

2020-04-27 Quiz Pleasant Mtn.

<https://www.mainetrailfinder.com/trails/trail/pleasant-mountain-trails>

See link for trail map for Pleasant Mtn. in Bridgeton, ME or use your own paper map. Should be the same. Trails are not labeled well. Use your resources.

Two scenarios. For each scenario there is no right or wrong answer more to make you think abstractly about navigation. Assume you are alone, have a map you printed from the link above and you do have a compass.

Both scenarios start like this.

Your plan is to hike the Ledges Trail. On the map the trailhead is the more southerly of the two trail heads on Moose Pond. The Ledges Trail takes you to the summit. From there your plan is to follow the Bald Peak Trail to the more northerly trail head on Moose Pond and then walk the road back to your car.

Both scenarios were complicated by the fact that I had my first dog with me. I am guessing that it would have been around 1996 or so. I got my first dog "used" and he was never trained to stay with me off leash so had to be leashed to me the entire time. Some might question why I would choose to go hiking in the weather described in the first scenario. My attitude at the time was that it was a learning experience and at the time I was in pretty good shape, had adequate gear, and had left detailed instructions with my wife. I had done a lot of backpacking in less than ideal weather including a trip that went from Rt 4 to the Long Falls Dam Road and included a traverse of Saddleback and the Bigelow Range during Hurricane Bob (1991).

Scenario 1:

It is early spring and the weather is less than ideal. With light rain/snow and temperatures in the low 30's. Wind is light and variable. Because of the flat light you have no visual reference for direction. The trail is slippery in most places with either mud or a thin layer of ice or both. The trail is generally well marked but because of lingering snow is obscured in many places. You reach the summit and locate the trail leading roughly north from the summit. The trail descends, steeply in places, over very slippery ground. You realize that you should have arrived at Bald Peak by now and have descended a lot more than you should have. It is now getting late. You get out your compass and realize that you are heading generally west.

Question 1. Where are you? **Somewhere on the Fire warden's Trail**

Question 2 .What is your plan? **Open to debate. One possible scenario is to continue down the Fire warden's Trail and then follow the roads back. It will be much longer but you will be "out of the woods" and on good footing. There is also a chance that you might get a ride. Another option would be to backtrack and hope you find the missed**

trail junction. This could be tricky with poor footing and fading light. My choice was to continue down the Fire wardens trail knowing that I would be on the wrong side of the mountain from where my vehicle was. At the time I felt that it would be safer than trying to go back up on sketchy footing. I would be off the mountain and if someone went looking for me they would most likely check the other trail heads and roads first. I figured that I had zero chance of getting a ride because I had my dog with me and we were both wet and muddy. As I was walking on the dirt (mud) road and had not reached Rt. 302 yet a guy came by in an open bed pick up and gave us a ride back to my truck. That summer I led a group of Boy Scouts and AMC people to re-blaze the trail and post signs.

Scenario 2:

It is late fall with great weather. Temperature is in the mid 50's with patchy clouds and intermittent sun. You arrive at Bald Peak but lose the trail. You back track, and do some scouting but just cannot locate where the trail continues.

Question 3. What is your plan? I knew I just needed to head east and downhill. As I was heading down I allowed myself to drift a bit to the north. My thought was that I would either end up in the drainage or hit the ski slopes. I ended up in the drainage. Travel in the drainage was pretty rough with lots of thick brush which was not made easier by having a dog on a leash. I made my way up the north side of the drainage which is where my map showed the trail was. I was probably close to the 1000' contour interval by that time. I figured if nothing else the walking would be easier on the ridge. I did find the trail and then just followed it out. Big lesson learned was that travel on the ridge was much easier than in the drainage.