

The White Mountain Shopper



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Photo by Mickey de Pham



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One Day/ Two Hikes in Jackson, NH

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Hall's Ledge Trailhead

Recently I did two hikes on the same day in the Jackson, NH area. Hall's Ledge was the first place I visited, which was then followed by a trek to Black Mountain. It wasn't my original plan to hike to both of these destinations on the same day, but sometimes things just have a way of evolving!

This past autumn, I visited Hall's Ledge for the first time. I found it to be a delightful spot and wanted to do it as a winter hike. For that autumn trek, I approached from the Carter Notch Road end of the Hall's Ledge Trail. However, since the upper portion of that road is gated during the snow season, I needed to use the approach from Rt. 16 this time around. It's probably worthwhile to say a word about the Rt. 16 trailhead for the Hall's Ledge Trail. The White Mountain Guide states:

"This trail starts on the east side of NH 16, just south of the bridge over the Ellis River . . . the trail sign is on a bank behind a guard rail and is easily missed . . . use the Rocky Branch Trail parking lot, 0.1 mi north of the NH 16 bridge."

As suggested in the guidebook, I parked at the Rocky Branch Trail parking lot, and YES, I missed the trailhead sign!! However, upon closer inspection, I eventually spotted the sign which was not only behind a guard rail, but also at the bottom of an embankment which made it very difficult to see from the road. After overcoming this minor glitch, I quickly slapped on my snowshoes to begin my hike on a trail that showed no evidence of recent hiker traffic.

The trail begins with a short but scenic stroll along the Ellis River. Then shortly thereafter, the trail

ascends along a high bank which overlooks a brook with a long cascade. To gain a good perspective on this cascade, you need to go off-trail and descend the steep bank. For me, it was worth the short side-trip since I have a fascination with cascades and waterfalls.

After my brief visit to the cascade, I continued onward up the trail through a predominately hardwood forest for about 1.5 miles to Hall's Ledge. Although the viewpoint at Hall's Ledge is just a small clearing, it has what I consider to be a very remarkable view of Mt. Washington and its eastern spurs and ravines. And, if you continue eastward on the trail for about another 5 minutes, you come to another nice viewpoint that the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation (JSTF) has cleared just within the past few years. This opening provides an

expansive wide-open vista looking southward toward Mt. Chocorua, the Moats, and many peaks in the Sandwich Range such as Mt. Passaconaway and the Tripyramids. It's well worth taking the extra 5 minutes to access this spot!

Following my hike to Hall's Ledge, I had originally planned to do some off-trail exploration in this general area. However, since snow conditions were not ideal for this, I opted to implement my "Plan B" which was to make the short drive over to the Carter Notch Road and then drive northward to Melloon Road to access the Black Mountain Ski Trail. This is a very wide trail since it serves not only as a hiking trail, but also as a backcountry ski trail. Hiking this trail for 1.3 miles brings you to the Black Mountain Cabin, and trekking for another 0.3 miles beyond that will take you to a



View of Carter Notch from Black Mtn



Black Mountain Cabin

viewpoint located on a 2,757 ft knob at the south end of Black Mountain.

Black Mountain Cabin is an 8-person cabin that was built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and is now maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. You can make reservations to for overnight stays by phone (877 444-6777). The cabin is very rustic and the only amenities are eight wooden bunks, two small tables, some benches and a wood stove. There is a vault-toilet a short distance from the cabin. There is also a spring nearby, but it is unreliable and water needs to be filtered or treated.

Regardless of whether you're staying overnight or just visiting, you've got a pretty nice view of the Presidentials right from the cabin's doorstep!! And, as mentioned earlier, just 0.3 mile from the cabin there is yet another viewpoint. From 1913 to 1947, a wooden observation tower (AMC Davis Memorial Tower) once stood at this site. Although the tower is no longer

there to provide unobstructed vistas, there are still some great views from this spot. The highlight for me is a truly up-close view of the Carter Notch. In addition, there are impressive views of the Presidential Range. The Baldfaces can also be seen from this same spot, although tall trees somewhat obstruct this particular view.

Adding Black Mountain to my trek to Hall's Ledge resulted in a combined elevation gain that is greater than what is required for hiking to many of the NH 4,000 footers. But, so be it! All things considered, I was happy that things worked out as they did. Combining those two "half-day" hikes enabled me to experience one full-day of hiking enjoyment, which is always a favorable outcome. All is well that ends well!

