



KEY DATES:

- Thursday, May 7: GMCG Drinking Water Protection Conference; Madison Library. Pre-register at 603-539-1859.
- Saturday, June 13: Ossipee Lake Alliance Lake Representatives Forum; Calumet Conference Center, Freedom. Info at 914-588-3280.
- Friday, June 26: NH Lakes Association Lakes Congress; Colby Sawyer College. New London. Info @ 603-226-0299.

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OSSIPEE LAKE, THE BAYS, THE RIVERS
AND CHANNELS, DANFORTH POND,
LOON LAKE AND ROUND POND

David Smith, Executive Director
Susan Marks, Development Director
Board Members: Howard Bouve, Perry
Fine, Barre Hellquist, Bob Reynolds

OSSIPEE LAKE REPORT

Volume 8, Issue 2 • April – June 2009

DAM REPAIRS MOVING FORWARD SLOWLY

CONCORD — DES Dam Bureau official Steve Doyon says he is “cautiously optimistic” that the plan to repair the Ossipee River dam complex this year will continue to move forward despite the State’s economic woes.

Speaking with the Alliance by email, Doyon said funding for the project, which was authorized in 2006, remains in place and the department expects to present the final plan to the Governor and the Executive Council before the end of the year.

If the plan is approved, the state will replace the deteriorating concrete dam at the northern outlet channel, which is known as the Berry Bay Dam, by enlarging the spillways and installing an automated hydraulic gate system so that discharge capacity can be in-

creased remotely during times of potential flooding.

Depending upon the final price tag and the availability of construction funds, the project to improve the northern outlet may occur in two phases. The first would be the replacement and enlargement of the existing concrete dam, and the second would be the installation of the automated gates.

If it does become a two-phase project, DES will use stoplogs, similar to the system that exists now, to control impoundment levels until the automated gates are installed.

The second dam at the complex, which is on the southern outlet channel and is known as the Head Works Dam, does not require work and will remain in place and be oper-

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A clutch of picnic tables, stacked up last fall for the winter, await the arrival of warm weather at Lake Ossipee Village Beach Club in North Broad Bay. *Alliance Photo*

ROBERT FROST ON OSS�PEE MOUNTAIN

By Stephen J. Lerman

The following article appeared in the June 1963 issue of Appalachia and is reprinted by permission of the Appalachian Mountain Club.

In the summer of 1895, Robert Frost, then an impressionable twenty-one years of age and a young man in love, lived in a semi-abandoned farm house on the side of Ossipee Mountain in Moultonboro [today known as Shaw Mountain]. It was the first time the fledgling poet had ventured into the mountains of northern New England, which were

to form such an intimate part of his later poetic landscape.

This is the story of that significant and hitherto unexplored chapter in Frost’s biography, a crucial period in his developing awareness that “the mountain he was climbing had the slant / As of a book held up before his eyes” and that “the thing was the slope it gave his head / The same for reading as it was for thought.”

As with many stories, the motivating character is a woman. In this case, the woman

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ROBERT FROST ON OSSIPEE MOUNTAIN

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was Frost's affianced, Elinor White. She and Frost had graduated together from Lawrence High School in 1892, he as valedictorian and class poet and she as co-valedictorian.

Elinor went off to St. Lawrence College in New York State, and Frost enrolled at Dartmouth College, where he remained a scant six months.

While Elinor conscientiously proceeded through three years of college to graduation, Frost, fed up with scholarship and seemingly without worldly ambition, taught in his mother's school, worked as a mill hand, dabbled in newspaper reporting, wandered through the South for a short while, and wrote poetry in his spare time.

Their romance developed haltingly during this period, and it was not until Christmas vacation of her last year in college that Elinor finally relented and returned to school for her final term firmly engaged.

Though Frost had just had his first poem, "My Butterfly," published in *The Independent*, long-range prospects for the engaged young couple in early 1895 were decidedly dim.

The immediate concern, though, was the upcoming summer, and interesting plans were developing. Elinor's sister Leona was an artist, and she had been invited to spend the summer at Ossipee Mountain Park to paint a portrait of the late Benjamin F. Shaw's grandchildren.

Benjamin F. Shaw had been the owner of the prosperous Shaw Knit Stocking Company of Lowell and a life member of the Appalachian Mountain Club. He had created Ossipee Mountain Park, a resort on the southeast slopes of Ossipee Mountain in Moultonboro.

