

Re-Supply Part Five Hanover NH to Monson Maine

Hanover used to be great Trail town, one of the best. It's still a great place for hikers to spend some time, tho there are, of course, a few difficulties (i.e. shortage of cheap lodging; as well as inconveniently located services such as laundromats and Outfitters).

For food Re-Supply, Hanover has one of the Trail's best supermarkets, the Co-Op Food Store, which you'll pass just before you head out of town. It's a bit pricey, but on the other hand, it has a great selection of things you won't find elsewhere, including food in bulk and a great natural/organic section. Vegetarians and vegans would do well to do much of their shopping for the rest of the trip here, and prepare maildrop parcels to send on ahead.

In addition to the Co-Op, there's a large 24-Hour convenience store on Main St. (very good if you're leaving town early) and also there's Stinson's on Allen St., which has great sandwiches and the Trail's best tobacco selection, among other things.

In terms of restaurants, there's a new Quizno's subs in town; the burrito place that used to be "The Wrap" is now called Boloco's (it's next to City Hall); and Ramunto's Pizza has moved off of Main St; it's now located next to the Public Library on South St. Note: The very friendly owner of Ramunto's will probably be giving out free slices to thru-hikers in 2007 so you should certainly stop by. If you like the first one, I suspect you'll want more.

The most hiker-friendly place in town is still Five Old Nugget Alley off of Main St. Hikers are welcome right off the Trail just as they are in the front bar-room (which also serves a full menu); you might want to clean up a bit if you're going to eat in the main Dining Room. EBA's on Allen St. has great specials including pizza on some nights and fajitas on Thursday's; their Sunday brunch is amazing, but you probably won't want to hike afterwards. Lou's is great for breakfast, but pricey. A good alternative is EBA's or the nearby Bagel Basement. The Canoe Club is a very nice place to eat, but a little fancy for most hikers; the Hanover Inn is quite nice if someone else is paying. There are all sorts of ethnic restaurants that are fair to good, and most of them overpriced. Best coffee on the entire Trail is still the Dirt Cowboy Cafe on Main St. near the Green.

For gear, Omer and Bob's sporting goods on Allen St. is a good place to start; they have some footwear, as well as clothing and accessories. The North Face store on Main St. is not really a complete outfitter, tho it has all sorts of stuff from its home company, and is quite friendly. The Hanover Outdoors shop on Lebanon St. (you'll walk right by it on your way north out of town) mainly has higher end outerwear, but they also have some footwear, accessories, and plan to carry fuel by the ounce as well as canister fuel. They may also have a small collection of useful things such as water purification options; bootlaces, and other small items. The owner is extremely hiker-friendly and looks forward to meeting a lot of folks in 2007, so you should certainly drop by. Also, they have an extraordinary collection of fishing gear and tackle; anyone planning to fish while on the Trail will go a little nuts in here.

If you need a real Outfitter, there's free bus service to the nearby town of West Lebanon, where you'll find an Eastern Mountain Sports and an L.L. Bean store. (The bus stop is in front of the bookstore on Main St. You can get schedules inside the store). Tell the driver you want the "Powerhouse Mall" stop if you're going to the Outfitters. There is also bus service to a Wal Mart; a Borders books; several large supermarkets, and all sorts of restaurants.

Other services in Hanover include veterinarians; a new CVS pharmacy; a fine bookstore; a great small used bookstore; a pet store (behind the movie theater; it has all sorts of good specialty dog food); and all sorts of retail shops. There's also a wonderful movie theater.

Unless you're lucky enough to be someone's guest on campus, laundry will be a problem. There's a place in town that will wash and fold your laundry, but it's quite expensive. Otherwise, you'll have to leave town. (There's a bus that goes to the laundromat, or you can share a cab with several other hikers).

For showers, you may be able to catch one at the Dartmouth Gym, if you leave an ID at the front desk. There doesn't seem to be any set policy on this; I think receiving this service sort of depends on who's on the desk when you get there.

