

**Franklin County by Foot and Paddle  
Doug Dunlap**

**Progress Report  
August 1, 2020 for  
July 16-July 31**

**On to Month Three of Our Maine Summer!**

August! Some dub this month “high summer”, opening with some of the warmest days of the year, and typically closing out with cool evenings. Some of the better hiking weather comes with August. As for water time, our cold northern waters usually moderate to be comfortably cool, if not downright warm.

Wild raspberries are ripe! Blueberries are about to follow! Nothing sweeter, fresher than the berries you find in the wild. So what if most of them get eaten before you arrive back home. What a great thing to do with kids, grandkids, a dear friend – or even by yourself as you enjoy a summer day. If there are any berries remaining, berry-packed muffins or pancakes are simple to make.

**Peace and Quiet**

I hope very sincerely, that you are making time to find peace of mind, quiet beauty, and refreshing simplicity, in our Franklin County outdoors. . On my daily walks and paddling, I often meet people who are re-discovering the world of mountain views; regular walks to start or close the day; sightings of summer birds; the cycle of wild flowers; the music of a running brook. In the past two weeks I met a family on an overnight camping trip near Rangeley. The kids told me excitedly about a talent show they had put on the evening before. In another conversation in recent days, a couple described a scavenger hunt they organized for their children and grandchildren – around finding a wildflower, spotting a bird or squirrel or chipmunk, sketching a cloud formation.

This is simple, homemade fun. Those kids will never forget it.

**Your Generosity to the United Way**

Then there is your generosity – in the form of your donations to the United Way. As people learn of the full range of extraordinary efforts related to COVID-19 that the United Way of the Tri-Valley makes possible, they are donating in increasing numbers.

Did you know that the United Way’s services extend county-wide – to Eustis and Rangeley, Salem, Phillips, Strong, Kingfield, Weld – to every one of our Franklin County towns. I have been heartened to learn that the United Way funded the Rangeley Public Schools Student Assistance Team for COVID-19 expenses; and the

Stratton-Eustis Lions Club “Pack a Snack” project for school children in that community. The Franklin County Children’s Task Force has opened an office in Rangeley to serve families with young children there, supported by the United Way. These are a few of the many essential services, so vital during the pandemic, that the United Way makes possible – again, countywide.

Food, clothing, shelter, childcare, and support for persons at risk during the pandemic – the United Way is filling gaps in care and service. This is as authentic neighbors helping neighbors as one can get.

Thank you for your generosity!

### **Highlights of the 1000-Mile Journey July 15-31**

#### **Into the North Country – Along With Fine South-lying Walks Too!**

Let us begin with my delightful walk up the Chesterville Hill Road toward Blazon Hill, early one July morning. Magnificent red oak trees rise at the higher elevation of the road, offering welcome shade on a rapidly warming day. Northward, through the trees I have glimpses of Mt. Blue and neighboring mountains. Eighty-foot high hemlock grow on the hill as well, some 18-24” in diameter – these great conifers are impressive.

Along the way I chat with two women sitting in the shade, knitting – one holding the yarn, unwinding it from a ball of light blue; the other working the knitting needles. The project? A winter hat. We all laughed about how it would not be long before that cap would be part of the daily wardrobe. Another resident pointed out the flowers in her garden. “I have planted more flowers, a different kinds of flowers this year. It is my proclamation of hope during the pandemic.” How about that!

Another day I return to Temple, to walk the Clover Mill Road, and Route 43 – making a great loop with Temple Stream never far off. Another hot day, but with frequent shade. I enjoy these road walks, with the mix of hardwoods and conifers, the continual calling of summer warblers, doves, and what have you – and the rattling away of pileated, hairy, and downy woodpeckers. Can’t beat the price of this concert.

I accumulated quite a few miles in these two weeks, as I set out to walk a great loop completely around Rangeley Lake. My starting and ending point was the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust headquarters in downtown Rangeley. Along the way, I stopped at every hiking trail leading to the lake, to include those trails in my walk.

A few sections I covered earlier in the month, but I completed most of this walk between 7/23 and 7/31.

Where did I walk? Here goes!