With its magnificent panorama of Lake Winnepesaukee, its rambling paths, picturesque waterfalls, nearby summits, and tranquil hotel, the Park was one of the outstanding attractions of northern New England in that era.

It has also been a mecca for nature poets such as John Greenleaf Whittier and Lucy Larcom a decade previously. Following Shaw's death in 1891, it was run by his family until 1899.

[Shortly after the turn of the century, Ossipee Mountain Park was bought by Thomas G. Plant, who burned the hotel and other buildings and erected his incredible "Lucknow," a castle estimated to have cost some five million dollars. Plant carved out a personal domain of five or six thousand acres, replete with tennis courts, a nine hole golf course, and thirty-five miles of carriage roads connecting his summits.

He died in poverty in the early 1940's, and today his castle is a tourist attraction known as "Castle in the Clouds."]

Elinor was invited to accompany her sister and to live with her at the hotel. Frost, not wanting to be separated from his bride-to-be, decided to travel north with the White sisters and try to find lodging nearby.

On a morning in late June, 1895, lanky young Frost hurried toward the railroad station in



Lawrence. He was to catch the Boston and Maine train for the north country and the White sisters, Elinor and Leona, were to get on at the next stop, North Lawrence.

As he approached the station, an old high school friend hailed him, and they stood chatting for a few minutes. Suddenly, the parting whistle shrieked and Frost dashed to the platform only to see the train picking up speed down the tracks.

Undismayed, he ran back to the street, brashly jumped on a passing farmer's wagon, gave the driver a dollar, and said, "Lick up your horses and get to North Lawrence fast as you can!"

Away they raced - but as they neared the railroad crossing a short way from North Lawrence, they found the road blocked by a slow-moving freight train.

Not to be thwarted, Frost jumped out of the wagon, leaped onto the freight train, climbed up and over to the other side, jumped off, and sprinted the remaining few hundred yards to the station, arriving just in time to be hauled onto the departing train.

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OSSIPEE LAKE REPORT:

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The Alliance is a member of the
New Hampshire Lakes Association
(www.nhlakes.org).

STATE DAM BUREAU OPTIMISTIC REPAIRS WILL PROCEED THIS YEAR

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ated manually. The Dam Bureau has selected consulting engineering firm GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. to negotiate a contract for the work, according to Kent Finemore, the Dam Bureau representative who is coordinating the work.

The consulting firm will conduct a flood hazard analysis, prepare construction estimates and manage the state permitting process. Once the Governor and Executive Council have signed off on the project, engineering work can begin. DES hopes to begin the permitting process within six months of approval by the Governor and Council.

The water level of the lake has been managed since the dam was constructed in 1919, origi-

nally for the benefit of downriver commerce and later for recreation. Each fall the level is lowered to minimize ice damage to the shoreline, and each spring it is raised to accommodate boating and swimming. During the summer, constant attention to predictions and weather conditions result in opening and closing some gates on the south side as often as five times a week. Reaction time with the present manual system may be days rather than minutes.

Dam Bureau officials say improving the dam control system could reduce flooding, but they concede it won't prevent it because the channels that connect the big lake and bays create a series of natural bottlenecks that impede the flow of water to the Ossipee River, its only egress, which results in flooding.

FREEDOM SLOWS MUNICIPAL LAND PURCHASE

FREEDOM — Faced with a Town Meeting decision on whether to buy land now to build a municipal complex later, or wait and commission a feasibility study with a more complete accounting of building options and costs, Freedom voters chose the feasibility study.

The vote, by a 2 to 1 margin, was a victory for Freedom Cares, a grassroots group of residents who organized last year to oppose the purchase of 12 acres of land near the Ossipee Lake Road where the selectmen hoped to consolidate municipal services.

The group argued that the impact of moving town offices outside the village district had not been adequately discussed, and that the cost of the project was unknown, especially as it compared to the cost of refurbishing the town's existing buildings.

In support of the purchase, the selectmen pointed to town votes authorizing the capital reserve fund, and said buying land did not obligate them to build on it.

While the consensus of the town is clear, the timing of the feasibility study is not.

Immediately after the vote, Town Counsel Susan Slack announced that the warrant article was flawed because it authorized the study to be paid for from the capital fund, which she said can only be used to purchase land.

Asked by a member of the audience whether she and the Board were aware of the flaw before the vote, she confirmed they were.

In other votes, residents established a Heritage Commission and elected Neil Boyle to fill the selectman's seat of outgoing Donna Cupka.

