

Wachusett Views



Worcester Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club

WINTER 2025

A close-up view of our Chapter's vibrancy and dedication

Winter 2025 Letter from the Editor

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While there's something to love about every season, most people do have a favorite. And mine is winter! Here are a few reasons why winter is #1 to me. I love winter adventures. There's nothing like hiking on the trails in winter, it's glorious, peaceful, yet so invigorating. If I'm lucky, I'll see birds, squirrels, deer, and their tracks too. I can also ski in the winter! Every time I ski, cross country or downhill, I feel healthier, happier and more invigorated. And in winter, when I'm chilled, I warm up with a delicious steamy mug of hot chocolate or hot tea.

This newsletter is full of interesting articles. You'll hear from our new Chapter Chair, Wendy Dziemian, and find out what's happening with the Worcester Chapter. You'll read about a bridge building project on Worcester's East West hiking trail, and you'll learn about August Camp 2025. There's much, much more in this newsletter, get reading and ENJOY. My hope is that in reading this newsletter, you'll be inspired to join us. We need you to help us protect the great outdoors.

Bundle up, get out, and have fun this winter. It'll make you feel so alive!

Nancy, Communications Co-Chair

Nancy Cahn, Wachusett Views Editor

AMC Worcester Chapter
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Under the Red Felt Crusher



**Wendy Dziemian
AMC Worcester Chapter Chair**

As the New England seasons change from fall to winter, I am reminded of a quote from one of my favorite philosophers, Joseph Campbell. “The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with Nature.” For me, as the hustle and bustle of the holiday season winds down, I look forward to the time to turn inward and reflect. The process makes the coming possibilities in the spring even more exciting. When wintered over properly in the garden, did you know that turnips develop the sweetest flavor?

AMC Worcester's Conservation Book Club (known more casually by the rolls-off-the-tongue acronym AMCWCBC), celebrated their 1.4 year anniversary this December with a discussion on Juan Li's *Winter Pasture*, a memoir/travelogue/social commentary following the misfit author as she travels from her small village in northwestern China to winter with a family of migrating Kazakh herders. The AMCWCBC meets every other month to discuss conservation and conservation-adjacent books. According to the book club's host, Jake Scoggin, reading the book is always encouraged but never required. If you're interested in conservation, books, or fellowship, you're welcome. Meetings include time for eating and drinking, discussing the book, and creating book-related art. If you're interested in future meetings, you can search for: Conservation Book Club on activities.outdoors.org.

Autumn brought about many Chapter activities, including our Annual Meeting and Social and the beginning of the Winter Hiking Series, and a few evolutions, including a long awaited, well received revised AMC logo and changes to our leadership team. We're currently developing the agenda for our annual Planning Meeting to be held in January. This important gathering will help our 2025 Executive Committee strengthen our sense of community and identify Chapter specific goals and objectives that build upon the AMC's mission to foster the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the outdoors. Plans for the backpacking workshop and spring wilderness first aid training are underway and on the calendar.

Open to all, the AMC's Annual Summit on January 25th is a great opportunity for Chapter members to connect and learn. There is an impressive list of course offerings this year, including Saturday sessions from two of our own, 20s and 30s Chair, Luke Chapdelaine, and Bikepacking Leader, Karin Mackin. Details can be found [here](#).

In closing, I am honored once again to congratulate the recipients of our Chapter's 2024 special awards, recognize and appreciate outgoing executive committee members, and welcome new committee members. Kim Beauchemin is our Appie

of the Year. Joe Massery received the Chair Award. Pat Lambert was recognized as Volunteer of the Year and we can expect great things from our Rookie of the Year, Luke Chapdelaine. After many years of service to the Worcester Chapter, Charlie Arsenault is stepping down from his most recent role as Regional Director. Kim Beauchemin, Zenya and Alexandra Molnar, Christine Crepeault, David Elliott, Ruth Legg, Ladda Kosaketh, and Eric Harris are leaving their individual indelible marks on the executive committee. Welcome back to Ingrid Molnar and Steve Ciras in the roles of Social Chair and Regional Director and welcome Linea Rowe and Luke Chapdelaine to the roles of Secretary and 20s and 30s Chair. Special thanks to Christine Pignatiello-Chatson for being an exemplary Chair and sticking around to mentor me, and Nancy Cahn who offered to stay on a little bit longer as Communications Co Chair, so this winter edition of the Wachusett Views would be published before she steps down.

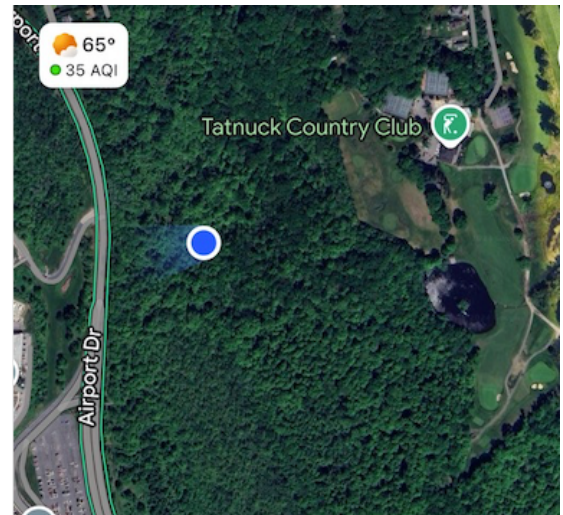
With deep appreciation and warmest regards,

Wendy Dziemian
Chapter Chair

Park Spirits of Worcester and the East West Trail

Rick Miller, President Park Spirits of Worcester

On October 7th of this year, a small group of eleven individuals, ten men and one woman, took part in a bridge building project on Worcester's East West hiking trail in a remote section of the trail near Worcester Airport. This ambitious project was made possible by a generous \$1000 grant from AMC Worcester chapter. Members Matt Reidy and Mike Peckar were instrumental in making this bridge a reality. The project was in Partnership with Park Spirit of Worcester, one of the original partners in the creation of the East West trail (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a610c324c0dbf76b38c557d/t/5a923212f9619a83af2cd0ac/1519530516592/total-map.pdf>) with the Greater Worcester Land Trust (GWLT).



