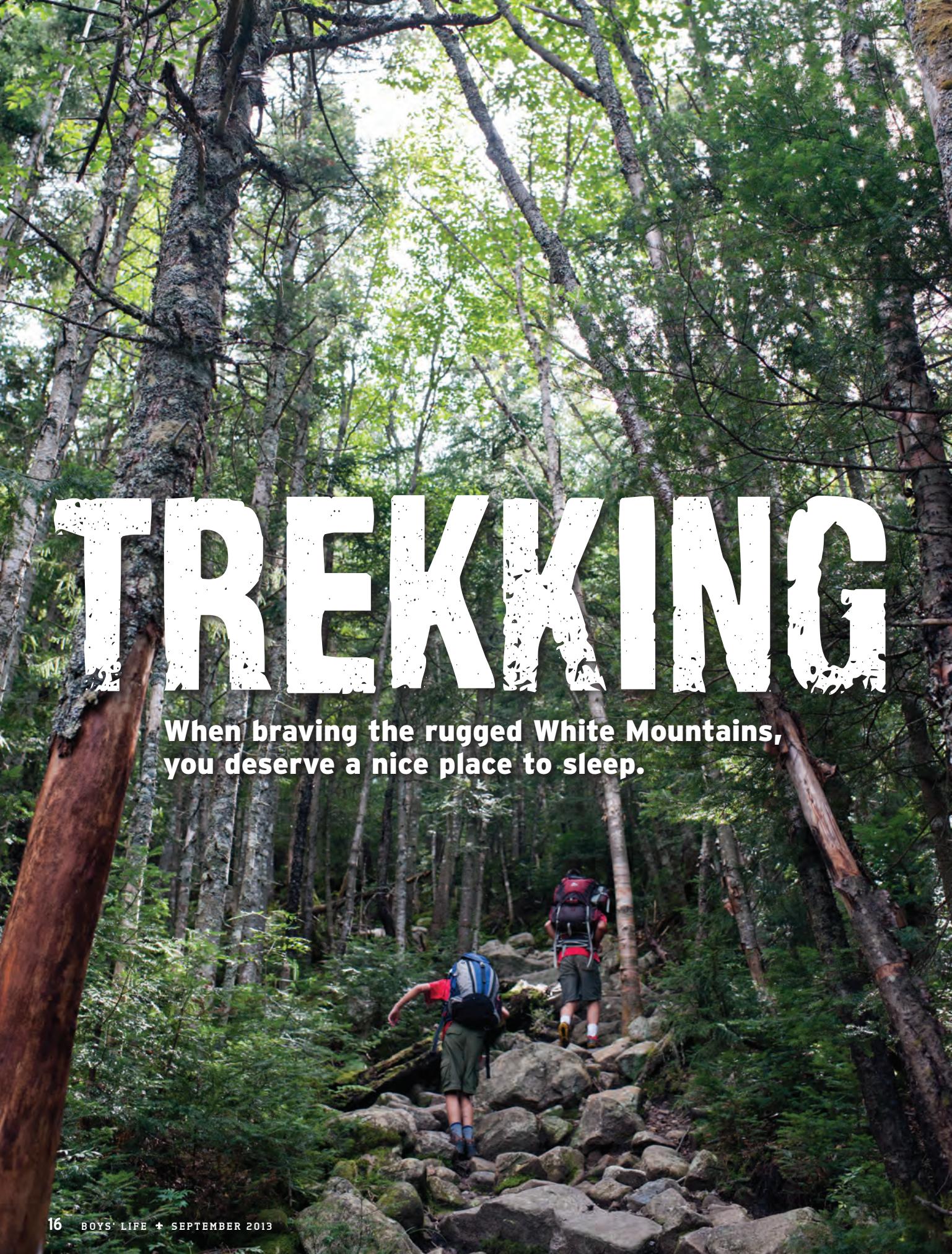


# TREKKING



**When braving the rugged White Mountains,  
you deserve a nice place to sleep.**

*Joe Kealy, from Troop 71 in New London, N.H., helps prepare the dinner table at a hut along the Appalachian Trail.*

*in*

# STYLE

By Matthew Broderick  
Photographs by Paul Taggart

*Galehead Hut is great, but the trail there isn't easy, with parts so steep you have to climb down a ladder.*



# THIS IS NOT YOUR *average*



Cameron Clark (center) gets by with a little help from his friend, Jonas Coverdale (right), as Joe Kealy (left) waits for his turn.

**T**he Appalachian Trail is a 2,181-mile path from Georgia to Maine that snakes through 12 states before making its way into New Hampshire.

That's where seven Scouts from Troop 71 in New London, N.H., began their journey, on one of the most challenging portions of the trail: the White Mountains. At 117 miles, this section of the A.T. includes 48 peaks higher than 4,000 feet.

This is not your average hike, which is why the Scouts splurged on their sleeping arrangements during their three-day adventure.



