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Books and Media

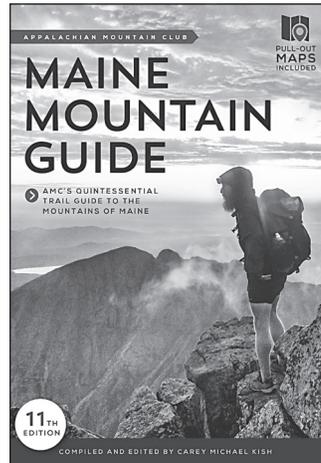
Maine Mountain Guide: AMC's Quintessential Trail Guide to the Mountains of Maine, Eleventh Edition

By Carey Michael Kish

*Appalachian Mountain Club Books, 2018,
640 pages.*

ISBN: 978-1-62842-097-5.

Price: \$23.95 (paperback).



GEOLOGICALLY SPEAKING, BARRING MAJOR earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, or meteor strikes, mountains don't change much in our lifetimes, but trails traversing them are occasionally extended, rerouted, or simply eliminated. This is why guidebooks and maps must continuously be updated, and there's no better example of this truism than the eleventh edition of the *Maine Mountain Guide*, authoritatively compiled and edited by Carey Michael Kish.

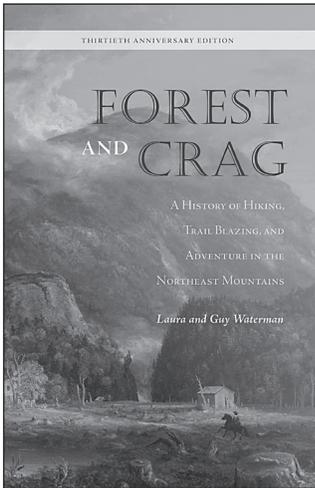
This meticulously researched, easy-to-read volume features 175 new trails and 50 additional mountains not included in previous editions, which date back to the first in 1961. There also are thirteen extra in-text maps, made necessary by Maine's admirable record of trail building and expansion since publication of the tenth edition in 2012.

Kish covers popular destinations, including Baxter State Park and Acadia National Park, as well as more detailed descriptions of regions, including the 100-Mile Wilderness and Moosehead Lake, Downeast, and Midcoast. In all, Kish revised descriptions of more than 450 trails.

You can do no better than to heed the expert advice and observations of Kish, a registered Maine Guide who grew up exploring the Maine Woods and has twice hiked the entire Appalachian Trail.

I hope Maine and other states continue expanding their trails so that we continue to need Appalachian Mountain Club mountain guides to get around those routes.

—*Steve Fagin*



Forest and Crag: A History of Hiking, Trail Blazing, and Adventure in the Northeast Mountains, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition

By Laura Waterman and Guy Waterman

SUNY Press, 2019, 978 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-4384-7530-1.

Price: \$34.95 (paperback).

NO COUPLE EVER EXPLORED THE MOUNTAINS of the Northeast more extensively nor wrote about them more voluminously than Laura and Guy Waterman. Pioneers of the hit-the-trail movement that began sweeping the country in the 1970s, the Watermans took hiking and technical climbing to new levels in the Northeast. Guy Waterman climbed all 48 of New Hampshire's 4,000-footers from all four points of the compass in winter.

They chronicled their rambles in numerous articles and books, including these latest editions: *The Green Guide to Low-Impact Hiking and Camping* (Countryman Press, 2016); *Wilderness Ethics: Preserving the Spirit of Wildness* (Countryman Press, 2014); and *Yankee Rock & Ice: A History of Climbing in the Northeastern United States*, with a new chapter by Michael Wejchert (Stackpole Books, 2018).

In 1989, after more than a decade of painstaking research and even more exhaustive tramping over hill and dale, the Appalachian Mountain Club published the Watermans' definitive mountain history, *Forest and Crag*. This comprehensive, 888-page compendium combines a history of the major peaks and paths of the Northeast with a philosophical narrative reflecting their deep-seated reverence for environmental preservation. AMC brought out a second edition in 2000. When the book went out of print some years ago, devotees went online and reportedly paid as much as \$200 for well-thumbed editions, and the Green Mountain Club made an ebook available.

Now, the State University of New York Press has resurrected this treasured tome in a new 30th anniversary print edition that will allow veteran hikers to replace their tattered volumes, as well as introduce the Watermans to the next generation of outdoors-oriented men and women. The new edition includes several pages of additional historical photographs and a new preface.

