

The Lightness of Being

I think about all that is going on and what I need to do next

I am compelled to find a window

I seek out the beauty of the Hanging Hills to escape the everyday

I walk through a canopy of sunstruck leaves of bright orange, glowing yellow, and flaming red

I pause to listen to the delicate rustling of leaves when the wind gently whispers through the silence

I rest on a rocky outcropping to feel the warmth of the sun on my face on a mild autumn day

I watch hawks ride an updraft along a cliffside into a blue sky speckled with wispy white clouds

I visit the places only I know

I look up to see sun flares through the pine needles and I look down to see tiny pine cones scattered on the rock floor

I feel time stand still as hundreds of diamonds shimmer in rhythm atop the wind-swept water of a clear glass pond

I think about who I am and what I believe

I am compelled to feel alive

-- Joe Kohut (Feb 2016)

I hope you feel the spirit of the outdoors and open space

I want the natural beauty and atmosphere of our public lands to be respected in all matters of potential land use

I feel it is more important to protect our public lands than exploit them when they are points of interest by open space advocates

I advocate for strong representation of our public lands by local communities since they understand their recreational value

Recreational use of public land is part of my being. Its importance in rejuvenating my spirit cannot be measured. Day hiking is something which I eagerly anticipate, especially in autumn, as a rite of passage from the everyday to nature's glory in New England.

I enjoy the outdoors and the precious public hiking places that are accessible to me for day hiking are few and far between. Therefore, I would like to advocate that public land use is just as important for hiking as it is for other uses. Location is a prime factor in being able to utilize public land and this fact highlights my concern that local communities and organizations should have a say in public land usage and stewardship.

It must be made clear that the recreational land we have is sometimes compromised by intrusions that are not readily apparent.

Most recently, in my expanding use, I sought out a new hiking location named Tri-Mountain State Park (near Durham, CT). Although there are some nice traprock outcroppings in this park, there are several issues which affected my enjoyment of this hike that are likely would be left unaccounted for by most. Being new to this park, I found out there is quarry noise nearby (Tilcon - Rte 68) and became a displeasure that was bearable since the continuous drone could be mentally averted with time. Yet, to my disgust, things got even worse when I figured out the "blasting" noises were not from the quarry, but gunshots from an area near the Wallingford Rod and Gun Club/ Blue Trail Range Gun Store. This was quite disappointing since this type of noise echos for miles. Additionally, hiking through the park provided nice views of a Reservoir on the right side, but many barbed wire fences on the left.

Noise pollution, commercial encroachment, and private land borders are all topics of consideration at a micro-level for enjoying public land for recreation.