

**Franklin County by Foot and Paddle
Doug Dunlap
Progress Report July 15, 2020 for
July 1-July 15**

Mid-July! Mid-summer!

Stepping up to face down COVID-19

Thank you all so very, very much for contributing to the United Way of the Tri-Valley during the COVID-19 pandemic. You are making a difference!

Needs stemming from the pandemic for food, clothing, and shelter; for support to our children, our working and out-of-work families; and for essentials of many kinds for our senior neighbors and friends – these are extraordinary, and they continue.

The United Way is an absolutely essential safety net umbrella organization for key services in Franklin County.

Let us continue to come together as a community. Neighborliness, the spirit of community, generosity – this is who we are in Franklin County. Over the years we have faced the flood of the century; the ice storm of the century; countless blizzards; power outages, and the horrific gas explosion of September 2019. Now we face COVID-19, limiting its spread, and countering its impact – together.

Most everyone is doing something extra – caring for children whose day-to-day has taken a different course during the pandemic, looking out for senior parents or grandparents – perhaps helping them to shop, or to dispel loneliness; keeping a small business going and thereby looking out for loyal employees and the community that uses that business; making protective masks to limit spread of this very contagious virus; volunteering at one of the county's many food pantries; checking on neighbors... on and on, in countless kind and thoughtful acts.

One of those acts is to support the United Way in the dozens of ways it helps our most vulnerable children and adults

Thank you for your generosity!

Oh, yes! Remember a walk (or a paddle, or bike ride, or wheel chair ride) in the outdoor setting of Franklin County offers a fine way to gain peace of mind, to find “calm in the storm”, spend quiet time alone or with people dear to you, reflect upon what is good and the kindnesses of others – and it costs little or nothing!

Highlights:

Walks south and north – and a few miles not counted!

Walking Temple Stream for four hours in the rain, watching newly-high waters cascade into deep pools, swirl, rush and roar downstream on the way to the Sandy River and the sea; summiting Saddleback on a 360 degree view day for the second time this summer; exploring back roads and hills of Farmington, Wilton, and Industry; venturing into little-visited north-lying Davis, Lang, and Tim Pond Townships; making my way to the top of 3791' East Kennebago Mountain – which does not have a maintained hiking trail; spotting my first coyote, first mink, and first tortoise of 2020 – that is some of the action of the first two weeks in July!

People Along the Way

I have enjoyed so much meeting people along the way. One sunny morning I met an 87-year old Wilton resident while walking on Walker Hill in East Wilton. We stood in the shade of high maples, as he chatted with me at length about the history of the town, the heyday of Bass Shoe Company, the sheep farms and chicken farms that were once common. On another walk I met an Industry farmer and his grandson, spending time together in the outdoors. He spoke to me of Industry history, and old roads I might consider for future walks. One day on a Farmington back road I met a mother and her two young boys, ages 5 and 7. The boys excitedly told me of their hike to Tumbledown Pond a few days before. Meeting people is a much a joy on these walks is the ever-changing scenery and sightings of wildlife.

The North Country

On days when I have the time, I head north, venturing into the remote swath of the county that lies north of the 45th parallel between Rangeley and Oquossoc to the west, and Stratton-Eustis to the east. Here rise some of the highest trail-less peaks in the eastern USA, many of them little known even to the people who live here. East Kennebago, Whitecap, Kennebago Divide, and Snow Mountain/Cupsuptic, are just a few of these. There are countless pristine back-country ponds; long, long views toward the boundary mountains where Maine and Quebec touch; and immersion in the magnificent northern forest that sweeps east-west across the northern USA, and extends far north to the Canadian interior.

Side Trip

My Franklin County mileage would have been a bit higher, but our family headed to Pemaquid for a 4th of July getaway. (I walked there, but am not counting those miles in my Franklin County 2020 totals.) This was our first venture outside Franklin County since COVID-19 made its major impact on Maine in March 2020. We kept to COVID-19 precautions, and were pleased that in the Pemaquid-Damariscotta

area, communities and business were united in those precautions. I did walk daily, including a 5-mile walk to Pemaquid Point lighthouse, where I watched a gathering of eider duck feed just off the rocky point while the breakers rolled in.

Discovery Mode

Walking has always been a source of joy and discovery for me. Now that I am intentional about walking every day, I am seeing and hearing anew. Mid-summer flowers now appear: bright red-purple fireweed; gold-petaled brown-eyed Susan's; pearly everlastings; mountain ash; an astonishing variety of wildlife (including the aforementioned coyote, mink and tortoise) dramatic cloud formations, from wisps to thunderheads; the symphony of a rising and falling wind as I walk on Mosher Hill, or Walker Hill, or Voter Hill. One day I enjoyed lunch overlooking the Sandy River Valley and Farmington, from the heights of Voter Hill, in the shade of a great sugar maple.

In case you are wondering: that coyote? I was on high on the side of East Kennebago Mountain. One look at me and – whoosh! Coyote made fast for deep woods. It wanted nothing to do with me!

Your Journey?

A wise person once advised me *When I tire of the world news, I make my own news.*

What she meant by her *own news*, was to go for a walk; or read a book to a child; or teach a daughter or son to fish or to paddle; or make something out of wood; or bake something from scratch; or make a campfire in the backyard and look up at the stars.

I learned in these past two weeks of a family that is searching out Franklin County waterfalls, visiting a different one each weekend. There are neighbors of mine who are up early and walking every day – reporting to me of sightings of deer, fox, porcupine – even a fisher. Other neighbors walk each evening as their young children bike beside them.