OSSIPEE LAKE IS NOW SOCIALLY NETWORKED

FREEDOM — Fans of Ossipee Lake - and you must be one if you're reading this newsletter - can now connect and interact with other fans on Facebook, the popular online social networking site.

The Ossipee Lake page went live in January and has already garnered close to 100 fans from across the country, many of whom have posted pictures, linked to articles and offered comments.

While the Facebook page was created by Ossipee Lake Alliance, it's purpose differs from the Alliance's other online efforts, according to executive director David Smith.

"The Alliance's website and email service were designed to be convenient daily sources of news and information," he said.

"In contrast, the Facebook page is purely a fan site, a place for people who love the lake to connect and share, whether it's a picture or a story."

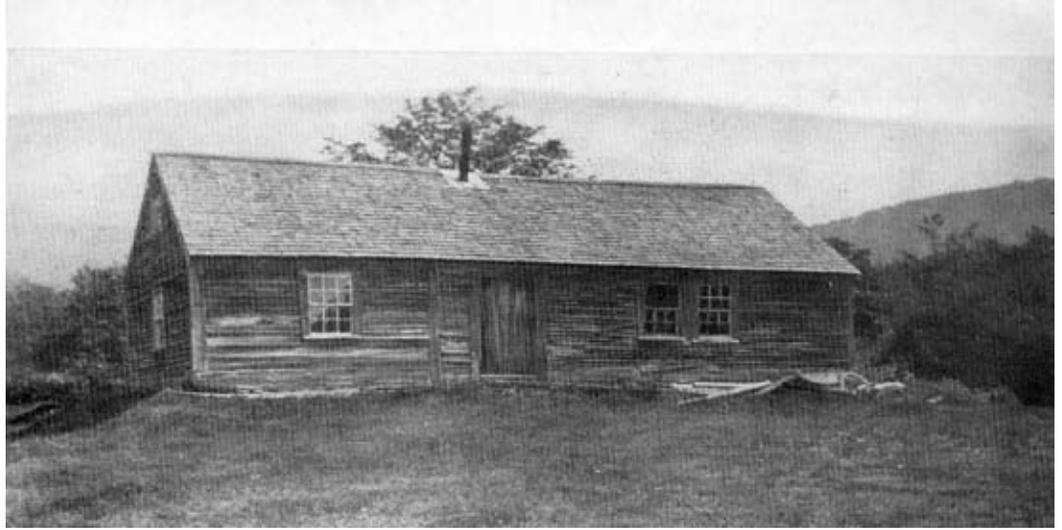
Or to compete, for that matter. Smith says he posted a question on Facebook's New Hampshire page (which has more than 18,000 fans) asking people to name the best state lake.

"Winnepesaukee is running well ahead of everyone else, although Ossipee has had a number of votes," he said.

Right behind Winnepesaukee is Newfound Lake, which has been on Facebook since November 2007.

"Ossipee Lake has more registered fans, so there's still time to edge out Newfound Lake in the voting," Smith said.

ROBERT FROST ON OSSIPEE MOUNTAIN



The Henry Horne House, where poet Robert Frost lived in 1895 on what is now known as Shaw Mountain in the Ossipee Range. Photo: Mrs. Martha Oliver, Appalachia (AMC)

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When they arrived at Ossipee Mountain Park, the White sisters moved into a comfortable cottage adjacent to the hotel; but the Shaws showed Frost little hospitality and, over the course of the summer, were never so much as to invite him to dinner.

They considered him a lazy dreamer and one of the older Shaws, himself a poet with a solid local reputation and several poems in the Boston Transcript to his credit, thought Frost's poetry was of no substantial value.

It was already late afternoon when Frost set about trying to find a place to live. Prospects were limited. Aside from the hotel and its adjacent cottages, the only buildings in the area were the houses of the Lee settlement, several of them abandoned and decaying by this time.

This settlement dated back to the 1790's, and the families had frequently intermarried, occasionally without formal ceremony, and formed a close-knit, independent group with its own laws and customs.

The Horne House

Frost happened to meet one of the remnants of this settlement, a peripatetic farmer and alleged local reprobate by the name of Henry Horne.

Horne lived sometimes alone in his own run-down house, sometimes with the Lees, or would disappear altogether for months at a time.

It seems that Horne was planning to be off the mountain for the summer, but was storing hard cider in his cellar; both men saw a mutu-

ally advantageous bargain. Yes, he would be willing to rent Frost the house for a nominal amount, if Frost would promise to guard the cider.