The bridge, a 14' foot wooden span, with stairs on both ends serves as a welcome addition to the trail in a section that, to be honest, had become both a challenge and a safety concern with a steep grade on one end and a severely eroded stream bed to navigate over.

The logistics of the bridge location was a bit of a challenge as all the supplies & materials had to be carried in one quarter of a mile from the trail head on Airport Drive to the stream location via wheel barrows, a landscaping cart and by hand. This work took most of the morning.

After all the supplies were on site, the team methodically started the construction. First preparing the locations for the sleepers, and then setting the four 14' 2' x 8' carrying beams, bolting two together as one creating two solid beams. Next, for stability and strength, lag bolting a series of 2' x 8' cross beams to the carrying beams, and then using posts for hand rails on one side and then the 2' x 6' decking. Finally stairs on both ends to accommodate the terrain changes.

Mother nature provided a beautiful fall day and it took most of it as we returned to our vehicles just prior to sunset, exhausted but tremendously proud of our accomplishment.

My sincerest thanks to AMC Worcester chapter for believing in this dream and this partnership with Park Spirit! Also tremendous thanks to both Matt and Mike who worked tirelessly the entire day, rejuvenated us with pizza midday, and thought of all the tools we might need.



KNOT DONE LEARNING

#2 of a Series: Knots for Hauling Your Own Lumber Harvest

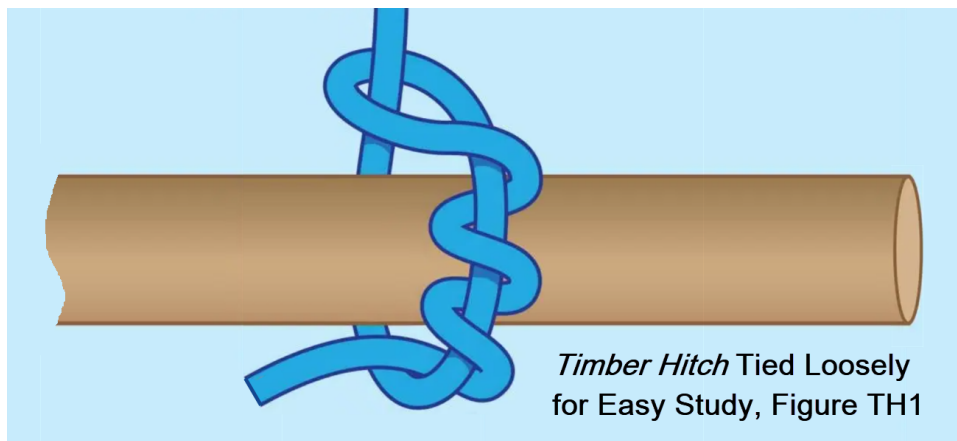
Submitted by David K. Elliott

Necessity being an effective mother of learning, here are some more knots presented as I'll be using them during a "mill your own lumber" project using simple tools and primitive skills, and I don't say primitive lightly. It could be 5,000 BC with me dressed in homespun and worshipping Odin, except the beer is better.

To summarize, I'll cut 6 foot lengths of tree, "rive" (split) them into quarters, and drag them out of the woods via my two legged ox. To accomplish this last step I need to hitch said ox (myself) to each log with rope using the knots below. Afterwards, we'll take a brief look at riven lumber.

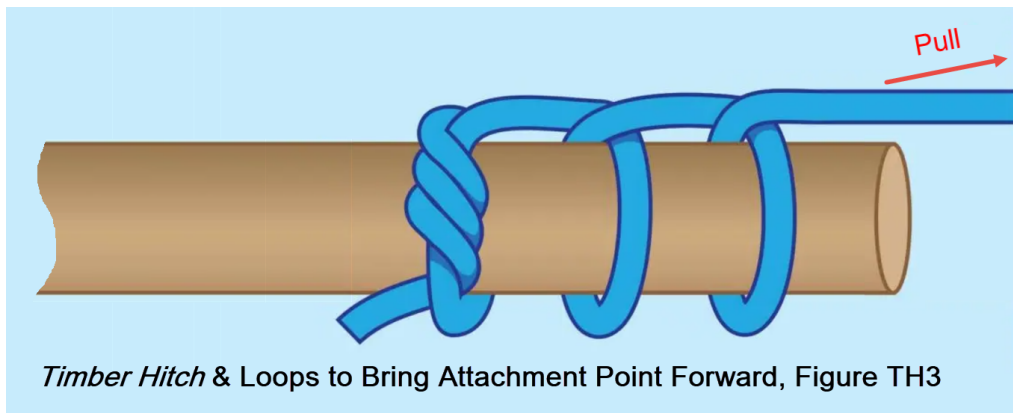
Timber Hitch

For this task the knot literature recommends the "**Timber Hitch**", a fittingly simple bit of wrapping rope around itself I can well imagine a Neanderthal mastering, even as we'll refine it a bit. Shown below it is tied loosely for ease of visual analysis by the reader, and below that as snugged and ready for action as indicated. Understand that in these illustrations you should assume the log being dragged extends well past the left side of the page.





