

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

**Progress Report
August 15, 2020**

For walks and hikes; and travel by kayak and canoe, August 1-15

How About You?

First, I hope so very dearly that you who read this are well, and are caring for yourself and those dear to you, during these so very difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Too, I hope that there is time and energy in your life to extend your caring to those whom you do not know, or do not know well – your neighbors of Franklin County. Those are high hopes. Those are true hopes.

If the times are overwhelming for you, I encourage you to call the United Way

About what? Food, clothing, shelter; about being alone or perhaps overwhelmed at how to care for yourself, your child, your aging parents or grandparents, or your family member with a disability; your needs as a veteran; with matters of domestic violence, alcohol and other drugs; with how to pay utility bills – again, matters that seem overwhelming. Get connected to the Maine – and Franklin County - safety net.

Call at 207-78-5048. Or 24 hours/day, call 211 where there is someone to speak with 24 hours per day. The 211 service is connected with the United Way of Maine. You are not alone!

You and the Franklin County Outdoors

We live in one of the world's most beautiful, and readily reached, outdoor settings. Within minutes of wherever you live in this county, there is a quiet trail, or a park, or a spot near water, that can be reached at no cost or little cost, for a time of peace of mind.

During the season of COVID-19, many, many individuals and families are discovering the benefit of simple time spent in the outdoors. I welcome you to join me in those discoveries.

A new habit of a morning or evening walk, sitting by woods or water for a few minutes each day - bringing children with you, perhaps – can be a move in support of your own well-being. I write “walk”; but that includes “roll”! I know of neighbors in our county who are mobile by wheel chair, and who make a point of sending time outdoors, each day.

Your Own Foot and Paddle Effort in Support of the United Way

You are welcome to donate to the United Way of the Tri-Valley in connection with my 1000 mile journey – or you might make your own plan.

You as an individual, or you as a family, might set your sights on, say, a quarter mile walk per day, or 10 miles per week, or whatever basis works for you. Put a penny or a nickel or a dime in a jar for each outing.

We are in this together!

Now, the Report for the First Half of August

Highlights of the 1000-Mile Journey August 1-15

A Bobcat, the Canadian Pacific Railroad, and Sugarloaf at Dawn!

Such a time! During this 15-day period I sighted my first bobcat – ever! Where? In a township bordering Canada? Nope – in Farmington, on the Whistle Stop Trail. Earlier this summer I saw a black bear. Where? Seven Ponds? Township “D”? Nope! Morrison Hill, Wilton!

During this two-week period I have explored Kingfield, Mt. Abram Township, and Carrabassett Valley; the Rangeley region; the distant townships of Jim Pond, Kibby, Skinner, Lowelltown, Merrill Strip, and Beattie; and West Farmington!

Inspired by a Map Collection

While walking a loop around Rangeley Lake in July, I stopped at the Outdoor Sporting Heritage Museum in Oquossoc. The museum guide, Avery Boucher of Farmington, led me to a new map display, set up just this summer. There I looked over map after map of Franklin County. I was fascinated at how some townships that today have little settlement, once had dozens of families, and in some instances, schools, and a post office. Along what is now the Canadian Pacific Railroad line between Halifax and Montreal, there were settlements like Lowelltown and Skinner where the train made whistle stops.

I have decided to make the effort to visit every township, in the county. It has been on my mind since I began the project. Having seen those old maps – I am all the more hopeful of doing that.

Highlights

I hiked the farthest north-lying peak of my journey, Kibby Mountain, in Skinner Township. Striking views of the Bigelow Range and Flagstaff Lake, well to the *south!* Turn west and northwest, and there long the irregular line of mountains that mark the border between Maine and Quebec rise trailless peaks, little known: Sisk, Van Dyke. Due north the land falls away to the valley of the Moose River, on its way to Moosehead lake, to feed the Kennebec, its waters running to the sea at Merrymeeting Bay.

Along the valley of the Moose River runs the Canadian Pacific Railroad, the line that reaches from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Montreal. Decades ago there were a handful of settlements along the way. Armed with topo maps and a GPS, well-supplied with extra gas, food, overnight gear if I needed it, a full-sized spare and well-working jack – before the day was over I had reached the track.

4000 Footers

Another adventure was to hike three of our county's peaks over 4000': Abraham (Abram) , Spaulding, and Sugarloaf. Rising before dawn from my overnight camp, I hiked to the summit of Sugarloaf to watch the sunrise. Watching the sun slip above the eastern horizon, throwing morning light upon the surrounding high peaks; Sugarloaf itself throwing long shadow westward – quite the sight! I followed that with a hike in to West Mountain Brook Falls on the north base of Sugarloaf, for a dip in the broad pool below the falls. Brisk!

Loons at the Bath

There were compelling quiet times as well. On a short paddle, I came upon two loons at mid-afternoon, preening. The two, spaced about 50 feet apart, clean their wing feathers. With their bills; dipped forward in what looked to me to be the rinse cycle; raised themselves in a short vertical out of the water, shaking their feathers. That sight, my friends, compares well with a Sugarloaf sunrise.

