

Lost on a Mountain in Maine

by **Donn Fendler and Joseph B. Egan**

(Beech Tree, 1992)

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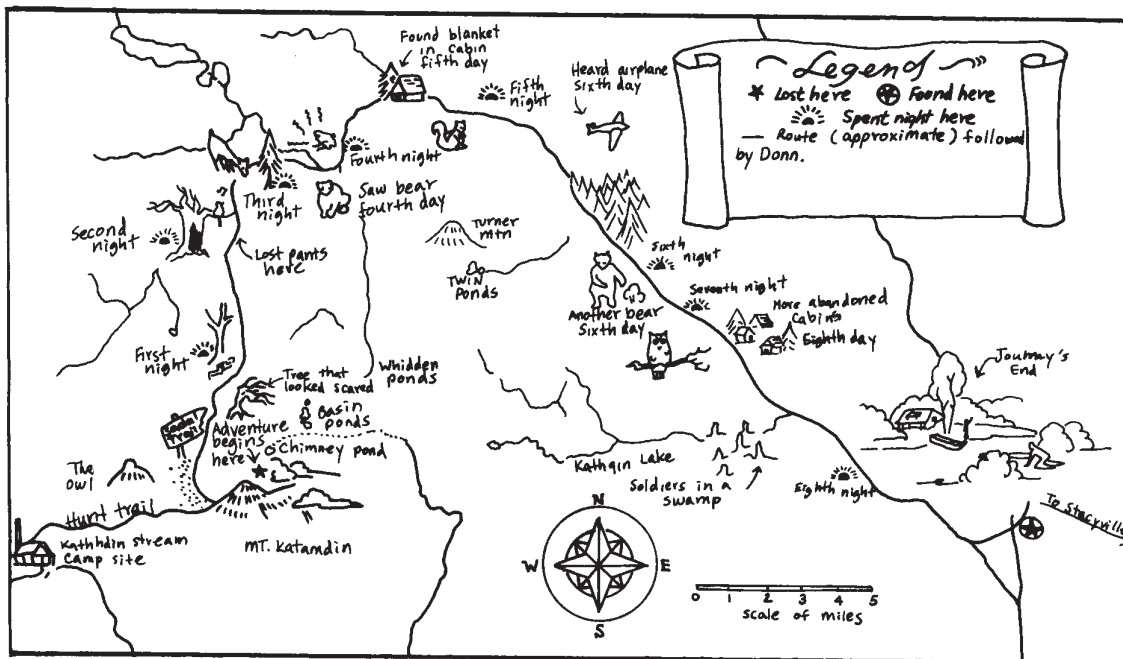
Lost on a Mountain in Maine is the true story of how a 12 year old boy survived alone in the wilderness of Maine for nine days. Donn Fendler left his hiking group and became lost in the fog, sleet, and rain on top of Baxter State Park's Mt. Katahdin. He wandered aimlessly while looking for a trail, and finally he left the mountain plateau and went in the deep woods. Once below the tree line, he wandered where no trails existed, following streams and blown down phone wires. He ate wild berries and drank stream water. Wearing only a light windbreaker, he had little protection from the environment. His hope of finding civilization around each bend in the stream kept him moving. After nine days of wandering, Donn stumbled to the edge of the Penobscot River where Mr. McMoarn found him and took him to his cabin for medical attention.

Name _____

Donn's Trail Map

We use maps as a way of recording the land around us. They can be used as directional guides or as a source for monitoring changes in our surroundings. Every map has a key or legend. The key contains important information about how to read the map. Most keys have a listing of the symbols on the map and their meanings, a distance scale, and a compass rose. Maps are sometimes divided into quadrants to aid the reader in finding a location quickly. The quadrant is found by following the lettered and numbered lines at the edges of the map. A quadrant is defined by listing both the letter and the number that correspond to the area.

Maine guides and rangers traced Donn's approximate trek through Baxter State Park. They sketched this map of his journey. Use the information in this map to answer the questions below.



1. About how many miles/kilometers does Donn travel in the first day? _____
2. How many times does he see bears? _____
3. What is the name of the stream that he follows for most of his trek? _____
4. In what quadrant does Donn spend his third night? _____
5. What direction would you travel to reach Bangor from Mt. Katahdin? _____
6. Name one landmark that is located in quadrant B,4. _____
7. What symbol does the map use to represent where Donn sleeps? _____

