

Otsego 2000 NEWS RELEASE

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TOM WALSH COMPLETES ULTRA OTSEGO OUTDOORS CHALLENGE

Completed 12 Otsego County trails in 11 parks and forests in one day

[Cooperstown, NY] On Monday, March 8, Tom Walsh of Worcester hiked 21.2 miles on 12 different Otsego County trails to earn the first ultra Otsego Outdoors Winter Octet challenge.

“Tom showed great determination,” says Ellen Pope, executive director of Otsego 2000, which manages the Otsego Outdoors program. “Since he completed the challenge in a day, he achieved the “ultra.” In fact, he did all 12 featured trails and not just the 8 required for the Otsego Octet.”

“I’m up for anything that promotes the trail system in Otsego County,” said Walsh, who noted that 21.2 miles is the longest he has ever walked in a day.

Tom started in the dark at 5:30 am at Arnold Lake State Forest and ended at Fortin Park in time to see the sunset over the Susquehanna River. He logged more than 100 miles driving to get to all the trails, which are featured throughout Otsego County.

He sent reports of his progress and photos throughout the day to Otsego Outdoors, which were featured on Facebook and Instagram. After Arnold Lake State Forest, he took on Gilbert Lake State Park, Texas Schoolhouse State Forest, Parlows Road Conservation Area, Glimmerglass State Park (which has two Otsego Octet trails), Lordsland Preserve, Forest of the Dozen Dads, Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park, Goodyear Lake Waterway Access at Silliman Cove, Robert V. Riddell State Park, and finally Fortin Park.

Pope said they are delighted with the response to the Otsego Outdoors Winter Octet Challenge. Last week, the 5th grade Milford Wildcats, led by teachers Mr. Cottrell, Mrs. Dibble and Mrs. Banks, completed the trail at Gilbert Lake State Park on their way to earning the Otsego Octet patch together.

“People are letting us know that they are out on the trails working toward the challenge,” said Pope. “We are happy to provide some incentive to people to explore the trails we have in the county on foot, snowshoes, and cross-country skis.” In winter, she noted all these trails are available to enjoy free of charge.

“We were delighted when Tom told us of his plan to tackle the full roster of Winter Octet trail options in one day,” says Pope. “We hope his enthusiasm for our trails is contagious and look forward to his continuing to help promote our county’s wonderful access to the great outdoors.”

Adds Walsh, “If this gets a couple more people in the woods, it’s worth it.”

Information on the Otsego Outdoors Winter Octet challenge is available at otsegooutdoors.org, by calling 607-547-8881, or sending an email to outdoors@otsego2000.org. Participants who complete eight activities between February 1 and April 30 will receive the Winter Otsego Octet patch. There is a \$5 fee per patch. A Summer Challenge will be announced in May.

Otsegooutdoors.org also includes winter safety tips and trail etiquette as well as information on other publicly accessible trails, parks, and forests in the Otsego County.

Otsego Outdoors is a collaborative effort among Otsego 2000, the Otsego Land Trust, and Otsego County Conservation Association. More information available at otsegooutdoors.org.