For lodging, there are OK motels outside of town; over the years, the Sunset has been the more popular. It is farther than you'll want to walk; once again, you may want to share a cab with several other hikers (The best local company is Big Yellow Taxi; in Vermont, call (802)281-TAXI; in New Hampshire, try (603) 643-TAXI. They are reasonable and reliable).

There are also several new hostels located north of town; check your Handbook or Companion for details.

If you're going to camp out, don't do it on campus, or in public places like the cemetery. This will probably get you arrested. Likewise, DO NOT crash out in any Dartmouth College building, including the Outing Club Building. Relations between hikers and campus Security have nose-dived in recent years because of this.

There is good (and perfectly legit) camping just North of town: Follow the Trail thru town just over .4 from Main Street; just past the Food Co-op, the Trail goes along the edge of a soccer field and enters the woods. Immediately upon entering the woods, there will be good campsites to the left of the Trail. A few caveats: Don't party hearty here, as homes are very close by; also, don't camp ON the soccer field itself unless you want a late-night visit from the police. And don't leave your stuff untended while you do your town errands; this is a very well-traveled spot, and someone might pinch your stuff or think you abandoned it. Lastly, clean up your trash! Town officials are starting to get concerned about hiker garbage left here. There are barrels less than .2 away so please use them!

Lastly, Hanover is a good spot if you have to get off the Trail, or if someone is coming to visit you. Amtrak service is available in nearby White River Junction VT; there's regular bus service (the company is called Vermont Transit; their schedule is posted at www.vermonttransit.com/). There are several buses a day to Boston and Logan Airport (try and find an "express" bus that goes there directly); there's also a small airport in nearby Lebanon NH and larger ones in Manchester NH and Burlington VT, both of which are about 90 minutes away by bus. The bus stop is in front of the Hanover Inn on East Wheelock St.

Very important note: You'll be going above treeline in the White Mountains just a few days after leaving Hanover; make sure you get your cold weather gear (clothing, heavier sleeping bag, etc.) sent back to you here, or buy some. If you don't do this in Hanover, do it in the next town, Glenclyff. But DO NOT head into the Whites with just your barebones summertime stuff, even if you arrive in July or early August. The weather in the high country can be very unforgiving.

It's only around 43 miles from Hanover to Glencliff, but it's tougher miles than you might think; most folks make it in 3 days or early on the 4th. If you're sending food or gear to the Glencliff Post Office, make sure it's going to be open when you arrive! Oh, and speaking of Post Offices, a lot of hikers seem to be in New Hampshire over the Labor Day weekend. This means that if one doesn't get to a Post Office by closing time on Saturday of the holiday weekend, you'll be without your mail til Tuesday morning! This can mean a long time cooling your heels in town waiting for your mail, which can be very expensive. Make sure you know ahead of time where you'll be around the holiday weekend, and either slow down or speed up so you make that rendezvous with your mail!

*It is possible to re-supply in the little stores before Glencliff; i.e. Lyme Center, Lyme, or Wentworth, but I never do. I find it easier just to bring what I need from Hanover.

*The hostel in Glencliff, the Hiker's Welcome, is excellent. Don't send mail there without checking first (the P.O. is right across the street). From Glencliff, you can hitch or catch a cheap shuttle to nearby Warren where there is a small market.

*I suggest that hikers re-supply in North Woodstock, unless they want to pack a really big load out of Glencliff. The market in North Woodstock is fine; anyone needing a larger store, or an outfitter can walk or hitch to nearby Lincoln, which has all sorts of services. (Note: This can be a tough hitch and a long roadwalk!)

*Make sure you read up on the White Mountains in your Handbook or Companion so you know regulations; facilities; fee areas, etc. You will probably score a few meals or a few night's lodging at the Appalachian Mountain Club Huts (big cabins, really), and you may get the limited thru-hiker work-for-stay option at some of the Huts. However, and this is very important, don't take either the AMC food or lodging for granted. Bring enough food with you to be self-sufficient if necessary, especially if you're in the thick of the hiker pack and find no work-stays or no space available when you arrive at a Hut.

