morgan

Dick Forest and I drove up to the White Mountain area on Friday in the late afternoon. We got a bit of a late start and the heavy convection fog caused by warm air over cold snowfields made the going very slow. We ran into most of the traveling difficulties north of White River Junction and especially when we headed into New Hampshire. Maybe we should have paid a little more attention to the fact it was Friday the thirteenth. As luck would have it our late start and the conditions made us late for the dinner we had booked at the AMC Highland Center in Crawford Notch, NH, our destination. Thankfully we had anticipated this and made due with a big Mac in Littleton.

We checked into the AMC Highland Center and found our surroundings very well appointed. The open beam trusses and the hand crafted maple paneling add warmth and openness to the facility. On the first floor is the reservation area, a small hiking gear store, cafeteria, large comfortable sitting room with fireplace, and function rooms where workshops are held on hiking, mountaineering, ice climbing and other outside activities. The second and third floors are sleeping quarters with private rooms and baths or shared rooms with 2, 4, or more bunks and a

very clean shared bath. There is also a sitting area with library and views of the mountains in the foyers of the upper floors. All linens, blankets, soap, and shampoo are supplied as well as breakfast and dinner if desired. The personnel were very friendly and helpful. They made us aware of programs and lectures available as well as organized hikes and activities, which were on the weekend events calendar. There is also complimentary L.L. Bean gear room where a guest can borrow a pack, fleece, snowshoes, and gear, for the events they may want to take part in. After checking into our comfortable well-appointed 4 bunk room and finding we were the only occupants we dubbed this the "Hikers Hilton". It is certainly the jewel of the AMC's lodges and a great destination facility. I had stayed in the Bunkhouse before but the main lodge is certainly an upgrade!! If it is lacking in any respect it is as Dick pointed out a lack of changing rooms for quests that are heading back and want to change and leave the trail and mud behind. You can however use the first floor bathrooms for this purpose.

Once checked in we looked up another club member staying at the center. The other three members were at a hostel in North Conway or other facilities and Richard was at Zealand Hut for the night. We hoped to meet Richard on his return from Zealand Hut



tomorrow as Dick and I planned to conquered peaks on the Willey Range and would be returning on the same section of AZ Trail as Richard. We sat in one of the

library sitting rooms and chatted. We learned this member was under the impression that PVHC would have planned activities at this event, which there were not. We invited her to join us on our adventure but she wisely declined feeling her winter hiking experience at elevation was limited. It turned out to be a pretty wise choice.

We met Sherri Cox, Mike Carrier, and Laurie Mahoney at breakfast the next morning. Our room came with the meal so we had a choice of cold cereal, pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, fruit, Danish, muffins, bagels, juice, milk, coffee and anything else they put out. It was a spread worthy of royalty and we did ourselves justice. Unfortunately this meal stayed with us most of the day feeling like a lead anchor as we slogged up the trail. To every bright side is a dark side and this adventure was no different. We had awakened to a rainy day. I mean one of those that you literally expect to see cats and dogs. It was pouring. It didn't take long for those who had any sense to say they were canceling their plans. We chatted for a while then split up to go our separate ways. Dick headed to the room for a morning siesta and I trying to hold on to hope approached the front desk to see what activities were going on that we might get involved in to salvage the day. I discovered that some hearty souls were going to head out to Mt. Willard with an AMC guide at 10:00 AM as part of the planned activities at the lodge. I reasoned that if they could do about 3 miles we could certainly do 6 miles and get in Mt Tom a 4000 footer. Both hikes started on the same trailhead near the Depot. I approached Dick and he was all for making something out of this outing.

As we geared up outside the entrance we noted the rain was lifting and we were optimistic. The Willard group was close by taking direction from the AMC guide and doing a last minute gear check. We heard the guide say that they had several stream crossings and they would evaluate each as to its safety in crossing and getting back. He indicated that normally the highest water occurs up to 6-8 hours after a rainfall. This made good sense and surely we had good judgment so we would do the same, ð ð no problem!! We hit the first of four crossings of the Crawford Brook and its tributaries. The Willard group had already separated. This wasn't going to be a problem. There were stepping rocks above water and the ice and snow bridges were intact, but the flow was up. Up to now there were tracks in front of us. We meet their owners a father and young son that had turned back at the next brook. This one was wider, flowing well, and had stepping-stones to a gravel island in the middle with a narrow stretch of steppable shallow water to the other side. We crossed with little difficulty and hit the Avalon, AZ Junction at 1.3 miles. With only 1.6 miles to go we felt good about our chances. We headed out and crossed a frozen brook in a

deep ravine with icy sidewalls that we climbed in and out of. We made it to the next crossing, which was flowing well but was narrow and had a stepping-stone allowing for a hop and over. We hit the Mt. Tom spur a short distance from the Willey Range trail junction. My pants were very wet and I was losing heat. I had to put on rain pants to try to conserve some warmth. Though the day had warmed to the 40° F we were well aware these were ideal hypothermic conditions and had monitored each other on the way up. After adjustments, drinks and snacks we needed to get moving because we were cooling fast. We summited Mt. Tom with little difficulty, snapped some shots at the cairn and hurriedly headed down as there were no views. We were socked in.

