SKY LINE TRAIL
MIDDLESEX FELLS

Witch Trail Committee
157 Circuit Road
Winthrop, Mass. 02152

revised 1984

Sponsored By:
The Witch Trail Committee
157 Circuit Road
Winthrop, Mass. 02152

25c
plus postage
Registration Form

Pack _______ of _______ (city) _______ (state)

plans to hike the Sky Line Trail on ____________

No. hikers expected _______ No. adults _______

We have prepared our group for a safe hike and agree that the Trail Committee, Trail Sponsors or the BSA are not responsible for any accidents that may occur.

Signed ____________

Leader in Charge (please print) ____________

phone _______ (zip) _______

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Awards Order Form

Pack _______ Troop _______ completed the Sky Line Trail on ____________ and would like to order:

Trail patches at $1.50 each _______
Trail medals at $2.50 each _______
Sets of patch and medal at $4.00 _______
Postage (see below) _______
TOTAL _______

Mail to: (please print) _______

(phone) _______ (zip) _______

Current 3rd Class postage is as follows: Patches 1-10 - .52; 10-20 - .70; over 20 add .35 each 10. Medals require .18 each postage/ extra refunded.
Notes:

Bolo ties and tie-tacks are now being offered for sale by the Witch Trail Committee. Designs are now available in stock showing the Wood Badge patrol you used to be in (Fox, Beaver, Owl, Eagle, Buffalo, Bob White, and Antelope). We also have designs showing your membership in the OA, (Ordeal, Brotherhood or Vigil).

These medals are available from the Witch Trail Committee in hand-cast pewter. They cost $5 each, postpaid.

Some Troops have done away with wearing a neckerchief with the new uniforms and switched to a Troop Bolo. We have made several and would be pleased to quote you on making one for your Troop. Typical design fee for the making of the initial die is $25. The personalized Bolo ties then cost $5.

If you are interested in having one made for your Troop, send us a sketch of your design and we will send you a firm quote as to the price and delivery.

SKY LINE TRAIL - MIDDLESEX FELLS RESERVATION

Purpose: The purpose of the Sky Line Trail is to acquaint Scouts with the existing trail, maintained by the AMC and to introduce them to some of the local history. This area was in the center of the land held by the "Massachusetts" Indians.

Trail: The Trail is open year-round and may be hiked whenever the ground is free enough of snow to permit a safe hike. The best views can be obtained when the foliage is not full. Excellent views are available year-round from the two towers on the trail.

The trail begins and ends in the parking lot of the MDC picnic area in Stoneham. The trail covers about 7 miles and will require approximately 5 hours to hike, depending on the time spent at the towers, cave and rests. The trail is a woods trail except for a few 100 feet where it skirts around the North Reservoir. There are no facilities on the trail, with the exception of trash cans and fireplaces at the starting point. Each hiker should bring his own water supply. The trail is similar to portions of the Appalachia Trail. It is not level and will require climbing over rocks, up hills and thru brambles. "Be Prepared."

Awards: All awards are strictly optional and not a requirement of the hike. There is no fee for hiking. A colorful Sky Line Trail patch may be ordered by the Unit Leader upon completion of the hike. A sketch of the most current patch is shown on the cover of this booklet but the design may change from time to time. A Trail Medal is also available for this hike. Trail Medals are worn over the left pocket of the Scout uniform. The patch is $1.50 and the medal is $2.50. The set of patch and medal is $4.00. The patches and medals are only available from the Witch Trail Committee, 157 Circuit Road, Winthrop, Mass., 02152. An order form is included in the front of this booklet. Please include postage with your order. Thanks.
Registration: Please fill out the registration form found in the front of this booklet to help us keep track of who is hiking and to give us a rough idea of the number of patches we need to keep in stock. If you will send in the registration form at least two weeks prior to your hike we will be able to let you know if there are any changes in the trail. Even if you decide to go on the hike at the last moment, please send in the form. You will not hear from us unless there has been a change in the trail.

Since this is a self-guiding hike, you may go any time you wish.

