

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

**Progress Report
September 1, 2020**

**For walks and hikes; and travel by kayak and canoe, August 15-30
(August 31 to be included in September 15, 2020 report)**

1000 Miles – Still Discovering and Still Counting!

On the evening of Friday, August 21, my wife and I walked a one-mile loop on the Sandy River intervale in Farmington, to complete mile 1000 of my 2020, COVID-19 related journey of a thousand miles in Franklin County. The day had been one of those on/off rain, clouds, brief sun, which characterized a week of so in August. As we began our walk, one last brief sprinkle of rain fell, giving way to lifting clouds and the sight of the setting sun. From the south end of the intervale we enjoyed a long look northward toward Mt. Abraham (Abram), its high ground becoming visible as clouds there lifted, too.

This is a fitting setting to reach that milestone. We come here often, usually for an evening walk, to see what mood the Sandy is in – rattling over the rocks at low water, or flowing swiftly by when snowmelt or recent rain fills the riverbed. In the course of a year and seasons, we discover the new growth in the fields, and river-lining red maples and other hardwoods. We travel here on snowshoes in winter. What better way to draw a day to a peaceful close than to walk by a flowing stream, watch the light change as day shifts toward night, see all that grows and the sky itself, in a new, soft light.

What now? What next? Why, to continue on through September 30, the original date I set for this journey, this adventure – to call attention, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to the peace of mind that our Franklin County outdoors offers; and to raise visibility of the extraordinary service of the United Way of the Tri-Valley during these extraordinary times.

The United Way continues, therefore I shall do the same.

Discoveries: The United Way, Six Months into the Pandemic

I had thought that I knew about the United Way rather well prior to partnering with them for their service to our neighbors of Franklin County. Am I ever learning, discovering! This is our county's true "safety net".

As children and youth prepare, with hopefulness, for the new school year – one unlike any that I have seen before in my lifetime – the United Way is hard at

work preparing sets of school supplies, and for a snack program, to ensure that every young person has the materials needed, and the always helpful nutritional boost, to approach the day well supported. Most of our students will have two school sites – one at school, the other at home. Both sites require thought and preparation – and school supplies. The United Way is working full bore on this, from one end of Franklin County to the other.

But I have also learned of extraordinary outreach to our older residents. In recent weeks the United Way has assisted with applications for tax relief funds available to older people who have too little income to file a tax return. Many older people do not know of this opportunity. The United Way has helped to bring thousands of dollars rightfully due Franklin County citizens. That was quite a discovery!

I welcome you to become a partner to these courageous and thoughtful efforts by making a donation to the United Way of the Tri-Valley. Donate based upon my miles (A penny a mile equals \$10), or an outright donation in any amount. Check the website: uwtva.org for the details.

Discoveries: Out of the Way Places

Much as I enjoy hiking our high peaks, and paddling our expansive lakes, and extensive network of rivers and streams, I particularly enjoy finding out-of-the-way places for a quiet walk, or paddle, of short duration, but magnificent simplicity, beauty, and promise of peace.

As the weeks have passed, I have explored back roads and pathways that I find in the *Maine Atlas and Gazetteer*. In the process I discover quiet ponds, rarely visited by others; sometimes the remains of a former settlement evident from stonewalls, a field stone foundation, perhaps a cemetery. I have anew appreciation for the back roads near our home where I have walked for decades. My frequent walks spark my curiosity, sharpen my attentiveness. Here I have seen the succession of wildflowers from early spring to late summer; have spotted a pine marten, found new attention to how the wind blows before, during, and after a summer storm.

Discoveries: People!

A three-generational family out for a walk in the mountains north of Rangeley; an older man and his dog exploring the banks of the North Branch of the Dead River in Jim Pond Township; a woman and her dog on a Farmington back road. Folks are getting out, and doing so with intent, during these difficult times.

I stop and talk, and find their stories endearing. There is a common theme: discovering the joy of simple family time or personal time in the quietness of the outdoors. A 4-year old plays in a trailside pile of dirt on the trail to West Kennebago

Mountain. “He says his is looking for buried treasure “says his mother. “It doesn’t matter how far we go today. He is having a great time”.

Highlights of the 1000-Mile Journey August 15-30

Six of Franklin County’s eight 4000’ foot+ peaks: Abraham (Abram), Spaulding, Sugarloaf, South and North Crocker, Redington; completion of a Kingfield-Mt. Abram Township-Carrabasset Valley loop walk of about 35 miles – including a bivouac overnight camp sleeping in a tent hammock; a hike in the Saddleback area of another loop: Dallas Hill to the base of Saddleback by a circuitous route; back roads/abandoned pathways to beaver ponds and hillsides with far north-extending views; the Sandy River intervale and roads near home; a bit of bushwhacking now and then.

Two more townships reached – Chain of Ponds and Coburn Gore. Two townships in all of Franklin County remain, Massachusetts Gore and Gorham Gore. Neither one is easy to access, but I do hope to set foot and/or paddle in them before September 30!

When I summited West Kennebago Mountain on August 28, I completed a hike to every former fire tower peak whose summit or trailhead is in Franklin County. For long views, fire tower peaks are a good choice!

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

Total miles for August: 162.2.

Total Miles March 15, 2020-August 30, 2020: **1044.3**

Next?

More Than Miles

In September I continue the journey, with new, or renewed focus. I am inviting dear friends to join me on short outings, by foot or paddle, some less than one mile in length – to renew and affirm our ties and my gratitude for these friendships. Such as time and weather permit, I would like to summit Saddleback Horn, the only Franklin County 4000' peak I have not ascended this year; and re-hike the Appalachian Trail through Franklin County.

A goal precious to me is to walk again through our towns, as many as I can; road walks perhaps, back roads or trails where these are available. There are quite beautiful places to walk in every county town, there waiting for me, and for you.

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 30: 162.2

(August 31 to be included in September 15 report)

Total (March 15-August 30): **1044.3**

Towns/Townships Visited on the Journey

*** = Visited August 15-30**

Alder Stream
Avon
Beattie
Carrabassett Valley*
Carthage
Chain of Ponds*
Chesterville
Coburn Gore*
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
Chain of Ponds*
Chesterville Esker
Chesterville Hill/Blabon Hill
Chesterville Wildlife Management Area (Little Norridgewock Stream)
Clifford Woods
Cook Hill
Cowan Hill
Cranberry Peak
Crosby Pond*
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 Mountains
Jane's Pond*
Kennebago Lake
Kennebago River

Kibby Mountain
Kibby Stream
Kimball Pond
Little Jackson Mountain
Madrid
McIntire Pond
Canadian Pacific Railroad
Carrabassett River*
Moose River
Mosher Hill
Mount Abraham*
Mount Abraham Public Lands*
Mount Blue
Mount Blue State Park
Nina's Woods
Orbeton Stream Conservation Area
Owls Head*
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)
Sarampus Falls
Shadagee Falls*
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 Kennebago Mountain*
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
Longfellow Mountains Trail, Chain of Ponds*
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 Kennebago Mountain Trail *
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 15-30**

Birds (Partial list)

Bald eagle
Black duck
Bluebird
Blue jay
Broad winged hawk*
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
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 15, 2020