The young poet moved into his guard post immediately. The house, in very dilapidated condition, consisted of a kitchen, a sitting room, and a small bedroom. There was a straw mattress on the floor, a table, a chair, an ancient pot-bellied cast-iron stove, and a kerosene stove for cooking. It was crude and spare, but his physical needs were not great.

The days and weeks that followed were happy and exciting. There was time for meandering, exploratory walks and long hikes to the summit of Ossipee Mountain with Elinor.

While Frost was at Dartmouth, he had never strayed far from Hanover, and this was his first taste of mountain climbing; he found it richly satisfying and exhilarating.

It was to be a favorite pastime throughout his life on Cannon Mountain, the Kinsmans, Lafayette, Liberty, and Lincoln when he lived in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, during the summers from 1906 to 1910 and again when he settled on a farm in Franconia from 1915 to 1919; in the hills of England during his 1912-15 sojourn; and along the Long Trail after he moved to Vermont in 1919.

Another activity that summer was tutoring two boys from Lawrence in preparation for technical school entrance examinations in mathematics and geometry. Thinking back, Frost mused that they probably didn't learn very much, but certainly had a good time.

"Horne said he would be willing to rent Frost the house for a nominal amount if he would guard the hard cider in the basement."

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TRY THE STATE'S FIRE TOWER QUEST

CONCORD — The end of winter weather marks the start of hiking season; and for many of us on the lake that means making the annual trek up Green Mountain to the fire tower, one of the area's most popular short hikes.

All well and good; but this year why not explore some of New Hampshire's other fire towers? In fact, why not participate in the state's Fire Lookout Tower Quest?

From early spring to late fall the N.H. Division of Forests and Lands maintains 15 fire lookouts around the state; and the objective of its Tower Quest is increase awareness of all of them.

To participate in the program simply pick one of the towers, hike to the top and document the date of your visit.

If you complete hikes to five different towers you'll be entitled to a free Tower Quest patch, a certificate and a letter recognizing your accomplishment. Patches can also be purchased

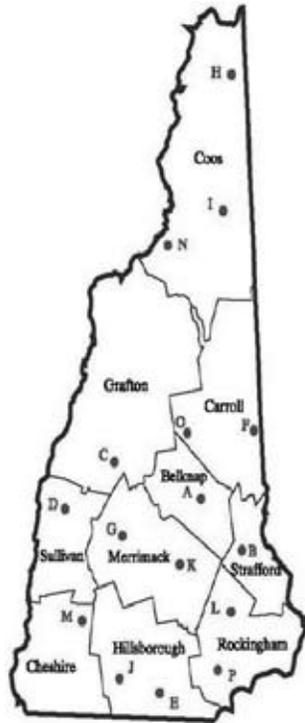
for \$5.00 each as a way to help the state support the program.

Tower Quest is a great activity for parents with small children. It makes for a fun day outdoors and increases awareness of the important role fire towers play in the protection and stewardship of the state's forests.

In addition to the N.H. Division of Forests and Lands, the Tower Quest program is supported by USDA Forest Service-State and Private Forestry, UNH Cooperative Extension and the N.H. Federation of Forest Fire Warden's Associations.

All of the information you need - including the locations of the towers - is online at www.nhdfl.org/fire-control-and-law-enforcement/fire-towers.aspx.

There are also other towers to hike that aren't owned by the state, including near-by Great Hill Tower in Tamworth, decommissioned by the state in 1977 and now owned by the town.



NH LOOKOUT TOWERS: A SHORT HISTORY

By Iris W. Baird and Chris Haartz

The following excerpt from "A Field Guide to New Hampshire Firetowers" was presented at the Third Annual Conference of the Forest Fire Lookout Association in 1992 and is courtesy of the N.H. Division of Forests & Lands.

A number of developments in New Hampshire about 1900 set the stage for what became a major cooperative effort in fire detection.

First was the heavy "cut and get out" logging which left widespread logging residue. Second came a series of dry summers, which, with sparks from wood-burning locomotives used to haul out the timber, set the woods afire repeatedly in the years 1888 to 1903.

Increased recreational use of the northern woods...brought these conditions to the attention of persons able to translate their concerns into organized action. The New Hampshire Forestry Commission was established in 1881 and The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) in 1901.