In that new preface, Laura Waterman acknowledges that the continuously growing popularity of hiking in the Northeast has been a double-edged sword. On one hand, it's gratifying that great numbers of people are drawn to the woods and mountains; on the other, it's troubling that such an influx threatens to trample the sanctity and solitude of wild places.

"The trails on the popular peaks see so much traffic that hikers are forced to step out of the treadway to allow others to pass. This is so common that damage to the vegetation has accelerated, and above treeline especially, where the plants recover slowly or not at all, they are, in some areas, in danger of obliteration altogether," she writes.

Laura Waterman still lives in East Corinth, Vermont, where she and Guy first settled as homesteaders after their marriage in 1972. On February 6, 2000, Guy Waterman climbed the 5,249-foot peak of Mount Lafayette in northern New Hampshire, sat down next to a cairn, and died overnight in below-zero temperatures. He was 67. I still find it difficult to comprehend that someone who had been so passionate about life in the outdoors ended his in that way.

Forest and Crag remains part of his, and Laura's, legacies. The richness of the Watermans' words will always resonate.

—Steve Fagin

**A Naturalist at Large:
The Best Essays of Bernd Heinrich**

By Bernd Heinrich

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018, 304 pages.

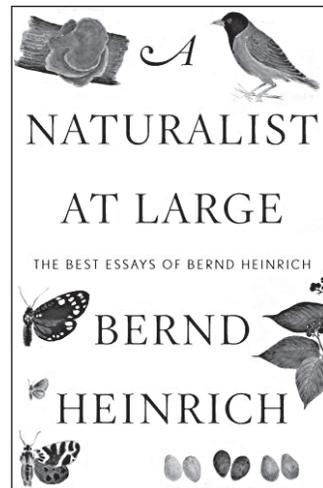
ISBN: 978-0-544-98683-1. Price: \$26

(hardcover);

ISBN: 978-0-544-98687-9. Price: \$14.99

(ebook).

YOU ARE THE SON OF A FAMOUS ENTOMOLOGIST-ORNITHOLOGIST; he discovered a bird so rare that, following its sighting in 1931, it was not seen again until 1996. You grew up for a time with your family in a one-room hut in a forest in northern Germany. You learned to pin beetles at age 6, skin and stuff small mammals soon afterward. At 11, you were painting flour paste on the



abdomens of bees to track their routes to honey trees. Of course, you became a naturalist.

“Natural historians make observations that prompt questions . . . (and) lead to an understanding of life in its various dimensions,” Bernd Heinrich, an emeritus biology professor at the University of Vermont, writes in the introduction to almost half a century of observational essays. For most of us, the curiosity of childhood eventually devolves into busy incuriosity. Caught in the cyber-tasks of our lives—never mind the laundry, never mind taxes—we have foregone the luxury of looking.

But Heinrich has not, as proven by a lustrous academic career and eighteen books written from cabins in the woods of Vermont, Maine, and elsewhere. Here is a man who looks for and answers questions we don't. The world is his office, and for one watching “the co-evolutionary arms race” between sphinx moths and hummingbirds (each must penetrate impossibly long, tubular flowers for nectar) or estimating that a lone yellow birch produces 19.5 million seeds annually (by counting the seed number per cone fruit, then multiplying by cone fruits per tree), office hours are long. Yet, he does not suffer burnout. Everything holds the promise of discovery.

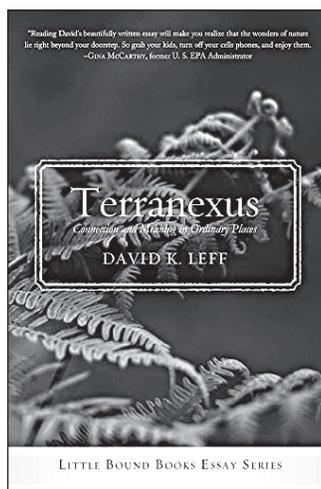
Enthusiasm for discoveries leaps off the page. For instance, by measuring the muscle temperatures of sphinx moths, Heinrich proved that some insects—contrary to reigning theory—are actually hot-blooded. Swarm temperature regulation allows bee clusters to surround a predatory hornet threatening the hive and, essentially, fry it to death. Many, but not all, vines unwind in counterclockwise direction—perhaps a macroscopic reflection of the microscopic spirality of DNA strands.

With all of his findings comes a sort of philosophy of existence: “Discoveries cannot be looked for,” he muses. “They happen . . . mostly by rummaging around.” If you watch ravens without pause for six hours (he is particularly eloquent about his bird-watching), or listen to the song of a phoebe for months (“alternating two-syllable phrases, FEE-BEE, FEE-BAY, FEE-BEE, FEE-BAY, at the rate of 30 phrases per minute”), or compare the rate of heat loss in two baby birds (“a two-ounce kinglet should lose heat at a rate about 75 percent faster than a four-ounce chickadee), the world grows infinitely more interesting.

