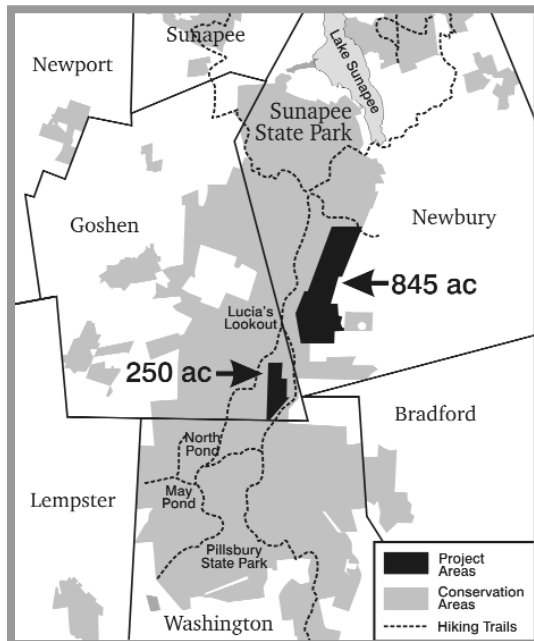


FRIENDS OF MOUNT SUNAPEE NEWS



Pillsbury-Sunapee Ridge Forest Project

Newbury & Goshen, NH
1,095 acres

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Forest Society Launches Campaign to Conserve 1,095 Acres on Eastern Slope of Mount Sunapee

Continuing a land conservation effort in the Sunapee region that dates back nearly a century, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests is launching a campaign to protect 1,095 acres on Mount Sunapee's eastern slope. The Pillsbury-Sunapee Ridge Forest Project project is a collaborative effort with the Newbury Conservation Commission and North Woodlands LLC. It will protect two parcels of land: an 845-acre tract in Newbury that was recently threatened by a sale for development, and a 250-acre tract in Goshen on the ridge near Moose Lookout Campsite.

These properties are critical links in the 15,000-acre chain of protected lands that stretch from Mount Sunapee to Pillsbury State Park. A segment of the popular Andrew Brook Trail to Lake Solitude crosses the Newbury parcel at its northerly tip, and the property line runs south along the ridge roughly between Lake Solitude and Lucia's Lookout, while also reaching all the way down the slope to frontage on Mountain Road in Newbury. The Goshen tract runs parallel to the main stem of the Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway in the triangle between the main trail and the Five Summers Trail.

In addition to the trail networks, these lands include high quality sugar maple-beech forest, south facing ledges that provide attractive habitat for bobcat, and many seasonal streams. The Pillsbury-Sunapee region has been identified as a high conservation priority by both the regional *Quabbin to Cardigan Collaborative* and in the *New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan*, because of its location amid one of the largest remaining forested landscapes south of the White Mountains and its unique habitat values.

The Forest Society has an agreement to purchase conservation easements on both parcels of the Pillsbury-Sunapee Ridge Forest from North Woodlands LLC, a local forest management company led by Don Clifford. North Woodlands recently purchased the Newbury property subject to an agreement to sell a conservation easement to the Forest Society, and they will sell an easement on the additional 250-acre property as part of this project. North Woodlands already owns much of the adjacent land which was protected by LCIP easements in the 1990's.

The cost to acquire both easements and to cover associated project and stewardship costs is approximately \$390,000, which reflects a substantial discount from fair market value. Recognizing the significance of this property, the Newbury Conservation Commission has already committed \$200,000 from its Conservation Fund. **Now the Forest Society is seeking to raise the final \$190,000 from private contributors by May 15, 2007. For more information or to make a donation on-line, please visit www.forest-society.org, or contact Anne Truslow, Director of Development, at 224-9945.**

From the President

Greetings to our friends, supporters and fellow appreciators of this corner of New Hampshire! Although communication has not been as frequent as it should be or will be, you may be assured that *Friends of Mount Sunapee* is active, vigilant and involved. Communication has been lacking primarily because all of our officers have been very involved with various projects, ranging from open space preservation to coordination and empowerment of like-minded local political groups. All of us are dedicated to the cause. All of us find ourselves making week-to-week priority decisions, but we will never lose sight of what brought us together. Appreciation and support of our publicly accessible State Park is a priority, locally and in Concord. Fortunately, our mission has strong support from Gov. Lynch and many others, giving us time to be part of a long-term plan for the protection and preservation of Mount Sunapee State Park. More broadly, we will continue forward with open space protection and related initiatives.