We headed down at a rapid pace Dick with six point crampons and I with stabilizers. They had served us well on the way up. We felt fairly secure and had little difficulty negotiating to the first crossing, which was narrow but rolling. The stepping-stone was a bit submerged now and it meant a quick submerged step with a slight possibility of getting a wet foot. We crossed with no incident, and proceeded down the trail to the next frozen crossing. We decided to approach the ravine breaking new powder to avoid ice on the ravine sidewalls. We crossed in and out of the ravine over the frozen stream, ice bridges intact, with only the normal concerns and energy expended to get us out the other side. We closed on the AZ Avalon Trail Junction. We were almost home. We knew Richard was behind us if he was on the trail because we had broke trail in the morning and our tracks were the only ones visible. I had left a message in the snow back at the Mt. Tom spur but it was hardly readable. I also tried to raise him on the preset channel we had decided on with the two-way radios to no avail. I was hoping that the rain had delayed his plans and that he would stay another night at Zealand Hut rather than try to come out this way having to possibly face high water in the dark. We headed down rapidly to the next crossing and it was here that the guide's words began to ring true. The water was higher, the island was still mostly there but the stepping-stones were submerged. In the narrows of the stream the water was a rolling boil. Way to dangerous to plant a foot and cross. We searched in vain for about an hour up stream and down. We did find a large tree that we might have been able to shimmy across but if you feel, ð .. it was going to be like white water kayaking without the kayak. Dick and I both decided that our best chance was at the original crossing. Our original crossing was flowing to fast on the far side to be practical only as a last choice. We found a spot that had three large slightly submerged boulders leading to a larger above water boulder that had a precarious 8+ round fallen tree which hit the other bank. I headed across to the above water rock and tree. At worst I reason

it meant a wet foot on the other side in 14+ deep water if I slipped off the log. We both got across with hardly a dip. We were still dry and headed to the last crossing. My thoughts went back to Richard; I hoped he didn't have to do this in the dark. We hit the next crossing with high spirits, which quickly sank. The snow bridges in the shallows where we crossed were turning to mush. The stepping-stones were covered with a rolling boil. Up stream in the narrows was a total gusher and down stream was a torrent waiting to sweep you into the rocks. We eyed a spot upstream of our original crossing. We would have to walk in the mush, step on two submerged rocks, and yes, plant a foot in 12" deep water to get to the other bank. Being this close to the tail head, I was very willing to get one foot wet to end this, rather than wait in the cold, soaking wet, for someone that wasn't coming to rescue us. Once done it was over. We made it across getting a foot wet and we happily discovered that what we thought was a half-mile to the trailhead turned out to be 100 yards.

In retrospect we accomplished our objectives, but we also need to be reminded of some important lessons. As it turned out no harm was done. Richard was safely at Zealand Hut after his own dealings with raging water, and Dick and I were out safely. Hopefully we learned that patience is a virtue and had we waited, a better day would have come for this adventure. Secondly when you over hear a guide say, you can expect high water especially on the return, + be assured that it could pertain to you as well. There is a part of me that wants to say, ok ð we tested our mettle, we pushed the boundary, and it was our skill and decision making that overcame a bad situation. However, I know that a mere fraction of a second of lapsed judgment or a slip could have reversed this, so I won't go there.

~R. Morgan

Baxter State Park Expansion

The Trust for Public Land has closed on a \$14 million expansion of 6,000 acres, including Katahdin Lake. The 6,015 acres to be purchased borders seven miles of the eastern boundary of Baxter park, site of Mount Katahdin and the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. The deal awaits private funding and legislative approval. \$3 million has already been pledged for the purchase, and state Conservation Commissioner Patrick McGown said he's confident the remaining \$11 million will be forthcoming by a July 1 deadline.

