ADK advocates the principles and practices of Leave No Trace:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel on durable surfaces
3. Pack it in—Pack it out
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) is a nonprofit organization with over 34,000 members dedicated to the protection and responsible recreational use of the New York State Forest Preserve, parks and other wild lands and waters. Founded in 1922, ADK is a member-directed organization committed to public service and stewardship. The club employs a balanced approach to outdoor recreation, advocacy, environmental education, and natural resource conservation. For more information or to join us, please contact us at:

Adirondack Mountain Club - Administrative Headquarters
814 Goggins Road, Lake George, NY 12845
518-668-4447 www.adk.org

ADK North Country Operations
Box 867, Lake Placid, NY 12946 518-523-3441

Funded by the
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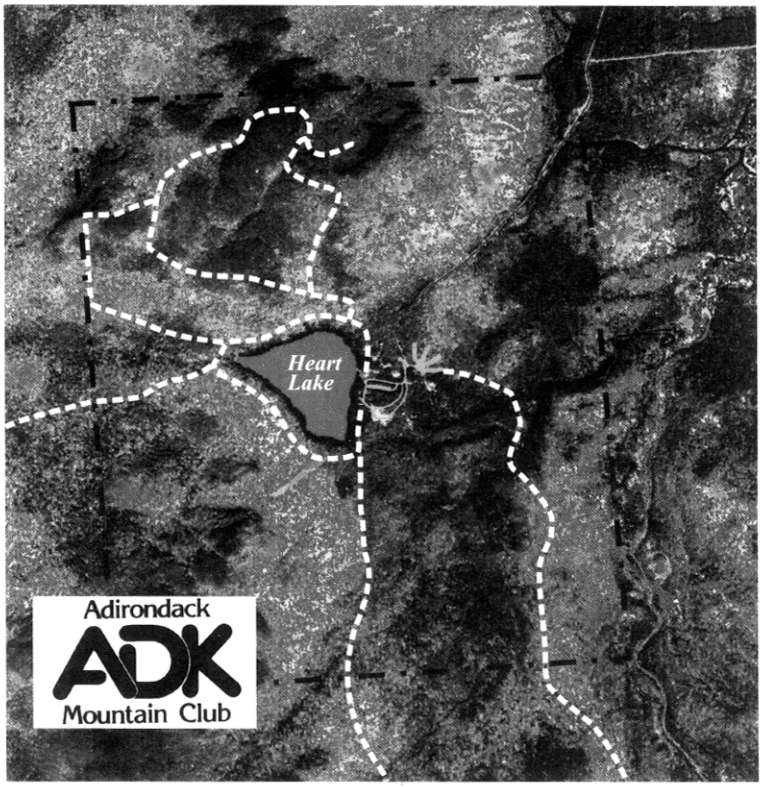
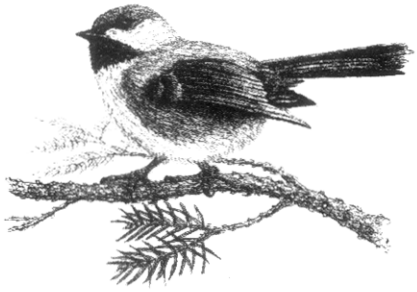


