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THE ADVENTURE & DISCOVERY MAGAZINE
JULY 2008

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Volume 8, No. 7

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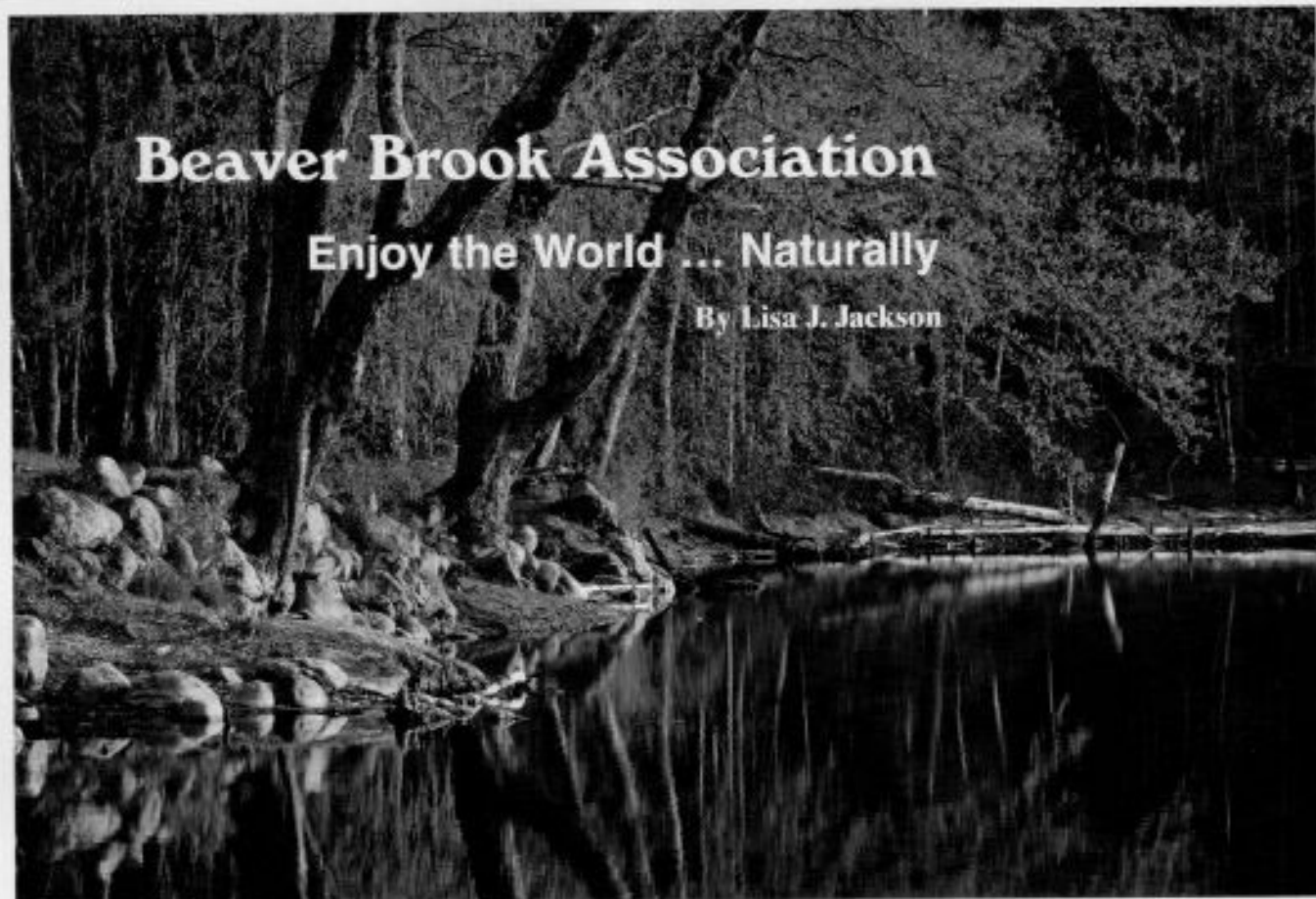
Clark's Trading Post celebrates its 80th anniversary this summer. Ursula takes a rest after 19 years of entertaining visitors at the park. Victoria, Pemi, and Echo carry on the beloved tradition of the performing black bears at Clark's that began in 1949. See page 20.

Photo courtesy of Clark's Trading Post

Beaver Brook Association

Enjoy the World ... Naturally

By Lisa J. Jackson



IT'S THE SIMPLE MOMENTS in life that can sometimes create the most lasting impressions. I am involved in the Big Sister program and experienced one of those moments at Beaver Brook Association. Last year, I showed my Little Sister a picture of a lady slipper, telling her we might see one as we hiked on the well-loved property, but it was a rare flower, so I made no promises. She'd never seen one before, but loves pink. As we were walking down by some wetlands, she was thrilled to find quite a few lady slippers right on the edge of the trail—which still amazes me. Such a rare flower on a well-walked trail ... not damaged at all. That moment sticks in my head. My Little Sister made a new discover, and one that would not have been possible if the folks in the area didn't have the respect for the wildlife there that they do.