Requirements: The trail was set-up for Boy Scouts but anyone is welcome to hike the trails - boy or girl. Adults may also qualify for the trail awards. Scout hikers are encouraged to wear full uniforms on the trail and an adult over 21 must accompany each group on the entire hike. It is recommended that adult leadership be on a ratio of about one adult to every 10 Scouts to insure a safe and orderly hike. All Boy Scout units should have either a local Tour Permit (#4416) or a National Tour Permit (#4419) in their possession if they are not members of Minuteman Council. These permits are issued thru your local Scout Office and make your trip an "official" activity covered by your own Scout insurance.

This is a strenuous hike and not recommended for anyone except those in good physical condition. Each hiker is expected to have the proper foot gear and be trained in hike precautions and basic first aid. This area is the public waste supply so there is no swimming, etc. in the water. Bring your own water with you and make sure you pack out all your litter.

You will come to a park road with a small "dump" or excavation on the right of the trail. You should see a letter "M" painted on one of the trees here. This marks the cut-off to the old mine site.

The trail goes straight ahead across the woods road but you might like to take a short side trip to see the remains of the Silver Mine. (see map)

Follow the road to the left, passing a Y junction on your left. The road goes down hill-reservoir in front of you thru the trees. As you go down hill you will see a concrete slab in the woods on the left with some short concrete posts around it. This will be on your left just before you come to the main park road.

The concrete slab covers the old 85 foot shaft which is now a well. In 1881 some prospectors sunk a shaft 30 feet and found "$18 in silver. $4 in gold and a large proportion of copper." The shaft was sunk to 85 feet and a lateral tunnel was dug. The mine operated for 2 years and then was abandoned. About 50 years ago some boys fell in so it was sealed.

It should be safe enough to drive a truck over but you should play it safe and keep your Scouts under control. No one wants to swim in an 85' well. The mound along side the shaft is the cinder pile. As of last visit there was a small hole in the center of the slab where someone chopped thru. If you want to test the depth of the shaft bring a string along. Take home a clinker and dream of the gold that is still in these hills!

After visiting the mine return to the main trail. The trail continues and crosses another road, where a Spur Trail leads off to the right. Do NOT take the spur unless you want to add another 5 miles to the hike. Continue straight ahead to your car - about ½ mile' aged. The trail will lead you directly to the parking lot from which you started.

(If you started at the Zoo, continue thru the field and the trail will bring you back to Bear Hill where the Blue side trail to the Tower will bring you back to the connecting trail to the Zoo.)
If you wish to visit the spring, follow the park road to the left to the intersection of another road. Just past the intersection you will see water flowing from the left (X on map). Molly's Spring was named after the daughter of Erin Conners - who lived alone in a hut by the side of the spring and demanded pay from those who wished to drink.

Continue south, over several rises, pass a water tower on your left and come to South Dam.

Crossing the dam you will re-enter the woods and cross a road, follow a short road and cross 2 more roads. After crossing the second road you will cross Wenepoykin Hill (el 225'). There will be an open area on your right.

Continuing you will descend from some rocks to the junction of 2 park roads. A Cub Pack has painted marks here so you will not miss Panther Cave.

Panther Cave consists of 2 small caves. There is a small one on the road and a much larger one in back. Climb to the top of the rock and you will find a small opening that drops you into the large cave. The cave extends to the left from the opening and has an exit on the side of the rock.

After the cave the trail crosses the road, into the woods, follows an old stone fence - from the 1800's and heads down to Bellevue Pond. Here the trail follows a dirt road around the pond and around Pine Hill. When you reach this point you can see the tower in front of you on top of the hill. The trail goes around the hill and then goes up to the tower.

The top of Pine Hill (el 243') has a fine tower which gives an excellent view of the sky line of Boston and the area to the South, West and East. On top of the hill you can find Glacial Scratches or scares traced in the rock. The trail goes right over them. Also, you will see in the rock initials cut that date back to the 1700's. These marks are on the trail north of the tower.

From the tower the trail goes north, parallel to Rt. 93. You will cross an old quarry road and several other paths along the way.

It is to be noted that participation of persons in hiking the Sky Line Trail in no way obligates the Trail Committee, Trail Sponsors, the MDC, the AMC or the Boy Scouts of America in the case of any accidents or injuries.

Other Info: The Walter D. Stone Zoo is close by and is an excellent Zoo, if you have the time.

