

HIKING WITH RACHEL, DONNA & DAISY

My daughter Rachel loves adventures, loves planning an adventure, loves actually doing the adventure- not just talking about doing it! So happy to have this bulldog force in my life!

Our adventure this fall, Oct of 2015, began with Rachel putting it out there on social media that she'd like to do a hut to hut walking trip within the Adirondacks or along the periphery, say the Lake Champlain area. Did anyone out there in cyberland have any good ideas, or better yet, experience, to share with her? She heard from a variety of respondents, with a variety of suggestions. One of the most concrete was from the Champlain Area Trails (CATS) with a detailed suggested route for a hamlet-to-hamlet hike, incorporating Champlain Area Trails. We were impressed with staff member Gail Testa's effort! Thanks Gail!

On a beautiful warm, sunny October day I decided to take a test run in my Camaro convertible along the route Gail suggested before we committed to that adventure. Good idea. As I found out it's not really practical to entirely walk the route Gail suggested- would take way more time than we had- but driving some of it and then hiking some of it would work.. And the signage in some spots was so non-existent we would have lost a ton of time and wasted many steps taking a wrong turn and then having to backtrack and find our way. Easy to fix those mis-takes when you're driving!

Here goes the story of our little adventure along the Blue Line boundary! We were looking for short, easy day hikes which locals probably take; wanted to sleep in sheets; and we wanted to eat out at restaurants with good food. We thought you might like to follow along.

Day 1 Saturday

With gear and husky Daisy packed in the car, we struck out for Mt. Defiance in Ticonderoga.-just a couple of hours' drive. From Raquette Lake. I love the statement that the overlook makes on why both the French and the British and then finally, the Americans thought it was important to build a fort there and control the river portage between Lake Champlain and Lake George. This point on the water route was the point of conflict over trade routes between the British-controlled Hudson River Valley and the French-controlled Saint Lawrence River Valley. The terrain amplifies the importance of the site. Both lakes are long and narrow, oriented north-south, with mountain ridges to the east and west. Looking down on Fort Ticonderoga from Mt Defiance, the fort's strategic location is clear as a bell! During the season you could drive up the mountain most of the way, as the road is paved. (You'd have to buy a ticket at Fort Ti.) At this time of year, the entry is chained, blocking vehicle access, but hikers have no problem.



Photo credit: [Tipsforfamilytrips.com](https://www.tipsforfamilytrips.com)



Fort Ticonderoga is located on the strip of land jutting out between the 2 waters.

Next stop: The new Lake Champlain Bridge, completed in Nov 2011.



It's about a 15-20 min walk from one state to the other.

Really windy!



Daisy's first time to Vermont- that we know of! She's a rescue dog so maybe in her other life she visited Vermont!