Whether you're seeking to relax, learn, exercise, or any combination of those, Beaver Brook Association delivers. This nature getaway nestled along the border in south central NH seems like a well-kept secret, but it isn't meant to be. I only discovered Beaver Brook's amazing offerings a few years ago even though I've have lived within 15 miles of it my entire life.

Beaver Brook is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote environmental education and land stewardship. Starting with 12 acres in 1964, Beaver Brook now covers approximately 2,000 acres of land within Hollis, Brookline, and Milford, with all but 200 acres being contiguous.

Made up of 35 miles of trails for walking, hiking, biking, and horseback riding, along with trails around gardens, fields, ponds, and wetlands, Beaver Brook offers a slice of nature for all energy levels, abilities, and curiosities.

Relax and Enjoy the Gardens

On days where just getting away from home for a bit is called for, it's wonderfully relaxing to bring a blanket and enjoy a picnic surrounded by the beauty of the Maple Hill Gardens. All 12 theme gardens are open and available daily to the public. Lovingly maintained by a group of volunteers known as the Maple Hill Gardeners, the gardens are located at the main entrance to the property and are handicap accessible.

The fountain in the Welcome Garden gurgles a greeting as you enter the property, Alice's Rockery is next and around the



Whether volunteering or participating in one of the many programs, all ages enjoy the many benefits of gardening at Beaver Brook Maple Hill Farm in Hollis.

corner to the left many Hostas and creeping Phlox inhabit the West Bank Garden.

Discover five categorized gardens within the Herb Oval. Herbs historically associated with keeping one safe from harm are in the Magic Garden. The Kitchen Garden contains kitchen herbs. The Apothecary holds herbs known for treating ailments, and Dyer's Garden contains herbs used for coloring before modern chemical dyes were invented. Contained in the center of the oval is the Armillary which contains varieties of thyme.

If you're drawn to the breathtaking floral aromas, your nose can lead you to the many trees and flowers in the Fragrance Garden. The Victorian Garden, containing plants common in gardens of the 1900s, surrounds a gazebo. In the Shade Garden, you can relax amongst the sturdy green plants that don't like direct sun.

As the heat of summer fades, the flowers and plants that bloom in the Autumn Garden attract a lot of attention. There are two parts to the Hedged Garden, each containing a mixture of annuals, perennials, and grass walkways.

Flowers used in dried flower arrangements for the Fall Festival are grown in the Drying and Cutting Beds. It's interesting to watch the flowers get harvested at the end of the summer.

On days where the sun is a bit too much, or relaxing and enjoying the serenity of the gardens is called for, take advantage of one of the many chairs in the shade under the Wisteria growing in the Arbor Garden. It's fun to take photos of the Little Barn Garden throughout the summer to see the progression of the kiwi vine which grows up and over the small building.



The gardens contain beauty and knowledge. Visitors are welcomed and encouraged to look and learn about the plants and flowers which are labeled with names and descriptions.

The gardens are gorgeous but they aren't the only places to see colorful plant life. Amazing flowers, including the pink lady slipper, can be found along the edges of the trails. It warmed my heart to discover such delicate flowers beside my foot I walked along.

Volunteers deserve a lot of credit for the condition of the property. They check the trails often and remove or report fallen trees or branches so the property can be maintained to high standards year round. Visitors show respect and do their part by leaving no trace and watching their step.

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New Hampshire ToDo

Learn About Nature

Beaver Brook is known for offering the highest quality educational programs in the area and they constantly strive to mentor children in knowledge and respect for the natural world. Summer courses are offered for kids as young as four, as well as workshops for 1st through 5th graders. There is also a leadership course for teenagers to learn outdoor ethics.

Friday mornings in July and August offer "Friday Frolics at Beaver Brook." These environmental activities are held rain or shine. The activities are for all ages; registration and a small fee are required. Consider one for a family activity. Summer programs incorporate natural items found on the property for building a bird bath, building gnome and fairy houses, walking stick whittling, composting, as well as flower pressing and card making.

Beaver Brook is a bird watcher's heaven. There are many bluebird houses in the open fields. The houses are monitored by volunteers for bluebird activity. Bring your binoculars, pick a spot to sit, and see how many birds are in residence.

Also on the property is a bird observation building. This is a three-sided retrofitted screened structure with bench seats. It sits on the side of a hill and is great for relaxing during the summer, or observing birds as they eat at the feeders in the winter.

