

Otsego Outdoors News Release
For immediate release

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Tom Walsh to embark on a thru hike to all 25 State Parks and Forests in Otsego County
Avid hiker and cancer survivor raising funds for Otsego Outdoors and Bassett Cancer Institute

[Cooperstown, NY June 1, 2022] Otsego County has 21 state forests and 4 state parks, and this June Worcester resident Tom Walsh is planning to walk to them all, in one continuous thru-hike. A hiker and cancer survivor, Walsh will use the hike to raise funds for the Bassett Cancer Institute and Otsego Outdoors.

This will mark Walsh's third hike to raise funds for a charity. "I always include Bassett, they saved my life twice," said Walsh. "I want to raise awareness about family services at Bassett Cancer Institute and also for Otsego County's parks and forests." He points out that most people living in Otsego County can get to a park or forest within a ten minute drive.

He has been training, walking more than 400 miles on 60 hikes since January 1, and visiting state forests and parks to map out his route and find places to camp. Beginning at his home in Worcester on June 2, Walsh will set out for Decatur State Forest, Maple Valley State Forest, Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park, R. Milton Hick Memorial State Forest, Bear Swamp State Forest, Honey Hill State Forest, Cherry Valley State Forest, Roseboom State Forest, Glimmerglass State Park, Oil City State Forest, Exeter State Forest, Plainfield State Forest, Basswood Pond State Forest, Hartwick State Forest, Texas Schoolhouse State Forest, Calhoun Creek State Forest, Jacob Morris State Forest, Wagner Farm State Forest, Gilbert Lake State Park, Milford State Forest, Arnold Lake State Forest, Susquehanna State Forest, Robert V. Riddell State Park, Hooker Mountain State Forest, South Hill State Forest, and then back to Worcester. Walsh estimates it will take him about three weeks to walk the 200 mile route.

His goal is to raise \$5,000. The funds for Bassett Cancer Institute will be used for patient and family services. The funds for Otsego Outdoors will go to trail improvements and maintenance. People can pledge per park/forest or make a donation online at Otsego2000.org or bit.ly/TomsCharityHike.

"Tom is a wonderful advocate for hiking and for all that Otsego County has to offer," said Peg Odell, program and communications manager at Otsego 2000. She noted that Walsh has been involved with Otsego Outdoors since February 2021 when he did a Super Ultra Winter Octet, completing all 12 of the featured trails in one day, instead of just the required 8.

"We are so grateful to Tom for his generous spirit, enthusiasm, and determination," said Odell.

"A lot of kind and supportive people come through the Bassett Cancer Institute," says Benjamin Everidge, Bassett Healthcare Network's Chief Development Officer. "Tom is one of the best. Year after year, his gratitude and generosity are an encouragement to the Institute's staff and a benefit to the Institute's patients. We are happily cheering him on as he takes on this next adventure."

Updates on Walsh's progress will be posted on otsegooutdoors.org and on the Otsego Outdoors Facebook page. Walsh said he welcomes people to walk along with him.

Otsego Outdoors is a joint program of Otsego 2000, the Otsego County Conservation Association, and the Otsego Land Trust that connects people with year-round opportunities to enjoy nature and the outdoors. Otsego Outdoors offers seasonal challenges—Otsego Octets. When people complete the

Octet Challenges, they earn a free patch and a listing on the Otsego Outdoors Challenge Roster at otsegooutdoors.org. A new Summer Octet Challenge begins June 21.

Bassett Healthcare Network is an integrated health system that provides care and services to people living in a 5,600 square mile region in upstate New York. Bassett Cancer Institute is a Commission on Cancer accredited program that offers screening and treatment of a variety of cancers to patients throughout that region. To learn more about these services, visit <https://www.bassett.org/services/cancer-care>. Follow Bassett on Facebook at facebook.com/Bassett.Network.