*At Crawford Notch; there is lodging and meals (for guests) available at the AMC Highland Center; one can also hitch to a camp store at a nearby campground, or to the general Store in Hart's Location, a few miles away (details on these places in your guidebooks).

*I do NOT suggest that you use the alleged Post office on the summit of Mt. Washington for a maildrop of any sort, as it historically has erratic operating times and even more erratic (read absent!) staffing; many hikers arrive there to find it completely closed.

*The little store at the AMC center in Pinkham Notch has extremely limited food re-supply, tho you may find a few Liptons and candy bars. You might also want to catch a meal there if the dining room is open. It's possible to hitch from Pinkham Notch to the town of North Conway, which has all sorts of services, but most folks wait til they get to Gorham, just 20-odd miles down the Trail. If you need to be in Gorham for any reason right away, it's an easy hitch from Pinkham; then you can come back and fill in what you skipped.

*Gorham is a good Trail town, tho again, it's all spread out. Plan your shopping wisely unless you want to spend all day walking around 9 miles up and down Main St. There are all sorts of town services; the Wal Mart and big supermarkets are quite a ways away. Other shops, including the outfitter and some other outdoorsy stores are on Main St. For lodging, Gorham used to be a good hostel town; many hikers nowadays choose to share a motel room with friends. Note: This is the last

town with a real outfitter located anywhere close to the Trail; if you anticipate gear, clothing, or especially footwear problems, I would take care of them NOW.

It generally takes me around 12-13 days to hike from Hanover to Gorham. If you consider that it'll take you 3-4 days to get from Hanover to Glenclyff, this means you'll be in the high country of the White Mountains for around nine days. Make sure you bring enough provisions, but don't overdo it. If the weather is good, you may make much better progress than you anticipated. Your longest stretch between supply points will be between North Woodstock and Gorham. I'd bring 5-6 days of food, less if you're fast. You may well end up scoring something at the AMC Huts, but again, it's really important that you don't take this possibility as a given.

You'll be entering Maine a day or two after you leave Gorham. Count on taking 22-27 days to finish your trip from Gorham, with the biggest factor being how co-operative the weather is. 24-25 days seems about right for most folks; keep this in mind if you have friends or family members meeting you at Katahdin. (Along these lines, most folks hit Katahdin 37-40 days after leaving Hanover).

Re-supply options in Maine are few and far between, especially when you keep in mind that there's over 280 miles of Trail in the state. Double check and make sure you've got everything you need before leaving a town in Maine, as if you've forgotten something, you'll simply have to get by without it for awhile. I always make a "To Do" list before I go into a town; it makes for quicker, more efficient shopping and errand-running, and greatly decreases the chance I'll forget something important.

Another thing to remember is that some of the places and facilities in Maine (like Shaw's or the Abol store, for example) either don't take credit cards or charge an additional fee if you use them. It's best to bring sufficient cash with you out of Hanover.

Lastly, if you're one of those folks who likes to pack really big food bags because you prefer to avoid towns, or you think you can save time and money by skipping some town stops, DON'T do that in Maine. Especially in the first half of the state, this is not terrain where you'll want to carry nine or ten days worth of food. I've done this, and lived to regret it.

*It's possible to hitch into Bethel for supplies (around 31 miles north of Gorham; you'd hitch from Grafton Notch). This can be a tough hitch; most folks keep going.

*Andover is an easy hitch from the Trail. There are two grocery stores; they are both OK, but nothing special. Many hikers make up a small maildrop from Hanover and send it here. The distance from Gorham to Andover is only around 45 miles, but don't let this fool you, and don't underestimate the difficulty of this section; I'd bring 4-5 days worth of food from Gorham.

There are all sorts of lodging options in Andover. The Pine Ellis has been popular for years; the Andover Guest House is also very popular. In recent years, The Cabin hostel outside of town has become a hiker favorite. Note that most folks who stay at the Cabin stay for several days at least and do some slackpacking (i.e. pack-less hiking) and return to the hostel for several nights in a row. If you plan to do this, you'll obviously need to buy less food, so don't go crazy on your maildrop or your food shopping.

