



Bootprints

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the
Pioneer Valley Hiking Club

President's Corner:

Leave No Trace

by President Lori Tisdell

PVHC has always been a very enthusiastic club with many activities on our schedule. And often with double digit attendees on our hikes. Which is great, but also means we have a large impact on the natural world. In order to reduce our impact when we recreate, we encourage our members to practice Leave No Trace ethics and guidelines. Our May clinic was on that very subject, but with the 280 memberships we know not everyone attended the meeting!

This month's article will be an educational one (one must do so occasionally) on Leave No Trace: Principles of Outdoor Ethic. There are seven main principles for anyone recreating in the outdoors to leave minimum impact on the natural world.

Plan Ahead & Prepare

Know the area and any special regulations, avoid high usage times (that can be difficult), split into smaller groups when possible. Plan your hike or activity, research the area so you know the trails well enough to not get lost or have to bushwhack.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Durable surfaces mean established trails & campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses, and snow. Camp at least 200 feet from lakes & streams. Walk single file to avoid widening the existing trail – even when wet and muddy. Those of you who hike in the White Mt.'s know there are areas in the alpine zone that have a fragile ecosystem where the growth can be destroyed by walking on it. Though, in winter snows, and ice will not. Our feet have a larger impact than we realize. Camping on established campsites is important as noted in the following research on LNT.org. One night of camping can reduce vegetation height by 60% or more. Vegetation recovery can
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take a year in the Southern Appalachians but 25 years in Glacier NP.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

Campfires can cause a lasting impact in the backcountry and outdoors. Use camp stoves to cook, use only established fire rings, keep fires small (yep, a bonfire is fun, but only under controlled circumstances and where it is safe) use sticks found on the ground and burn all wood and coals to ash. Make sure the fire is completely out and scatter cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife

We all love to see wild animals when outdoors – well most of us anyway. But observe from a distance, don’t approach (we’ve all heard the horror stories of people wanting to get a close-up photo, haven’t we?) I guess that’s their impact on us! Don’t feed animals as it can damage their health, alter natural behavior, and expose them to predators. Habituating animals to humans is never a good thing, often means the animal, bears for example, will need to be relocated, at best. If there are signs that a trail is closed due to animal activity, such as some trails in Acadia NP for nesting falcons, please respect them. Control your pets when you bring them out on a hike. They should be under your control at all times. And most parks require pets to be leashed.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Respect other hikers and the quality of their experience as well as your own. Yield to other hikers on the trail – uphill travel has the right of way. Unless they indicate for you to continue downhill. The reason for this is that it takes more energy to go uphill and get started again after stopping. Move aside for horses and pack stock. I remember waiting 20 minutes for the pack mules to continue on when I was hiking up the Bright Angel Trail a few years ago. And let nature’s sound prevail – though with large groups such as we have that can be a difficult thing! We’ll just try not to annoy the other hikers! Like those people with their music playing for all of us to hear.

See *President’s Corner* continued on page 3

“Yield to other hikers on the trail – uphill travel has the right of way.”

~ President Lori Tisdell

President's Corner continued from page 2

Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack it in, pack it out. Pretty simple – but apparently many people seem to think their dog's poop in a brightly colored bag is going to be picked up by someone else! Pack out your trash, extra food, etc. Human waste should be buried in a cathole 6-8 inches deep, covered over and disguised. And you should do your business 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Viruses and pathogens from human waste (think giardia) can survive weeks or months in water or soil. 200 feet seems to be the magic number. Carry water to wash yourself or dishes that distance from the water source, use a small amount of biodegradable soap and then scatter the strained water.

Leave What you Find

Preserve the past - observe cultural and historic artifacts and structures but don't touch. It is estimated that by Petrified Forest NP Park staff that 12 tons of petrified wood is taken each year. Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects. Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species. The estimated cost to control invasive species in the US is more than \$138 billion annually. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, invasive species have contributed to the decline or 42% of the country's threatened and endangered species.