www.adk.org

An Interpretive Guide to

Reading the Landscape of Mt. Jo



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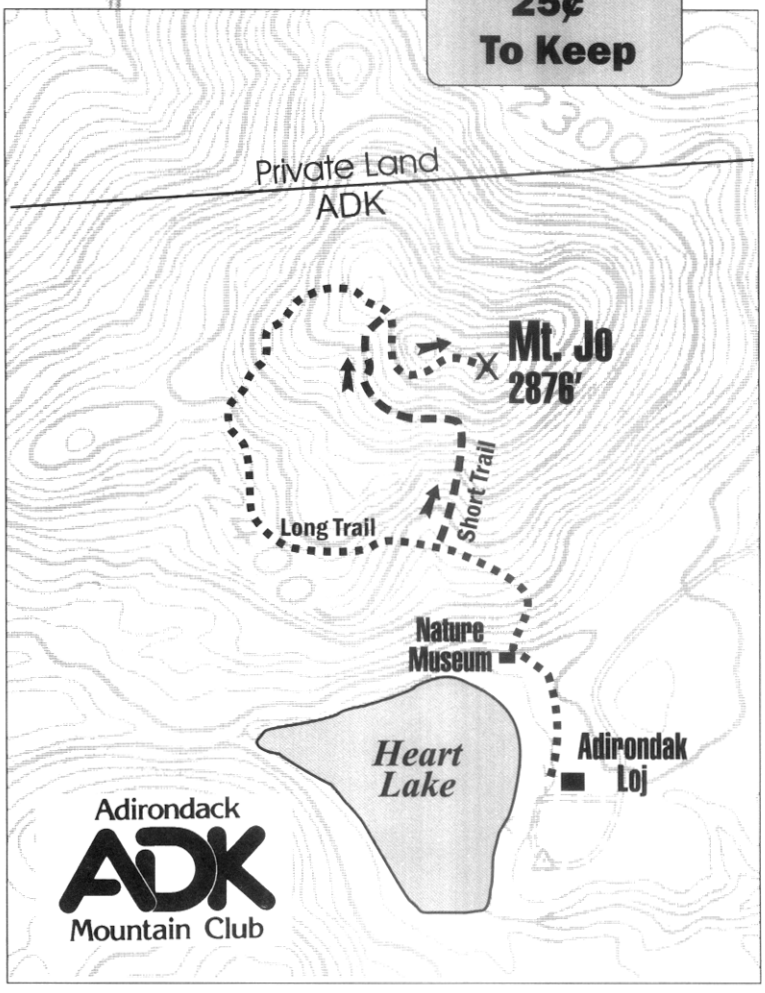


Adirondack Mountain Club
Adirondak Loj-Heart Lake Property
"the finest square mile"

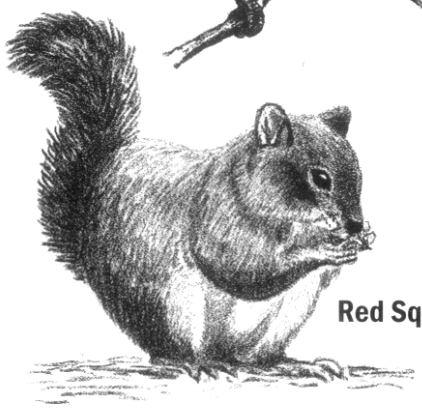
Welcome to the Mt. Jo Interpretive Trail.
This self-guided trail is designed to help you understand the natural forces and cultural history that shape the landscape of Mt. Jo, Heart Lake and much of the High Peaks Wilderness to the south. As you walk the one mile route to the summit, stops are indicated with numbered posts that correspond to this leaflet. The trail ascent is 700 feet and steep in some areas. Mt. Jo's summit view is said to be one of the best in the Adirondacks for a short climb.

Cultural History
Formerly known as "the Bear", Mt. Jo attained its current name in 1877 in honor of Miss Josephine Schofield, fiance of Henry Van Hoevenberg. An Adirondack guide, inventor, and storyteller, Van Hoevenberg commissioned the construction of the original Adirondak Loj on the Heart Lake Property, and laid out many of the trails that radiate from "the finest square mile." Vacationers came to the charming rustic lodge seeking refreshing solitude from cities and isolation that could not be attained at the bigger hotels. In 1903, a huge forest fire swept across the area and burned the popular lodge, leaving only charred remains of the magnificent forest that had once flourished there. In the past century and a half, this place was discovered, named, developed, burned and regenerated. The trail ahead will explore the mountain's forest life, and help you read the landscape of Mt. Jo.

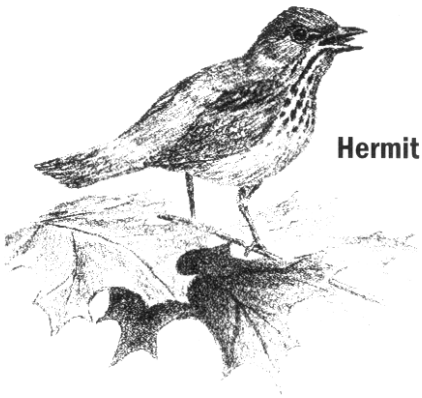
1. Stumped This century-old stump is the remains of a large white pine that succumbed to the 1903 fire that swept Mt. Jo. Pines have large amounts of resin in their wood, and along with the fired charcoal are not easily broken down by fungus, bacteria, or insects, so the stump is still intact. Most of the evidence of the fire has disappeared, but its story is told in the forest that grows here now.