Pay close attention to your itinerary and hiking plans when you leave Andover; if you plan to Re-Supply in Rangeley, it's 37 miles from Andover and you'll most likely come to the Rt.4 Trail crossing

towards the end of the 3rd day. If you plan to bypass Rangeley and go all the way to Stratton, it's another 32 miles, so bring 2-3 more days worth of food. This is a solid section.

*In Rangeley, there's a big new supermarket, as well as a great bookstore, several restaurants, and a nice hostel, Gull Pond. If you want to save some money, remember that there's a great big shelter and additional campsites at Piazza Rock, just 1.7 easy miles past the Rangeley road crossing.

*The market in Stratton is fine. There are all sorts of dining and lodging options; over the years, many hikers have stayed at the White Wolf Inn, tho the other places all enjoy fine reputations.

*It's only around 40 miles from Stratton to Caratunk, but again, this is a solid section. Count on taking 3 days. If you've got an old guidebook, remember that the general store in Caratunk has long since closed. If you don't get a maildrop, you should walk less than a mile up the road to Rivers and Trails, which is run by Steve Longley, a legendary Trail figure, and probably the guy who just ferried you across the Kennebec River. Steve has a small camp store which is more than adequate to get you to Monson, an easy 37 miles (bring three days worth of food). Steve also has a small bunkhouse and lots of tent space as well as a few small cabins. Sometimes, there may be a work-stay project if he has things he needs a hand with. There is fancier lodging and dining up the road a bit.

*Monson will be your last Trail town. Shaw's boarding house is very popular with hikers and accepts mail; otherwise, the Post office is nearby. There are other lodging options as well, as well as a laundromat, several places to eat, and a very friendly public library. The general store is OK; you may also want to check out the enormous hiker boxes at Shaw's before you shop; lots of folks get monstrous maildrops here, and end up dumping a lot of perfectly good food they don't need. If you need a real supermarket, the folks at Shaw's can shuttle you to nearby Greenville, Guilford, or Dover-Foxcroft. Fuels of all sorts are available at Shaw's.

Important Note: There is presently ONE place to re-supply between Monson and Abol Bridge at the border of Baxter State Park. Hikers NOT planning to stop at this one place, White House Landing, should, in all likelihood, bring 6-8 days worth of food with them from Monson. Note also that W.H. Landing might NOT be accepting hiker maildrops this year; do not send them anything with checking ahead of time.

*Abol Bridge. Unless you go into the town of Millinocket before finishing your trip, the camp store by the bridge is absolutely the LAST place to buy food before entering Baxter State Park. Note the word BUY. Do NOT send maildrops or anything else to either the Abol Store, or the Baxter gate, or any of the campsites/Ranger stations in the Park, unless you have absolutely gotten the permission to do this, which you probably won't get. And make sure to get an extra day's rations at Abol Bridge in case you have to kill a day in the park waiting on the weather to improve for a better summit day. If you find you don't need your extra food, you can always give it away to a hungry new arrival who you'll see at the foot of Katahdin after you've summited.

*In my experience, I generally make camp in Baxter on the 7th day out of Monson, and summit on the 8th day. Keep this in mind if someone's going to meet you or pick you up. And remember that Baxter gets REALLY crowded on the weekends in August and September. Unless your friends or family can ONLY come get you over the weekend, I'd try to summit early or mid-week, unless you want to share Katahdin with a crowd.

*When you leave the Park, Millinocket has all sorts of lodging and dining options. One can catch a bus in nearby Medway; see your guidebooks for details on the best way to make your way home.

And now you're done! Congratulations, and very best wishes on your next adventure! I hope the information above has proved both useful and accurate, and once again, if you think I've forgotten anything important or left out anything significant, please let me know so I can include these additions or corrections in the next edition of this article.

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26 Feb. 2007