The MDC maintain an outdoor swimming pool during the summer at the north end of the trail, near the Zoo. Camping is not permitted in this area. You may camp at Camp Nihan in Saugus - a short drive away. This campground has tent sites and cabins for the use of youth groups. It is run by the MDC and may be reserved by contacting the MDC. Hq., 145 Pond St., Stoneham, Ma., 02180. (Tel. 617-438-5690). This office is located next to the Zoo.

The Witch Trail Committee sponsors a total of 9 different trails in this area. The other trails are:

- Witch Trail - 10 mile hike from Danvers to Salem visiting the sites of the 1692 Witchcraft scare.
- Leslie's Retreat Trail - 6 mile s following the British march of Feb. 1775 from Marblehead to Salem. This action set-up the battle at Lexington.
- Spirit of '76 Trail - 2 miles around historic sites of Old Town section of Marblehead, including the original '76 painting. Good hike for Cubs.
- Pirate Legend Trek and Trail - a 4 mile hike designed for Cubs and a 10 mile hike for Scouts thru the Lynn Woods. Visit a treasure cave 150' long and Wolf pits.
- Sons of Liberty Trail - 10 miles from Lexington to Concord following the famous "Battle Road" of April 19, 1775. Chance to re-live history; good museums.
- Blue Hills #1 & 2 Trails - a 2 mile for Cubs and a 10 miler for Scouts thru the woods to test your map and compass skills or just enjoy the woods.

Information as well as patches and Trail Medals for all the above trails are available from the Witch Trail Committee, 157 Circuit Road, Winthrop, Ma. 02152.

Guide books, similar to this one are available for each trail for 25¢ plus postage (37¢0 or $2.65 for set.
To Reach the Trail:

From Boston: Follow the Central Artery north to Rt. 93. Follow Rt. 93 north to Rt. 28 - Fellsway West exit. Follow 28 north, parallel to 93. About 0.1 miles after Rt. goes thru a tunnel under 93 you will come to a road on your left that leads under a cement bridge; the road leads to the "Picnic Area". Turn left here, going under the bridge, road then bears right, going up hill to a parking lot. The parking lot is the start of the trail.

From North of Boston: Take Rt. 128 to Rt. 93. Follow Rt. 93 south to Exit 9. Get off at Exit 9 and turn left at the foot of the exit ramp. Take your next right and another right at the traffic lights. This should put you on Rt. 28, heading south. Follow 28 an it will parallel Rt 93 and cross over it. About a 1/2 mile after you cross over 93 you will come to an exit on your right that goes down under a cement bridge. Turn right here, going under the bridge. The road will bear right and go up hill to the parking lot. This is the start of the trail.

From the West: Follow Rt. 128 to Rt. 93 and use the "From the north" instructions.

From the East: Follow the Middlesex Fells Parkway from Rt. 1 in Saugus. Turn right at traffic light with sign pointing to Rt. 28 and Zoo. Follow signs to Rt. 28, passing Zoo on your left. Take left at lights after Zoo, onto Rt. 28 - Fellsway West. You will go over Rt. 93 and about 0.2 miles after that you will see a "Picnic Area" sign on left and a road on the right LEADING UNDER A CEMENT BRIDGE. Turn right here, going under bridge and up hill to right to parking lot. This is start of trail.

Alternative: The Picnic Area lot is sometimes locked and an alternative spot to leave the car - safer maybe too - is the Zoo parking lot. Follow signs to Zoo. There is a blazed trail from the lot to Bear Hill, note dotted line on center map. Once you follow these dots up Bear Hill you will connect with the trail as described on bottom of page 12. This also has advantage of making the hike a full 10 miler for the Merit Badge.

Bear Hill has had several names. On Feb. 7, 1632 Gov. Winthrop, Mr. Nowell and Mr. Eliot came up here while exploring the area. They ate lunch on a rock just north of the tower. They named it "Cheese Rock" since they had brought cheese for their lunch but forgot the bread. It was called "Bare" Hill when it was first stripped of trees for local housing and ships. When the trees grew back the name was changed to "Bear" Hill.

Once you have enjoyed the view, return down the same blue marked trail you came up and then rejoin the Sky Line Trail - turning right at the junction.