From an organizational perspective, our office changed sites, moving down Angell Brook Road to office space at the *Sanctuary Dairy Farm*. Also, our slate of directors is filled with dedicated individuals with a variety of talents. We understand how important our effort is and we will continue from multiple perspectives to support the mission of *Friends of Mount Sunapee*.

Thank you for your support.

Jolyon Johnson

Pillsbury-Sunapee Ridge Forest Events

Presentation:

April 26 / 7:00 pm.
Tracy Library,
New London

Learn about the rich history of Mount Sunapee, the Quabbin to Cardigan Land Conservation collaborative and other Forest Society ongoing land conservation efforts.

Tour:

April 28 / 1:00-4:30pm
Meet at Newbury Town
Hall parking area.

Join Forest Society staff for both an introductory map presentation and a guided hiking tour of the Pillsbury- Sunapee Ridge tract.

FOMS

Friends of Mount Sunapee advocates for protection of Mount Sunapee State Park for its essential public values; conservation of the Lake Sunapee watershed and Sunapee highlands; and preservation of the unique character and natural beauty of the rural communities in the mountain's shadow.

Join us! Fill out the form below and mail to FOMS or give us a call.

Member Areas of Interest:

- Public Lands and Public Policy
- Land Conservation
- Land Use Planning
- FOMS Administration (Human Resources, Membership and Fundraising)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL: _____ EMAIL: _____

Mail to FOMS: PO Box 199, Georges Mills NH 03751 or call 603-863-0045

Newbury Conservation Plan

NEWBURY – The town's conservation commission is working on a town-wide conservation plan they hope will be included in Newbury's Master Plan revision scheduled for completion by the Planning Board this year.

The town previously completed a natural resource inventory of the town, and this is the next step in the process. The conservation plan will rank the town's natural and important ecological areas and will include the data about Newbury's surface water hydrology, aquifers, soils, rare wildlife and plants, historic cultural resources, scenic vistas and protected conservation land.

"The Conservation Commission is working to ensure the plan will establish acknowledged community conservation goals that will help keep Newbury the attractive, natural attractive place it is today," says Conservation Commission Chairman Bill Weiler on the town's website. ▼

by Catherine Bushueff

Legislative Update - HB 74

While Mount Sunapee's deep forests and long views feel a world away from the halls of power in Concord, *Friends of Mount Sunapee* knows all too well that decision-making in the State House can greatly impact our state parks.

Past experience always reminds us that vigilance is essential. During the mid-nineties, several low-profile legislative initiatives to lease the ski area within Mount Sunapee State Park quietly chugged through the political system, while our regional communities remained largely in the dark, until it was too late.

FOMS maintains an active presence in Concord so that we can see ahead of the political curve, and involve our members in political processes that have so often led to bad policies for our mountain, region, and public lands. When opportunities to improve our state park system arise, it's critically important to actively support change. Along with the larger conservation community and many good Friends in the legislature, we want to promote efforts to reform and improve the state public lands system.

The election of a state parks-friendly governor and legislative leadership during the past two election cycles has made it possible for some positive changes to finally move forward this winter. Many good opportunities are being proposed in the form of a single piece of legislation, Senate Bill 74.

Some FOMS members will recall Senate Bill (SB 5), an act passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Lynch in the summer of 2005. SB 5 created a commission which became known by two names, the *State Parks Commission* and the *Odell Commission*. This group of legislators and advocates spent much of a year studying the future of the state park system.