(Questions and Comments to the author can be submitted at: [HYPERLINK "http://1happyhiker.blogspot.com/"](http://1happyhiker.blogspot.com/) <http://1happyhiker.blogspot.com/>)



Ellis River from Hall's Ledge Trail

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A Walk in the Woods—April 2011

By David Falkenham, UNH Extension Grafton County Forester

One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of a March thaw, is the spring." Aldo Leopold

Spring is most certainly here. Of course this depends on your definition of spring as the recent snow storms have shown us. After a pretty rough winter the months of March and April do indeed test the New Englander's resolve. Despite the murky skies filled with wet heavy snowflakes spring is undeniable at this point. Geese and ducks can be seen around every bend in the river, the woodcock are singing in wet fields on some evenings, songbirds are singing every morning, bald eagles and hawks have been spotted migrating along the river, turkeys are strutting in the fields and of course the steam is rolling out of the sugar houses at an unprecedented rate.

The recent snow conditions make walking in the woods very easy. With no ground debris to trip you up and no bugs (yet) there is no better time to be out there. With the remaining snow on the ground it is easy to track the progress of much of our wildlife that is on the move this time of year.

Recently my walks in Benton and around Lakes Tarleton and Constance have revealed plenty of movement from one of my favorite fuzzy critters, the North American River Otter.

Did I say 'land loving'? Well the river otter is more of an amphibious assault vehicle that actually travels great distances between watersheds as they patrol their territories. Otters are found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica and their home territories can measure between five and ten miles.

This propensity for travel is closely tied to the otter's ravenous appetite. Otters do not have a heavy layer of fat under their skin for insulation so to keep warm they must consume up to twenty percent of their body weight in food each day.

Depending on the age and sex of the animal, otters must consume one to seven pounds of food daily! The metabolism of an otter is so high that they must consume up to 50% more food than any other North American land mammal.

Unlike beavers which are strict vegetarians and can shack up in a place until the food is gone, otters are carnivores and must hunt for their dinner. Thus otters are constantly on the move hunting for food. Despite their habit for land travel, the otter's food supply is closely tied to aquatic habitats and the bulk of their diets consist largely of frogs, fish, crayfish, crabs, and other aquatic invertebrates. Occasionally they will prey on birds, rabbits, and rodents. Otters don't require large rivers for survival. I have found evidence of otters in the wilderness along headwater streams that were no wider than a few feet.

So how do you spot an otter? Otters can be spotted along any of our local rivers especially this time of year when they can be seen on the edge of the ice eating their lunch. Of course if you live near aquatic habitats such as streams rivers and beaver ponds your chances of casual observations increase dramatically.

Finding where an otter has been is easy. Otters are notorious sliders and their slides offer quick access to water and are a simple form of low energy travel. Slides can be sloping riverbanks or winter snow banks. No other animal that I know of leaves such a definitive sign. Slides are commonly 6-10 inch wide depressions in the snow and they are indeed a slide that can be many yards long.

It is currently twenty two degrees out and the dog is sleeping at my feet, woofing in his dreams. Somewhere out there an otter is happily sliding down a river bank for a swim in the icy water.

Enjoy your spring!

