

Exploring By Snowshoe

By Christine Auclair

The snowflakes have arrived and a fluffy white comforter blankets the Adirondack wilderness. For some, this means hunkering down indoors while the beauty of the season passes by. For others, snow is a welcome sight for a myriad of outdoor winter activities, and one of the most popular is snowshoeing. The rise in popularity has to do with three main factors: exercise, expense and ease. Snowshoeing improves cardiovascular fitness by burning between 600-1000 calories per hour, depending on your pace and the terrain. It is also an inexpensive sport – as long as you have snowshoes, you can virtually snowshoe for free on the thousands of miles of trails in the Adirondack State Park's six million acres of wilderness. Very few parks charge a fee, and lodges and centers abound that will let you borrow shoes for free. Add the relative ease of the sport (snowshoes are lightweight and easy to transport), and what more of an incentive does one need to head outdoors and enjoy the beauty of an Adirondack forest in this time of economic woes?

Some of the most awe-inspiring beauty can be found while snowshoeing

in the gorgeous natural settings of this area. Enjoy the solitude of the landscape, breathe in the crisp air, discover nature. The magic awaits! From the delicate call of a Black-capped chickadee to the snow-covered tree branches set against a bright blue sky, exploring by snowshoe can allow you to become immersed in sights, sounds and scents that you would otherwise miss by viewing the season through your frosty panes. Taking in the fragrance of a pine forest while trying to discern what critters created the tracks traversing the path ahead are enough to inspire a day out on snowshoes.

While seeking a location for your adventure, try The Fern Lodge in Chertown. The lodge offers its guests the opportunity to snowshoe on trails throughout its 70 acre property, as well as on Friends Lake. Snowshoes are also available free for guests' use. What could be more inviting than wrapping up an excursion on the trails by sipping hot cocoa and warming your toes by a fireplace in your own guest room? Check out their Winter Escape & Relief packages at www.thefernlodge.com.

Be sure to also stop by the Visitor Interpretive Center at Newcomb (Route 28N). Snowshoes are loaned to visitors



at no charge, and there are four miles of trails suited for family adventure. The annual Chilly Ski & Snowshoe Festival is on Sat., Feb. 13th. Planned activities include a visit by Adirondack Mountain Club folks who will offer instructions on snowshoeing. The center's calendar is posted at www.adkvic.org.

Christine Auclair is a freelance writer and photographer, as well as an avid nature/outdoor enthusiast. Her children's book, [You Can't Find a Rainbow in the House!](#) was written to inspire children to get outdoors to enjoy the beauty and lessons that nature has to offer. The book, along with Christine's photography, are available at www.ceilswheelspublishing.com