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9th Annual Cycling Challenge Raises Money for Northeast Passage

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August 16, 2012

9th Annual Cycling Challenge Raises Money for Northeast Passage

9th Annual Cycling Challenge

Tyler Walker of Franconia cycles in the Three Notch Century. Credit: Steve McKinney, Big Dawg Images

DURHAM, N.H. – Bicycling 100 miles through the White Mountains is an impressive feat for any cyclist. Doing so without the use of your legs approaches insanity. In September, 300 bicyclists of all abilities, including some paraplegics on handcycles, will tackle three scenic but grueling notches – Franconia, Crawford and the Kancamagus Highway – in the annual Three Notch Century to benefit the University of New Hampshire’s Northeast Passage program. This year’s event, which lets participants choose to complete the course in one, two or three days, is Sept. 7 – 9, 2012.

“An amazing aspect of the Three Notch is that the range of ability and age of participants is incredibly vast. There are bike teams that do the entire century in one day and then there are 50-year-old paraplegics who do the century in three days, but they are still doing it!” says UNH student Marlon Shepard, who completed the two-day ride on a handcycle in 2009 and 2011.

Three- and two-day rides start in Lincoln and cycle to the Flume and the State Forest Recreation Trail, nine miles of rolling hills that crisscross the Pemigewasset River to Profile Lake. After climbing through Franconia and Crawford notches (three-day riders will stay overnight at the Appalachian Mountain Club’s Highland Center), cyclists cruise a speedy descent into North Conway, where they connect with the one-day cyclists for a celebration dinner at the North Conway Grand Hotel. Two- and three-day riders “crank the Kanc” on Sunday and finish back in Lincoln.

New this year is a 40-mile option on Saturday, Sept. 8, ideal for friends and family of century riders. This loop from North Conway goes over Bear Notch Road.

Bear Notch was one of the three new notches the 2011 event conquered after Hurricane Irene’s destruction of both the Kancamagus Highway and Crawford Notch forced a last-minute route change. Just days before the event, Northeast Passage staff and volunteers scrambled to completely re-route the ride, re-book hotels, gather new permits, and change meals and checkpoints. “Amazingly, it all came together. It was a mad rush to get it done, but we never considered cancelling,” says Keely Ames, Northeast Passage development coordinator.

“The Three Notch is our marquee event,” says Jill Gravink, Northeast Passage executive director. “It is critical to our

fundraising and highlights our mission by providing an all-inclusive, accessible opportunity for individuals with and without disabilities.”

For additional information, or to participate in the Three Notch Century, go to www.threenotchcentury.org or call 603-862-0070. For more information on Northeast Passage, visit www.nepassage.org.

Northeast Passage is a program of the University of New Hampshire’s College of Health and Human Services and an affiliate of Disabled Sports USA. Northeast Passage develops and delivers innovative, barrier free recreation and health promotion programs. All proceeds from this event directly benefit Northeast Passage’s programs. The Three Notch Century is sponsored by Martin’s Point Health Care.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

Photograph available to download: http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2010/aug/bp19nep.jpg

Caption: Tyler Walker of Franconia cycles in the Three Notch Century.

Credit: Steve McKinney, Big Dawg Images

Watch a video of the 2009 Three Notch Century: <http://vimeo.com/12460747>

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Media Note: Northeast Passage staff and participants will be available all weekend for interviews and photo opportunities. On Friday, Sept. 7, we will be riding through the Franconia Notch recreation trail, past the Mount Washington Hotel to the Appalachian Mountain Club’s Highland Center in Crawford Notch. Please contact us at 802-598-8542 for specific times and locations. B-roll footage from previous years is available.

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