Red-eyed Vireo

Dark-eyed Junco



Red Squirrel



Hermit Thrush

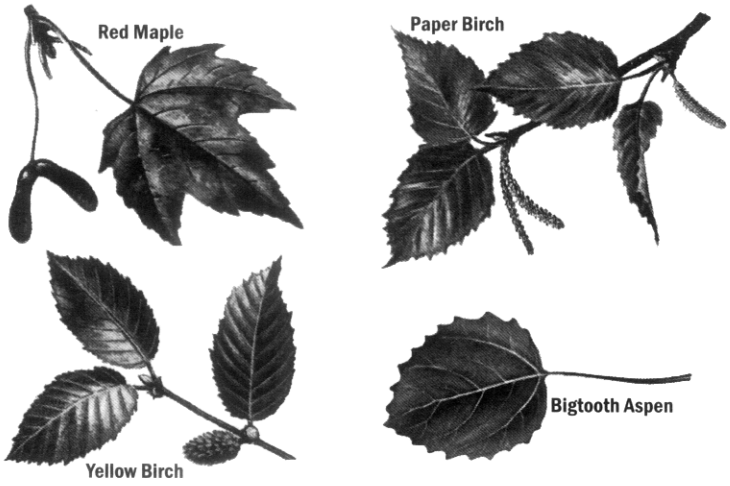
Painted Trillium

Bunchberry

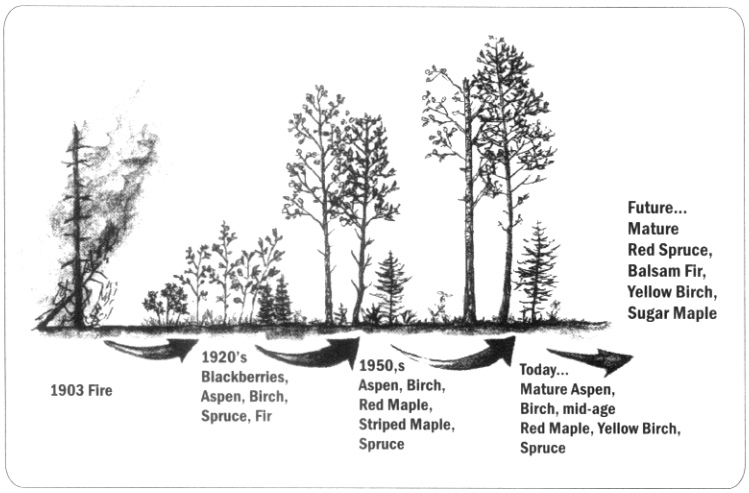
Clintonia or Blue-bead Lily

Ravens nest near the summit of Mt. Jo

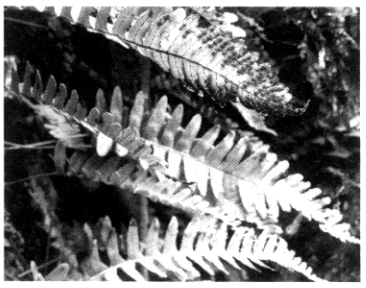
2. Not so Fast After the 1903 fire, seeds from aspen and paper birch blew in during the following years, and started growing on the open charred hillside. Some red spruce and balsam fir seeds drifted in too, along with red maple, striped maple, and yellow birch. The spruce and fir can grow in deep shade, and although the fast-growing birch and aspen over-top them, these shade-tolerant trees survive. The red spruce trees, only 10 feet or so in height, may be 50 years old. Once the paper birch overhead die, they will grow quickly and be the next tall



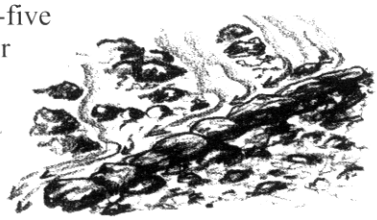
forest trees to dominate this site. This "second-growth forest" is common in the Adirondacks of today, following the widespread fires and logging in the early 1900's