Chaired by District 8 State Senator Bob Odell of Lempster (whose district includes Mount and Lake Sunapee, as well as many of our members in the region), the commission released its final report November 2006. Armed with piles of testimony and data about the grim condition of a 100% self-financed park system, the commission proposed several changes to better oversee and manage the Department of Resources & Economic Development (DRED), the state agency entrusted with our state parks. You can read a copy of the commission's report and many appendices of information here:

<http://www.nhstateparks.org/ParksPages/SB5/SB5.html>

The odds for positive reform grew exponentially with the sweeping of a pro-conservation leadership team into the State House last November. All of the commission's recommendations were pulled into Senate Bill 74 and released to the public in late January. While both the commission report and SB 74 are worth your time to read in full, here is a partial summary of the key policy recommendations found in both. You can read the full text of SB 74 here:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2007/SB0074.html>

Major Components of 2007 State Park System Reform Bill

New Bureau of Historic Sites

DRED's leadership argued effectively during the SB5 process that a new bureau created within the State Parks & Recreation Division to manage and maintain the state's twenty-two historic sites would free up resources that could be used on the larger state park system. A new bureau would add about \$2.2 million to the overall division budget in the first year, and about \$220,000 every year thereafter.

Creation of a State Park System 10 Year Plan

The legislation calls for DRED to prepare a comprehensive 10 year master plan for the entire park system by the end of 2007. The plan would include in part:

- An analysis of the recreational needs of each geographic region of the state and the degree to which existing park facilities address those needs.
- An evaluation of overall state park system operations to identify strengths, weaknesses, and future approaches to increase revenue and simplify operations.
- Specific goals and objectives for the park system.
- Identification of areas in which there is a need for physical expansion of park properties.
- Identification of park system properties which are surplus to the state's needs.
- A summary of the division's planned maintenance program for park facilities, including, but not limited to, measures to protect against undue environmental stress.
- Proposed improvements to park facilities, including major renovations, repairs, additions, or new construction.
- An analysis of whether leasing or outsourcing certain state park functions, or entering into public/private partnerships would increase revenues and simplify operations.

Division-Wide Independent Audit of Park System Accounting

With many concerns raised about DRED's accounting, SB74 requires a full audit to be completed by the end of 2007. Such an audit could find lost dollars and inefficiencies, while also shining a bright spotlight on the most fundamental problem for our parks: a 100% self-funding mandate and the resulting exploitative pressures it necessarily creates.

(SB 74 continued on next page)

(SB 74 continued)

Creation of a State Park System Advisory Council

Perhaps the most important provision in the bill for long-term systemic reform is the creation of a standing citizen's advisory council to monitor and watchdog DRED. While the effectiveness of the council will depend greatly upon the appointments made by our governors, a perpetual presence could serve to open up DRED's decision-making to greater sunshine, accountability, and citizen participation.

Creation of a Standing Joint Legislative Oversight Committee.

At present DRED and the park system receive too little attention from the legislature, which leads to both a lack of accountability and fewer financial resources. This oversight committee could become both a mode of support and advocacy for the parks, as well as a powerful counterweight to a sometimes secretive public agency.

Bonds to Fund the Master Plan and Improvements to the State Park System

While not included in SB74 itself, the commission proposed a companion bill asking for \$20 million in bonded funding over the next four years to implement critically important repairs and improvements to the park system. These funds would emphasize projects that could help the division bring in more or new revenue (such as increasing parking spaces at Hampton Beach.)

While some longtime observers were frustrated that the SB5 Commission and SB74 didn't tackle head-on the 100% self-funding paradigm or propose comprehensive improvements to the laws governing DRED, SB 74 is an excellent first step on the road to reform.

The bill also represents a well-crafted compromise among various factions on the SB5 commission, as some members chose to fixate solely on the dream that leasing Cannon Mountain could be a single silver bullet to "save" the park system. Senator Odell and a majority of the commission deserve enormous praise for steering the process away from the Cannon lease conversation and toward a bigger picture.

