

Local Sugarhouse Operators Report About-Average Yield

Loss of Maple Weekend had big impact on sales

Larry Chase
Beacon volunteer

As the maple sugar season wrapped up in early April, owner-operators of local sugarhouses seemed to agree that “it was a pretty good year” – about average, most indicated.

Mark Cowdrey, who operates Ragged View Farm at 111 Bradley Lake

but people have been good about calling and arranging to pick up.” Beacon readers can do the same, Mark said, by calling him at 724-7511 or sending an e-mail to rvfa-mlc1@usa.net.

The size of Cowdrey’s operation, all on his property, includes about 220 maple trees. His taps – a combination of buckets and an intricate system of plastic tubing that arrives eventually at a 500-gallon tank – yielded well over 2,000 gallons of sap. These in turn yielded, after considerable boiling, the 52 gallons of syrup cited above.

Other local sugarmakers appear to have had about the same success this year as Mark. This from Greg Stetson, who heads up Winter Hill Maple just off West Shore Drive:

“Though I was cautiously optimistic about this season from the start, due to the warm winter weather and lack of snowfall, we produced over 30 gallons this year, right in the same ballpark as last season. The COVID-19 pandemic meant no Maple Weekend and open house; however, we are still selling our syrup. We can be reached on Facebook; by e-mail at GMStetson84@gmail.com, or by phone at 455-4980 to place an order. We will do dooryard deliveries in and around Andover, and we can accept payment via PayPal, Venmo, credit card, check, or cash. Thank you for your support!”

And Zach Barton, who runs the Trail Side Sugar House on Currier Road, reported that he made “a little less syrup than usual.” He tapped beginning the first of February as usual and finished about a week and a half earlier than typical. He noted that it seemed to take more sap to make syrup, indicating a low sugar content. Learn more, or make a purchase, by calling him at 748-1307.



A bottle of the finished product from Mark Cowdrey’s Ragged View Farm maple sugaring operation.

Photo: Larry Chase

Road, put it this way in an e-mail exchange: “I made about my average – 52 gallons – but my quality seemed to be up a bit, probably due to more diligent equipment maintenance.”

And about sales, Mark had this to say: “The cancellation of Maple Weekend (March 21-22) because of the coronavirus had a big impact on sales,



In this 2015 photo, hikers enjoy the serenity of the old heron rookery near Fenvale, one of many opportunities in Andover to get out of the house safely.

Photo: Larry Chase

Options Abound for Enjoying the Outdoors Safely

Numerous trails and Town-owned lands

Tina Cotton

Andover Conservation Commission

Staying at home is the new norm. Enjoy the outdoors locally, alone or with your family. You can work in your yard, walk, bike along your road or the Rail Trail (visit FNRT.org), or hike numerous trails in town. Three of the more popular trails are a segment of the Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway (SRKG); Cascade Brook; and the former heron rookery.

The Andover segment map of the SRKG can be found on SRKG.com. However, the bridge over the Blackwater River, just after crossing the Rail Trail going from Proctor Academy to Winslow State Park, has a significant hole on one side of the bridge and has

been deemed not safe for travel. Take the detour on the Rail Trail to Bridge Street.

Cascade Brook is along Mountain Brook, north of Elbow Pond in the Newman conservation easement. Paths are on both sides of the brook. Please contact the owners for permission to cross their land though: Bill Barsdley on the west, and Susan Schnare on the east.

The former heron rookery in a conservation easement is accessed from a small parking lot at the end of Fenvale Road. The beaver-dammed pond flooded trees and caused them to die. Blue herons built nests in the treetops in which to raise their young. However, time has taken its toll, and only some tree trunks devoid of nests remain standing. Paul Fenton is the landowner to contact.

Many conservation easements have trails. Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust holds many of these, and descriptions of properties can be found at AusbonSargent.org/Properties. Contact See Outdoors on page 15

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