Looking at figures TH1 & TH2 above note that the **Timber Hitch** is basically a slip knot, suggesting any slip knot would do this job more or less. Its purpose is to tighten against the log when you pull on it as shown. So why use specifically the Timber hitch? Because crude can have benefits. The **Timber Hitch** is quicker to tie, easy to remember, hard to tie wrong, and easier not only to untie but to extract from the frozen tangle of brush and snow that will build up during a drag through the woods.



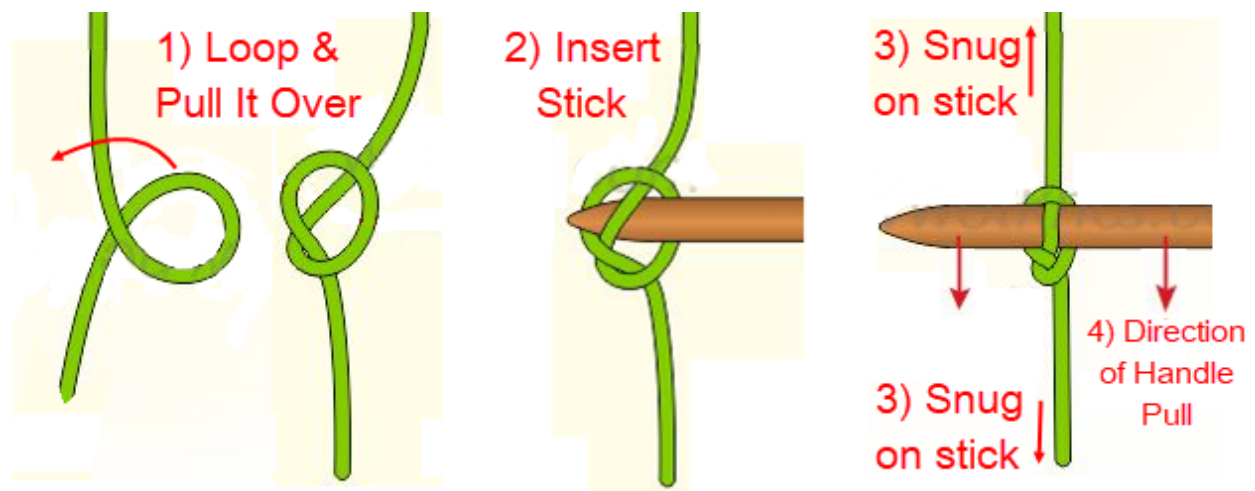
My strategy will be to tie the slip knot a couple feet from the end I'm dragging as shown in figures TH1 and TH2. That should provide a margin of error versus my attachment sliding off the end of the log. Between the slip knot and end of the log I'll add several half hitch loops as shown so I'm steering the log from its very front. That should help align the log with the direction of pull while raising the front slightly to reduce the chance of it nose diving into obstacles.

Harness Design

Speaking of pulling, as an intelligent draft animal, how might I improve my grip on the hauling rope? Among the possibilities are:

1) Tying a stick handle to the rope using a **Marlinspike Hitch** as per figure MH1 below. While unlikely to be optimal for this application, it sure would be an improvement over clamping cold hands around a modest diameter rope. Besides, with such a simple and elegant knot applicable to any number of situations we might find ourselves in, we really ought to learn it. So much so that my highly knot challenged self will make a stab at a memorable way to discuss it.

Tying the Timber Hitch, refer to Figure MN1. 1A) Start with “just” a loop as shown. Note the working end passes behind the standing end. (In medical devices we’d say the “**distal**” portion is behind the “**proximal**” portion but that may not fly with knot people, eh)? 1B) Shift the loop slightly counter clockwise over the standing end. Now comes why this is interesting. 2) Take care sliding in the pointed stick, noting how the center crossing rope comes forward while the outer rope loop goes behind the stick. With each making its contribution, the result is the whole holds together. Sweet! 3) Snug the knot around the stick. 4) Note that this knot secures the stick “handle” only for the single direction of pull indicated. The knot will slip if you invert the knot or switch sides to end up pulling from the wrong direction.

