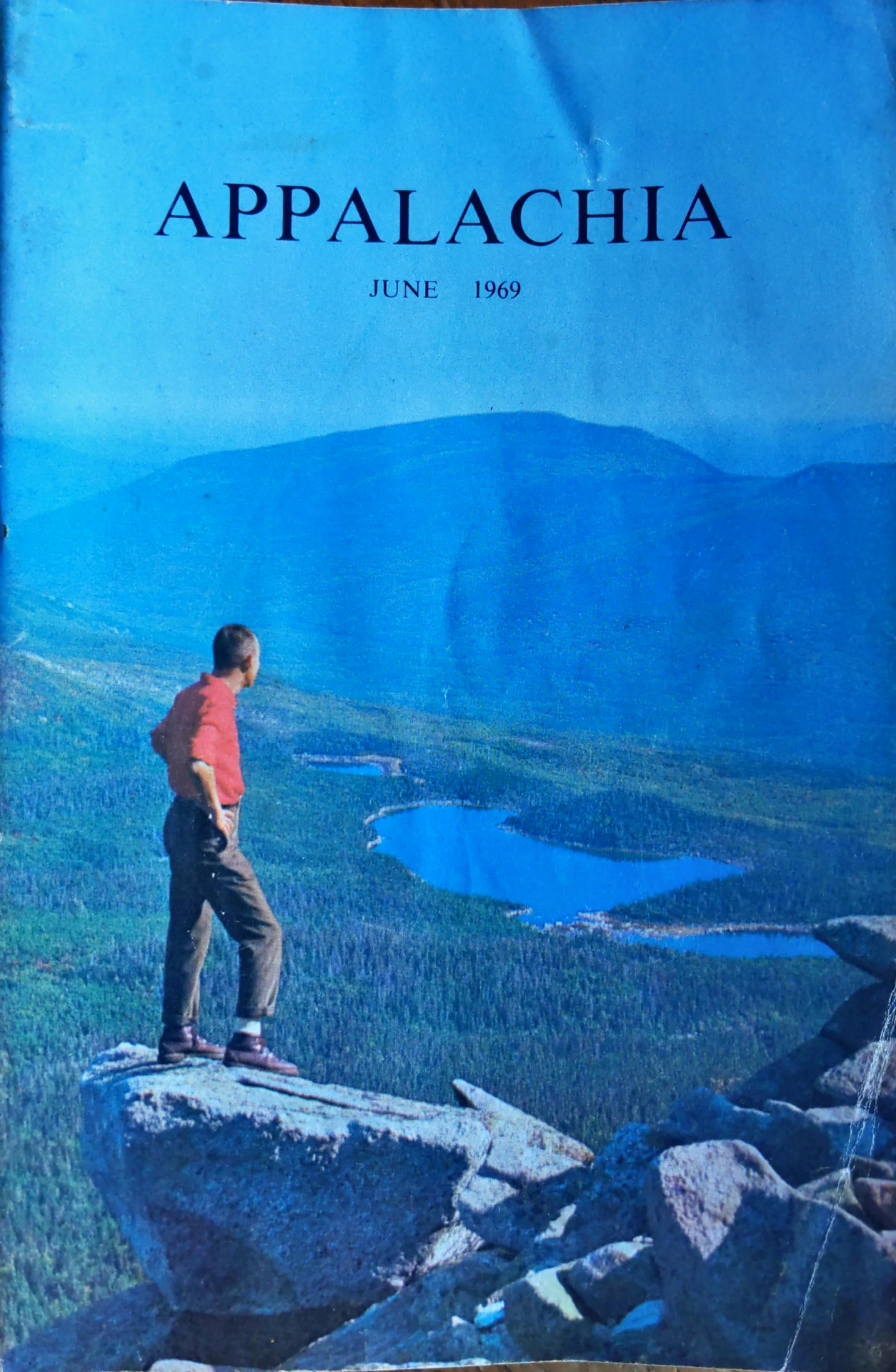


APPALACHIA

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snowmachines weather, all spell danger. The same conditions, I don't care who the driver is."

I wonder if the same people who fail to take heed of the warnings would be willing to go back up to help rescue or recover someone. I didn't see any out at the Glen House the other day asking to go.

The Mount Washington Auto Road Co. has now closed the road to snow-machine travel above the Half-Way house. Signs will be erected to this effect. Will there be those who ignore these signs? I expect there will, and if so, someone will get in trouble. Perhaps the next person won't be as lucky as Mr. Philbrick was. If snowmachiners ignore the closure at Halfway, those who do should be forced to pay for the rescue or recovery costs that may be necessary as a result of their actions.

I had intended to write about the great snowstorm in this week's column but I have used up most of my space already. I guess I shall leave it for next week. I will, however, say that I measured 56 inches of new snow at Gorham between Monday at daylight and sundown on Thursday of last week. This brings my total snowfall count on Gorham Hill to 228 inches since the first snowflake on the night of Nov. 8.

PAUL DOHERTY, *Littleton (N. H.) Courier*

Conservation

Some thoughts on snowmobiles and other evils. For the last couple of years, I have wasted a great deal of breath and many letters to the editor in futile attacks on the snowmobile, an adult toy more and more of my neighbors are embracing with near religious zeal.

