



New England Regional Ski for Light

P.O. Box 861

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Winter 2019 NEWSLETTER

Message from the President

At New England Regional Ski for Light, we come together for camaraderie and our passion for the outdoors. So much good comes from the collaboration of sighted and blind pairs to share the opportunities of hiking, biking, kayaking, Nordic skiing and snowshoeing.

I am Susan Bueti Hill, and I am so honored to be the new President of New England Regional Ski for Light. I have been an active NERSFL member for nearly ten years, and I have loved attending many international, national and regional Ski for Light events. I am a legally blind massage therapist with a home practice in Cambridge, MA.

I want to thank the board of directors for putting their trust in me as I have a tough act to follow. Former president of twelve amazing years, Marie Hennessy, set such a high bar as President with her warm regard for all volunteers and participants, avid attention to safety, and considerable organizing talent. Marie will continue on the outreach committee, speaking on behalf of NERSFL. We thank you with an abundance of gratitude, Marie!

We had a great trip to the White Mountains this past August with 30 folks attending. Check out Joanne Jordan's trip report in this newsletter! And we had a blast at our rainy Autumn hike at Breakheart Reservation in Saugus, MA;

thirteen braved the weather! And you can also read Jessie Mabry's trip report for the 2018 trip to Craftsbury, VT.

Speaking of which, the 2019 trip to to Craftsbury is scheduled for January 11 to 14. In the Spring, we will head to the Wayside Inn in Bethlehem, NH to ski and snowshoe in the beautiful White Mountains. That Spring trip is scheduled for March 1 to 3.

We welcome our new board members, Maurie Hill of Vermont, David Deans of Massachusetts, and Joan Holcombe of New Hampshire. In our latest board meeting, we've decided to create an accessible template to streamline our outreach efforts for funding. That money will go for renting vans, new radios, and financial assistance. If you are interested in helping with our outreach efforts please touch base with any of our board members. You can find our contact info on the NERSFL website.

Thanks for reading and I hope to meet you soon!

Susan Bueti Hill, NERSFL President

TRIP REPORTS

2018 Summer Trip Report

Written by Joanne Jordan and Esther Levegnale

I always look forward to Ski for Light trips. I have been a member since 1978. I love the outdoors and do not get enough of it. Being blind is enough of a challenge especially when it comes to doing outdoor activities.

Susan Bueti Hill has been coming for a while. Our past presidents and many volunteers have worked very hard to make NERSFL what it is today. Susan watched our past president Marie Hennessy work. Susan was passionate about NERSFL and wanted to be president and ran and got elected.

Susan did a lot of hard work beforehand recruiting volunteers in different locations as well as getting equipment for the trip ready. With her organizational skills, the weekend ran as smoothly as I have ever seen.

On Friday night, we took cars and vans and grabbed dinner where we could and arrived at the Wayside Inn in Bethlehem New Hampshire, a lovely place along a river. The rooms are very comfortable. The balconies open to the river.

The water was high and the river was delightful sounding bubbling up. The nights were pleasantly cool after the hot and humid weather we were having.

On Saturday morning we got up for breakfast at 7:15. It was a very happy meeting with everyone seeing who was there and saying hello and having our first meal together. After the meeting we all met in the bar. We brought some guides who drove vans and cars. Susan had arranged for AMC guides as well. One of our guides, Sharron Ferris, knows all the local mountains as well. There were two hikes, the easiest, but still a challenge, was in Lincoln New Hampshire along an abandoned railroad bed traveling through the woods and up to the Franconia New Hampshire falls. The second hike, which I have done many times before, was the Zealand Falls hike, a more strenuous mountain which goes to the Zealand Falls Hut. The falls are located just outside the hut.

We split into groups and chose our various hikes. I went on the Lincoln New Hampshire hike. This I had never done but found it delightful, despite hiking boots whose soles were coming apart and old sneakers also on their way to coming apart. My guide Lou and I started out. Our group had a wonderful time. This hike reminded me that I had better lose even more weight! We all talked as we were going along.

When we finally arrived at the Franconia Falls, I had order seltzer for a drink and forgot what happens when you try to open it after it is shaken. Those around me got baptized, like it or not, very embarrassing! We all had a good laugh. The weather was delightful! It was a little humid and cooler and cloudy so that no sun was bearing down upon us. We hiked back out and had photo ops as well during the hike.

The Zealand folks were longer, but everyone made it and had a wonderful time. After showering and getting cleaned up, we all had various wonderful dinners, drinks, and desserts. Some went to a fire pit at the Wayside after dinner.

After Sunday morning breakfast, we met with guides from the Adaptive Partners of the North Country and kayaked and did a tandem biking run down hill for five miles. I was hesitant to kayak because my old sneakers were coming apart even more. I walked around with my guide waiting for my turn to tandem. The ride downhill was delightful with a really experienced guide. The tandem was old and the chain broke early on, but one of our guides had a tool to fix the chain.