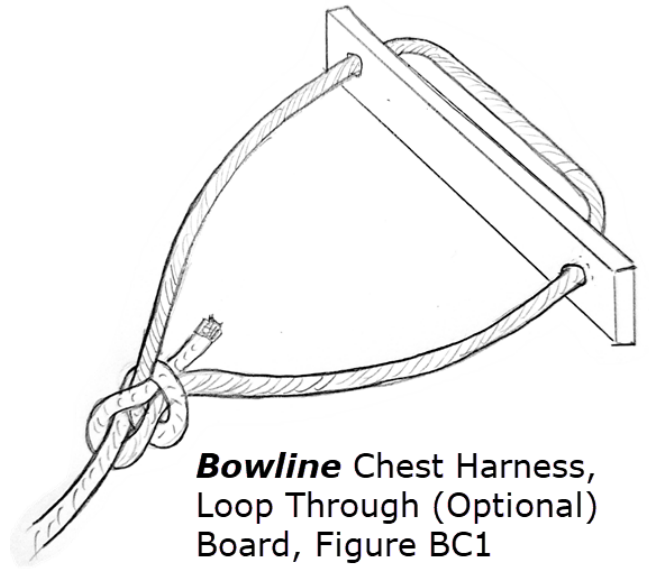


Marlin Spike Hitch, Figure MH1

A word on terminology. If you picked up on my preference for a “pointy ended stick” versus referring to an actual metal Marlin Spike, congratulations. But back in the day a seaman was more likely to have a marlin spike handy for the purpose, thus the very old knot’s very old name. What’s a marlin spike? Picture it as sort of a 20x scaled up sewing needle for men but used for super advanced prodding at heavy rope. But for operating in the forest, actually for using this knot anywhere, understand that its seeming to call for a particular ancient piece of hardware is just reading too much into a historical accident. It’s only fair to sound import saying the name if you do it for laughs, otherwise you’re confusing people.

- 2) Provide a chest harness not entirely unlike that used for a horse. Accomplish this by tying a loop that easily drops over the head and fits around the body of the person pulling. This loop must not get smaller under load, i.e. we must not use a slipknot. Recall from the knot article in the last, Fall’s Wachusett Views that a bowline nicely provides exactly this capability.
- 3) Make the above more comfortable for pulling heavier loads by adding a board behind the rope to spread its load over a larger area of the body. Past experience tells me I’ll need all the help I can get. See figure BC1.

4) I'd been seriously considering timber hitches on both ends of the rope with me standing in the loop stretching between them - more closely resembling the setup for hauling my firewood sled. But that prompted David Miller to give me that look of his and point out a single point of attachment was simpler, suggesting not only approach 1 but cautioning I'd definitely want a Bowline for 2. Thus illustrating again how it's not just about knowing the knots, it's also about knowing which are good for what.



Bowline Chest Harness, Loop Through (Optional) Board, Figure BC1

Riven Lumber: Myself My Sawmill

Getting back to the primitive enterprise that's providing the larger context for this knot discussion. What I'm after is salvaging standing, dead hardwood timber for building a substantial workbench, the sort to make a woodcarver happy. To accomplish this I'll be using methods falling under the term "woodcraft" - even as final steps will involve power tools and I hope in the end not look too rustic. The best of all worlds, lumber yard offerings best- ed by drawing on my secret weapons, a wide selection of trees to choose from, 4 steel splitting wedges, as many wedges carved from saplings as the occasion may require and me convinced I can actually pull this off.



First Wedge,
Figure SP1



Quarters, 2nd Wedge,
Figure SP2

Riving (Splitting) Lumber

For amid the myth making about Abe Lincoln you can bet he really did split logs to build fences, and many on the frontier split whole trees for beams. Here are a couple snapshots of furniture maker Elia Bizzari starting a chair. woodandshop.com/how-to-split-a-log-for-amazing-lumber/

In my experience straight grain ash trees splits easily into quarters - which by conventional wisdom will refrain from the sort of cracking and warping a whole round tree will undergo as it seasons. And those quarters can then be further split, sawed and planed into squared lumber of the desired dimensions. Will it be easy? Will the results be just as I hope? Hey, we can all use a little suspense in our lives! ~

AUGUST CAMP 2025



Mountains & Sea AMC's August Camp 2025 Olympic National Park

Enjoy both snow-capped mountains and ocean at magnificent Olympic National Park. Hike, bike, paddle and more, visiting many stunning waterfalls and scenic vistas on dozens of activities for all ability levels led by trained AMC volunteers.

This million-acre park protects a vast wilderness, thousands of years of human history and several distinctly different ecosystems. These include glacier-capped mountains, old-growth temperate rain forests and more than 70 miles of wild coastline.

Camp just outside the park in Quilcene, WA. Arrive and enjoy the activities and camaraderie. Everything's provided: tents, and cots. Hearty, delicious meals including trail lunches prepared by our staff. We provide local transportation and a free shuttle from and to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

August Camp runs from July 19 through August 16. Apply to

attend for one of the four weeks. Detailed information, pricing and registration are available at augustcamp.org. The last time August Camp was held on the Olympic Peninsula, it was filled by mid-January!

Online registration opens January 2, 2025 at 9 AM. All applications received between then and midnight on January 12 will be treated equally by random selection.

Week 1: July 19 — July 26

Week 2: July 26 — Aug. 2

Week 3: Aug. 2 — Aug. 9

Week 4: Aug. 9 — Aug. 16

Each week: \$1700 for members, \$2040 for non-members, plus Washington state tax

Questions: Please visit augustcamp.org.



augustcamp.org

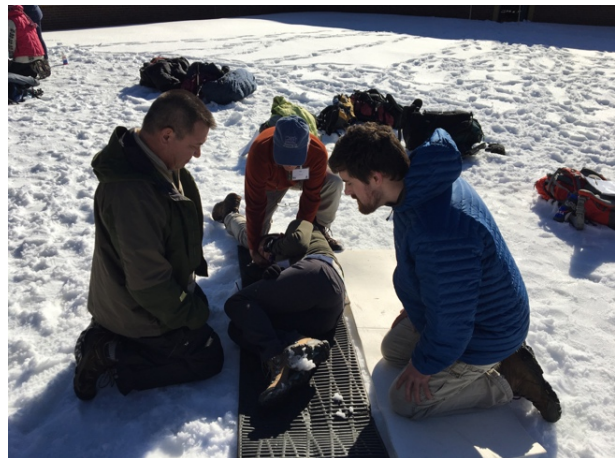
Photos by Janine Brancale and Lennie Steinhmetz, August Camp 2016

J.U.M.P. celebrates 17 Years of Worcester Chapter support in Empowering Youth Through Hiking and Backpacking

Bill Spacciapoli, Founder and Executive Director

JUST UNDERSTAND MY POTENTIAL, Inc.