Another frustration felt by some is the conservative amount of bonding the commission recommended. With a starting point of \$20 million over four years, the Governor's proposed budget amount predictably fell to just over \$12 million. With tens of millions more in deferred maintenance and repairs growing more expensive every year, \$12 million is far short of the amount needed.

However, with the state's bonding capacity reduced due to financial mismanagement at the Department of Transportation, the inclusion of \$12 million is viewed by some as a minor miracle, given the hundreds of millions of bonding requests that come in from all state agencies annually. Regardless, the park system will need a much greater infusion of cash very soon, and we are hopeful that DRED's leadership will use the master planning process to justify a significant bond for the next biennial budget.

Despite these concerns, SB 74 is a strong first step and deserves our support. Several provisions would force important information out into the public light, and will create opportunities for citizens and park-friendly legislators to get involved in a long-term process of change. *Friends of Mount Sunapee* urges all our members and friends to take some time to voice support for this important legislation.

SB 74 passed the Senate by a voice vote on March 22nd and is headed now to the House, where it will be in committee for most of April and perhaps into early May. House leaders and parks advocates will do their best to make sure this important bill and the \$12 million bond both pass this year. Your supportive voice is crucial as the budget end-game and legislative wrangling come to a close this spring.

By Tom Elliott

STATE PARKS BILL HEADS TO THE HOUSE

What can you do?

1.) Write or call your Representatives and ask them to support SB 74 when it comes to a full House vote. Find your legislator here:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/ns/whosmyleg/default.asp>

2.) Attend committee hearings and testify; sign up for our email alerts to get notice of meeting times.

3.) Write a letter to local newspapers supporting SB 74.

4.) Write Senator Odell and other cosponsors to thank them for their efforts.

**Sign up for up-to-date email reports at:
www.FriendsofMountSunapee.org**

Goshen Condos to Abut Mount Sunapee

FOMS received a number of inquiries this winter from people distraught by media reports that condos abutting Mount Sunapee State Park in Goshen are on sale now. "Slope-side condominiums to be completed by next ski season," read the Eagle Times headline. "Living large near top of Mount Sunapee" proclaimed the Union Leader. After nearly six years of struggle and a major victory in 2005 against Okemo's expansion plans, many asked: how did condos happen after all?

The news is true: a development abutting the park named "Mountain Reach" has indeed begun selling condo units in Goshen.

In the summer of 2005 a real estate investor group called Mountain Reach LLC purchased the home of George Dorr on Old Province Road adjacent to the top of what was named the Province Area (in appreciation for the historic road running nearby).

The 29 acre Dorr parcel is the only property that directly abuts both the state park and Okemo's ski lease boundary.

Coupled with stunning western views and sunsets on its rocky, steep terrain, Mountain Reach quickly saw the potential to develop the only skiing-accessible private land next to the mountain.

It announced a plan for 29 condos in July of 2005 and approached the Goshen Planning Board (GPB) immediately. In late December 2005, they submitted their official proposal for 27 units.

From January until September 2006, Mountain Reach and the GPB engaged in a lengthy Site Plan Review (SPR), during which their development plans changed numerous times to conform to Goshen planning regulations.

A 26 unit clustered "open space" development is very close to final approval, and ground is expected to be broken this spring. The plan includes the leveling of the Dorr house to make way for condos priced around \$800,000.

Friends of Mount Sunapee engaged in every step of the SPR process. We were

particularly concerned with the development's potential connection to the ski area and the state park. Given our role in the Okemo expansion debate, we felt the need to present a very strong and consistent position: that Mountain Reach should be denied any permanent intensive ski access across the border as well.

As Mountain Reach's plan evolved and changed during 2006, FOMS played a critical role in asking tough questions about their intentions for developing trails, lifts, snowmaking, and grooming across the state park boundary, before both the GPB and the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED.) FOMS volunteers were present at nearly every meeting of the GPB.

In June, Mountain Reach asked DRED to allow replacement of the existing fence running along the boundary between the Dorr Property and the state park, with a single five foot "hole in the fence" through which Mountain Reach owners, but not the general public, could access the skiing and other recreation opportunities of Mount Sunapee State Park by foot.