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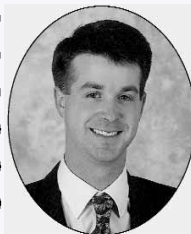
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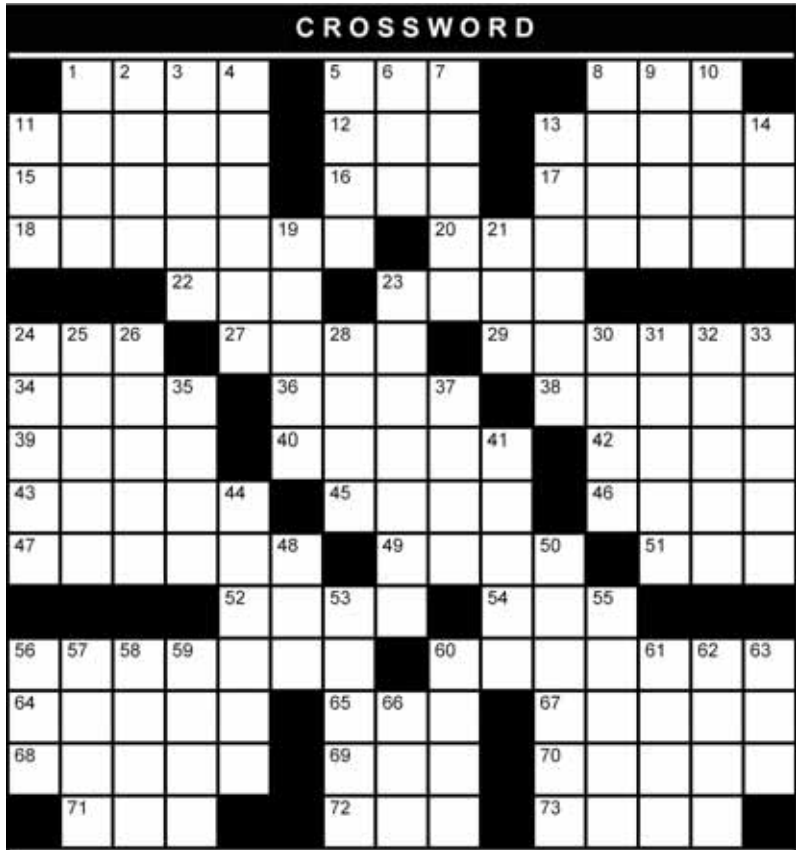
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The White Mountain Shopper PUZZLE PAGE



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THEME: FAMILY TIES

ACROSS

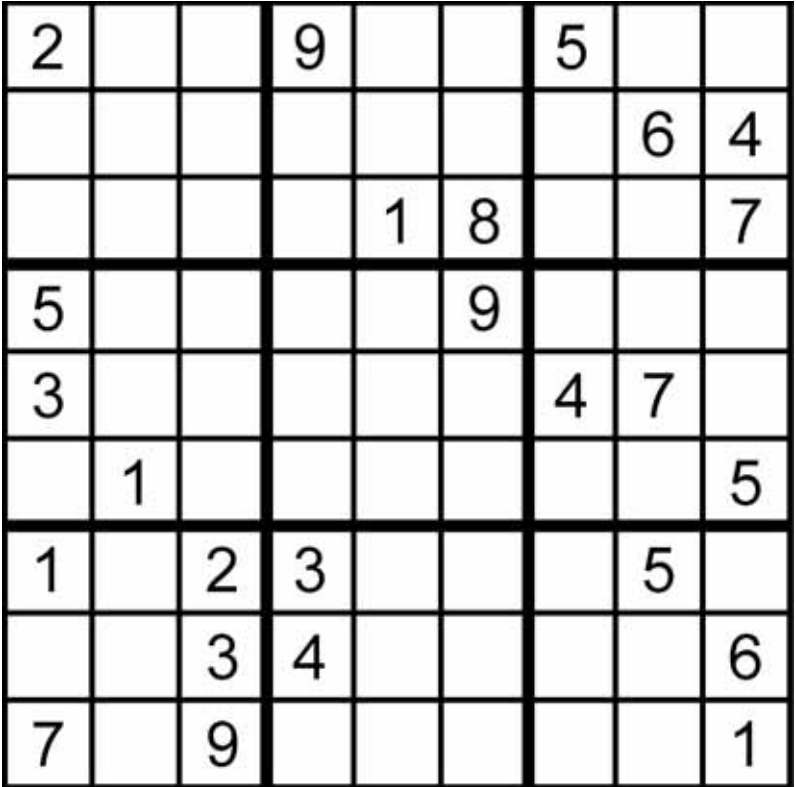
- 1. Cowboy's prod
- 5. Snow runner
- 8. *Mother, sister, daughter pronoun
- 11. Figure out
- 12. "Put a ___ on it!"
- 13. Arctic or Antarctic, e.g.
- 15. Intestinal obstruction
- 16. Santa ___, CA
- 17. Wilkes-___, PA
- 18. *Maddox to Zahara, Pax, Shiloh, Knox and Vivienne
- 20. *Marc Anthony to Jennifer Lopez
- 22. "Much ___ About Nothing"
- 23. Impersonate
- 24. Inquire about
- 27. Pitcher
- 29. Stay clear of
- 34. 2002 Winter Olympics state
- 36. Long nerve fiber
- 38. *Harry Belafonte's daughter
- 39. *Delia and sister ___ Ephron, co-authors
- 40. Affirmatives
- 42. St. ___, patron saint of Norway
- 43. ___-_-la
- 45. Wind catcher
- 46. Liver delicacy
- 47. Put in motion