In 2008, the founder of J.U.M.P. began engaging contacts in the Ayer, MA public schools in hopes of recruiting underserved youth to participate in our hiking and backpacking trips. One contact we serendipitously stumbled upon was Barbara Dyer, an Ayer School teacher and member of the Worcester Chapter of the AMC. Barbara described the chapter endowment fund and encouraged J.U.M.P. to apply. As I recall, at that time the endowment application limit was \$2,000. For J.U.M.P., which at that point had been recognized by the IRS as a non-profit for barely a year, a donation of \$50 was a lot of money. As an all-volunteer organization with little experience in fundraising and no name recognition, \$2,000 was an incomprehensible amount of money! We applied for and received \$1640, managing to spend \$582 of it in 2008. The balance was graciously reallocated for the 2009 calendar year. Since that time, support for J.U.M.P. has continued unabated while also collaborating on Wilderness First Aid Training at the Boys & Girls Club in Leominster and giving away clothing and gear donated by Chapter members.



The bulk of our efforts, however, were hiking and backpacking trips. We ran day hikes out of Noble View, Cardigan Lodge, Joe Dodge Lodge, Shapleigh Bunkhouse, and the Highland Center and overnights to Lonesome Lake Hut, Mizpah Spring Hut, and Carter Notch Hut, as well as a handful of campsites in the Whites. We had groups that summited several of the Presidentials as well as many lower peaks right here in Massachusetts.

Reflecting on our journey over the past 17 years, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude. With your committed support, our Hiking and Backpacking Program has transformed the lives of countless young adventurers. While some of you may have met Clever Chaves and Leanne McDonald, two notable examples of the transformational nature of the work you supported, rest assured there are many more who benefited from our programming. Chapter supported programming has been a beacon of hope, fostering resilience, teamwork, and self-confidence among our participants. These young hikers, often facing significant life challenges, have discovered their strengths,



formed lifelong friendships, and developed a deeper appreciation for nature. Our success story would not be possible without the unwavering support of the Worcester Chapter whose contributions to our program have provided critical support, particularly in the early days when J.U.M.P. was long on heart and short on everything else. Your belief in our mission has enabled us to offer these life-changing experiences and build a supportive community for our youth.

While the kids benefited from your investments in them, what I carry with me is an appreciation for the trust you placed in the people of J.U.M.P., sticking your hand out to help, often before we could ask. I will never forget your support, and how you made me and our volunteers feel.

Thank you for being a part of this extraordinary journey and helping to build the foundation of our organization.

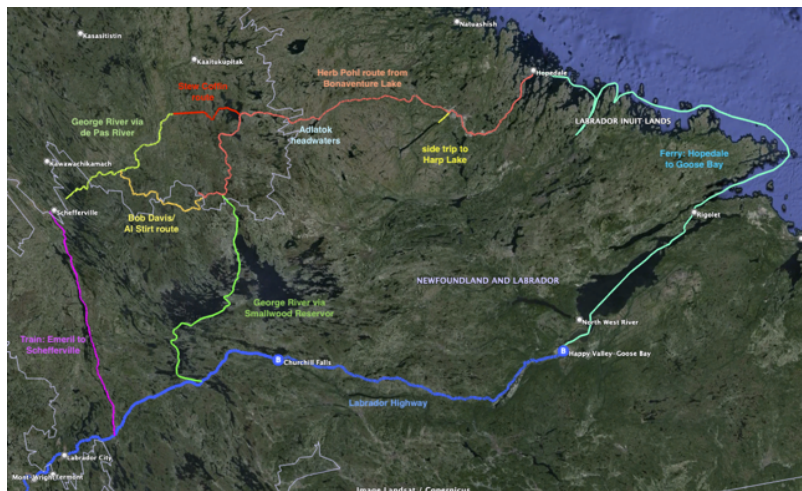
Resiliency, Perseverance, and Flexibility in Planning and Executing a Wilderness Expedition Canoe Trip

By José Schroen

Writing an article for the newsletter has been on my to do list for several years. What should be my focus? The trips are always awesome and this trip fit that category as well, with fabulous participants and enough heart stopping rapids, magnificent and breath taking nature, wildlife non-existing (not the norm), and no shortage of resiliency, perseverance and flexibility required. My focus will be on the last statement. Resiliency, perseverance and flexibility are needed during both the planning stages as well as the actual trip. There is only so much you can plan for.

The summer of 2024's plan for the expedition canoe trip, 28 – 30 days, was to paddle the Adlatok or Ugjoktok river in Labrador. The river with two names, which in itself is a challenge in trying to find information from previous expeditions. We has 4 interested participants, and for safety reasons we wanted at least 6. Research listed the following previous trip descriptions:

- 1972 - Parks Canada Survey - **Adlatok River** via Rapid Reach, Grid Reference N.S. 2942 [12]
- 1982 - Stewart Coffin - **Adlatok River via de Pas/George crossing** [3,8] - 20 days
- 1983 - Karl Shimeck - **de Pas/George crossing**
- 1984 - Herb Pohl - Notakwanon River via **de Pas/George crossing** [3]
- 1985 - Herb Pohl - **Adlatok River** via Bonaventure Lake/George River headwaters [3,6]
- 1992 - Bob Henderson - **Adlatok River** via Harp Lake [4,7]
- 1994 - Daniel Penny - **Adlatok River** via Mistinippi Lake & Shapio Lake [5]
- 1995 - Alan Stirt - **Adlatok River** via upper de Pas to George River headwaters [11]
- 2007 - “Floats on the River” - **Adlatok River via de Pas/ George crossing** [7]
- 2019 - TA Loeffler - **Adlatok River** via Shapio Lake [10]



Ted Kenelly plotted the routes. There are choices.