By 1909 New Hampshire was sharing the cost of fighting forest fires with the towns, and by 1911 John W. Weeks of Lancaster had secured

passage of an act establishing national forests in the eastern United States...In 1908 Philip Ayres, forester for SPNHF, published a series of articles in The Granite Monthly calling for New Hampshire to take steps to preserve its woodlands.

Fire lookouts, permanent fixed sites from which to spot forest fires, originated in the west before 1900. The first lookout in the east was reportedly on Squaw Mt. in Maine in 1905.

In the fall of 1909 the state found itself with \$599.39 of unexpended fire fighting funds, and got permission to purchase telephones, wire and fixtures for five lookout stations.

The AMC, which had title to the summit of Kearsarge North (Pequawket), let a lookout use the ruined hotel on that summit and run a phone line to the valley. With this cooperation from the private sector, New Hampshire entered the lookout business.

New Hampshire State Forester Edgar C. Hirst next called a meeting in Gorham in March 1910 at which he explained to the major timberland owners what Maine, New York and Vermont were doing and asked for support.

"N.H. first entered the lookout business in partnership with AMC, running a phone line from a ruined hotel on the summit of Kearsarge North to the valley."

A SHORT HISTORY OF STATE FIRE LOOKOUTS

Continued from page 5

The timbermen contributed \$4,100 on the spot and organized themselves into the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association (NHTOA)...In the summer of 1910, ten additional lookouts went into service...The NHTOA also supplied funds for seven additional stations.

As the state made funds available, these stations were taken over by the NH Forestry Commission and twelve more were added. In 1912 there were 12 stations owned by the state and another six by NHTOA. By 1917 the state was operating 29 stations.

During much of this early period the watchmen, especially those on the NHTOA stations, were woodsmen employed by the timber operators during the winter. They built their own cabins and towers, mostly of local materials, and usually of pretty basic design.

During the 1920's the state began to replace these rough log structures with steel towers, and to add lightning protection and more sophisticated phone lines.

In the 1930's visits by the general public had increased to the point where it seemed wise to replace tower ladders with stairs, and install roadside directional signs and trail markers.

The role of the fire lookouts in public education about forest fire prevention led the U.S. Forest Service to print up "squirrel cards" and pass them out to certify that the holder had visited a tower, and enlist the holder's support for fire prevention.

In 1938 disaster struck. The Great Hurricane blew down much of the northern forest, and a number of towers as well. At the same time the Civilian Conservation Corps provided manpower and materials for major rehabilitation.

During World War II many of the towers shut down for lack of manpower. The US Forest Service recruited WOOFs (Women Observers on the Forest) to staff a number of stations, including Mt. Chocorua.

By 1948 the use of aircraft for fire spotting and a decline in fire danger led to the closing of many stations. The US Forest Service marked ten towers for demolition and retained seven, some on inactive status. By the end of the

1960's these were all out of service and only the state towers were left.

Abandoned towers were believed to be hazardous, so many of these were removed over the next decade.

From time to time, especially in dry summers, various private observation towers around the state were called into service as temporary lookouts.

It was also department policy to supplement the tower network by using as observers people who lived on high ground and had good views of their surrounding territory.



By 1980 only 22 towers were in operation. Three aerial detection routes were operated by four private aircraft contractors. By 1982 the network was reduced to 14 towers; all were closed by June 9, 1983 for lack of funds.

The next year the towers were operated on a part-time basis. The following year weather turned dry and the towers had to get extra funds and remain open many more hours.

In 1992, 16 stations were in service, 15 funded by the state. This continues to be the case today. For more on this topic, go to www.nhdf.org/fire-control-and-law-enforcement/tower-history.aspx.

"In 1938 disaster struck. The Great Hurricane blew down most of the northern forest and a number of towers as well."

REFERENCE LINES AND OTHER CSPA CHANGES

The following information is courtesy of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services.

Changes to the way the reference line is determined, and the elimination of the dwelling unit limit, are among the changes in the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA) being proposed by DES.

Currently, for lakes and ponds, one of the criteria used to determine the reference line is whether or not the lake or pond is impounded (dammed).

Right now, for impounded water bodies the reference line is either the waterline at full pond as determined by the spillway crest or the elevation of any flowage rights that are associated with the dam.

This creates confusion and extra work for applicants owning property on impounded water bodies who apply for shoreland permits because they must research spillway crest elevations and determine if there are any flowage rights.