# hike...



*Left: Eric Scheuch and Jonas Coverdale (left to right) study their map as the troop hikes through the White Mountains.*

*The huts are a great place to relax while discussing the next day's route.*

In addition to their challenging terrain and sweeping views, the White Mountains also feature a network of huts, each roughly a day's hike apart, that provide lodging for weary travelers.

The Appalachian Mountain Club huts — some more than 100 years old — feature soft beds and fresh meals, perfect for a grueling trek like this one.

Kurt Thomas, 17, is no stranger to the White Mountains, having hiked many of its summits, including Mount Washington, the Northeast's highest peak. But that wasn't the main attraction on this trip for him.

"I really valued the chance to experience the huts," he says.

### Setting the Pace

Kurt helped set the pace for the troop, which included a handful of Scouts making their first trip in the White Mountains. The trek began with a 4.2-mile hike into the White Mountain National Forest, an expanse of 800,000 acres of wilderness.

"I enjoyed the chance to get away with my troop and unplug from everything," says Kurt, who traded in his smartphone for a ham radio to communicate with troop leaders trailing behind the Scouts to make sure the group stayed together.

For Troop 71, Day One of the adventure was ambitious. After hiking a

few miles on rocky terrain, the guys began to ascend Galehead Mountain, the westernmost peak in the White Mountains' Twin Range. Much of the mountain, including its 4,024-foot summit, was covered in trees, making for a slower pace.

For Eric Scheuch, 13, the first day's six-hour hike was a test of endurance. The altitude didn't help, nor did his stuffed backpack. In an area where temperatures from the base of the mountain to the summit can fluctuate by 30 degrees, the Scouts had to Be Prepared for any weather.

"I packed shorts, T-shirts, a jacket, hats, mittens, long pants, snacks and



## WHITE MOUNTAINS

The White Mountains are actually part of the Appalachian range and are known as the most rugged mountains in New England. That's why so many hikers take advantage of the system of huts. (Your pack gets much lighter when you don't have to worry about carrying tents and cooking gear.)

No one knows for sure how the White Mountains got their name. Many assume the highest peaks must have been covered with snow when the mountains were first discovered by early explorers.

The Appalachian Mountain Club was created in 1876 to preserve the White Mountains area. For more information, go to [boyslife.org/links/amc](http://boyslife.org/links/amc).



*Michael Salo does his part to Leave No Trace as the Scouts prepare to exit their hut for the day's hike.*

water," Eric says. "Fortunately, because we were staying in the huts, I didn't need to carry sleeping or cooking gear."

### Hut One

After reaching the summit of Galehead Mountain, Troop 71 descended to the Galehead Hut, the most remote of the eight huts in the White Mountain chain. Located at 3,800 feet, the hut is surrounded by scenic views of the Pemigewasset Wilderness Area. In fact, from the hut, the guys were able to see the peak of Mount Kearsarge in their hometown, 57 miles away.

The Galehead Hut features four bunk rooms, a large common room,

restrooms, a kitchen and family-style dinner and breakfasts, which were served as part of a large community meal between hut guests.

And with late-August temperatures dropping into the 40s, along with a rainstorm the first night, Troop 71 was glad to have the shelter of the hut, especially after such a rugged hike.

While amenities such as electricity and indoor plumbing in the wilderness seem like a luxury, Eric was quick to point out that the troop's journey there wasn't your average hike.

"Typically, we might hike a half-mile into the woods and set up a camp," he says. "On this trip, we walked several

miles in and up a mountain. We were all very grateful for the hut."

### Hut Two

Rested and fed, Troop 71 set out at 8 a.m. to summit three more mountains on the trip's second day. With a mix of sun and clouds and unseasonably warm temperatures, the Scouts began their ascent of Mount Guyot, a 4,580-foot peak that features a double summit with panoramic views of much of New Hampshire.

They then walked along a 3,000-foot ridge to summit the neighboring mountains of South Twin Mountain (4,902 feet) and Zealand Mountain

**AMENITIES SUCH AS ELECTRICITY AND  
INDOOR PLUMBING IN THE WILDERNESS  
SEEM like a luxury**

**Bumps, bruises and scratches are common along the difficult part of the trail. Troop 71 is prepared with its first-aid kit.**

(4,260 feet).

By day's end, Troop 71 had hiked 7.5 miles as they began their descent to the Zealand Falls hut, located at 2,700 feet.

After another restful night in a hut, Troop 71 headed home back through the wilderness, where they met many hikers, including one man who had walked the Appalachian Trail all the way from Georgia.

"He told us that although he'd hiked 80 percent of the trail, he had only completed 20 percent of the trail's difficulty, until New Hampshire," Eric says. "It was nice to know we hiked the toughest part of a 2,000-mile journey." ♦



**Evan Coverdale, Michael Salo and Eric Scheuch (left to right) wind down for the day with a game of cards.**