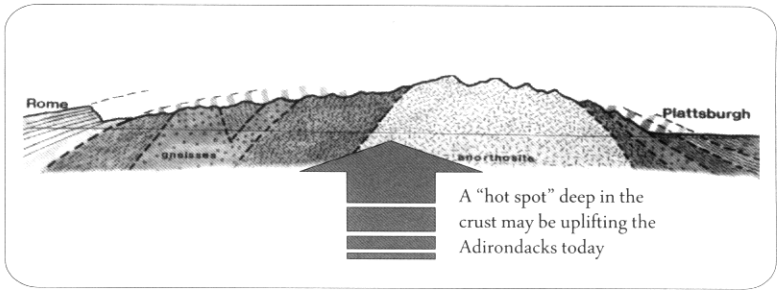
.3. Left Behind This boulder is termed a *"glacial erratic"* because it was transported and deposited here by glacial ice. It has been colonized by several trees and other plants. With little soil, it is a difficult place for plants to survive. Delicate ***Polypody*** ferns cling to the edge. Unknowingly, people climb over the exposed tree roots, making their existence even more tenuous. Please respect the plants and stay off the rock and tree roots.

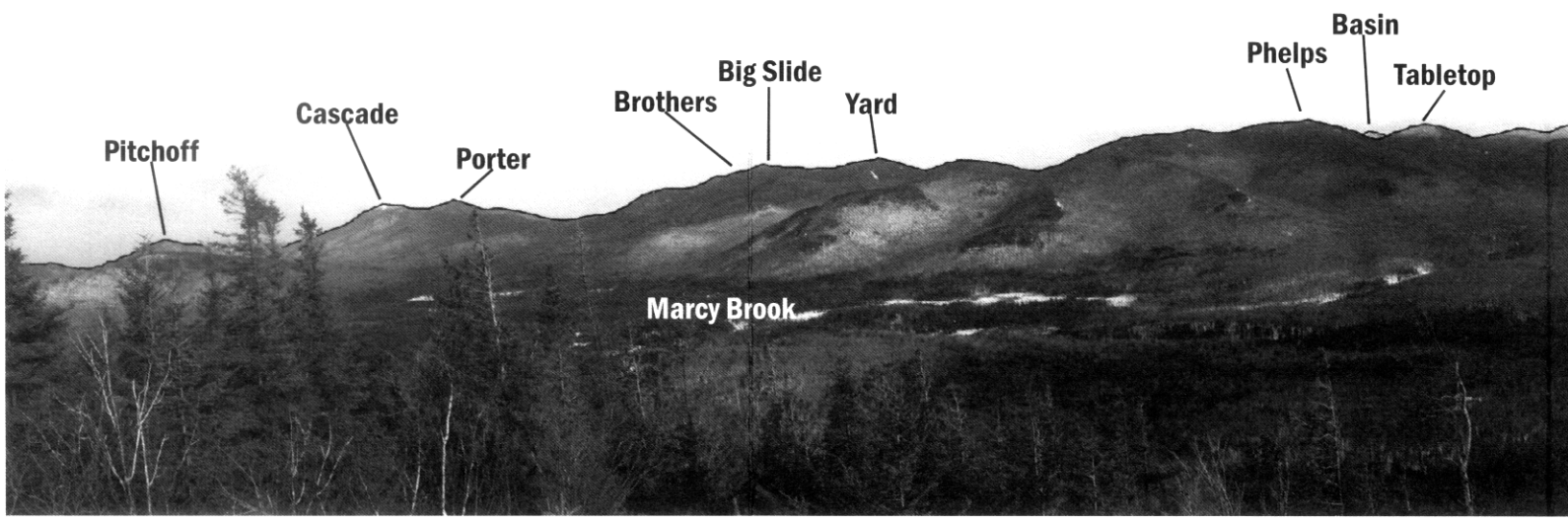


4. A Bar Just for Water! This angled group of stones is called a rock *waterbar*. Built by the ADK Trail Crew, it directs heavy rain or snowmelt off to the edge of the trail, rather than forming a stream down the middle, thus causing soil erosion run-off. The rocks are placed at a forty-five degree angle, ensuring water flows down the ditch and will not "jump" the waterbar. This technique is a "hardening" method that halts deep erosion on even the most heavily used Adirondack trails.