Sometimes Heinrich leaves his cabin in the woods—where observations, experiments, and calculations are no farther away than the door—to travel to the Anza-Borrego Desert in California, Ellesmere Island in the Canadian

Arctic, the Okavango Delta in Botswana. He writes about these places, too. Everything in this world is watchable; everything is fertile. With his essays, he is pollinating us.

—Elissa Ely



Terranexus: Connection and Meaning in Ordinary Places

By David K. Leff

Homebound Publications, 2018, 80 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-947003-95-8.

Price: \$12.95 (paperback).

A BOOK OF SHORT ESSAYS IS LIKE A SERIES of short day hikes: brief, directional, and heading toward a clear end. Of course, sometimes the hike you think you're taking breaks from the route and heads somewhere else it has decided to take you instead.

The first essay in *Terranexus* begins with a description of the White Mountains of New Hampshire in all their magnificence. You've read this one before. The usual ode to wilderness is about to follow.

Not so. David Leff, who writes essays occasionally for this journal, uses the White Mountains as an easy way to understand what he calls "terranexus"—profound connection to terrain. Everyone feels terranexus on the top of Mount Lafayette. But then Leff changes direction: to a heavily polluted river near his Connecticut home, to a local landfill, to a strip mall. It turns out terranexus can be felt in those places too.

Canoeing down the Naugatuck River, he finds muskrats and signs of beavers by "drowned shopping carts and piles of bald tires." In the Hartford landfill ("among my favorite degraded places to visit"), he sees birds perching "on fence-post-sized gas wellhead pipes." Even in the strip mall, god help him, he "admits to . . . an occasional thrum of excitement."

Why should we feel affection for "the hard used places where civilization and nature are entangled"? Explanation comes in other essays. History, Leff explains, has provided three waves of thought about conservation, the

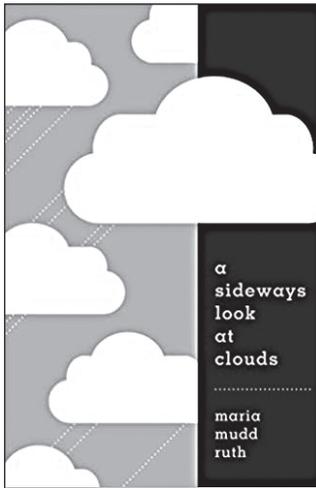
last “encouraging us to prize not just the pristine and magnificent places . . . but more mundane precincts.”

He turns to Boston for proof. The Emerald Necklace links 1,100 acres of urban parks and waterways, winding through the city and out to wilder surroundings, crossing and recrossing “the lines between human and wild communities . . . built and natural environments.” It’s an example of continuum at its best: “Only by appreciating . . . the everyday landscapes where we live and work will we be able to ensure the future of . . . places where nature is dominant and human beings feel like visitors.” Therefore, why not more of this, Leff wonders? Why not become “naturalists of urbanity”?

It seems counterintuitive. We list toward nature precisely to escape urban blight. For the still-unconvinced, Leff hikes further off the main trail, looking over a shoulder now and then to make sure we are following. “Not a polluted wasteland nor a seemingly boring subdivision,” he argues, “is without compelling tales and fascinating human and landscape confluences.”

You can find eternity in a grain of sand, or on a mountaintop, or in a landfill. This little book believes every landscape holds that grain.

—*Elissa Ely*



A Sideways Look at Clouds

By Maria Mudd Ruth

Mountaineers Books, 2017, 224 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-68051-118-5.

Price: \$24.95 (hardcover).

THE FIRST CLOUD MARIA MUDD RUTH ever noticed resembled Richard Nixon. Fortunately, political caricature did not prevent her from gazing up again decades later, initially with interest and then, with a growing obsession.

“My perfunctory dog walks became cloud rambles,” she confesses in *A Sideways Look at Clouds*. “I tripped on curbs. . . . once I walked into a parked car.”

