

Franklin County by Foot and Paddle Doug Dunlap

Progress Report May 16 - May 31, 2020

Why the Journey

I am walking – and paddling my kayak and canoe – 1,000 miles in Franklin County in spring and summer 2020, to encourage readers to enjoy the world-class woods and waters, foothills and high peaks, of our dear county – and to call attention to the dedicated, heroic work of our United Way agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic. From helping young families to care for their children, to reaching out to senior citizens who feel isolated and fearful, United Way affiliates are helping our neighbors in the finest Maine tradition.

Looking for some peace of mind? We have the landscape for quiet walks, gentle paddles. Want to tackle some big time outdoor terrain? We have that, too, with eight of Maine's 4000' elevation peaks (10, if we add Avery and West Peak in the Bigelow Range, which are in Somerset County), and the mighty waters of the Rangeley Lakes chain, and headwaters to the Kennebec River.

Chesterville, New Sharon, Temple, and the North Country

What a two-week stretch I have enjoyed! I rise early to take advantage of the extra hours of daylight in late spring, and head out in order to be done with the day's outing by mid-morning, when I am engaged in COVID-19 related volunteer work. A few days ago I parked at the Chesterville Wildlife Management Area on Little Norridgewock Stream, spent some time bird watching – and headed out for a 6-mile round trip walk on the Chesterville Esker. Gravel and sand deposits left by retreating glaciers constitute eskers, long, narrow embankments that in some places are well over 50' high. I have driven over this esker many times, but on foot I truly appreciate the rugged beauty. Horseshoe Pond and Norcross Pond parallel the base of the esker, and great stands of red oak rising on the esker ridge. A pileated woodpecker hammered away as I passed by. Quite the spot!

That was just one morning! On other days I hiked the foothills of the Kennebec Highlands in New Sharon, trekked back roads in Temple, paddled to the inlet of Wilson Stream in Wilson Lake, walked the high ground of Wilton along Orchard Drive and Walker Hill. Heading north, I have explored the Saddleback foothills, gaining rare angle views of the Redington Range and East Kennebago, and walking trails along Cascade Stream and South Bog Stream. On a weekend I kayaked Little Kennebago Lake, well north of Rangeley.

Your Journey

Join with me in spirit by taking your walks or hikes. Start with short distances, even the nearest power pole and back, increasing distance gradually. A daily habit of walking (or paddling) matters more than how many miles you cover. We live in one of the most beautiful outdoor settings in North America – right in our country “backyard.” Start a family tradition with evening walks, or whatever routine will work for you and your family.

Peace of mind, good exercise – and you can’t beat the price!

Doug’s Miles

During the latter part of May I passed the 500-mile mark, and have another 500 miles to go to reach my goal of 1000 miles by the end of summer in September. I hope to visit most towns in Franklin County. Doing that will reduce my daily miles because of travel time from my home in Southern Franklin. Mountain hikes will require more time per mile. There will be less daylight toward the end of the summer. This is not a “done deal”, but I am having a great time – benefiting from the exercise, spotting wildlife, and meeting very friendly people.

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.

Thank You!

A special thank you to those who are caring for a family member, devoting time to encourage a child in learning, looking in on your neighbors, or volunteering in some capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you, of course to those who are donating to the United Way as you follow my progress – or who are setting your own goals and donating accordingly.

Doug Dunlap

Miles Completed

March 2020: 114.5

April 2020: 205

May total: 219.5

Total: March 15-May 31: **539 miles**

Towns/Townships Visited on the Journey

Chesterville
Dallas Plantation
Farmington
Industry
New Sharon
New Vineyard
Rangeley Plantation
Sandy River Plantation
Stetsonville Plantation
Temple
Wilton

Points of Interest

Cascade Gorge – Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust
Chesterville Esker
Chesterville Wildlife Management Area) Little Norridgewock Stream)
Herrick, Hunter, Pratt Mountain Area
Kennebago River
Kimball Pond
McIntire Pond
Mosher Hill
Saddleback northern foothills – Rangeley Takes Trails Center
South Bog Stream – Forrest Bonney Stream Restoration Section
Walker Hill/Orchard Drive area - Wilton
Varnum Pond

Established Trails Walked

Cascade Gorge
Cascades, Mosher Hill
Rangeley Lakes Trails Center
South Bog Stream
Whistle Stop Trail – Wilton

Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, Streams Paddled

Kennebago River
Little Kennebago Lake
Wilson Lake

Other Passage

Bushwhacking Farmington foothills

Wildlife

Birds

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
Red-winged blackbird
Song sparrow
Tree swallow
Towhee
Wood duck

Mammals

Beaver
Bobcat (track)
Chipmunk
Coyote (track and sign)
Moose (track and sign)
Pine marten (track)
Red fox
Red squirrel
Snowshoe hare
Whitetail deer
Wild turkey

Wildflowers

Azalea (wild)
Blueberry
Bunchberry
Bluet
Coltsfoot
Dandelion
Red maple
Serviceberry (aka June berry)
Starflower
Trillium - painted
Trillium - purple
Trout lily
Violet
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)

Spruce, red

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