- 49. One of the hipbones, pl.
- 51. "___ Lonely Boys" band
- 52. Officer training program
- 54. *"The Waltons" aired on this network
- 56. *Khloe, Kim and Kourtney, e.g.
- 60. *"Family Ties" family
- 64. Part of an eye that contains the iris, pl.
- 65. Member of Shoshonean people
- 67. Alfred Hitchcock in his movie, e.g.
- 68. Third planet from the sun
- 69. Bobby sox dance
- 70. Relating to uvea
- 71. Clinton ___ Rodham
- 72. Mon cher ___
- 73. Type of e-mail box

DOWN

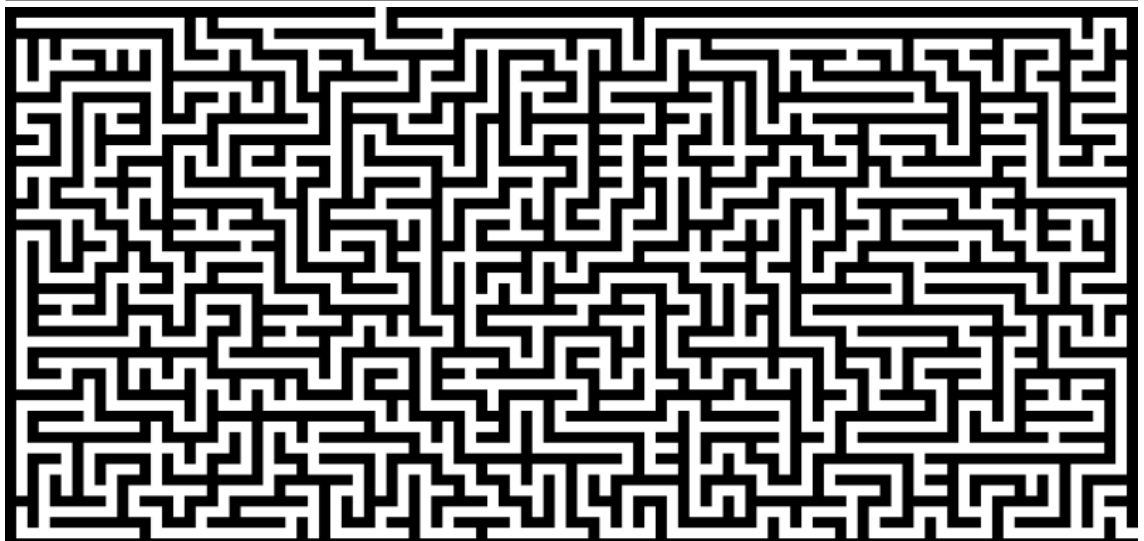
- 1. More than one solo
- 2. Commoner
- 3. Soft palate hanger
- 4. Live in a certain place
- 5. Ore smelting by-product
- 6. *Kith and ___
- 7. Boise state
- 8. Strikebreaker
- 9. *Zeus' sister and wife
- 10. Acquire, as in respect
- 11. *Bro's sibling
- 13. Be preoccupied with something
- 14. Flanders of "The Simpsons"
- 19. "___!", exclamation of disbelief
- 21. Consume, as in drugs
- 23. Humdrum
- 24. *Your cousin's mom, pl.
- 25. Place of purchase
- 26. Gold unit
- 28. *Richardson and Mueller to Charlie Sheen
- 30. It means hurry up when repeated
- 31. Shariah-approved meat
- 32. Muse of love poetry
- 33. *"The Stepford ___"
- 35. Sign of a saint
- 37. He took a giant leap
- 41. Curving golf shot
- 44. Anew
- 48. Hemingway's "___ Whom the Bell Tolls"
- 50. Manual calculator
- 53. Japanese sabre guard
- 55. The five lines on which notes are written
- 56. Famous T-Rex
- 57. *Director Jason Reitman's famous director dad
- 58. Withered
- 59. UK art museum
- 60. Yachting cap
- 61. Black cat, e.g.
- 62. Whiskey without water
- 63. Sun in Mexico
- 66. *Suri's dad

Puzzle Solutions on page 15



WEEKLY WORD SCRAMBLE (two words)

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For scramble answer check www.whitemtshopper.com (Last week answer: SPRING TIME)

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