We all finished up our activities at about 1:00PM. The van took off first because participants needed to catch busses. I always hate good-byes. Another NERSFL trip was over, but our car had one last good time going in to Lincoln New Hampshire. I decided it was time to buy waterproof hiking boots. One of our group was very generous and treated all of us in our car to coffee and donut treats.

I went home dreading another Monday, but I am always high after a Ski for Light trip. This was no exception! Such a terrific weekend!

2018 Craftsbury Outdoor Center Trip Report

Written by Jessie and Joseph Mabry, first time participants

After reading so many enthusiastic reports about past Craftsbury trips, we were excited to attend our first trip there with NERSFL. Jessie only had experience with alpine skiing half her lifetime ago, and Joseph hadn't even touched any kind of ski in his life, but we both had high hopes as we boarded a bus to meet our carpool to Craftsbury. We were certainly not disappointed.

We thoroughly enjoyed the center itself. The dorm-style setup wasn't optimal for couples, with mostly twin beds in the rooms, but we managed. The food lived up to the hype it got before we arrived. We made a point to try things that were new to us and soon grew accustomed to having beets pop up in unexpectedly tasty concoctions—e.g., burgers and sausage. No matter what was served, the food always managed to be both hip and hearty.

One thing we will doubtless always remember about this weekend was the extreme bitter cold, averaging around -10 both Saturday and Sunday. It didn't deter most of us, but it shortened our time on the trails somewhat. We discussed safety measures thoroughly every morning before we headed outside.

We were both very impressed with our introduction to Nordic skiing. Our guides first showed us the basics inside and then brought us out on the trails once we got the hang of it. It was fun gelling as a team, adapting to different guiding styles, and taking in the peaceful surroundings.

The guides were very helpful and respectful, both on and off the snow. Everyone seemed very capable and eager to work with whatever level of experience you brought to the table. As we became more comfortable on our

skis, we enjoyed chitchatting with our guides and getting to know them. We became fast friends with many guides and blind skiers alike.

When we weren't skiing and eating too much superb food, we found plenty to keep us busy: We had a great time hanging out with our fellow attendees, participating in the annual NERSFL auction, and, (Joseph's favorite part of the trip), and playing an epic game of hearts into the wee hours of Monday morning.

Considering that we are on our way to New Hampshire for the March NERSFL trip as we write, we obviously recommend these events highly and are very glad we went to Craftsbury.

NERSFL Winter 2019 TRIPS

CRAFTSBURY OUTDOOR CENTER

January 11-14, 2019

Craftsbury, VT

The Craftsbury Outdoor Center offers cross-country skiing, and snow shoeing right from the lodge, with trails for all levels of skiing or snow shoeing. Trip includes 3 nights lodging, double occupancy with hall baths, and great food. All meals beginning Friday evening through Monday lunchtime are included. Trail passes are also included.

Cost: \$290. Payment for the Craftsbury trip must be received by December 1, 2018. Additional \$20 late registration fee will be charged if payment is received after December 1, 2018. Sign up ASAP as this trip will fill up fast so to reserve your space – mail your check and forms as soon as you receive the newsletter!

On Saturday evening at Craftsbury we will be holding our fun silent auction with our own NERSFL auctioneer. Be sure to bring unused items, items you can solicit from your favorite merchants, donations from family and friends or cash donations. Once again this year we are going to have the 50/50 raffle following the auction. Don't forget to bring your dollars to purchase auction items and participate in the 50/50 raffle as this is our only fund-raising event during the year. All money received from our auction will go towards the cost of van rentals, the purchase of radios and financial assistance for VIP's and guides to attend events.

THE WAYSIDE INN

March 1-3, 2019

Bethlehem, NH

This venue offers spacious double rooms overlooking the Ammonoosuc River.

Price includes 2 nights lodging, ski and snow shoe passes, 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and Saturday night dinner at the Wayside.

Cost: \$215. Payment must be received by February 1, 2019. Additional \$20 late registration fee will be charged if payment is received after February 1, 2019. This trip will also fill up fast so mail your check and forms in ASAP to reserve your spot!

Come and cross-country ski or snowshoe at Bear Notch and/or Bretton Woods. Both venues offer all levels of cross country skiing and snow shoeing in the White Mountains of NH.

NERSFL 2019 Event Policies

Payments and Refund Policy

Please make payments by check made out to New England Regional Ski for Light and mail to NERSFL, P.O. Box 861, Georgetown, MA 01833. NERSFL does not accept credit cards and Paypal at this time.

For all events, early application returns will assist in planning for adequate guide and transportation matching. Don't miss out on our events as space for our summer trip fills up quickly! If for any reason you need to cancel your reservation for the weekend trip, \$25 of the trip cost is nonrefundable. The balance may be refundable in part minus charges incurred by NERSFL from the vendor. We will do our best to assist you to find someone to take your place, but it is ultimately your responsibility to find a replacement.