At first, I supposed my aversion to the little monsters stemmed from a basic disapproval of motorized recreation plus the fact that these machines have usurped the winter woods from those of us who loved them enough to visit them on foot. But with the fantastic growth in popularity of the snowmobile, I have come to regard it in a larger and more sinister context, perhaps that of a major breach of our conservation battle lines.

I doubt if anyone really knows how many of these idiot sleds are snarling and buzzing around the country, but if our section of northern Pennsylvania is any measure, and I think it is, the total is awesome. The population of our town is less than 1,300 with at most an equal number living nearby and there are 150 snowmobiles registered with the local club with many more unregistered.

If this figure seems startling, consider that in these parts it's a rare winter that produces more than a dozen days when conditions could be rated good or better for snow sports! During the 1968-69 winter there was less snow than usual, yet weekend after weekend snowmobiles jounced through fields and woods on the ridge back of my place on a snow base of one inch or less. One man went so far as to spread straw in a field and run his machine on it!

What manner of madness is this? I believe the answer lies in the nature of this machine. The snowmobile has at least three attributes which are dear to the heart of modern man. Number one, it makes a heck of a lot of noise. Second, because you sit so low you get a heightened sensation of speed. Third, the snowmobile, at least as it is being promoted in the most extensive advertising and publicity campaign in the history of motorized recreation, promises an effortless passport to high adventure.

You may have seen the Skidoo poster that shows a big man in a snowsuit standing on high ground, one foot on his snowmobile, his pose the quintessence of power and his expression that of a victorious explorer. He symbolizes not only the spirit of adventure but man's delusions of subduing nature.

Snowmobile ads usually picture the things hurtling through the winter air or skimming pristine drifts in high mountain terrain, the riders aglow with demonic delight. This is a heady come-on for a man who can spare \$1,000 or more for a new toy (or perhaps can scrape up the down payment) plus the price of a pair of insulated pants. But it's a far cry from the tame, aimless and earthbound uses snowmobiles are put to around here. Often they simply churn in circles on the front lawn.

The ads love to proclaim that the snowmobile opens up country "hitherto inaccessible," news certainly to snowshoers and cross country skiers.

Basically, the snowmobile is just one more entry in the parade of trail vehicles which started with the Jeep. You may, if you wish, write it off as a passing fad, a wintertime only thing which does not interfere with quiet enjoyment of nature at more popular seasons. Many do just this, and I think they make a mistake.

Precisely because it does seem relatively innocuous and is an off season thing, the snowmobile has been able to worm its way onto federal and state lands previously closed to all motor traffic. Snowmobile trails are appearing in some of our finest parklands in many parts of the country. It's the classic opening wedge which the development boys are sure to exploit in their ambition to lace the last of our primitive regions with motor trails and highways.

In general, pressure now building against wilderness are likely to make past assaults seem like child's play. The old mining, timber and dam building interests are being augmented by a mighty new army of exploitation marching under the near-sacrosanct banner of "recreation," an all purpose word that on our verbal value scale now rates along with flag and motherhood. Add to this the influence of the manufacturers, supplies and dealers of motorized recreational equipment, their advertising budgets and, far from least, the millions of enthusiastic users

who "pay taxes too" and you have an idea of the potential scope of future wilderness preservation battles.

As they say, it's easier to complain than to prescribe; what's to be done?

There is certainly no easy answer. Can we somehow infuse new hordes of insensitive outdoor recreationists with a true appreciation of wilderness before we are overrun? The hour for this would seem to be two minutes before midnight if not a few after. Must we eventually give up large chunks of presently designated wilderness in return for smaller areas with tighter controls? I hope not.

Viewing the explosions of population, affluence and motorized recreation, which later is sure to include a one-man chopper or jet pack capable of opening not only the wilderness but the very mountain peaks to the unqualified; viewing all this as a confirmed pessimist, I have a depressing vision of a future wilderness buff in his walled backyard mini-sanctuary listening to a tiny electrically operated waterfall and to little bells in bonzai trees agitated by hidden fans.

Let's hope that nightmare doesn't materialize, but let's not underestimate the enemy or his weapons, including the snowmobile.

We can only fight on.

ED VAN DYNE

White Mountain National Forest

Lincoln Woods Scenic Area. The establishment of 18,500 acres of the White Mountain National Forest as the Lincoln Woods Scenic Area was formally announced at the A.M.C. Annual Meeting in Boston on January 10, 1969.

This establishment by U. S. Forest Service officials of the Eastern Region and the White Mountain National Forest with the cooperation, advice, and encouragement of the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire's Forests, New Hampshire Natural Preserves Forum, and the Selectmen and residents of the Town of Lincoln, formalizes the Forest Service's management since 1936 of protecting the scenic splendor of this unique and historic section of the Forest.

In the management and administration of the United States National Forest system and within the concept of multiple use management, there is an objective to provide areas managed in near-natural conditions of sufficient number and size to provide present and future needs for recreation of this type.

Scenic Areas are one such class of recreation areas under this concept of management. The Scenic Area description places emphasis on special management practices to provide optimum human use consistent with basic near-natural values. Management decisions consider the protection of all resources and, particularly, the enhancement of the scenic values.