- ATV trail/bushwhack to the Forestry Museum hiking trails on Haley Pond – and the Forestry Museum
- Snowmobile trail (ITS 89) to Dallas.
- Trail and road to Rangeley Trails Center near Saddleback
- Fly Rod Crosby Trail, Rock Pond to Cascade Gorge\*
- Road walk Cascade Gorge to Rangeley State Park, and into the park to walk two park trails
- South Bog Stream trails (two)\*
- Snowmobile Trail ITS 84 to Highway 17
- Road walk to Bald Mountain
- Bald Mountain summit to Rangeley Guides Association Tim Baker Nature Trail, via herd path and snowmobile route
- Rangeley River Trail\*
- Outdoor Sporting Heritage Museum, Oquossoc
- Road walk Highways 4/16 east to Rangeley, with side hikes to Bonney Point\*; Hunter Cove Upland\*; Hunter Cove Wildlife Sanctuary\*; Mingo Springs Birding Trail; and Hatchery Brook Conservation area\*

\* Trails managed by the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust. The Director of RLHT, David Miller joined me for part of the hike. Amanda Laliberte, Director of RLHT Communication and Programs; and Maine Guide Pete Christensen, helped me with all-important vehicle shuttles

One day I stepped away from the loop hike to walk the Appalachian Trail from the Highway 17 overlook south of Oquossoc to the Highway 4 AT crossing south of Rangeley near Sandy River Ponds. I did this with Rangeley friends, Guide Pete Christensen, and seasoned-hiker Jen Atwood.

### **The North Country**

During these two weeks I ventured north of Rangeley for two particularly enjoyable outings. One day I hiked to the summit of Snow Mountain in Alder Stream Township. Snow is 3960' elevation, just shy of 4000'. Its elevation places it on the New England One Hundred Highest list. I had summited Snow previously, and always look forward to the remarkable view *southward* to the highest peaks of Franklin County – Saddleback, the Crocker and Redington Ranges, for example. The trail, which is on land of the Penobscot nation, is unmarked. If you anticipate a hike here, you must have sound navigation skills, and be equipped and skilled for self-rescue. The fine views extend to Quebec, which is closer to the summit than is Eustis.

Paddling the North Branch of the Dead River from cathedral Pines to the Eustis Dam was my other far north trip. I slipped my one-person canoe into the water in late afternoon, and enjoyed the company of black ducks and a loon. The afternoon sun cast cool shadows across the water. On the return I had a straight-ahead view of the Bigelow Range. Quite the sight!

### **Along the Way**

Where do I begin? Mountain view after mountain view: the Saddleback Range; the Redington Pond Range; Beaver Mountain, Four Ponds Mountain; Quill Hill; Bemis Mountain Range; Spotted Mountain. From the tower atop Bald Mountain I had a look at Mt. Washington in New Hampshire; Mt. Gosford in Quebec; and the twin Horn Peaks of the Bigelow Range. Water? I had a great swim from the grass beach at Rangeley State Park, stood on the snowmobile bridge over the Rangeley River watching the water race towards Mooselookmeguntic Lake. Room does not permit me to describe every wildflower, perching bird, or waterfowl, but believe me, there was a new discovery each day – including my first skunk, the mysterious white flower dubbed “Indian pipes”, ripening wintergreen, and my first wild blueberry of the season. All free.

### **People**

When I walk locally, I frequently meet old friends, and enjoy a good COVID-19 socially distanced talk. There are also the perfect strangers who strike up a conversation, often telling me of their favorite places to walk in our county.

As I pass the Rangeley Plantation (not the town, but the Plantation) Town Office, I notice that it is open. In I go where I met Elizabeth Swiney, who manages the office. The building is in a former schoolhouse. She describes the history, which extends back to the early 1800's. A chalkboard runs the full length of one wall. Oak paneling and trim reminds me of the two-room schoolhouse I attended in Chesterfield New Hampshire where I began school in first grade. (There was no kindergarten back then.)

Another people story. To help with my route planning for the Rangeley loop walk, I stopped in at Boss Power Equipment in Rangeley, walking through a mighty impressive display of off-road vehicles to ask about ATV and snowmobile trails. They probably do not get many hikers there, but were just great in talking with me about alternative routes. I returned a few days later to thank them.

## **Say Hello!**

I enjoy meeting people on these walks. When I am on a road, I wave to vehicles as they pass by – perhaps I have waved to you. If you are outside as I go by, say *hello!* Happy to chat with you!

## **Shop locally**

Kindly remember to make some of your purchases this summer – all year round, really – at the local retailers and gas stations in our smaller towns. They serve our communities throughout the year. Summer business makes it possible to do that. Shop locally!

## **Doug's Miles**

As of July 31 I have traveled **838.7 miles**. I have passed the three-quarter mark! Just under 250 miles to go!