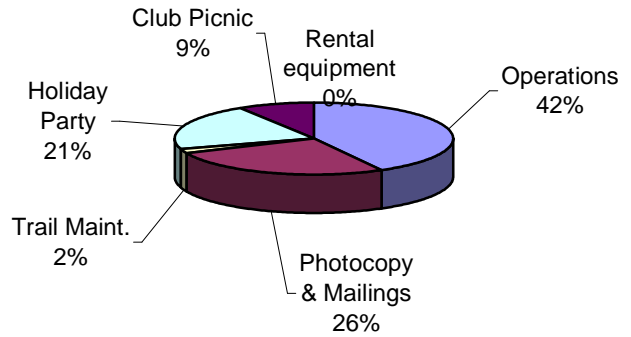
These pictures represent Harry Allen's attempt at trying to capture the magic of Mt Monadnock on Saturday, Jan 7, 2006.



Nothing like the real thing!!!
~Harry Allen



Where PVHC Dues Go (Jan to Dec 2005)

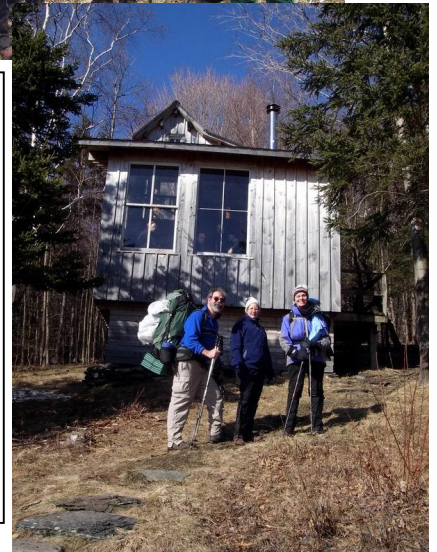


Operations:	Liability insurance, meeting expenses, office equipment & supplies, guest speaker gratuity T-shirts, web site maintenance, special awards, leadership training, scholarships, and membership goodwill.
Photocopy & Mailings:	Meeting agendas, schedules, newsletters, club brochures, membership kits, labels, postage, etc.
Trail Maintenance:	Support for trail maintenance, purchasing trail maps & Guide books, etc.
Holiday Party:	Includes food, hall rental, door prizes, & entertainment
Club Picnic:	Includes food & misc. expenses
Equipment	Purchase of basic hiking equipment for use by beginner members, nominal rental fees offset depreciation of equipment.



Merck Forest – Feb11-12

Winter in Vermont is so cozy at least for ten of us! Twelve hearty hikers, including one tenting and one sleeping outdoors, enjoyed views of Bear Mt and Mt Equinox from Nedø Place nestled on the shoulder of Mt Antone. Not much snow but good hiking, food and friends.
~John Klebes





Dear PVHC,

Thank you to everyone that helped out with the Campshow this year. Especially, Stephanie and JJ Bustos, Ravi Kulkarni, Kimberly and Jonathan Stevens, Mike and Gail Carrier, Norm Plante, Mike Reed, Rob Schechtman, and Scott and Laura Cook.

Sincerely, John Klebes

TTOR Hiking Series

Ann Marie Visconti and Mike Reed will be leading a series of hikes this year with the theme of hiking the many ecological jewels hidden in The Trustees of Reservations Properties. Since 1891, The Trustees of Reservations has been saving the Massachusetts landscape for people to enjoy. You may have already hiked some of their holdings such as the Dinosaur Footprints in Holyoke and Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield! Special thanks to Frank Kamlowski, Al Goodhind, and Juliana Vanderwielen for their commitment to organizing annual club events to help maintain these two properties.

This non-profit organization with over 40,500 members, many of them PVHC members, has helped protect more than 53,000 acres across the state. They maintain over 95 reservations and inspire conservation awareness through a variety of educational programs. Join Ann Marie and Mike as they take us on a tour of many of these fantastic places.

Here's a description from the TTOR website of what's on our current schedule:

Peaked Mountain, Monson, MA

From the 1,227-foot summit of Peaked ("pea-kid") Mountain, a panoramic view unfolds taking in Connecticut's Shenipsit State Forest to the south, Mount Monadnock to the north, and Mount Wachusett to the northeast. In between lies a sweep of rolling New England countryside with forested hills and ridges, valley farms, and small villages. The Valley View overlook provides views of nearby Boulder Hill and the City of Springfield to the west.

Remains of charcoal mounds and a collier's fireplace indicate that Peaked Mountain was the site of a 19th-century

charcoal operation that provided fuel for local iron smelters and forges. In more recent years, the Peaked Mountain Co-op, a group of former property owners, managed the mountain's forest for timber and firewood production. Fire roads lead through a forest consisting almost entirely of oaks and other deciduous hardwoods. Scrub oak and other plants that are adapted to exposed sites dominate the rocky summit of the mountain.

