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[Northeast Passage](#)

Ski, Kayak And Bike For UNH's Northeast Passage

'Trilogy of Challenge' an Athletic Event for People with and Without Disabilities

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EDITORS/NEWS DIRECTORS: Members of the media are invited to participate in one or all three of the Mountains to Marshes events to gain an insider's perspective of the story. Please call Sharon Keeler, UNH Media Relations, at (603) 862-1566 to make arrangements.

DURHAM, N.H. -- Challenge yourself, have fun and raise money for a good cause. Northeast Passage (NEP), a self-funded program of the University of New Hampshire that provides recreational opportunities for people with disabilities, is launching an innovative three-season, three-sport athletic event for people with and without disabilities in 2005 called "Mountains to Marshes: A Trilogy of Challenge."

Underwritten by Martin's Health Care, a Portland, Maine-based health plan administrator and clinical practice with four locations in Maine and New Hampshire, and Liberty Mutual, Mountains to Marshes is the "embodiment of the Northeast Passage mission: to create an environment where individuals with disabilities can recreate with freedom of choice, quality of life and independence," says Executive Director Jill Gravink. "The athletic challenge is one part of the trilogy. Earning money for NEP, to support its programs, is another."

People are invited to participate in Mountains to Marshes, which includes a series of events -- skiing in February, kayaking in June and cycling in September. Participants are asked to raise \$1,000 for NEP to participate in a single event of their choice. Raise \$1,500 or more and attend two or all three events.

The first event will be held Feb. 27 and 28. "The Highland Loppet: The Nordic Skiing Event" is a two-day cross-country skiing endurance challenge. "Loppet is a Norwegian word for "long trip." Beginning at the Bretton Woods Nordic Center on Sunday, skiers will set out on a 25-kilometer mountain course. An overnight at the nearby Appalachian Mountain Club includes dinner.

The second event takes place June 23 and 24. "Owascoag: The Kayaking Event" is a two-day paddle through the saltwater channels of the Scarborough Marsh Wetlands Preserve in Maine. It includes a lobster bake and overnight in Old Orchard Beach.

The final event of the trilogy, "Three Notches: The Cycling Event," will be held Sept. 12-14. This expedition will challenge cyclists to conquer three mountain passes in three days.

Starting Monday, the trip will cover 100 miles and 4,300 feet of elevation gain, as cyclists take on New England's Franconia Notch, Crawford Notch and Kancamagus Highway. Overnight accommodations at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Highland Lodge and a North Conway hotel offer rest and social opportunities with fellow cyclists.

For more information, contact Northeast Passage at (603) 862-0070 or (800) 735,2964 (TTY NH RELAY), Email at northeast.passage@unh.edu, or visit the organization's Web site at www.nepassage.org.