The next 10 weeks should be VERY interesting. I look forward to time in the northern tip of Franklin County, with long driving times, and perhaps some backpacking. I also hope to hike a Kingfield-Carrabassett loop; and a Stratton-Eustis loop. Before I complete the walk I also aim to walk from Jay to Chesterville to New Sharon – perhaps even to Industry and Farmington.

North or south – there is so much good country to explore, and so many good people to meet along the way.

***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

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**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**

**July 15-July 28: 71.4**

**Total: 838.7**

**Towns/Townships Visited on the Journey**

**\* = Visited July 15-July 31**

Alder Stream\*

Avon

Carthage

Chesterville\*

Coplin

Dallas Plantation\*

Davis Township

Eustis\*

Farmington

Freeman

Industry

Kingfield

Lang Township

Mount Abram Township

New Sharon

New Vineyard

Perkins Plantation

Phillips

Rangeley\*  
Rangeley Plantation\*  
Salem  
Sandy River Plantation\*  
Seven Ponds Township\*  
Stetsonville Township  
Strong  
Temple\*  
Tim Pond Township  
Township "D"\*  
Township "E"\*  
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 Hill/Blabon Hill\*  
Chesterville Wildlife Management Area (Little Norridgewock Stream)  
Clifford Woods  
Cook Hill  
Cowan Hill  
Cranberry Peak  
Daggett's Rock  
East Kennebago Mountain  
Flagstaff Lake – North Branch Dead River\*  
Fly Rod Crosby Trail\*  
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  
Quill Hill\*  
Rangeley Lakes Trails Center  
Rapid Stream  
Rock & Midway Ponds\*  
Sand Pond  
Saddleback Lake\*  
Saddleback Mountain\*  
Saddleback northern foothills – Oakes Nubble area;  
Saddleback Wind Mountain (Carthage)  
Snow Mountain\*  
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  
Fly Rod Crosby Trail\*  
Hatchery Brook Conservation Area\*  
Hunter Cove Upland\*  
Hunter Cove Wildlife Preserve\*  
Little Jackson Trail  
Maine Forestry Museum Trails\*  
Mingo Spring Birding Trails\*  
Mount Blue Trail

Quill Hill Wheelchair Trail\*  
Rangeley Lakes Trails Center  
Rangeley River Trail\*  
Rangeley State Park: Shore Trail and Moose Corridor\*  
Saddleback – Gray Ghost/Tricolor\*  
South Bog Stream (2)\*  
Tim Baker Nature Trail\*  
Tree of Life/FMH\*  
Whistle Stop Trail – Wilton, Farmington \*

### **Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, Streams Paddled**

Haley Pond  
Hunter Cove, Rangeley Lake\*  
Kennebago River  
Little Kennebago Lake  
Saddleback Lake\*  
Wilson Lake

### **Wildlife**

**\* = FIRST sighting of 2020, July 15-July 31**

#### **Birds (Partial list)**

Bald eagle  
Black duck  
Bluebird  
Blue jay  
Brown Thrasher  
Canada goose  
Catbird  
Chickadee  
Goldfinch  
Gray Jay\*  
Great Horned Owl\*  
Ruffed grouse (“partridge”)  
Hairy, Downy, Pileated woodpeckers  
Junco\*  
Loon  
Mallard  
Mourning dove

Osprey  
Red-winged blackbird  
Song sparrow  
Tree swallow  
Towhee  
Wigeon  
Wild turkey  
Wood duck

**“Critters”**

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

**Wildflowers/plants/mosses (Partial List)**

Azalea (wild)  
Bluebead lily  
Blueberry  
Bunchberry  
Bluet  
Canada Mayflower  
Club moss\*  
Coltsfoot  
Cotton sedge  
Dandelion  
Diapensia\*  
Fireweed\*  
Goat's beard  
Goldenrod\*  
Hawkweed\*  
Lady Slipper (white)

Milkweed\*  
Mountain Ash\*  
Mullein\*  
Old man's beard lichen\*  
Pearly everlasting  
Peat moss\*  
Queen Anne's Lace\*  
Red maple  
Mountain rue\*  
Saxifrage  
Serviceberry (aka June berry)  
Starflower  
Sumac  
Trillium - painted  
Trillium - purple  
Trout lily  
Violet  
Water Lily and Bull's eye water lily\*  
Wild oat  
Wintergreen\*  
Wood sorrel\*  
Yellow rocket

### **Trees**

Apple (wild/volunteer/abandoned)  
Alder  
Ash, black  
Beech  
Birch, white  
Birch, gray  
Birch, yellow  
Cedar, white  
Elm\*  
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

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**Next Report August 15, 2020**