Decomposition rates not so fun facts:

Cigarette butts – 1-5 years
 Aluminum cans – 80-100 years
 Plastic 6-pack holder – 100 years
 Orange or banana peel – up to 2 years
 Plastic film container – 20-30 years
 Plastic Bags – 10-20 years
 Glass bottle – 1,000,000 years
 Plastic coated paper – 5 years
 Nylon fabric – 30-40 years
 Leather – 1-5 years
 Wool socks – 1-5 years
 Tin cans – 50 years

Thanks for attending my TED talk – hope you all learned something and will practice these LNT principles! --President Lori Tisdell

“The estimated cost to control invasive species in the US is more than \$138 billion annually.”
 ~ President Lori Tisdell



Our Week on Top of Mount Washington

by Beth Ouellette

My husband Pete and I have climbed Mount Washington. We have driven up the Auto Road. We have ridden up on the Cog Railway. But on a chilly morning last September we found ourselves riding up the Auto Road in a van with a team of weather observers for the Mount Washington Observatory.

Last spring, Pete saw on the Mount Washington Observatory Facebook page that they were looking for volunteer docents to cook dinners for the crew and assist in the Observatory museum and gift shop for a full week. We looked at the online application and could answer affirmatively to questions like "Are you willing and able to prepare family-style dinners for 7 or more people?" and "In the event of an emergency are you willing and able to hike 8 miles to safety?" We sent in our applications and waited. About a month later, we were excited to get an email with our assigned week to volunteer.

Over the summer we received packets of information about day-to-day life on "The Rockpile" and what our duties would be. We were given packing lists, lesson plans for the museum, and safety rules. The biggest document was "Guest Hospitality at 6288 ft.". This was where the reality of what our week would be like sank in. There were pages of recipes and tips for cooking at high altitude. There were also lists of food supplies that might be on hand. We were warned that supplies vary from week to week so we could not be assured of specific items being available. No running to the grocery store for that one ingredient you need to make a particular recipe. However, we were assured that there would be enough items on hand to create likable meals and they never run out of food. The key was to be flexible.

The first day of our adventure came and we met our crew at the base of the Auto Road to begin our full week on the mountain top. We met the week's three observers, the gift shop/museum attendant, and the summer intern. Once the crew and the food supplies for the week were loaded, we began our slow crawl up the Auto Road. Slow, because the

See Week on Mt. Washington continued on page 5

"...that they were looking for volunteer docents to cook dinners for the crew and assist in the Observatory museum and gift shop for a full week."

~ Beth Ouellette

Week on Mt. Washington continued from page 4



visibility was just a few feet in front of the van. At the top the winds were over 75 mph, gusting to 95, with sleet and rain. The weather was so bad that the Auto Road was closed for the rest of the day and the Cog Railway shut down.



Once we arrived at the top there was a quick flurry of activity as we helped bring the week's food supplies and gear down to the living quarters, our home for the week. We met the volunteer coordinator and were shown our bunks and given a tour of the kitchen and pantry. We were also introduced to Nimbus, the Observatory's cat. (There has been a cat in residence at the weather station since it first opened. The cats serve as companions and rodent control.) After our tour of the living quarters we were shown the museum and gift

shop and given a quick course in its operations.

While our first day was a blur, subsequent days settled into a routine of Pete and I splitting our time between the kitchen and the museum See *Week on Mt. Washington* continued on page 6

*"We were also introduced to Nimbus, the Observatory's cat."
~ Beth Ouelette*



Week on Mt. Washington continued from page 5

and gift shop. Despite our concerns about food supplies, we found there was food in abundance. The only thing was that all of it was fair game for the observatory crew. We were only responsible for dinner, but they had free rein over the supplies in the pantry and fridge. Our plan to serve mac and cheese, was thwarted when the night observer used up our macaroni and most of the cheese. This led us to hide cans of tomato sauce for a spaghetti dinner. Also, weather observing must be strenuous work, because these folks could eat! One night we made meatloaves with 3 pounds of hamburger and six people made it disappear. Desserts were always a hit. We had used the single box of brownie mix on our first day, so all baking afterward was from scratch.