To eliminate this extra step and for consistency, DES is proposing that the reference line for all lakes and ponds (whether or not they are impounded) be the surface elevation as listed in the DES Official List of Public Waters. This will combine impounded and natural water bodies into one category and eliminate the need for property owners on impounded water bodies to engage in additional an often time consuming research.

In addition, DES is proposing to eliminate the dwelling unit density limit in RSA 483-B:9,V (e). Applicants for shoreland permits will also be pleased to know that with the adoption of new shoreland administrative rules in December, 2008, the requirement for a stamped surveyed plan has been eliminated.

The new rules also establish a 10 year permit for public infrastructure maintenance, and changes to accessory structure limitations and clarifications to and additions to the list of activities that do not require a shoreland permit.

To view all of the changes, please visit <http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/legal/rulemaking/documents/env-wq1400amd.pdf>.

Vegetative Buffers

One of the ways the CSPA protects water quality is through vegetative buffers. Native vegetation consisting of trees, saplings, shrubs and ground cover perform important functions that protect the water quality and aquatic systems of our lakes and rivers.

We don't usually think of vegetation as a "service provider" but when native plants are assembled together as a buffer, they can prevent erosion, stabilize and shade the shoreline, absorb excess nutrients, help to recharge groundwater, and provide wildlife habitat.

These important ecosystem services keep our waters clean, and the value of clean water cannot be overstated. Clean water is an important component of the state's economy and helps maintain shorefront property values.

Natural, or native, ground cover is any herbaceous plant or any woody seedling or shrub generally less than 3 feet in height. It also includes naturally occurring leaf or needle litter, stumps or root systems, small twigs (duff), branches, stones, and boulders. It does not include lawns, invasive species as listed in RSA 430:53,III, exotic species, imported organic or stone mulches, or other artificial materials.

Poison ivy or invasive, exotic species may be removed using hand tools provided that any area exceeding 10 square feet left without vegetation be replanted with native species. Care should be taken to make a distinction between trees and saplings and shrubs.

Examples of native shrubs that qualify as ground cover include, but are not limited to: mountain laurel, pussy willow, sweet pepperbush, viburnums, winterberry, and high bush blueberry.

Examples of soft stemmed herbaceous ground cover include sarsaparilla, ferns, wintergreen partridge berry, Canada mayflower, and bunchberry.

Owners of lots that were legally developed prior to July 1, 2008, may maintain but not enlarge cleared areas such as existing lawns and beaches.

Normal trimming, pruning, and thinning of branches is allowed to the extent necessary to protect structures, maintain clearances and provide views. Trimming, pruning, and thinning of branches for the purpose of providing views is limited to the bottom half of the trees and saplings.

New State Statistics

- Visitor days by fishermen, boaters and swimmers total 14.9 million, or 29 percent, of the 51.4 annual visitor days in New Hampshire
- Annual purchases by fishermen, boaters and swimmers is over \$379 million.
- Nearly 6,000 full-time and seasonal jobs are generated by these activities.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF OSS�PEE LAKE

Water-skiing in the bays? Kayaking the Ossipee River? Maybe it's fishing on Round Pond or paddling a canoe on the big lake at sunset.

Whether you're a property owner, a renter or a regular weekend visitor, the memories you make in the Ossipee Lake area will stay with you forever.

Help us keep Ossipee Lake the place where your memories are made, year after year after year.

Susan Marks
Development Director

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NAME

PERMANENT ADDRESS

LAKE ADDRESS

EMAIL

SEND TO:
OSS�PEE LAKE ALLIANCE
PO BOX 173
FREEDOM, NH 03836



Hello Susan,

Thank you for your thank you note for our contribution. I have had an Ossipee Lake connection since I was about five years old. We lived in Massachusetts and spent every weekend and every summer on Green Mountain road where my aunt lives today. We spent every-day either swimming, boating or fishing on the lake.

I now live in New Jersey but travel often to the lake where I have rented the same home for more than thirty years. My children have all grown up vacationing both summer and winter. We are on the no wake area between Broad and Leavitt Bay. Now that my



children have grown and we have grandchildren we all travel back to the lake each June for several weeks together. My wife and I can be seen riding around the lake area in our microcar, a blue 1960 Isetta.

I wish we were closer to the lake. We have come close to buying on the lake several times, but having several businesses it is hard to own a home anywhere but here in New Jersey. I am very happy though to know that there is an organization that is dedicated to preserving the lake so that my children and now their children can enjoy what Ossipee Lake has offered to me and to the generations before me.