Follow the path down hill to opening in the pines.
You will go over Money Hill and come out at the end of the North Reservoir. Walk along the dam toward the brick building. You will pass an Aux. Fire Dept Station on your right. (Hospital is 2 blocks from here to the right.)

Trail turns left at the road, follows the road up hill for a short distance and then re-enters the woods on a wide path.
You will go over Grinding Rock Hill (el. 235'), cross a stream and a dirt road and then go up a steep hill - Nanepashemet. (If you have not read the Indian history to your group this might be a good spot to stop and rest and do it.)

Between Grinding Rock and Nanepashemet there is a rock named for Squaw Sachem - see map - but it is too far off the trail to see. The Middle Reservoir is located just east of Nanepashemet Hill but is difficult to see thru the trees.

On the south shore of the Middle Reservoir was located the hut of Hannah Shiner. She was the last Indian to live within the reservation. She was a "herb gatherer, basket-weaver, and lover of rum". In those days the area was called "Turkey Swamp".

Continue south on the trail till you cross a path and a dirt road. To the left (East) is a spring.
TRAIL GUIDE

The Trail starts and ends at the entrance to the parking lot. You will find white dots on the retaining wall on the right as you enter the parking lot. These dots will lead north (toward the ball field) up hill, where the trail is marked by trees with a white blaze.

The Trail has been marked exceptionally well by the AMC and needs little or no directions. When you see 2 dots or marks on one tree be careful as this indicates a change in direction. You will find this trail good practice for the Appalachian Trail.

The following notes are more to point out features rather than serve as a detailed guide. The way the Trail is marked it is most difficult to get lost.

From the parking lot the trail goes to the top of the hill and crosses the "Soap Box Derby" Track. It runs parallel to the ball field, drops down and enters the woods. It continues thru the woods to a dirt road, left for 50 feet and then up hill to the top of Winthrop Hill - a rock top with a good view West.

If you look west from the top of Winthrop Hill (named for Gov. Winthrop) (el. 291') you can see the North Reservoir. To the south of it is the Middle Reservoir (behind the trees). The land between the 2 reservoirs is called Wanapanaquin Hill (el. 225') - named for the grand-daughters of Nanepashemet. (see map)

Continue on the trail north, down hill until you come to blue dots painted on trees. This is the short side trail to the 60' observation tower on top of Bear Hill (el. 317'). Follow the marked trees to the top for an excellent view.

(If you start your hike at the Zoo, this will be where you will join the main trail - after having followed the trail from the Zoo up the hill to the observation tower.)
References:
The following books were used to prepare this guide book:
- History of the Town of Medford by Brooks & Usher
- Round about Middlesex Fells by Medford Hist. Soc.
- Middlesex County & Its People by Conklin (1927)
- Walks and Rides about Boston by Bacon 91897
- Appeals for the Fells by Wright (1893)
- Biographies and Legends of the N.E. Indians, Vol 1
  by Bonfanti - This book is still available from the Pride Pub. Co., Box 13, Wakefield, Mass. 01880
  for $1.50. It is a good book on Indians.

Conservation: Like all public places these days, the Middlesex Fells suffers from litter. The
beauty of the woods is hurt by the inconsiderate people who leave their trash behind.
It would be a great help to the MDC and others if each hiker would take out his own trash and
make a effort to pick up some of the litter left by others. If each person would pick up 6 cans
as his "price" for hiking the trail we would all have a better trail. There are trash cans in the
parking lot. If you crush the cans they will be easy to carry back to the parking lot.

Blueberries: One of the nice parts of the trail is the fact that there are many wild blueberry
bushes along the trail. They should be ripe toward the end of July, if you have the time.

Trees: There are many different evergreens and other trees in the Middlesex Fells. See how
many you can identify.

Nanepashemet's youngest son was Wenepoykin or Little Feather. He was called Sagamore George by
the English. When his two brothers died in 1633, he inherited all their lands. He had 3 very
beautiful daughters who were called the Little Feathers - Wanapanuquins - by the local Indians.
In 1640 Wenepoykin sold Wakefield, Reading and North Reading to the English for $50. He tried to
get payment for the rest of his land which he had given away previously. He brought his case to the
English Court but never settled to his satisfaction. In 1675 he moved to Chelmsford to live in the
Christian Indian village of the Wamesit.
Wenepoykin still felt he was unfairly treated by the English. When the King Philip War broke out he
joined the Indians and fought against the English. At the age of 60 he was captured and held a prisoner
on Deer Island in Boston Harbor. In 1676 he and 500 other Indians were sent to Barbadoes as slaves for
having taken part in the War. 8 years later he was set free when Rev. John Eliot sent a sum of money to
the West Indies to buy the release of the New England Indians. Wenepoykin died in 1684, the year he re-
turned to New England. Before he died he made a will leaving all his lands to his nephew, James Quannapowitt.