Exercise and Education

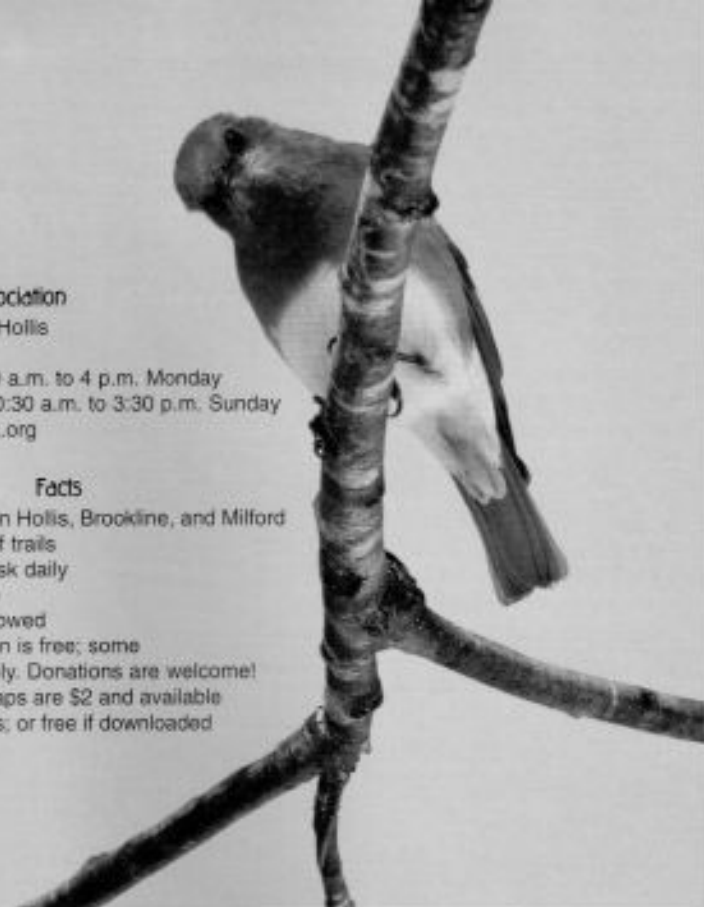
Combining exercise and education can add intrigue to your day. If you'd like to learn about what grows in the forest, be sure to check out the one-mile, self-guided Tudor Richards Natural History Trail. It's a loop trail of varying walking difficulty, and not for everyone. A trail guide is available to identify 74 numbered sign posts which describe trees, plants, and habitats found along the path. It doesn't matter if you start to the left or the right; there is a lot of knowledge to be had while walking in the woods along this trail.

Beaver Brook Association

117 Ridge Road, Hollis
(603) 465-7787
Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday; 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday
www.beaverbrook.org

Facts

2,000 plus acres in Hollis, Brookline, and Milford
Nearly 35 miles of trails
Open dawn to dusk daily
All ages welcome
Leashed dogs allowed
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Colored-coded maps are \$2 and available during office hours; or free if downloaded from the website.



Courtesy of Beaver Brook Association



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Definitely bring your camera and binoculars when you explore the Nesting Box Trail. Use the available trail guide and take a casual walk along the one-mile loop. See how many of the 14 types of nesting boxes you can discover. They aren't all at eye level. If you're lucky, you'll catch glimpses of various inhabitants such as wood ducks, squirrels, and chickadees.

The Wigwam Trail is a blast for young kids. There can be a contest to see who can locate the bark-covered structure first. It blends in with its habitat year round.

Frogs, fish, beaver, ducks, and other wildlife can be found in and around the ponds. Keep a close eye on the water as you walk across the bridges, you never know

what critter may be watching you. Who can identify more, you or the young person with you? I know who has an easier time catching the frogs.

Parents with children age 8 or older can sign up to camp out overnight at Beaver Brook. Bring a tent or borrow one, hike to the campsite, learn how to build a fire and shelter, track animals, and pick up a few survival skills.

If you're an off-road runner interested in some competition, Beaver Brook hosts a summer and winter 5K race along their trails.

The numerous mountain bike trails are great for families. There are a few different entry points on the property. I enjoy cycling

Resources Available

Horticulture education classrooms; meeting rooms; facilities can accommodate up to 125 people; rustic cabin rentals; libraries and demonstration-teaching gardens

Beaver Brook Activities

There is hiking, biking, horseback riding, bird watching, winter snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Some of these are scheduled group events—check it out. You can plan themed birthday parties, too! Look online for events like the Summer Solstice Celebration held on June 21 at 6 p.m., complete with entertainment and a dessert buffet contest.

to Beaver Brook and riding the trails. The variety of trails keeps me going back.

I fell in love with Beaver Brook on my first visit with a friend one weekend. Beaver Brook truly has something for everyone ranging from low-key and relaxing to high-energy and exhilarating. No matter your age, interests, or experience with nature, if you have an interest in photography, writing, observing, learning, walking, hiking, cycling, exploring, or simply relaxing, you can do it at Beaver Brook.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has a motto, of sorts. It reads, "Little moments ... Big magic." Been there ... done that. At Beaver Brook.

To Do

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