Give yourself the gift of time during these most challenging times. Walk, paddle, pedal, roll – whatever works for you. Make your own news!

Say Hello!

I enjoy meeting people on these walks. Say *hello!* Happy to chat with you!

Shop locally

As I head to the small towns of Franklin County, I make a point of buying some gas and supplies at local stores. Let's help the local economy.

Doug's Miles

As of July 15, I have traveled **766.3 miles**. I have passed the three-quarter mark! Just under 250 miles to go!

The next 10 weeks should be VERY interesting. A proliferation of mid-summer thunderstorms, and a stretch of hot and humid weather call for careful planning.

With the goal of walking or paddling in as many of Franklin County's townships as I can, I will be heading far north – which requires more driving time, and likely some overnights in our remote north country.

When I cannot work a long drive into the day, I continue to explore the foothills of southern Franklin County. Much beauty here!

Do wave and say hello as I pass by!

***Be safe and well during this pandemic.
We will get through it by helping one another,
and holding a positive outlook.***

May you find peace of mind in our Franklin County outdoors.

Thank You!

Doug Dunlap

Miles Completed

March: 114.5

April: 205

May: 219.5

June: 168.1

July 1- July 15: **63.2**

Total March 15-July 15: **766.3 miles**

Towns/Townships Visited on the Journey

*** = Visited July 1-July 15**

Avon
Carthage
Chesterville
Coplin
Dallas Plantation*
Davis Township*
Farmington*
Freeman
Industry*
Kingfield
Lang Township*
Mount Abram Township
New Sharon
New Vineyard
Perkins Plantation
Phillips
Rangeley*
Rangeley Plantation
Salem
Sandy River Plantation*
Stetsonville Township*
Strong
Temple*
Tim Pond Township*
Township 6 North of Weld
Washington Plantation
Weld
Wilton*
Wyman

Points of Interest

Abbott Park
Bald Mountain (south of Weld)
Blanchard Ponds*
Bigelow Preserve
The Cascades (Farmington Fairgrounds vicinity)
Cascade Gorge – Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust
Chesterville Esker
Chesterville Wildlife Management Area (Little Norridgewock Stream)
Clifford Woods
Cook Hill
Cowan Hill
Cranberry Peak
Daggett's Rock
East Kennebago Mountain*
Foothills Conservancy, Wilton
Haley Pond
Herrick, Hunter, Pratt Mountain Area
Kennebago Lake*
Kennebago River
Kimball Pond
Little Jackson Mountain
Madrid
McIntire Pond
Mosher Hill*
Mount Abraham Public Lands
Mount Blue
Mount Blue State Park
Nina's Woods
Orbeton Stream Conservation Area
Porter Lake
Rangeley Lakes Trails Center
Rapid Stream
Sand Pond
Saddleback Lake*
Saddleback Mountain*
Saddleback northern foothills – Oakes Nubble area;
Saddleback Wind Mountain (Carthage)
South Bog Stream – Forrest Bonney Stream Restoration Section
Temple Stream*
Tree of Life Trail – Franklin Memorial Hospital*
Tumbledown-Jackson Maine Public Lands
Tumbledown Pond
Voter Hill*

Walker Hill/Orchard Drive area – Wilton
Walker Hill/Morrison Hill - Wilton
Whistle Stop Trail – Wilton and Farmington*
Varnum Pond

Established Trails Walked

Bigelow Range Trail
Bald Mountain/Saddleback Wind Trail*
Cascade Gorge
Cascades, Mosher Hill
Little Jackson Trail
Mount Blue Trail
Rangeley Lakes Trails Center
Saddleback – Gray Ghost/Tricolor*
South Bog Stream
Tree of Life/FMH*
Whistle Stop Trail – Wilton, Farmington *

Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, Streams Paddled

Haley Pond
Kennebago River
Little Kennebago Lake
Saddleback Lake*
Wilson Lake

Wildlife

* = **FIRST sighting of 2020, July 1-July 15**

Birds (Partial list)

Bald eagle
Black duck
Bluebird
Blue jay
Brown Thrasher

Canada goose
Catbird
Chickadee
Goldfinch
Ruffed grouse (“partridge”)
Hairy, Downy, Pileated woodpeckers
Loon
Mallard
Mourning dove
Osprey
Red-winged blackbird
Song sparrow
Tree swallow
Towhee
Wild turkey
Wood duck

“Critters”

Beaver
Black bear
Bobcat (track)
Chipmunk
Coyote*
Mink*
Moose (track and sign)
Pine marten (track)
Red fox
Red squirrel
Snowshoe hare*
Tortoise*
Weasel
Whitetail deer

Wildflowers (Partial List)

Azalea (wild)
Bluebead lily
Blueberry
Bunchberry
Bluet
Canada Mayflower
Coltsfoot
Cotton sedge
Dandelion

Diapensia*
Fireweed*
Goat's beard
Lady Slipper (white)
Mountain Ash*
Mullein*
Pearly everlasting
Red maple
Saxifrage
Serviceberry (aka June berry)
Starflower
Sumac
Trillium - painted
Trillium - purple
Trout lily
Violet
Wild oat
Yellow rocket

Trees

Apple (wild/volunteer/abandoned)
Alder
Ash, black
Beech
Birch, white
Birch, gray
Birch, yellow
Cedar, white
Fir, balsam
Hemlock
Hawthorn
Hobblebush
Larch
Maple, rock (sugar)
Maple, red
Maple, striped (moose)
Oak, red
Pine, red
Pine, white
Popple (Aspen); big toothed and small-toothed
Spruce, red

Next Report August 1, 2020