The trails at the Miller Forest Tract allow for a different experience. Sandy soils here support a forest of mature pine and oak. Trails lead to and encircle tranquil Lunden Pond, where visitors might glimpse beavers, herons, and other wildlife drawn to the quiet waters.

Brooks Woodland Preserve, Petersham, MA

Once home to Nipmuc, then cleared by settlers for open farmland, the Brooks Woodland Preserve is today an undisturbed forest of towering red oaks, hemlocks, and white pine that is being managed to re-create a forest typical of Central Massachusetts at the time of its settlement. Visitors may hike or cross-country ski along many miles of woodland trails and former woods roads.

Old stone walls, reminders of former agricultural use, cross the forest floor, passing through patches of maidenhair ferns, winterberry, and partridgeberry. Some of the original farmland has been kept as open fields within the forest. Along parts of the Swift River, Moccasin Brook, and Roaring Brook, beavers have dammed the stream, creating swamps. A cascade of glacial boulders near outcrops of granite ledge provide dens for porcupines.

Six early-nineteenth-century farmsteads can be rediscovered in the Preserve. Fieldstone cellar walls, porch steps, and a chimney support are all that remain of the former Dudley Farm.

The Mission of The Trustees of Reservations:

"To preserve, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts."

Swift River Reservation, Petersham, MA

The East Branch of the Swift River links all three tracts of Swift River Reservation. The Nichewaug Tract includes extensive rocky ledges, a moist ravine, open fields, a beaver-dammed swamp, vernal pools, riverside habitat, and forest edges along woods roads. These habitats support many small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, and birds.

In the late eighteenth century, much of the Reservation was cleared for farms that conducted small-scale agriculture, subsistence livestock grazing, and fuelwood collection. In the nineteenth century, population growth and new local industries (saw and wool mills, a box company, a tannery, and a hat company) placed greater demand on the area's natural resources. The forest was largely cut, sparing trees only on steep, rocky hillsides, on ledges, and in wetlands.

Several reclaimed fields in the Slab City Tract re-create the open setting around the Avery Williams farmstead as it may have appeared around 1890. After farm abandonment in the early twentieth century, the forest returned only to be decimated by a major hurricane in 1938. Today most of the Reservation's white pine and mixed hardwood forest date to this hurricane and its associated cleanup.

Minutes – January 3rd, 2006 Club Meeting:

Club members closed out December with the Holiday Party which was a fun night. Ray Tibbits, club founder, was a surprised guest and was honored at the party. Ann Marie had some equipment difficulties which slowed the flow of the slide presentation. Thanks to all who helped organize this great event. The New Year was brought in by 44 or so members who joined in the Noho "First Night" celebration and dinner. Good food and lots of fun. Thanks to Frank Kamalowski for organizing this annual event. Nominations were held for the Club Elections to take place at the February Meeting. The Nominees were: Ann Marie Visconti - President; Mike Gross - Treasurer; Monica Gross - Secretary; Marcia Kelly and Mike Carrier . Vice President.



Minutes – February 7th, 2006 Club Meeting:

This meeting marked the Fifteenth Anniversary of the founding of the club. We marked the occasion with a cake and old club photos and newsletters brought in by Al Goodhind. Thanks Al and thanks for sticking with the club all these years. This club is and always will be only as good as the members who participate in it. Activities reported at this meeting varied as much as the unusual and changing weather which this winter has brought to us. We've had mud and mild conditions. Downpours and raging rivers. Blowing winds, freezing temperatures and snow. Members also, played like kids in caverns and swam in the pool.

Club Election results:

Incumbents: Ann Marie Visconti . President
 Mike Gross . Treasurer
 Monica Gross . Secretary
 All the above ran unopposed.

Running for Vice-President - Marcia Kelly and Mike Carrier, Elected - Mike Carrier. Congratulations to the officers, hope it is a good year.

Respectfully submitted,
 Monica Gross
 Secretary PVHC

PVHC 2006 Election Results

PRESIDENT
Ann Marie Visconti

VICE-PRESIDENT
Mike Carrier

SECRETARY
Monica Gross

TREASURER
Mike Gross

Important Notice

The following memberships are up for renewal:

March Renewals:

- Samuel Armstrong
- Betsy Atkins
- Kay Byington
- Suzanne Carey
- Mike & Gail Carrier
- Alan Goodhind
- John Gorey
- John Klebes & Family
- Ray Manniello & Family
- Terry Murphy
- Kathy Nothe
- Robert Ring
- Bea Robinson
- Jennifer Sagan
- Mary Walters

April Renewals:

- Bill Bartsch
- Nancy Bigos
- Rita Blais
- Terri Brusseau
- Ann Burnham
- Cindy Bushey
- Dianne Chiba
- Parker Cleveland
- Ron Gaudreau
- Jane Glushik
- Bryan Goodwin & Family
- Mike & Monica Gross
- Sheila Harrington
- Charlotte Lee
- Chris Lenox
- Donna & Daniel Liese
- Susan McGurk
- Robert Morgan
- Sybille Nickel
- Ron & Esther Nunley
- Rosemarie & Terry O'Conner
- Mike & Karen Rattelle
- Warner Robinson
- Jacqueline Sheehan
- Carolyn Smith
- Jonathan & Kimberly Stevens
- Carolyn Stewart
- Mary Taylor
- Patricia Tinervia
- Judy Treu

Please renew early, and renew by mail. (Make checks payable to PVHC) Mail your renewal with your name and any address or phone number changes to:

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club
 c/o Wilderness Experiences
 P.O. Box 265
 Southwick, MA 01077

(Dues are \$25 member, \$40 family, and \$15 for students)



WEU Pool/Pizza Party – January 29, 2006

Come Canoe the Battenkill River - June 3 / 4 - 2006

Battenkill Riversports & Campground
 937 State Rte. 313
 Cambridge, New York 12816
 3 ½ miles East of Cambridge on Route 313
 518-677-8868

Rates for Trip:

25 people min

Activity	Price	# of People	Extension
½ Canoe	\$24.50		
1 Kayak	\$29.00		
Bar-B-Que	\$12.50		
Adult Camp	\$10.00		
Child 14 yrs	\$5.00		
		Total	

Remember CHECKS ONLY!! Made out to PVHC

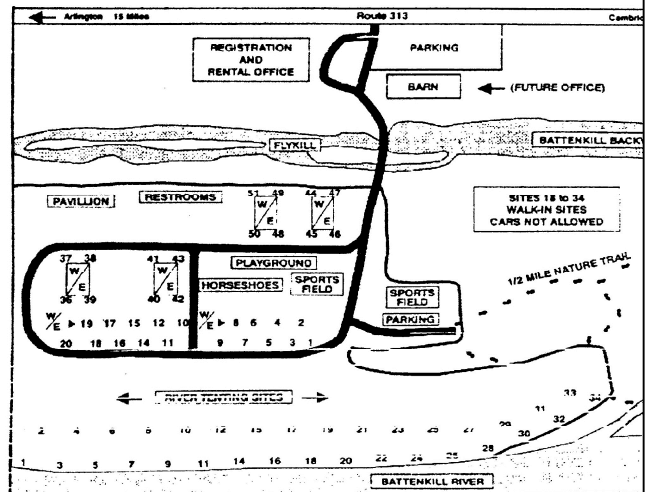
Give to Mike or Monica Gross
 16 Joffre Ave.
 South Hadley, MA 01075

Email: mmgross@map.com
 Phone:

Directions to BRSAC

West to end of Ma. T'Pike, to NY Tru-Way.
 Look for exit to Austerlitz NY Rt. 22 No. Follow 22 No. to Cambridge NY (about 1 hour).
 In the center of Cambridge look for RT. 313 on right follow 313 to Battenkill River Sports located on your left side

Map of Campground



Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers & Committees

Ann Marie Visconti, President
Mike Carrier, Vice President
Monica Gross, Secretary
Mike Gross, Treasurer
Scott Cook, Wilderness Experiences Unlimited
Ray Tibbetts, Founder

Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Planning Coordinator: *Sue Forest & AnnMarie Visconti*
Backpacking Coordinator: *Ed Laroche & Mike Rattelle*
Trail Maintenance: *Ed Laroche & Rob Schechtman*
Web Page Editor: *Dick Forrest*
Email Correspondent: *Rob Schechtman*
Email List: *John Klebes*
Quartermaster: *Jack Leary*
Bootprints Editor: *John Klebes*

Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Send your story contributions to the editor at: j.klebes@ieee.org (Email) or by USmail to John Klebes, P.O. Box 51385, Indian Orchard, MA 01151.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

- ❑ Next Club Meetings:
Apr 4, 2006, 7pm at **FBC**
(combined Hiking Planning & Elections)
May 2, 2006, 7pm at **FBC**
- ❑ Deadline for Submissions for next BootPrints is: Apr 22, 2005

FBC . First Baptist Church, West Springfield

***** Check out our web page at:**
<http://www.geocities.com/pvhcweb>

Join the PVHC Email List by sending a message to: pvhc2000@hotmail.com

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A publication of the
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c/o Wilderness Experiences Unlimited, Inc.
P.O. Box 265
Southwick, MA 01077

**Happy
15th Anniversary
PVHC**