Curt's numerous trips in Quebec and Labrador helped settle the plan: Stewart Coffin's route from Iron Arm lake, the De Pas river, over height of land, along Pardy Creek, to the George river (a big river), up river on the George, over height of land to the headwaters of the Adlatok river and via Adlatok Bay to Hopedale. He did it in 1982 and someone else in 2007. Super exciting. Now we need more than 4 participants.

On June 6th, we have 4 committed people and 3 more who are interested, and we have a plan. The plan for the boats is below.

Participants:

Boat 1: TBD - possibly solo Curt Gellerman TBD0	Boat 2: TBD Jose Schroen TBD1	Boat 3: Old Town Tripper (red) Jackie Schoendorf Ted Kennelly	Boat 4: TBD TBD3 TBD4
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A preliminary schedule has been laid out based on the latest information from the Tshiuetin railroad train. Border Beacon is where 4 or 5 of us will meet the people for the 4th boat. Confirmation on Hopedale ferry is still outstanding.

	Date	Estimate	Distance	Parks Canada (1977)	Coffin (1982)
Train to Scheferville	July 31				
De Pas River	Aug 1 - Aug 4	4 days	164 km		4 days
Cross Over	Aug 5 - Aug 6	2 days	32 km		2 days
George River/ White Gull	Aug 7 - Aug 8	2 days	24 km		2 days
Border Beacon	Aug 9 - Aug 11	3 days	87 km		2+ days

In the following weeks, regular checking of the train departure dates and commitment status of the other participants creates anxiety. Will we have a trip? On June 19, Curt sends the following email: *"I'm game for the 29, Is everyone else? So it's official- more or less, Need to check with shuttle drivers."*

Ok. We have a trip. Train leaves Sept-Isle, Quebec, on July 29. Ferry is booked for August 28. Possibly 5 participants.

June 19: Churchill Falls, Labrador is being evacuated for wild fires. Do we still have a trip? We'll have a trip, but will it be this one?

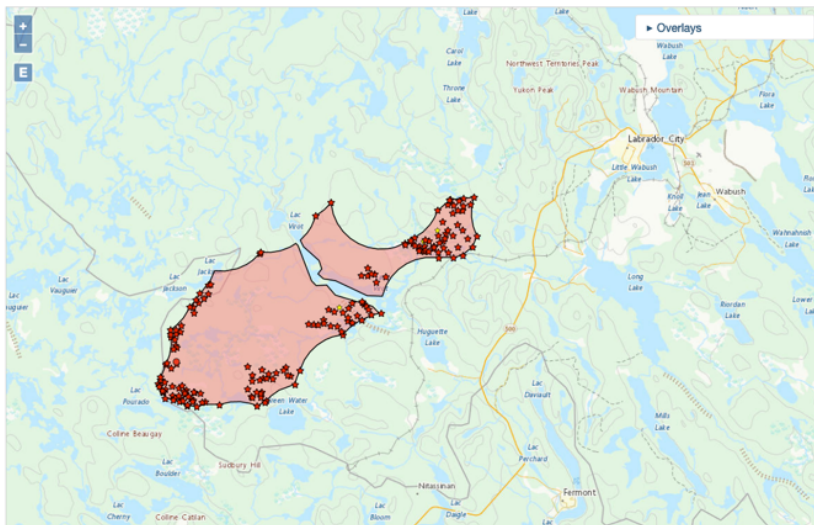
June 27: We have a group of 6, meeting on the train to Schefferville, Labrador. No Border Beacon flight, no solo boat, and Churchill Falls is still evacuated. But we stay hopeful and continue the planning. There are a lot of rivers in the north for alternate plans, and the train seems to still be running. Therefore, we make train reservations for the 29th of July. Meals and gear are being coordinated.



From left to right:
Jackie, Ted, Tom, Lee, Curt, José



The logistics: Four of us will be driving to Emerill Junction in Labrador to catch the train to Schefferville. Two of us will fly into Sept-Isle to catch the train to Schefferville on the same date. In Emerill Junction we shall meet the shuttle drivers who will take our cars via Churchill Falls to Happy Valley Goose Bay. In Schefferville, we'll connect with the shuttle drivers to get us to the put-in at Iron Arm lake. On Aug 28, we will board the ferry in Hopedale, Labrador to Happy Valley Goose Bay (where hopefully the cars are waiting). What an exciting trip!