In colonial days the Fells was called the "5 mile woods". Its present name was suggested by Sylvester
Baxter - Fells being provincial English for a barren or stony hill. It was set aside as public land in 1894
and added to later. Prior to being taken the land was used to provide timber, "Medford Granite" and red gravel.
There are 2 old "Towns" inside the area. One was between the Middle and North Reservoir on the East Side. The
other was located east of Spot Pond in the area bounded by Pond Street and Ravine Road. There are many old stone
fences inside the reservation today.
His wife and children escaped just before the Tarratines attacked. They hid with some of their friends to the west. Once the danger had passed Nanepashemet's wife, Squaw Sachem, returned to Medford and became the ruler of the Massachusetts Indians.

In 1621 Miles Standish came to Boston on a trading expedition, visiting the "Shawmut Indians" and some of the "Massachusetts Indians". The Shawmut Indians were in Boston and were in such fear of Squaw Sachem that they were eager to sign a treaty with the Pilgrims in return for protection.

In 1637 Squaw Sachem deeded Concord, Mass. to the English settlers. In 1639 she deeded Somerville to them also. By 1639 Squaw Sachem had become very peaceful and signed a deed leaving some of her lands to Edward Gibbons, an English trader. This land included what is now the cities of Cambridge, Medford, Arlington, Melrose, Belmont and Stoneham. She died in 1667 and was buried in Medford. The exact location of her grave is not known.

Nanepashemet's sons were well known to the English. His oldest son was Wonohaquaham - called Sagamore John by the English. He was the leader of the Indians who lived in Revere, Charlestown and Winthrop. His chief home was in Medford, on the Mystic River. He is recorded in history as having been "Courteous and ingenious". He died in 1633 in a small-pox epidemic that killed most of the remaining Massachusetts Indians.

Nanepashemet's second son was called Sagamore James or Montowampate. He was in charge of the Indians living in Saugus, Marblehead, and Lynn area and lived on the Saugus River. He too died in the 1633 epidemic. After this "plague" almost all the remaining Indians deserted this region. The deaths made this area a dreaded locality and Indian superstition kept all away.

History: While walking this trail you will pass sites named in honor of Nanepashemet, his wife Squaw Sachem, his son Wonohaquaham (Sagamore George) and his grand-daughters, the Wanapanaquins. These Indians were the last to be in charge of the "Massachusetts Indians". Nanepashemet was killed just south of the trail and his wife was buried in this general area. They ruled over all this area - as far north as New Hampshire.

The Indians were united into family groups of several hundred persons and their leader was called Sagamore. The leader of many families was called Sachem and he ruled over several Sagamore. These terms were the ones used by the Indians to show authority rather than the word "Chief".

Nanepashemet (New Moon) was the Sachem of all the Indians between Boston and Concord, N.H. as well as those in Western Mass. He lived in many different parts of Mass. during his life but his chief homes were in Salem, Lynn, Marblehead, and Medford Mass.

He was a powerful ruler who sent his war parties out on raiding parties. During one of these he attacked the Tarratine Indians of Maine on the Penobscot River. Their leader was "Bababac" who vowed to kill Nanepashemet in revenge.

Nanepashemet feared he might be caught by surprise. Therefore he moved to Medford and made a fort on Rock Hill (About a mile south of the trail on the Mystic River). He made the fort by sticking 30 foot logs in the ground, enclosing a circle about 40-50 feet across. On both sides of the row of logs he dug a trench, chest high - making a bridge the only way in. Inside he raised his house 6 feet off the ground on poles.

About this time the Massachusetts Indians caught a disease from the white men that killed many of them. In 1619 Nanepashemet's enemies found out he had lost most of his braves so they attacked and killed him - here in Medford.