Again, thank you for your note. It would be nice to meet some of the people who are involved in this group at some point.

Jim Dietterich



ROBERT FROST ON OSSIPEE MOUNTAIN

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A constant companion was a huge, playful, and cowardly St. Bernard lent to him for the summer by Leona as an antidote for loneliness. Frost recalled with wry amusement that the dog was terrified of loud noises and during thunderstorms at night would jump into bed on top of him. And when he would have target practice with his old single-shot pistol, shooting at a stove lid, the dog would gallop off yelping into the woods.

Only one person has been located to date who remembers Frost during that summer. Paul Shaw, who was then nine years old, and was one of the grandchildren of Benjamin F. Shaw whose portrait was being painted by Leona.

His boy's eye view of young Frost is revealing. Often when Frost was courting Elinor, Paul and the other boys would pester them; rather than being annoyed, Frost would smile wanly and whittle them wooden animals or make birch bark canoes. "We recognized right away," said Shaw, "that he was a friend."

Though the summer was full and busy with courting, mountain climbing, and tutoring, there always had to be time for reflection and writing. Frost would go off into the woods, occasionally to one of the waterfalls or look-outs that had inspired Whittier, and at night sit alone in the house and write by the light of a kerosene lantern.

He wrote a great deal during these early years, though he could not remember any specific poems which he produced that summer. However, two later poems and an unpublished play were based on his experiences on Ossipee Mountain, memories reworked in his poetic imagination.

The action related in "The Lockless Door" (New Hampshire, 1923) is derived from the following incident. One dark night when Frost was sitting alone in his house, he heard a loud knock at the door. He was apparently a person with a Gothic imagination (note the recurrent confrontation of fear in his poetry) and the house, like all houses in the area, had no lock on the door.

When the knocking continued, he became frightened and climbed out an open window, stuck his head back in, shouted "Come in," and ran. After spending the entire night wandering in the woods, he returned to the house to find a local drunk asleep in his bed.

In "Meeting and Passing" (Mountain Interval, 1916) he has recalled a chance meeting with Elinor on a hillside at a time when they were "less than two / But more than one as yet" and manipulated it into a striking image of the mutual revelation and discovery involved in

a love relationship. An unpublished play entitled "The Guardeen," written between 1912 and 1915 in England, was based on his experiences as "guardeen" of Henry Horne's cider.

A poet's biography is no substitute for his poetry, and to realize the full impact of the mountains on Frost, one must look at his poems, which are geographically and spiritually rooted in the mountain land north of Boston. Mountains are always in the background of his human dramas and narratives and often serve as the material for his lyric images.

If a poem is not set on a mountainside proper, it takes place on a farm with a tilted pasture full of rocks and a view overlooking a mountain range across the interval. Mountains are never inanimate objects, though, to be viewed at a distance, but are part of a humanly and poetically significant environment.

Ever since men ceased to regard mountains as fearful dwelling places of the gods, they have found beauty, challenge, solace, and a meaningful way of life in them. So it was with Robert Frost, whose head took on a new slope on Ossipee Mountain.

At the end of the summer, the White sisters and Frost returned to Lawrence, where the engaged couple began teaching in Mrs. Frost's newly-opened private school. On December 19, 1895, Elinor White and Robert Frost were married.

The romance nurtured on Ossipee Mountain became a passionate, soul-deep union that was to last for forty-three years. And when Elinor died in 1938, Frost sought again the sequestered, self-reliant way of life he had known during the summer of 1895, a "strategic retreat" from which he could make forays into the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to Professor Lawrence Thompson of Princeton University, and to the memories and scrapbooks of people who enabled me to reconstruct a picture of the Ossipee region at the time of Frost's visit, including Mrs. Peter Larson, Mr. Wilfred Riley, Mrs. Martha Oliver, and Mrs. Lee Porter of Moultonboro; and Mrs. Marion Robie, Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Hunter, and Mr. Burton Whitten of Melvin Village. Thanks must also go to the late Robert Frost, who reminisced with me about his summer on Ossipee Mountain during visits to his Vermont farm in 1961 and 1962.

Stephen J. Lerman was attending medical school at Western Reserve University when he wrote this article in 1963. He has been a pediatrician in Boston for more than 40 years.

"One dark night when Frost was sitting alone in his house, he heard a loud knock at the door. He was apparently a person with a Gothic imagination...and the house had no lock."



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