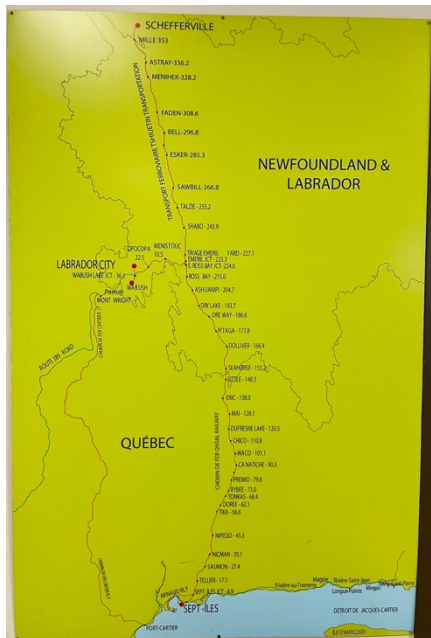
July 13: Email from Ted:
"In case you hadn't heard - they had to evacuate residents of Labrador City to Goose Bay on Friday night due to a rapidly spreading fire just west of the town. Hoping things cool off soon up there. Looks like there is some rain in the forecast..."

July 27: Wildfires in Labrador City and Churchill Falls are under control. All six of us are en route. Tom and Lee are flying into Sept-Isle where they will catch the train. Curt, Jackie, Ted and I drive north to Labrador City via the Labrador highway with boats and gear. Wow, what a rough road. We will meet the shuttle drivers for the cars catch in Emerill Junction, then catch the Tshiuetin Rail transport, and meet Tom and Lee on the train.

Car trouble did not skirt us. Frozen brakes on Ted and Jackie's car together with a loose muffler made us run around Labrador city to find a mechanic to fix the car, while pursuing other options to get to Emerill Junction to meet the shuttle drivers and catch the train. A mechanic is available at 6:00 am the morning of the 29th, brakes are unfrozen, and an appointment is made for the car to be fixed after August 28th on the way back. It was not recommended to drive the Labrador highway again without repairs.



Flying into Sept-isle was also not without problems. One of Lee's bags did not make it. Of course it is the food bag. 30 days of food. This is no joke. After lots of phone calls, a flight will bring the lost bag to Schefferville, however, the train will not arrive in time for us to claim the bag. We do not want to already run a day behind in paddling. This trip will be physically demanding as it is. The kind and flexible shuttle driver in Schefferville is able to claim the bag prior to us meeting him at the train station. It is great when everyone is willing to help. It is a really good idea to make sure you have phone service at the start of trip like this. Once the trip starts satellite service is the only way to make contact.



On the evening of the 29th all 6 of us arrive in the pitch dark at Iron Arm Lake and are greeted by northern lights. What a fabulous start to the trip.



After 4 days of lake paddling, portaging on snowmobile trails connecting the lakes, scouting and running rapids on the De Pas River, we leave the river to portage two days, 4 miles, along Pardy Creek. We have found a nice campsite and portaged the boats 0.5 mile further (stash #1). This turned out to not be an easy task. Game trails with caribou moss are nowhere to be found. This area is known for the caribou herd, but we have not seen any yet.

Curt, Tom and Lee are in search of game trails. No luck.

We continue the portaging the next day. First all the gear to the boats (stash #1). I am getting the idea of what was meant by **no** portage trails. This is one rough portage. No two routes are the same. I am no longer able to carry my bear barrel in these conditions. The barrel is too heavy, the ground too covered with pucker brush of different heights, and swampy footing. Black spruce trees everywhere. This is one scary environment because you can not see the person in front of you, you have a heavy load on your back, and you can not walk as fast as they do.



Title



However, we continue our portaging (stash #2). Curt, Jackie and I have made it one mile in, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile past stash #2 and it is almost 3:00 pm. We are sitting on top of a big rock. The boats are not there yet, but Tom, Ted, and Lee are coming with gear. There is absolutely no way for us to possibly set up a tent in this location. 1 mile in 2 days. The plan had 4 miles in 2 days. You can see how much further we have to portage before hitting water.

What are we going to do? At this rate we will never make it to Hopedale by Aug 28. Maybe it is time for a pow wow. On the top of this big rock, surrounded by woods with no possibility of setting up tents, we are having our pow wow. All 6 of us are still in one piece but already physically beat. We can continue the plan, beating up our bodies and hopefully make it to the air strip at Border Beacon, or we can turn around go back to the De Pas river, continue down the De Pas,

which runs into the George river, and go down river. We can not go up the George. This is really big water (reason for the plan to portage up Pardy Creek). Our maps stop at the intersection of the De Pas and the George. Two choices: maps versus no maps or physically getting beaten up versus maybe a canoe vacation. Either way we will need a flight out. We choose to turn around, go back to the De Pas, paddle into the George with no maps. We are in possession of a satellite phone and GPS devices. We can have contact with the outside world. We are going towards the Arctic instead of the Atlantic.

Lee has great connections to help us in researching information regarding the paddling on the George and relay that info to us. Curt's wife is very efficient in researching ways to get us off the river once she has location information including flights.



The next couple of days down the De Pas were fun. Camping, however, was not great. We are getting information about the George, in text only, and flights out from salmon fishing camps along the George is not looking promising. In the meantime, Lee and Tom have no interest in paddling the George, Ted and Jackie are neutral, Curt and I just want our butts in a boat. We are all staying positive continuing on our quest. Once on the George, we entered this enormous lake, Savage House lake.

Winds are unbelievable. Paddling is super hard, camping is not good. Our spirits are still good, food is great, enough sunshine to keep our devices charged, but we do not know yet what will be happening. We have approximately 70 miles of this bigger water before we will hit the first rapid and no fish camps yet. So hang in tight.

Curt states: "This is a perfect spa trip. 24 hours a day of fresh air, 12 hours + a day of physical activity, fantastic food with great people." A great way to look at our new situation.

