

# Yoga hikes add new dimension to fall in Roscommon County

The beauty of autumn in the woodlands of Roscommon County, with their brilliant colors and deep quiet, will be enhanced this fall with the addition of yoga hikes at Stone Turtle Yoga at Higgins Lake. Mariah Frye, the owner and instructor at Stone Turtle, said the one to two-mile hikes are low impact, yet invigorating to yoga practitioners of all levels.

She said that just as the experience of each of the poses that are part of the practice of yoga are different every time, the forest will be different every time. "The yoga hikes are an opportunity to slow your mind down, get yourself away from trying to get somewhere or thinking about the future and exist in the moment," said Frye, who added that they are a perfect form of practice for those who are new to yoga.

During preparation for a recent yoga hike, Frye quoted Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Naht Hanh as saying that the primary purpose of walking meditation is to completely enjoy the experience of walking. "We walk all the time, but usually our walking is more like running. Our steps are often burdened with our anxieties and worries. When we walk in forgetfulness, we imprint our anxieties and worries on Mother Earth, and on those around us. But when we walk in mindfulness, each step creates a fresh breeze of peace, joy and harmony."

When practicing walking meditation "we just enjoy

the walking with no particular aim or destination. Our walking is not a means to an end. We walk for the sake of walking."

Frye has been practicing yoga since 2008 when she moved to Berkeley, CA. Born and raised at Higgins Lake, she has been an athlete her whole life, playing team sports throughout her childhood and eventually captaining her volleyball team at Kalamazoo College.

She earned a 200-hour RYT certification at Yoga Garden of San Francisco in May 2012, under the instruction of David Nelson and Michelle Myhre, and teaches a style of practice derived from the Vinyasa, Ashtanga and Iyengar schools of yoga. She said her teaching style is light-hearted yet focused, emphasizing alignment and extension within the poses.

Her studio is in the Stone Turtle Lodge at Cross Country Ski Headquarters, so named because of its massive stone fireplace which features a large stone shaped like the head of a turtle. She said that yoga classes will be available four days per week during the fall, including yoga hikes on Friday mornings.

For a full class schedule, price list and information on Stone Turtle Yoga, contact Frye at (989) 302-7928 or visit the studio's web site at [www.stoneturtle yoga.com](http://www.stoneturtle yoga.com).

**PRE-HIKE PRACTICE**  
Mariah Frye (left), owner and instructor at Stone Turtle Yoga at Higgins Lake, leads a group in a pre-hike yoga session. She said she teaches a style of practice derived from the Vinyasa, Ashtanga and Iyengar schools of yoga, all of which were developed in India in the last 200 years.



**NATURAL SETTING**  
Participants in a yoga hike at Stone Turtle Yoga at Higgins Lake practice along a ski trail that is part of the 12-mile trail system at Cross Country Ski Headquarters. Instructor Mariah Frye, the owner of Stone Turtle Yoga, said the session in the middle of the two-mile hikes, which are regularly held on Friday mornings, consists of poses designed to help bring participants into a quiet state of mind.



**CROSSING INTO QUIET**  
A group of hikers waits for traffic to clear before crossing County Road 100 to begin a recent yoga hike on the Cross Country Ski Headquarters trail system. The trail system, developed by the Frye family beginning in the mid-1970s, now includes 12 miles of groomed trail through a forest of pine and mixed hardwoods.

**SETTING OUT**  
Mariah Frye (right), owner and instructor of Stone Turtle Yoga at Higgins Lake, leads a group on a yoga hike recently. The hike began and ended with practice indoors, but Frye said fall hikes will be conducted outdoors from start to finish.



**QUIET WALK**  
Hikers make their way down the trail to the sound of wind and rain hitting the forest leaves during a recent yoga hike. Brilliant colors will be added to the setting as fall progresses.

*Story and photos by Thomas Reznich*



**POST-HIKE SESSION**  
Mariah Frye (left) leads yoga hike participants in a series of poses before the final relaxation pose (Savasana). Also pictured (left to right) are Paul Bennett and Carol Herndon of Maryland, Pineniece Joshua of Houghton Lake, Lisa Reznich of Berlin, Germany and George Frye of New York, NY.