NERSFL President and Treasurer make all trip arrangements. No one should contact the venues regarding lodging or with questions about a trip. Call President Susan Bueti Hill with any questions or information needed regarding events.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to participants and guides who cannot afford to pay the full cost of a trip. Up to three-quarters of the cost of a trip may be subsidized. In order to be considered one must submit a letter with the event application by June 27 for the July weekend trip and September 17 for the fall day hike. The letter should contain total monthly or yearly income with expenses and other related information to demonstrate need. You will be notified by telephone within ten days from receipt of your application if you will be receiving financial assistance.

Forms

Enclosed is a trip application to complete and return with your payment. Health, Liability, Guide, and Participant forms can be downloaded from our website: <http://nersfl.org> or mailed to you in hard copy at your request. All forms must be filled out, signed, and returned before you can participate in an event.

Payment for the January weekend is due by December 1, 2018.

Payment for the March weekend is due by February 1, 2019.

Physical Condition and Guide Pre-Requisites

To attend a NERSFL trip you must be willing to actively participate in all athletic events as either a VIP, guide, or guide in training. Anyone in good physical condition can expect to complete these activities. If there are any questions about your ability to participate, we will be happy to discuss them with you. In questionable cases, the decision to participate will lie with the participant and his or her physician. Participants must take responsibility for their own health-related issues at events. If you are interested in attending an event as a guide, please be assured that training in guiding a visually impaired person is available at events. However, it is expected that guides have prior experience and skill with hiking, kayaking and biking. Everyone's enjoyment will be enhanced by any measures taken to improve physical fitness and stamina before the event. All persons attending events including guides and visually impaired participants must be at least eighteen years of age.

More information about participating as a guide or as a visually impaired participant can be found on our website, <http://nersfl.org> or requested by sending an email to nersfl@nersfl.org or by calling 781-321-1071.

Transportation

Transportation to events is a shared responsibility. We will make every effort to have transportation available by carpooling. Guides are encouraged to let us know if you are willing to drive and how many passengers you can take. All passengers are expected to contribute towards the cost of gasoline and tolls. REMEMBER - take into consideration the high price of gas when paying your drivers!! If you are coming to an event from out of town, do not make travel plans back home on public transportation prior to 7:00 pm on the final day of an event. We cannot guarantee a return to transportation centers prior to this time.

Guide Dogs

Although guide dogs are welcome on trips, there are restrictions that may affect your participation in some activities. You must not contact staff at venues where we do activities, or lodging operators to ask them to check on guide dogs left unsupervised. Dogs are not allowed in boats and are not allowed on many ski or snow shoe trails. When outdoors at an event Guide dogs must be on leash at all times. On the last day of an event, after checkout time you will be responsible for attending to your dog. Please consider this when deciding whether or not to bring your dog.

The information about event policies can also be found on our web site, <http://nersfl.org> . Please contact us if you have any questions about them.

Please consider making a donation to NERSFL. Donations can be made to The Helen and Nario Brenes Scholarship Fund and/or The Jordan Family Memorial Fund.

Another way to make a donation is to use our Go Fund Me site. This site can be found at www.gofundme.com/NERSFL. Check it out - it's Jaws friendly! There are links to post it on your Facebook or Twitter so that you can share this site with others who may be interested in making a donation.

We are a tax exempt not for profit 501C3 organization. Any donations to NERSFL are tax deductible and greatly appreciated! These donations allow us to cover the cost of van rentals for summer and winter trips, provide financial assistance to guides and VIPs to attend events who otherwise would not be able to participate, purchase new radios, and other costs incurred by NERSFL. If you have any other suggestions for fund-raising opportunities, please contact us!

Winter 2019 Trip Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____ (C) _____

E-mail _____

I am a guide _____ visually impaired participant _____

I need transportation to the event/s _____ (yes or no)

I can offer a ride to # _____ passengers ___to and ___from the event.

I wish to attend the following event/s. Enclosed is my payment for:

_____ Craftsbury Outdoor Center, Craftsbury, VT January 11-14, 2019
\$290 plus additional \$20 if received after Dec. 1, 2018

_____ The Wayside Inn, Bethlehem, NH March 1-3, 2019
\$215 plus additional \$20 if received after Feb. 1, 2019

In addition to this trip application, please complete the NERSFL Event Form if you have not already done so for the current calendar year and mail it to the address located on the form. All forms can be found on our web site at nersfl.org/appforms.html.

_____ Enclosed please find my donation of \$_____ to the Helen & Nario Brenes Memorial Fund for financial assistance to VIPs or \$ _____ in memory of Joanne Jordan's father for financial assistance to guides. We are a tax exempt not for profit 501c3 organization.

_____ I am interested in writing a trip report and/or in taking photographs for NERSFL.

Detach and mail with payment to:

NERSFL

P.O. Box 861

Georgetown, MA 01833

NERSFL Board of Directors
Susan Bueti Hill, President
Esther Levegnale, Vice President
Kari Anne Dunlop, Secretary
Donna Paterson, Treasurer
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Margaret Gaffney, Director
Maurie Hill, Director
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Free Matter
for the Blind