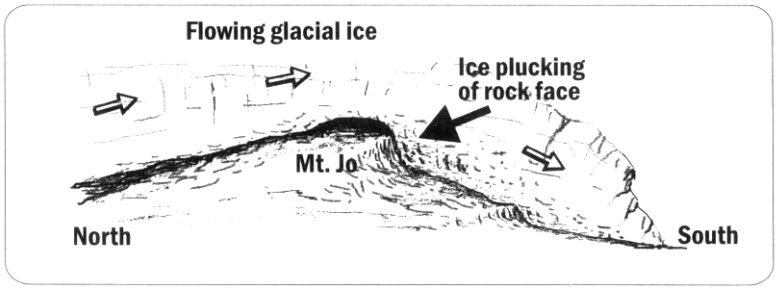


5. Bedrock Anorthosite forms most of the foundation of the High Peaks and Mt. Jo. If you look closely at the rock, it is made of dark and light gray crystals of the mineral plagioclase. All Adirondack bedrock was created 1.1 billion years ago, pressure-cooked deep in the earth, then recently uplifted, in a process that continues today. The mountains are actually getting taller rather than just

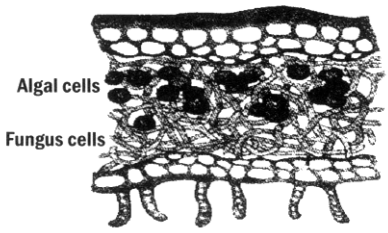




wearing down! Mt Jo's profile was caused by glacial ice smoothing down the north slope and plucking rock away from the south side, thus the steep cliffs here.



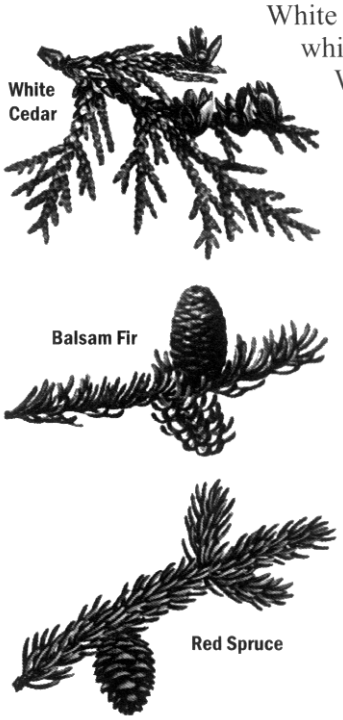
6. Tapestry Where bedrock is exposed, groundwater seeping through the soil from above trickles over the surface creating a fabric of moss and lichen species. The greens and grays of these hardy primitive plants clothe the rock, slowly dissolving the mineral surface, and giving the hiker a visual delight. As you climb the trail, take notice of other exposures similar to this to admire.



Lichens, shown here in cross-section, are composed of algae and fungus cells that help each other survive.

7. A Rock and a Hard Place Every year 14,000 people climb Mt. Jo! This impact causes trail erosion and trampling of fragile vegetation, especially in steep areas. To preserve the natural character of the trail, ADK Trail Crew build rock staircases to provide a safe, hardened surface to walk on and help keep hikers on one pathway. Smaller rocks, called *scree*, are placed alongside the staircase to anchor soil. On any hike, **please** stay on the rocks, don't detour around wet areas or obstacles, and keep on the trail! Thank you!

8. Evergreen? Four natural cone-bearing trees are the common species found on Mt. Jo: Red Spruce, White Pine, Balsam Fir, and White Cedar. White Pine is rare here, while Balsam Fir, Red Spruce, and White Cedar will grow to be the most common long-lived trees on the mountain. Each is distinctive in appearance, but shares a common trait. They make seeds in cones, and have leaves—needles or scales—that remain on the trees for three to ten years before being shed. Hardwood trees like aspen and birch drop all their leaves when they are only about five months old. The White Cedar trees are especially adaptable, able to grow on swamps, bogs, hillsides, and mountaintops.



This stop is the last one before you reach the summit.

What a View!! Mt. Jo is said to be the best view for the energy expended. Do you agree? The panorama of mountains before you forms the backbone of the High Peaks Wilderness Area, 335,000 acres of protected wild country set aside by New York State as the centerpiece of the Adirondack Park. Below, Heart Lake can be identified by its shape. Algonquin looms straight ahead, while Marcy, at 5344 feet, soars in the distance to the left. The panorama below identifies the mountains on the horizon, as well as the some of the features you may wonder about in a 180-degree arc from the summit.

The landscape of Mt. Jo is owned and protected by the Adirondack Mountain Club, while the Wilderness Area in the distance is protected and managed by New York State as the Adirondack Forest Preserve. This partnership of stewardship assures that these magnificent landscapes will be protected and enhanced while visitors enjoy these special places.