One evening we were told to expect 14 people. Knowing how this group could pack it away, I wanted to make a chocolate sheet cake. I sent an SOS via Facebook messenger to my cousin (LoL) for her Never-Fail Chocolate Cake. She came through and saved us from from fretting over what to serve.



"I sent an SOS via Facebook messenger to my cousin (LoL) for her Never-Fail Chocolate Cake."

~ Beth Ouellette

Our time in the museum was not exactly as expected. We ended up not using the lessons plans sent to us over the summer. Most visitors to the museum come up on the Cog Railway or the Auto Road. They have a limited amount of time to peruse the museum and then hit the three gift shops at the top of the mountain. They aren't interested in stopping to watch an explanation of the physics of wind. We found it was better to just be available to answer questions visitors might have about the exhibits. Probably the most asked question was, "Where's Nimbus?" The Observatory mascot is hugely popular with his face adorning calendars, mugs, and postcards. But they did take great
See *Week on Mt. Washington* continued on page 7

Week on Mt. Washington continued from page 6

delight in experiencing the weather at the summit. People came in breathless and laughing having felt the full force of 60 mph wind gusts.

Just as we were settling into a routine of preparing meals and helping in the museum, our week came to a close. We didn't get outside to hike as much as we anticipated due to poor weather or unanticipated crowds at the museum, or larger than usual groups for supper. But we still enjoyed our time on the summit. In the museum we met people from all over the world who expressed their awe at the majesty of the White Mountains. It was so satisfying to know that more people

had come to appreciate a beauty we have known for a long time. Also, the observers were quick to come get us to get outside to experience outdoors at the top of the world. We felt 70 mph wind gusts, got to climb the observation platform (the highest spot at the peak), and even saw the Atlantic Ocean 120 miles away on an exceptionally clear day. The crew are all true weather enthusiasts and want everyone to feel the same thrill they feel at nature's forces. Pete and I were happy when we realized that it was our crew who got to experience the record-tying cold temperature on February 2, 2023, of -47 degrees, sustained winds over 8 mph, and a wind chill of -100 degrees.



"We felt 70 mph wind gusts, got to climb the observation platform (the highest spot at the peak),...."
 ~ Beth Ouellette

If you think this might be for you, check out the website mountwashington.org for an application. You'll get some great mountain memories.

--Beth Ouellette



Smurfy advice for the trail...

Navigation using Terrain Features and Handrails

by John "PaPa Smurf" Klebes

Have you ever wondered if you were still on the right trail, missed a turn, or passed a water source you were depending on but couldn't see easily from the trail? We have all at one point or another had that sinking feeling if we were still hiking in the right direction, missed a critical turn, or gone too far off trail. While I was hiking the Continental Divide Trail it was critical to use terrain features and landmarks to keep correcting your progress since the trail was not marked in many sections and if you were not careful you would spend most of your time correcting and trying to get back on track. This month I'd like to share some of the many ways you can use geographic features, both natural and man-made, to help you navigate routes and stay trail aware!

When outside I suggest you take a good look around at possible landmarks and terrain features, both visible directly, and those you can identify on a map. Landmarks and terrain features are anything that you can use to help determine where you are on a map. They can be trail intersections, lakes, mountain peaks and valleys, man-made features, such as bridges, roads, etc. You can gauge your progress based on which landmarks you pass. While not a substitute for good map and compass navigation skills the awareness and use of visual landmarks and a mental picture of where you are in reference to handrails, backstops, and terrain features can greatly improve your trail position awareness and help identify escape routes.

One of the best navigation aids you can have is a handrail. Handrails are natural or man-made linear features, such as streams, roads, mountain ridges, utility easements (gas, electric, telephone), railroad tracks, rock walls, fences, and just about any linear feature that can
See *Navigation continued on page 9*

"...share some of the many ways you can use geographic features, both natural and man-made, to help you navigate routes and stay trail aware!"

~ PaPa Smurf

"One of the best navigation aids you can have is a handrail."