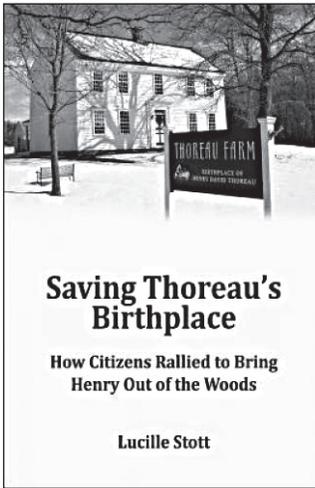
In the beginning, her funds of knowledge were limited. “I knew clouds were made of water and that they floated,” she writes, “but so did icebergs.” She began to roam widely into cloud science with the help of weather textbooks, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an international cloud atlas, and the Cloud Appreciation Society. She consulted physicists, chemists, professors, neighbors, family, and a flight meteorologist.

Roaming took her to a cloud-painting watercolor class, to the study of Latin etymology and the physics of visibility, and of course, to pondering climate change. Sometimes she struggled to keep up with the science, even with categorization. There are ten cloud forms. Neophytes usually recognize cumulus, cirrus, and stratus, but each type is subdivided by shape and structure into genus and species. Plenty of creative Latin is involved: *congestus*, *humilis*, *mediocris*. All the descriptors are temporary, though, because clouds are in constant evolution and devolution. “By the time we pin a name on a cloud,” she observes (humbly, but without defeat), “it changes enough to need a new name.”

Clouds are full of water droplets, ice crystals, and mind-blowing facts. A typical low and languorous cumulus cloud (“the cloud kingdom’s happy ambassador”) can contain more than a million pounds of water. Gray altostratus clouds—“the cloud that practically begs you to ignore it . . . the boring cloud . . . the mute button of the atmosphere”—can measure thousands of miles across. If most of us are too busy looking down to care, these numbers ought to shake up a little respect.

In the clouds, Ruth glimpsed art and mythology as well as science and Nixon, and even a way into beginning to cope with her mother’s death. Clouds became openings she walked through—beautiful doors. She writes about them with such weight of knowledge and such lightness of creativity and such great affection that the sentences float upward, inviting us to rise too.

—*Elissa Ely*



Saving Thoreau's Birthplace: How Citizens Rallied to Bring Henry Out of the Woods

By Lucille Stott

TMC Books, 2018, 246 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-9996249-4-4.

Price: \$19.95 (paperback).

BACK IN 1995, LUCILLE STOTT WAS THE editor of the *Concord Journal* in Massachusetts. One day a resident called the paper. The farmhouse where Henry David Thoreau had been born might be torn down. Stott started working on stories. She visited the rundown

house where, “without warning, I was overcome with emotion. I realized a little sheepishly, for I’d always thought of myself as a practical, feet-on-the-ground kind of person, that what I was feeling was awe.”

The site of Thoreau’s cabin on Walden Pond attracts crowds all year, but here was an actual building where “the Henry with a heartbeat” had come into the world, Stott writes here. Although Thoreau’s world remained rather small—he lived most of his life in Concord—his life in that town remained rich with connections to his family and friends.

Within a few years, as Stott returned to teaching at Concord Academy (and became editor of this journal from 2000 to 2005), she became involved in a community movement to buy the Thoreau birthplace. The story of that movement unfolds in this book’s graceful and well-documented 40 chapters. She tells how activists gathered support and encouraged the town to buy the house. Citizens formed the Thoreau Farm Trust, renovated the building, and transformed it into a historic site. The house opened to the public in 2010.

The farmhouse and this book have now become part of the Thoreau story. Learn to appreciate the man who taught us that “in wildness is the preservation of the world” by visiting the town and the building where he began his life as a town resident.

—Christine Woodside

The Pacific Alone: The Untold Story of Kayaking's Boldest Voyage

By Dave Shively

Falcon Guides, 2018, 166 pages.

ISBN: 978-1-4930-2681-4.

Price: \$24.95 (hardcover).

ED GILLET IN THE SUMMER OF 1987 completed an astounding navigational feat that no one accomplished before or since: a solo crossing of the Pacific Ocean, from California to Hawaii, by kayak.

One remarkable aspect of Gillet's 64-day, low-budget, sparsely publicized, unsupported voyage was how little recognition he gained from such a stunning achievement.

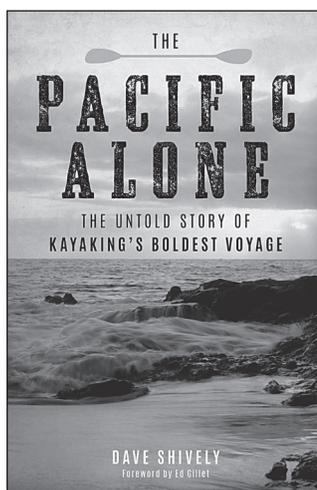
Gillet subsequently retreated to the relative anonymity of a California high school, where at last report he teaches AP English. Even his arrival in Hawaii after such a harrowing journey went virtually unnoticed. As Dave Shively writes in this entertaining, illuminating new book, no cheering throngs greeted the exhausted, half-starved, and cramped Gillet when he at last arrived at Maui's Kahului Harbor.