In a September letter, DRED Commissioner George Bald approved Mountain Reach's request to allow pedestrian access only across their "hole in the fence." He wrote that "Residents of Mountain Reach will not enjoy any greater interests or rights at Mount Sunapee State Park, including its lifts and trails, than those enjoyed by the general public accessing the property at approved entrance points... There will be no preferential treatment for residents of Mountain Reach for any portion of the recreation resources of the park..."

While FOMS argued that a private, commercial access is in fact preferential treatment, DRED did not agree. On the positive side, however, Bald clearly believes that the type of access he granted is, in his own words, "pedestrian only."

While FOMS believes that DRED had a legal and public trust responsibility to deny a private, exclusive access to a public park for a commercial entity, the letter does limit the possibility of more intensive ski resort-style development from crossing the border onto Mountain Reach property.

More important than DRED's position, however, are the stringent limitations placed on the development by the GPB. In a thorough 21 page document issued September 26, the GPB conditionally approved a densely packed development on 10 acres of the parcel. It also mandated that a conservation easement deed be placed on the remaining 66% of the property (approximately 20 acres). The easement's "open space" area includes a continuous strip of land surrounding the condos, creating a publicly-controlled buffer area between the development and our state park.

Though as narrow as a hundred feet in the part closest to the Province chairlift, the "space between" provides a forested wall that, if strictly enforced, will prevent Mountain Reach from becoming the type of permanently fused, cross border development that FOMS so vigorously opposes.

While the language hasn't been finalized as of this writing, the GPB's written expectations for the easement were made crystal clear in September. The easement must provide a "vegetated buffer" that "requires the preservation of existing trees." Uses of the open space will be limited to "non-motorized, low impact activities." Prohibited in this buffer space are "motor vehicles for recreation of any kind" and "snowmak-

(CONDOS continued on next page)

(CONDOS continued from page 5)

ing equipment.” Paths between the condos and the park boundary have been laid out and are dictated by the approved plans, and are limited to 10’ in width.

The GPB did allow the use of “motorized snow grooming equipment” in the easement area, against the advice of FOMS. We worry that this allowance could lead over time to widening and detrimental creeping of the trails toward a resort-style model, as awareness of the easement fades and enforcement relaxes.

All in all, however, the GPB provided the tool necessary to prevent a much more full-scale, resort-style develop-

ment.

While the easement will provide a perpetual protective legal document that all Mountain Reach residents are bound to respect, our experience and that of our colleagues in the land protection community has taught us that easements, like all laws and rules, are only as strong as the people who defend them.

Likewise, while the GPB decision document is clear and thorough, FOMS will be very proactive this spring in helping the GPB review the easement language, to insure that it fully codifies Goshen’s expectations.



A historic view of Mt. Sunapee and Lake Sunapee, from a 100+ year old glass plate negative.

We are reminded once more that the lure of exploiting public lands grows greater every year, and that the resources to protect abutting lands from development are more necessary than ever.

FOMS is remiss for not having had the dollars and volunteer energy in 2004 to both fight the Okemo expansion and lead an effort to purchase the Door Property, which sold to Mountain Reach for about \$750,000.

While our efforts before the Goshen Planning Board last year helped limit the impact of the development on our park, we are even more committed to proactive land protection initiatives like those highlighted elsewhere in this newsletter.

We hope you feel the same, and can contribute financially to prevent further development on the eastern slopes of glorious Mount Sunapee. ▼

By Tom Elliott

Judkins Conservation Easement

The Unity Conservation Commission continues to lead an effort to protect the 258-acre Judkins property located in the northwest corner of town. For several years, the commission has sought to acquire the parcel’s development rights through the purchase of a conservation easement, says Commission Chairman Bardy Flanders (a member of the FOMS Board of Directors).

The covenant would protect from development substantially the entire parcel—all but 5 acres and the building of one house. Sullivan County owns the property resulting from a tax lien. The easement would be held and moni-

tored by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests; the Unity Conservation Commission would be the secondary easement holder.

