

# January 7, 2023: Moonlit Snowshoe Hike Recap

written by Amy Oestreich | January 10, 2023

*"Connections" – I feel connected to nature; I think of the history of snowshoes. A simple piece of gear, created out of necessity, more than 4000 years before my time. I feel a literal connection to the snow. My feet are securely attached to a mode of transportation perhaps my ancestors relied on for food and travel. I begin to feel a heightened connection between my mind and my body. My other senses are alive as my vision diminishes. I read the snow without sight; the packed trail feels denser underfoot than the drifts, it sounds crunchy. The moonlight is enough – but my other senses must greatly assist. My mind cannot wander and lead me astray. Is this the way? I feel a survivalist sense of responsibility as 22 participants follow me onto the trail and into the night. – Thoughts – Amy Oestreich*

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The Outdoor Activity Center hosted its first [Moonlit Snowshoe hike of 2023](#) on January 7. We were excited to welcome 22 participants to the adventure. As a KML team member, I organized and guided this event for the first time. Below is a recap of the event:

Events are always filled with excitement and of course a little bit of nervousness. After all, this was my first time in charge of such an event. Twelve people had signed up in advance...no problem! To my pleasant surprise more folks kept arriving. As we began our introduction, 22



participants had filled the Outdoor Activity Center. Group activities are interesting and always fun. You have a range from “this is my first time on snowshoes” to “I think I was born with snowshoes on”. What I notice, no matter the skill level, folks are there for the guided, group dynamics and perhaps more importantly the camaraderie that forms; the connection.

I welcomed everyone, gave a brief overview of the gear, trail safety, vision by moonlight, the Adventurer Snowshoe Route, and [Leave No Trace Practices](#). Then we headed outside to gear up and hike out. I was lead guide and Chris Guibert, OAC Lead, served as sweep.

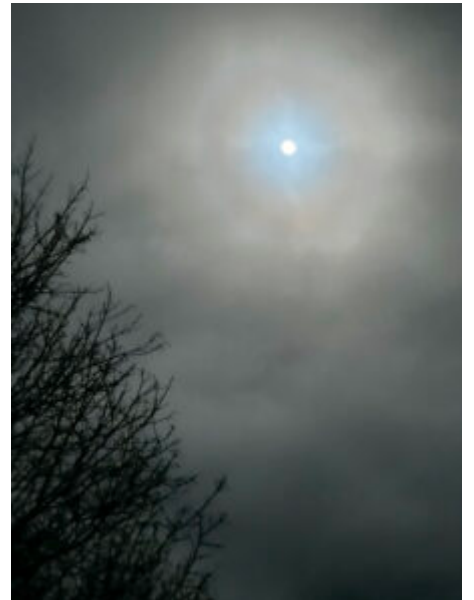


The [Adventurer Snowshoe Route](#) begins by crossing the golf course. Snow levels were low and the route was not as obvious to my night-visioned eye as I had hoped. Leading a group creates a sense of responsibility. These folks are going to follow me...my anxiety challenged my confidence. I questioned a path I had traveled many times, but not with people depending on me. Then, connections...camaraderie showed me the way. Tom Oliver, a previous team member at the Lodge, who was instrumental in creating this route, leap frogged me and led us to our next junction. I embraced admitting that I got off trail a smidge. It reminded me of relying on our neighbors during times of need; asking for help; moving as a team; admitting imperfections.

As we traversed into the wooded section, I did have to chuckle

as Tom led us off trail for a brief moment. But truer, I thought of times past. I thought of the days when our ancestors used many of our current forms of recreation as everyday transportation. I thought of these modern snowshoes on my feet and how they evolved from hand shaped wood and animal hide. I thought about how they were used solely to move and hunt in the winter. I then thought of other forms of recreation, sport and even competitions and how they evolved from our ancestors modes of transportation: hiking, dog sledding, horseback riding... Again, I began to feel a connection to nature and history.

The route continued through the woods, alongside rock formations and then to an uphill portion. Sure, ascents can challenge our bodies, but I find that they can work our minds even more. Many times, what we think manifests what we feel. As we re-grouped in an opening, I suggested connecting to the internal chatter your mind tends to create when faced with difficulty. This hill is hard! I want to stop! I'm out of shape! What if we can change the mental narrative to, I've got this! Keep going! I am getting into shape! As we connected our minds to our bodies, the hill disappeared underfoot. As if to reward us, just then, the full moon began to unveil herself from beneath the clouds. Hello Moon!



Our snowshoe adventure continued along the historic rock wall boundary and back into the woods. Pockets of moonlight guided us along the trail. The stillness of the night calmed me. I could sense the wildlife sharing their space with us. Little tracks imprinted the snow telling us where these critters come and go. Our night as a group was coming to an end. As we circled together, smiles shined in the light of the moon. We did it! We

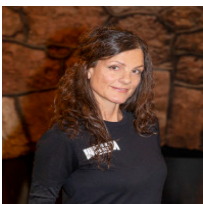


connected as a community of snowshoers; each bringing a desire to explore and learn and each leaving with a new memory by moonlight.



If you are interested in joining our next Moonlit Snowshoe hike on February 4th at 8:00pm, please call the OAC for more information and reserve a spot.

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