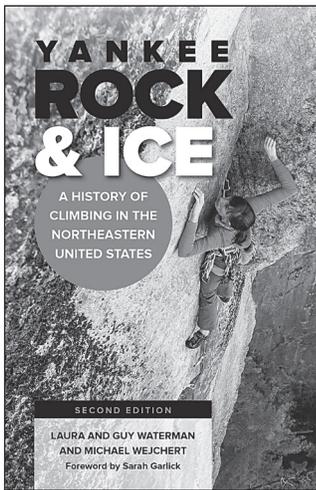
"After forty nonstop hours spent paddling to the finish, Gillet realized he could not stand on his scarred and atrophied legs. Through pins and needles he propped himself from cockpit to sand. As he pushed himself up and worked to straighten his knees, he could only lurch from side to side. . . .

"His first human contact was a lone drunk, who teetered toward him in the waking hours, thinking he'd perhaps found a kindred spirit. Gillet had asked him for a hand dragging his boat farther up the beach, revealing how he had just paddled over from California, to which the derelict stranger responded, 'Two months in dat little thing?'"

Shively's book evolved from an article for *Canoe & Kayak* magazine, in which he set out to chronicle various failed attempts to paddle across the Pacific. Realizing that a detailed account of the only successful crossing had never been written, Shively got in touch with Gillet. What results is a gripping read, full of drama on the high seas. This remarkable tale of survival and perseverance has finally surfaced.

—Steve Fagin





Yankee Rock and Ice: A History of Climbing in the Northeastern United States

By Laura and Guy Waterman with new chapters by Michael Wejchert

Stackpole Books, 2018. 464 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-8117-3768-5.

Price: \$19.95 (paperback).

THE WATERMAN'S *YANKEE ROCK & ICE* has been released again in a revised, expanded second-edition paperback. The first hardcover edition was published in hardcover in 1993 and reissued in paperback a decade later. New Hampshire climbing guide Michael Wejchert contributed four new chapters to this new edition. North Conway climber, writer, and filmmaker Sarah Garlick wrote the foreword. Stackpole Books is to be congratulated for its commitment to preserving and updating this classic account of Northeastern climbing history.

From the 1970s to the beginning of the 21st century, the Watermans were like the unofficial first family of New England climbing, a role that climbers and former *Appalachia* editors Robert and Miriam Underhill fulfilled for an earlier generation. Robert and Miriam were the first to ascend all 48 New Hampshire 4,000-footers in winter. Guy Waterman established his own enduring record, as the first to summit all 48 peaks in winter from all four points of the compass. The Watermans co-authored a shelf of insightful books on wilderness ethics (with a strong emphasis on the principle of Leave No Trace) and climbing history. Laura's memoir *Losing the Garden: The Story of a Marriage* (Shoemaker and Hoard), which came out in 2005, five years after her husband's suicide, is a poignant account of how even a life well lived is sometimes not enough.

Yankee Rock & Ice remains the go-to book for anyone interested in the history of climbing in the region, especially in the White Mountains, the Shawangunks, and the Adirondacks. Much of this history in the twentieth century, especially in the Whites and the Gunks, is bound up with that of the Appalachian Mountain Club. Lively and well-drawn characters emerge in the early chapters, including the Underhills, Ken Henderson ("who always

wore a jacket and tie on the hardest of climbs”), and German immigrant Fritz Wiessner, who deservedly gets a chapter all of his own.

The first edition offered a detailed account of Northeastern climbing down to the eve of the 1990s. Wejchert’s four new chapters bring the story down to the day before yesterday. He introduces new faces (Jim Surrette, Leesa and Jay Conway) and carefully considers new ethical questions (bolting, chopping) and ever more difficult and colorfully named routes (“Difficulties be Damned”).

This book will make Northeastern climbers proud of their region and its heritage of difficult and pioneering climbing. As Garlick notes in her preface to *Yankee Rock & Ice*, New England and New York may not have “the tallest cliffs, or the highest mountains, or even the greatest weather, but we have the best variety of high-quality terrain anywhere.” That plus a climbing community that, at its best, is rooted in the values espoused and embodied by the Watermans.

—*Maurice Isserman*

MAURICE ISSERMAN, professor of history at Hamilton College, is the author of *Continental Divide: A History of American Mountaineering* (Norton, 2016).