In the mean time, Lee receives a GPS message from one of his contacts, Michael Peake, former Che-Mun Editor and Governor, Hide Away Canoe Club. He is relaying exciting information about the George river and Bob May (see quote below). Micheal Peake wrote a book, <https://www.hacc.ca/ungava> about the George and Bob May. Lee had read this book this past year, but had never expected to be paddling in this part of the world.



August 9: George River with blackflies on the camera lens

Quote on Canadian Canoe routes:

GEORGE LUSTE

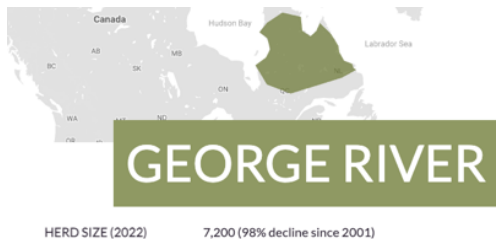
January 10, 2009

George Luste of Toronto writes about Bob May, whose obituary appeared Thursday.

Bob May was a truly exceptional individual. That was my experience when I briefly met him more than 30 years ago on the George River in northern Quebec during a canoe trip to Ungava Bay. He and Nancy warmly welcomed our canoe party with delicious hot tea and cookies at their unique lodge at Pyramid Hills. It was a simple, practical and interesting lodge, with the floor of the dining area covered in a layer of brightly washed pebbles that evidently had been collected from the shore of the river. I recall that we took our shoes off in respect for those pebbles. During our chat, he cautioned us about a stretch of dangerous white water downstream. That evening, as our six-man canoe party huddled around a campfire in the raw and cold weather at the menacing rapids, his tiny plane came out of the mist, circled us twice and flew back to his lodge. Clearly, he had been worried about our safety and flew out in the marginal weather and semi darkness – at some risk to himself – to see if we might be in trouble or in need of help. He was a very remarkable and decent man.

This information about the George River and the historical significance and impact, and the lack of getting flighted out, are causing Lee and Tom to feel more excited about paddling the George and catching salmon. Information is trickling in. There is a possibility to get a flight on Aug 25 out of Kansiqsualujjuaq, George River town, almost the end of the George River, by Ungava bay. Great excitement. We are still however without maps. Just what is available via GPS. No details.

After approximately 70 miles, 6 days, on this lake/river, we are going to encounter the first rapid: Class II/III 1.5 mile stretch. The only detail we have: there were no notes on the map regarding the rapid.



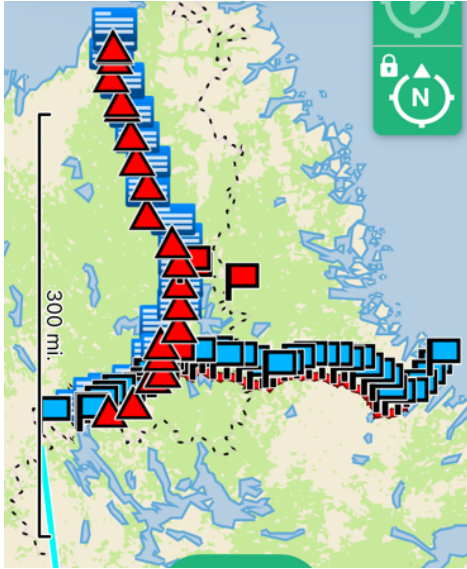
We are running the rapid on this very misty morning. As we come around the bend at the end of this rapid, which all of us successfully



ran, we see a cabin on river left. Excitement, let's go check it out. As we get closer people are walking down towards the water. It is Serge Ashini-Goupil of the Innu nation with his daughter and her friend. They run five, 1 week retreats for the elders at this camp, and had arrived 2 days prior and were expecting their first guests in another 2 days. We are invited in for coffee and bagels. How exciting. Guess what, yes you guessed right, WiFi via Starlink. We download maps, at least we have an electronic copy, and a tide table, because there will be extreme tidal changes closer to the end, 40-50 feet tidal swings. We get a tour around the grounds, explanation of the extreme declining caribou herd, therefore no game trails, and went on our merry way.

<https://www.northerncaribou.ca/herds/eastern-migratory/george-river/>

It is Aug 12th. Life is good. As a group we are now paddling the George River to Kansiqsualujjuaq, 191 miles north and have a flight scheduled for Aug 25. Ferry has been cancelled and the shuttle drivers need to be put on standby. We do not know yet where we are flying to, just that we have a flight. We also do not know yet how we get the boats back. But there is time to get that sorted out.



Our goal is to be in Kansiqsualujjuaq on Aug 23. This gives us extra time just in case. Remember, there are still 40-50 foot tides to be dealt with.

There are 191 miles in 11 days to get to Kansiqsualujjuaq. We are having a canoe vacation instead of beating up our bodies. There are still portages around waterfalls, but hopefully better trails.

Planned vs actual, Atlantic vs Arctic

Our resiliency, perseverance, willingness to be flexible, and belief in each other had gotten us this far. These skills are a must for a trip like this. Not to leave you hanging, the boats were put on a flight to Montreal where we picked them up on the way back. However, one of the boats has a hole in it. We're still trying to get the claim sorted out.

I like to leave you with the following quote:

“Journeying together in remote and wild places requires us to depend on each other in deeper, and often unspoken ways—learning and knowing each other’s strengths and places of struggle—bringing out the best of ourselves as we navigate the wild water, the stormy skies, and encounters with wild animals.” By TA Loeffler.