The conservation plan would guarantee public access and multi-use of the land for generations to come. It would allow for on-going timber management and outdoor enjoyment and recreation from bird watching to snowmobiling. The parcel is accessible from two alternate class VI roads—the Judkins Road and Britton Road. While the land is largely wooded with a mix of hard and softwood, it has several large open areas and at least one field offering beautiful scenic views to the west and southwest.

Among those fundraising for the project are Sullivan county foresters now seeking pledges towards a memorial fund to honor former Sullivan County Forest Resources Educator, Joseph Szymujko. Joe was a graduate of UNH and worked for over 30 years for the UNH Cooperative Extension. He was known and respected in the forest community. He died in July 2006.

For more information about the Judkins project or to contribute, contact Bardy Flanders, Unity Conservation Commission, 13 Center Road, Unity, NH 03603 or call 603-863-4443. ▼

By Catherine Bushueff

Herbert Welsh: Walking Crusader

The pull of Sunapee for Herbert Welsh was similar to a migrating bird that is summoned every spring by an irresistible force of nature. And like a migrating creature, Welsh used his own resources to reach his destination. From 1914, at age 63, until 1930 at age 79, Welsh walked from his home in Germantown, outside Philadelphia, to Sunapee!

He was quite precise about his time of departure – mid May – and planned his route for arrival before mid-June, marching 20 to 25 miles per day. He kept a daily diary of his walks, or “tramps,” for 1919 and 1920.

They were published by the Philadelphia Ledger and later appeared in book form under the title *The New Gentleman of the Road*. These accounts are a fascinating portrait of the man and of the time and places through which he traveled.

Saving the Mountain

The beauty of unspoiled natural surroundings stirred Welsh deeply. He prized roadside trees for their welcome shade and lamented marching into New Haven in 1919 and finding the “great numbers of splendid elm trees” which shaded the public square “destroyed by some blight or pest.”

As his artist’s eye took in a scene, he was drawn to mountains with their unspoiled forests and magnificent tree specimens. It is no wonder, then, that Welsh was shaken to the core by the extensive clear-cut logging operation on Mt. Sunapee’s north face which went on from 1906 through 1909.

It seemed clear to Welsh and many of his neighbors that the beauty of Mt. Sunapee was being ruined and its primeval forest and rare plants were in danger of disappearing. He was determined to put a stop to the destruction.

Donald MacAskill, in his 1981 publication *Mt. Sunapee State Park / A Comprehensive History*, recounts how

Abija Johnson obtained a parcel of land on the mountain in the early 1800’s near what is now the traffic circle on Route 103. There, on a natural plateau, he built a large farmhouse, barn and a dam in the brook east of the site to provide waterpower for a sawmill.

The view was superb and summer visitors were beginning to seek accommodations in the area, so the Johnson family first took in boarders at their comfortable farmhouse, and in 1867-68 opened a hotel on the site known as the Sunapee Mountain House. The hotel burned in 1876, and while the Johnsons continued to take in boarders and farm the land for another 30 years, they left the mountain in 1906.

The loggers were right behind them, and lost no time in cutting virtually every tree on the property, leaving behind slash and discarded rotting timber.

MacAskill credits Herbert Welsh in being instrumental in halting the destruction on the north side of Mt. Sunapee. Welsh organized people around the lake - year round and summer residents – to raise money for the cause, and he asked the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests to help in negotiations to acquire the land.

In 1911, the group had raised \$8,000 for an initial purchase of 656 acres. This included the summit, Lake Solitude, and almost the entire north side of the mountain above the Johnson farm. The land was acquired to save it from being logged again, so it could provide pleasure for future generations.

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests was designated trustee, and through this action led the way for a new era of forest preservation legislation.

