



Moosalamoo region: A little something for everyone this September

September really is a perfect month for local outdoor enthusiasts, hikers, campers, nature walkers, hunters and anyone in the Moosalamoo region that wants to get out and enjoy a breath of fresh air. My husband, Lou, and I enjoyed a little of everything in Moosalamoo during Labor Day weekend, and really can attest that the region offers something for everyone.

My husband was up on Blueberry Hill bright and early Saturday morning, hunting for bear. He came back to the house at 11 a.m., quite excited that he found fresh bear scat right along the trail in the blueberry hill area. Of course, I insisted he take me back up there so I could see it too (yes, what could be more exciting), and our golden retriever absolutely loves to run around open fields. Up on the hill that afternoon, I couldn't help but stand in awe at the views of the Brandon Gap mountains, the Taconic Mountain Range, and the Champlain Valley with the Adirondacks in the background. It literally took only a hundred yards to enjoy fantastic panoramic views.

Next, he took me up the road to Voter Brook Overlook, and the Moosalamoo campground. We quickly checked out the Overlook, another hundred-yard walk where you can enjoy beautiful views by picnic table. The campground, off the same road, was also busy Saturday. The nineteen campsites were pretty full with campers (families of all varieties) and cars from all over New England.

Sunday, my husband returned to Blueberry Hill and the surrounding woods. Unfortunately, the bear that had been frequenting the area continued to elude him, but while in the woods on the Catamount Trail, my husband ran into a tour group with Bruce Acciavatti, fellow Moosalamoo board member, and owner of Wonder Walks guided tours. The group was quite interested in my husband's hunting experiences and the techniques he used in the area, and one group member even took his picture. Alas, he returned home, a little flattered, but without a bear.

Given the nice weather Monday, and the fact that we live just down the road in Brandon off Route 53, we decided to return to the area and hike Mt. Moosalamoo. After all, we hike all the time, and being on the Moosalamoo board, we thought it only appropriate that I should hike to the summit of the actual mountain. So, we enjoyed a nice mellow 2.5 mile hike to the top, and then took the Keewaydin Trail back down to the dirt road that comes out just above Voter Brook Overlook, where we enjoyed our lunch at the picnic table. On the way down the Keewaydin Trail, however, we had to stop and admire a Beech tree with some serious bear scratches all over it. This poor tree epitomized the phrase "scarred for life." My husband labeled it the Keewaydin Trail's "bear tree."

Back at the parking lot, we ran into a hiker who had spent the evening camping up on Mt. Moosalamoo, and was just returning to his vehicle. The area really does offer a maze of trails once you get in the woods. You have the option of everything from light walks, to

the 19.5-mile Oak Ridge trail, if you're ambitious enough to hike the whole trail perhaps in a day (as we're going to attempt on my birthday this month), or for an overnight camping trip.

So, from a little walk, to hunting, to a picnic lunch with panoramic views, to adventurous hiking, my husband and I really love the Moosalamoo area. We will no doubt visit it more this September ... and we encourage fellow outdoor enthusiasts to do the same this fall.

The mission of the Association is to: Collaborate with public entities to plan, manage, and provide stewardship for wildlife habitat conservation and quality public recreation opportunities and facilities, promote responsible recreation participation and environmental awareness through interpretation, education and resource monitoring, demonstrate the unique capabilities of public and private partners working together, and strengthen partnerships at the local level in cooperative projects such as trail construction and maintenance, wildlife habitat improvement, or visual enhancement of roadsides.

Moosalamoo NRA is a 20,000-acre region of public and private land nestled in the Green Mountain National Forest. Moosalamoo's diverse ecosystem is home to a large number of plants and animals. The region is also a marvelous recreation area for wildlife viewing, berry picking, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, picnicking, and camping. Find out more by visiting www.moosalamoo.org.

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