~ PaPa Smurf

Navigation *continued from page 8*

provide a backstop or directional aid to keep you aware of your direction of travel. You can follow alongside the feature so that you don't get lost or use it as a backstop to keep from moving in the wrong direction. This along with other types of landmarks can help you determine where you are.

A landmark or terrain feature that is linear can act as a handrail to keep you from deviating left or right, or as a backstop to keep you from crossing outside your intended route. Less linear features, such as trail junctions, bridges, stream crossings, and mountain peaks, can give you valuable confirmation of where you are exactly on a map.

Take a good look at that topo map of your intended hike. Does the trail follow alongside a stream? Maybe there is a road, power line cut, railroad track, or stone wall that parallels the path you plan to take. Does your route follow along under or over a mountain ridge line? By being aware of these linear features you can use them to easily identify whether you are still on your intended trek or have deviated off route. Even if you cannot see a handrail, the knowledge that a road, power line, railroad track, river, etc. is there, can give you confidence that you have/or have not crossed that handrail or backstop feature.

If my intended route has a stream to my left then if I find myself crossing the stream or moving away from the stream I'll know to stop and assess my situation before I get too far from the stream. Same for any other linear feature. If I am off trail and lose track of the handrail, use your compass and head directly back using the handrail as a backstop.

See *Navigation continued on page 10*



PaPa Smurf

“A landmark or terrain feature that is linear can act as a handrail....”

~ PaPa Smurf



“Even if you are just following a marked trail it’s always good to have handrails in mind.”

~PaPa Smurf

Navigation continued from page 9

Even if you are just following a marked trail it’s always good to have handrails in mind. If I know there is a stream bordering my hike a few miles to the left and a road roughly blocking on my right I can always take a perpendicular path left or right to make it to this landmark should an emergency occur.

Other landmarks can be used as backstops or positional markers. When your trail junction is right before a lake you can use the lake as a backstop. When you see the lake, look harder for the trail turn. If you start going around the lake you know you missed the turn. Or perhaps a stream crossing changes your handrail to the other side of the stream. That’s another data point telling you where you are. Look ahead on your map for landmarks near trail intersections, campsites, and other points of interest for your hike so you can use them as flags of when to find them. Is there a lake or stream crossing near your next turn? What features or landmarks help you identify that you are near your campsite, lunch spot, or car parking spot?

The figure below shows a typical topographical map of a state park in my neck of the woods. On this map you will see the route, other trails,



See *Navigation* continued on page 11

Navigation *continued from page 10*

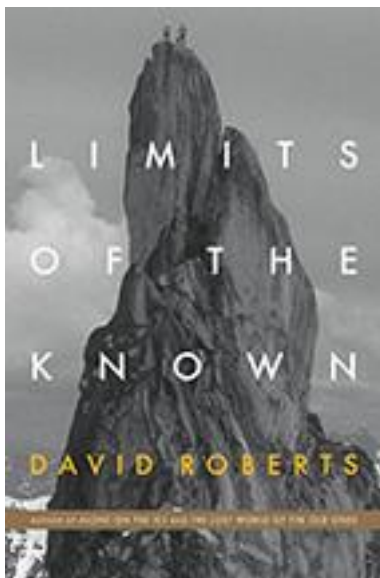
and campsites; along with annotation of landmarks, handrails, and backstops. Identifying useful landmarks, handrails, and backstops on your map is a fantastic way to solidify your map reading ability and keep you trail aware of your progress as you hike.

For more tips on having "Trail Awareness" see the March, 2017, issue of *Bootprints* and don't be afraid to get out there and explore the grand outdoors!

—PaPa Smurf

(If you have a suggestion for future topics or a hike-related question you would like covered in this column send a note to:

john.klebes@gmail.com)



"It's about explorers, some I have not heard about, and it's also written as a memoir about the author's life and experiences."