Welsh’s group became the Sunapee branch of the Society, and raised an additional \$1,200 in 1912 for building trails, opening springs, clearing slash, and other work on the mountain. A log shelter and fire-place were built at Lake Solitude for hikers who wished to spend the night. Undoubtedly, Welsh was among them, as this area was one of his favorites and he enjoyed exploring the cave formations there. The Society continued its land purchases and by 1934 had acquired 1,185 acres.

Herbert Welsh would certainly approve of these efforts. For him, the end of the long walk each summer was the beginning of an agenda.

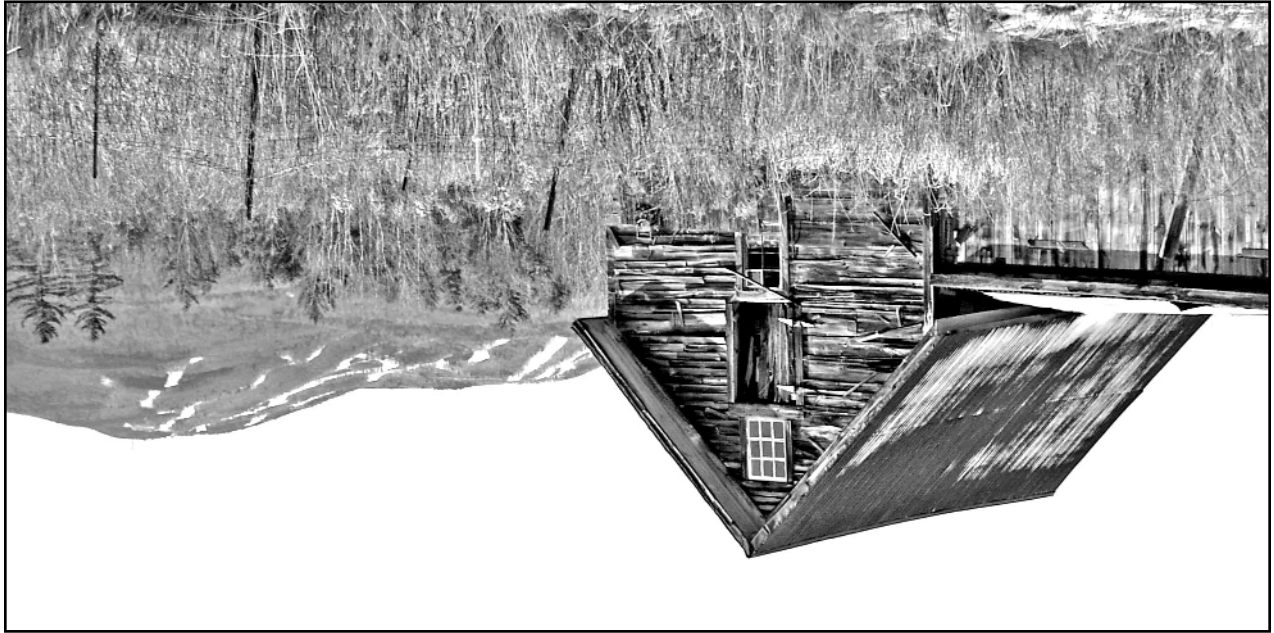
This article consists of excerpts from “Herbert Welsh: Walking Crusader” by permission of its author Shelly Candidus. It was published in the Summer 2004 edition of SoaNipi Magazine.

On his arrival at Sunapee with Dorothy Whipple in 1929, his last diary entry reads: “And there we made ourselves ready to begin . . . a summer campaign . . . for the rights of the North American Indians; for the control and, let us hope, elimination of the White Pine Blister Rust, the menace of New Hampshire; the acquisition of an additional tract of land to be added to the public park already established on Mount Sunapee, and other things . . . for the general public good and that of men and women, rich or poor, high or low, white, black, or yellow, who compose the great human family.”

Is Mt. Sunapee an important part of your near or distant landscape?
If so, send your favorite photo for inclusion in a FOMS newsletter
to PO Box 1016, Goshen NH or to beajil@yahoo.com.

Mt. Sunapee Sightings

Mt. Sunapee from Schoolhouse Road in Newport



FOMS

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