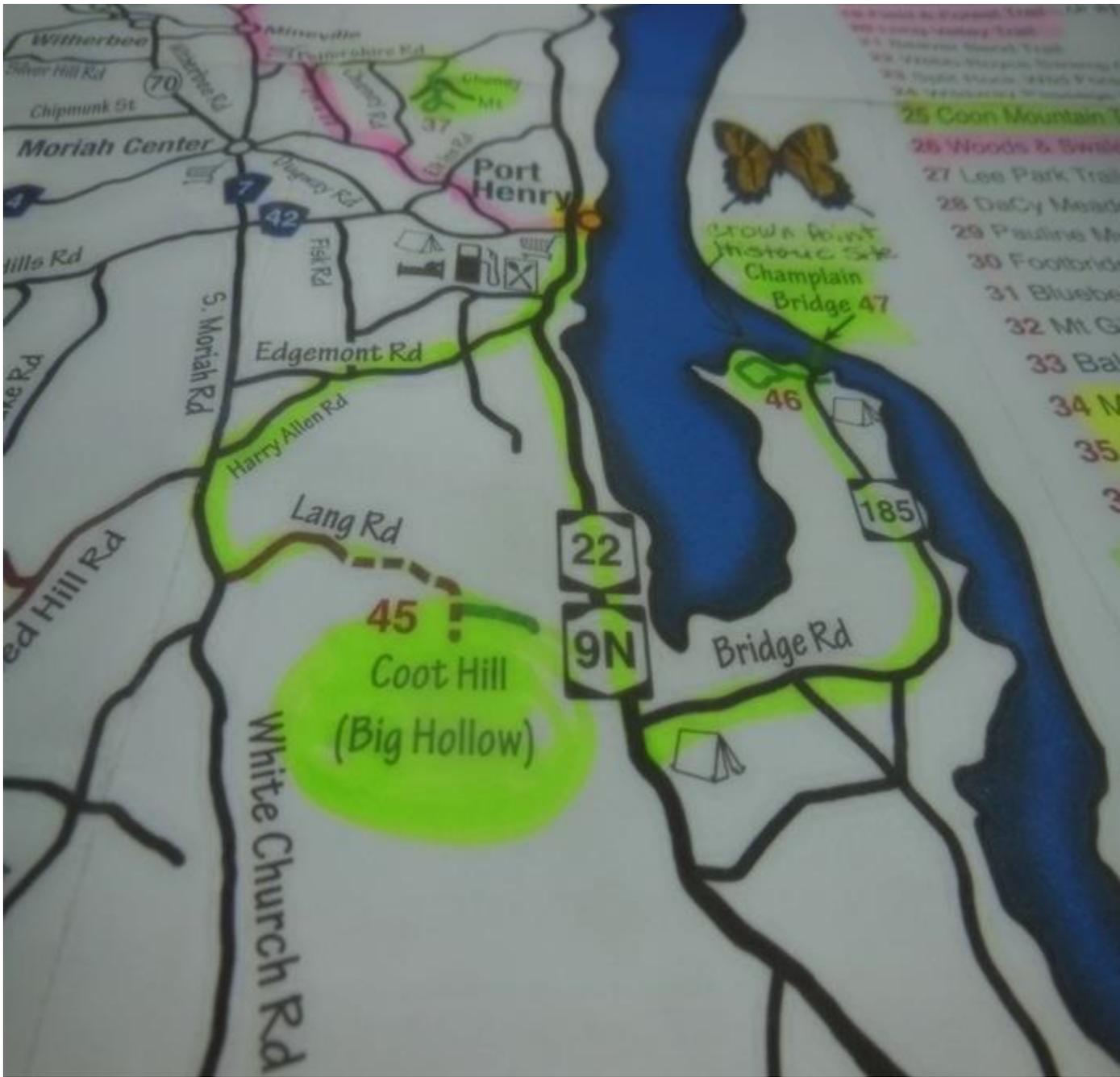
Lunch at the Bridge Diner in Vermont. Time to try a Vermont craft beer!



From the bridge, we drove north through Port Henry. One of its claims to fame (or maybe only claim to fame) is the collection of stick dolls peopling various town businesses.







Gail's directions said "[In Port Henry] walk north on Stone Street which becomes Switchback Rd. "



This castle-like house marks the Stone Street corner if you're planning on replicating this trip. Lack of signage is a real problem! Glad we're in the car and not on foot making all these wrong turns!

Right onto Pelfershire Rd where we stumbled onto Cheney Mt trailhead., right where we're supposed to be! Yea!



Yes, it's a reclaimed land fill. Those are gas pipes sticking up.
Summit: 1347 ft; 2 miles roundtrip

View from the top: Lake Champlain bridge



After Cheney Mt we drove through Mineville to Barlett Pond Road; then a left onto Mountain Spring Rd, which turned out to be a snowmobile trail. After the initial few minutes drive past trailer homes and yards littered with old machinery, cars, snowmobiles and quite a few children playing, we had the road to ourselves, all the way to Stevenson Rd, which brought us to The Inn at Westport on the corner of Stevenson Rd and Route 9N.



We had reservations at The Lakeside Hotel on Champlain Ave since they allowed dogs.



We checked out Ernie's Deli on Champlain Ave to see what time they opened in the morning and what breakfast possibilities there were. 6 AM. Great- because Rachel and I are both early risers!

Dinner at the historic Westport Hotel, located on 9N by the train station. Rachel had lobster Mac N Cheese. I had Osso Bucco. No one there but us.....it's the off-season.



We finished dinner about 6:30. With no Wifi, no internet and no books (TV yes), we were hard pressed for something to do. A party of 2 men from NJ occupied the room next to us. They had driven the 4 hours to fish Lake Champlain but the fish weren't biting. Plus it was really windy and blustery. They thought they might end their fishing trip early. We felt badly for their predicament.

Nothing to do and we were tired so lights out by 7:30. We still got 9 hours of sleep, even though we awakened at 4:30 am! Walking Dead was on TV. Jeez!

Day 2 Sunday to be continued.....