~Dick Forrest

Book Review by Dick Forrest:

Limits of the Known

by David Roberts

I found this book in the hiking/adventure section of a public library and thought it would be interesting to read. I found out that the author, David Roberts, was an accomplished mountaineer beginning in his late teens and early twenties, taught at Hampshire College in the 1970's, subsequently became a freelance writer, and as a result, traveled the world writing adventure genre articles for various well-known publications, has written over twenty-five books, was a good friend of Jon Krakauer, and was a Watertown, Massachusetts, resident. This book was published in 2018 and the author died in 2021. Upon his death the *New York Times* ran an obituary entitled: *David Roberts, Who Turned Adventure Writing Into an Art, Dies at 78*.

So what's Limits of the Known all about? It's about explorers, some I have not heard about, and it's also written as a memoir about the author's life and experiences. This book was written in the course of the author finding out that he had stage four throat cancer in his early seventies. At one point he couldn't type anymore with his index finger and had to write the manuscript with a pen in longhand. His loving wife would type the pages into a word processor program.

Chapters about some of the explorers and other chapters:

Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian explorer, who wrote the classic expedition narrative, *Farthest North*, tried to make it to the North Pole in 1895. In a nutshell: his ship, the *Fram*, got stuck in the ice, the crew were eventually rescued, while he and another shipmate tried to make it to the North Pole by dog sled. They didn't make it there because the sea ice was taking them south, away from the North Pole. The two of them barely made it back to land alive. Eventually they were reunited with their crew.

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Book Review *continued from page 12*

Eric Shipton, a member of five Mt. Everest expeditions between 1933 and 1951, wrote a narrative called Blank on the Map. Shipton liked to explore unknown regions so he chose the relatively unknown Karakoram mountain range along the borders of India, Pakistan and China, K2 being the highest peak in that range.

In another chapter, Roberts writes about the Anasazi cave dwellers of the American southwest and the Tellem of Mali in Africa. Mountaineering/cliff walking was akin to both cultures.

Another chapter is devoted to river running, specifically the first descents of wild rivers. Richard Bangs is the explorer whom he covers as a writer.

Another chapter is devoted to first contacts with native tribes/peoples and we read of Roberts' own encounters with people who have never seen a white man before. This chapter delves into questions of anthropology.

In the next to last chapter, entitled *The Undiscovered Earth*, Roberts writes about caving and cave diving - cave diving in the Yucatan in the cenotes (sink holes in the karst topography), and other places, and the exploration of caves all over the world.

In Roberts' last chapter he delves into *The Future of Adventure*. It's in this chapter that he writes more about the philosophy of adventure and his own personal journey, close to the end of his life, which becomes more like a memoir.

What's interesting about this book is that Roberts intersperses his travels/experiences and his knowledge gleaned from them, among the various chapters, whether it's as a mountaineer or as a freelance adventure writer. What's clear about David Roberts is that he has an extremely broad knowledge of exploration literature and conveys that knowledge well. It's impossible to do justice to the depth of his writing and the breadth of his understanding in such a short review about this book.

--Dick Forrest

"What's interesting about this book is that Roberts intersperses his travels/experiences and his knowledge gleaned from them, among the various chapters, whether it's as a mountaineer or as a freelance adventure writer."

~ Dick Forrest



Future Events in 2023

May 19-21 - (NH) White Mt. Greenleaf Hut Trip led by Karen Markham

June 23-25 - (NH) White Mt. Sampler organized by Al Goodhind

July 14-16 - (NY) ADK Heart Lake led by Dick and Sue Forrest

September 11-15 - (ME) Acadia National Park led by Erin Squires and Lori Tisdell

September 23 - (NY) NYC Trip led by Jeanne Kaiser and Gary Dolgoff

October 16-20 - (MA) Cape Cod Trip led by Cheryl Stevens and Deb Bombard

PVHC 2022-2023 Executive Board



Left to Right: Lori Tisdell, President; Erin Squires, Vice President; Peggy Tibbitt, Treasurer; Lani Giguere, Secretary

Fun Pin Awards for Completing Hikes

PVHC has started a new Fun Pin Award for participating in hikes with the club. There are three pins that members can earn:

1. **10 Hikes with PVHC**
2. **10 Mountains/Summits with PVHC**
3. **10 Trails with PVHC**

There is no double or triple dipping. One hike can be used for just one hike or summit or trail. You can count weekly hikes, summits or trails more than once if you do them on different dates. Examples - the Monday Morning hike can be used several times in the hikes log as long as you do them on different dates, Mt Holyoke can be listed several times as long as it is hiked on different dates, same with trails.

