

**From:** [Lynn Richardson](#)

**Sent:** Thursday, October 08, 2009 9:07 PM

**To:** [FriendsOfCrowellHilaka@yahoo.com](mailto:FriendsOfCrowellHilaka@yahoo.com)

**Subject:** [FriendsOfCrowellHilaka] Hikes & a geocache at Crowell Hilaka

Kathleen Bradley & I went out to camp today to check out possible project areas.

**Target 1 : the Pine Lake Trail.** Find it by taking the road that runs between North House & Coach House. Go over the wire mesh bridge. Trailhead on your left marked with a multi-colored sign. Absolutely beautiful place. & With the fall colors -some stunning views across the lake. Lots of partridge berry, ferns, conifers, viburnums & more.

It's so pretty that I planted a **geocache** nearby! eventually I will get the directions posted on the website, but I will tell you them now as an incentive. **Anyone coming out to work at camp this weekend has the chance to be First To Find** . North 41 15.040 / West 81 40.666 / el. 1153'

Sadly - some spots along the trail have invaded by buckthorn & barberry. Those have got to go. they wouldn't be bad in themselves, but they are so vigorous that they will eventually crowd out the native plants. ( once I was hiking around this mountain in PA where barberry had taken over. There was almost nothing else left. ) Kathleen will be working out some programming ideas along these lines. Meanwhile, if you already know what these bad boys look like, feel free to pull them out.

**Target 2 : Deer Leap Trail .** Start at the front door of Seely cabin ( which is behind & to the left of Gund) . Straight ahead & down a slight hill is a truly horrid outhouse nestled in a beautiful grove of golden witch hazel. Go around the outhouse. There is a barely visible path that follows the creek flowing out of the upper dam. Lots of little waterfalls, a couple deep- looking pools, little hidden glens, a mossy pointed rock outcropping jutting out over the creek. It's like the ultimate storybook woodland. Path opens out onto the gas cut. Step out, turn left, up the hill , left again on the road takes you back to the Hilaka parking lot.

The name Deer Leap Trail comes from a story in the Richfield archives.

The only work this trail needs is removal of the various fallen sticks & branches along the way. First troop who feels like doing that when they are camping at Hilaka can go ahead & just do it.

**Target 3 : Mystery Road :** No work required. The biggest mystery is: why not? I have been prowling around Julia Crowell for 12 years and I NEVER came across this place before today. And yet it looks to be pretty well maintained. Who is using it & what for?

Take the main drag through camp. Go all the way down PAST the Crowell parking lot. Look leftward towards the creek. There is a break in the hedges. It's easy to miss, but if you do, you will come to another soon enough. You either arrive at a wooden bridge, or you can see it just upstream. Looking at it from downstream, you can also see an old stonework wall. In my opinion, the wall looks to be older than the Kirby constuctions, which would date it back sometime with the Oviatts. But the wooden bridge is fairly new.

Cross the bridge & continue up the wide, gentle grade. It takes you up to two old gate pillars: solid standing stones. The old hardware is still in them. But the old gates are gone - replaced by ones

that are continuous with the perimeter fence just beyond them. Turn sharp left. The wide road continues up. You can walk it all the way up to Robinson shelter. Robinson shelter overlooks the Lower Lake. It's a great place to sit quietly & think. I always felt it was a shame that it was so isolated & so few people realized it was there. I thought the only ways up were over the swinging bridge ( now closed) or from the trail across from Garfield that skirts the lakeshore & is very soggy, narrow & brambly just past the fernwood bridge. Now I find out there is practically a woodland highway 10 feet behind the shelter!!!! I am shocked. Did anyone else know about this road ? anyway - worth checking out.

Lynn