Southern Comfort

On days when I do not travel to the north, I enjoy hikes and walks local to Southern Franklin County. By walking to the top of Titcomb Mountain in West Farmington in these past days, I have completed hikes to every hill in Farmington – unless I am missing one! The others – Porter Hill, Cowen Hill, Mosher Hill, Titcomb Hill, Bailey Hill, Perham Hill, Chandler Hill. Have I missed any?

Wherever you live in Franklin County, there is a peaceful place in the woods or by the water, not very far away.

Say Hello!

I do 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. I spread my gas purchases throughout the county, and my trail food supplies as well. Shop locally!

Doug's Miles

Between August 1 and August 15 I logged 75.5 miles on foot and 3 miles paddling, for a total of 78.5 miles.

Total miles, March through August 15: **960.6** .

I have fewer than 40 miles to go before my end date of September 30, 2020!

Goal

The goal is within reach – but the next 6 weeks are complicated. Various late summer work projects will limit my available time. The parts of the county I have not yet explored on this adventure lie well to the north, and off-road, requiring long drives – the drive requiring more time than the hike or the paddle!

More Than Miles

1000 miles is the goal, an average of 5 miles per day from March through September.

But as I have walked and paddled all over this strikingly beautiful county, and met so many kind, generous, and good-natured people, other goals have developed – “more than miles”.

- Set foot or paddle in every township in Franklin County. (I have 3 to go)

- Reach local spots that are special to the townspeople. These exist in every community. An example is the Chesterville Esker; and Cathedral Pines trails in Eustis. (Pico in Industry; Spruce Mountain in Jay; and Chain of Ponds in the township of the same name, are among those I still hope to visit in 2020)
- Reach the summit of every 4000' + peak in the county.
- Walk from town to town. There are countless options. I would like to walk the southern rim towns, Jay-Chesterville-New Sharon, in one continuous walk. I have a few far north routes in mind, too, possibly with some bushwhacking involved.
- Meet more of the good people of Franklin County!

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: 180.1

August 1-15:78.5

Total (March 15-August 15): **960.6**

Towns/Townships Visited on the Journey

*** = Visited August 1-15**

Alder Stream
Avon
Beattie*
Carrabassett Valley*
Carthage
Chesterville
Coplin
Dallas Plantation*
Davis Township
Eustis
Farmington*
Freeman
Industry
Jim Pond*
Kibby *
Kingfield*
Lang
Lowelltown *
Madrid
Merrill Strip *
Mount Abram*
New Sharon
New Vineyard
Perkins Plantation
Phillips
Rangeley
Rangeley Plantation
Redington
Salem
Sandy River Plantation
Seven Ponds
Skinner *
Stetsonville
Strong
Temple
Tim Pond

Township "D"
Township "E"
Township 6 North of Weld (AKA Berlin Township)
Washington Plantation
Weld
Wilton
Wyman

Points of Interest

Abbott Park
Appalachian Trail*
Bailey Hill
Bald Mountain (south of Weld)
Blanchard Ponds
Bigelow Preserve
Canadian Pacific Railroad*
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
Dead River Pond*
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
Kibby Mountain
Kimball Pond
Little Jackson Mountain
Madrid
McIntire Pond
Canadian Pacific Railroad track*
Mosher Hill
Mount Abraham*
Mount Abraham Public Lands*

Mount Blue
Mount Blue State Park
Nina's Woods
Orbeton Stream Conservation Area
Passamaquoddy Nation Territory*
Penobscot Nation Territory•
Perham Hill
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
Spaulding Mountain*
Sugarloaf*
Temple Stream
Titcomb Mountain Trails*
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
West Mountain Brook Falls*
Whistle Stop Trail – Wilton and Farmington*
Varnum Pond

Established Trails Walked

Appalachian Trail*
Bigelow Range Trail
Bald Mountain/Saddleback Wind Trail
Cascades, Mosher Hill
Firewarden Trail, Mt. Abraham*
Fly Rod Crosby Trail
Hatchery Brook Conservation Area

Hunter Cove Upland
Hunter Cove Wildlife Preserve
Kibby Mountain Trail (maintained but not signed or blazed)*
Little Jackson Trail
Maine Forestry Museum Trails
Mingo Spring Birding Trails
Mount Abraham Spur Trail*
Mount Blue Trail
Narrow Gauge Bypass*
Narrow Gauge Pathway*
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)
Sugarloaf Mountain Connector Trail (South Side)*
Tim Baker Nature Trail
Tree of Life/FMH
West Mountain Brook Trail*
Whistle Stop Trail – Wilton, Farmington

Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, Streams Paddled

Dead River, North Branch (arm of Flagstaff Lake)
Haley Pond
Hunter Cove, Rangeley Lake
Kennebago River
Little Kennebago Lake
Saddleback Lake
Wilson Lake

Wildlife

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

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
Great Blue Heron
Junco
Loon
Mallard
Mourning dove
Osprey
Red-winged blackbird
Song sparrow
Tree swallow
Towhee
Wigeon
Wild turkey
Wood duck

“Critters”

Beaver
Black bear
Bobcat * (First sighting ever!)
Chipmunk
Coyote
Mink
Moose (bull and cow))
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)
Lousewort
Milkweed
Mountain Ash
Mullein
Old man's beard lichen
Pearly everlasting
Peat moss
Queen Anne's Lace
Red maple
Mountain rue
Saint Johnswort
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, alpine
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, black
Spruce, red

Next Report September 1, 2020