We hope you have fun hiking with PVHC and earning your Pins!

The logs for each pin are posted on the club website. Once completed you may turn it in at a club meeting for your pin award.

Slide Show Photos

Please send all slide show photos for the 2023 PVHC Holiday Party multimedia slide show to the following email address:
pvhcpictures@gmail.com

Important Membership Renewal Notices

The following memberships are up for renewal:

May Renewals

Jill Abramsen
James & Diane Brown
Deborah Cook
Steven & Amy Dane
Nora Dryjowicz
Deb Gebo
Carol Giguere
Marin Goldstein
Marie Hart
Marsha Hertel
Tom Lake
Phyllis Levenson
Lisa Martial/Timothy Webster
Peggy McLennan
Ron & Eleanor Morrisette
Karen O'Connor
Michael Reed
Elsa Rosenak
John Rothery
Karen Savoy
Erin, Peter, Emily Squires
Bob/Georgene Trombley
David Vibber
Janice Webb
Alison Wondriska
Celeste Ziemba & John Gorey

June Renewals

Judy Alfano
Renee Brown
Bill Burgart & Marianne Huber
Allison Cook
Barbara Davis
Rachel Davis
Robert Duclos
Gina Geck
Melanie Greenman
Richard Harrington
Marie Holmes
Wendy Katz
Barbara Keough
Peter & Beth Ouellette
Ed Page
Susan Space
Jim & Peggy Tibbitt
Whitney Wilson

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:

Peggy Tibbitt
413 South Gulf Rd.
Belchertown, MA 01007

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

Pioneer Valley Hiking Club Officers

Lori Tisdell, President
Erin Squires, Vice President
Peggy Tibbitt, Treasurer
Lani Giguere, Secretary
Ray Tibbetts, Founder

Standing Committee Chairs

Hike Schedule: Lori Tisdell & Michele Wolf
Backpacking Advisor: Rick Briggs
Trail Maintenance: Chip Pray & Rob Schechtman
Club Website Editor: Dick Forrest
Non-Member E-mail Coordinator: Rob Schechtman
Club E-mail Coordinator: Lori Tisdell
Quartermaster: Mike Carrier
Bootprints Newsletter Editor: Dick Forrest

Bootprints is a publication of the Pioneer Valley Hiking Club. Please email your story/event contributions to Dick Forrest at: dforrest@charter.net

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mar

Shana Mothewrway
Karen Normand
Victoria Worth

Apr

Megan Bergin
Bev Dyer
Christine Jonas (Labich)
Holly Keith
James Krupp
Annie Nelson
Laura Oppedisano
Joanne Quirk
Noreen Rodgers & Bill Deskin
Laura Vizenor
David Weinberg



UPCOMING EVENTS AND THE USUALS

- Mondays Morning hike
- Tuesdays Morning hike, evening hike
- Wednesdays Morning hike
- Thursdays Morning hike
- Fridays
- Saturdays Morning hike
- Sundays Morning hike
- Jan 3 (2023) (MA) Club Meeting
- Mar 7 (MA) Club Meeting
- PVHC <https://teamup.com/kszb8qkbizhndt3qjt7>
- Schedule of Events

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Next Club Meetings

May 2, 7 p.m. at **ROC**
 June 6, 7 p.m. at **ROC**

ROC - Red Oak Church, 337 Piper Road, West Springfield

Deadline for submissions to the next *Footprints* is June 20, 2023

**** Check out our club website at:**
www.pioneervalleyhikingclub.org

Members may join the PVHC Email List by sending a message to:
pvhc.hikingclub@gmail.com



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 P.O. Box 225
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