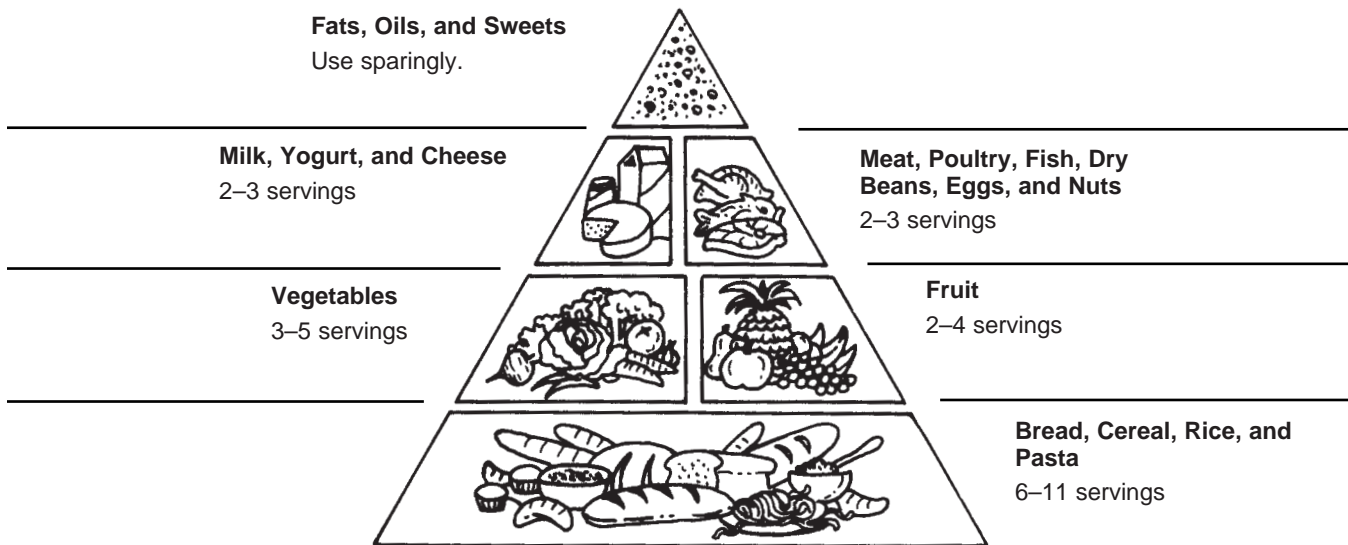
Challenge: Work in teams to draw your own map of a location in your neighborhood. Be sure to locate the direction of north first so your map will be positioned correctly.

Name _____

Balanced Diet

The food pyramid is based on a healthy, well-balanced diet. It is important to eat a balanced diet of foods to remain healthy and strong. Some food groups are more important to our diets than others, so we should try to eat more foods from these groups. Other food groups are less important, and these foods should be eaten sparingly.

Food Pyramid



1. Donn scavenges for his food while he is lost in the Maine woods. Make a list of the foods that Donn eats during the nine days he is lost.

2. Is Donn's diet healthy? _____

3. What food groups does Donn's diet lack? _____

4. Choose one day and list all of the foods that you eat during that day. Use the chart on the next page. In the snack category, list any foods eaten outside of the three regular mealtimes.

Balanced Diet (cont.)

Your Menu	
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	

5. Do you eat a well-balanced diet? _____

6. a. If not, what food groups do you need to eat more of? _____

b. What food groups do you need to eat less of? _____

Name _____

Lost

There are few situations more frightening than being lost. When Donn was lost for nine days, he did not know where he was nor did his family know where to find him. Many of the people searching for Donn thought that he must be dead.

Remember a time when you or someone you loved was lost. How did you feel? What did you think? What did you do?

The following is a list of common rules to remember if you become lost in the wilderness and you know that someone will soon miss you. Note the rules which Donn did not follow and discuss what he did instead.

1. If you become separated from your group, stay put. Your group will have a better chance of finding you if you do not move.
2. Stay on the marked trail if you are on one.
3. Stay calm and do not panic.
4. Use the universal distress code. This is a signal repeated three times. You can either yell, use a whistle, or set out a marking on open ground.
5. Keep warm, dry, and comfortable.

Although we never plan to become lost, it is always good to be prepared for emergencies when we are hiking. Make a list of five preparations that Donn could have made before becoming lost that might have helped him enhance his chances for survival.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Name _____

Scouting

The first scouting organization was established by Robert Baden-Powell in Great Britain in 1907. After returning from a tour of duty as a soldier in India, he decided that he would like to help the British youth become better citizens. He invited 22 boys to spend a week on an island off the coast of England with the goal of teaching woodcraft, lifesaving, and nature observation. Following this camp, he wrote the book *Scouting for Boys*. Boys all over England read the book and became excited about scouting. Boy Scout troops were soon organized all over the country.

While on a trip, American businessman William D. Boyce met one of Mr. Baden-Powell’s British scouts. Mr. Boyce was lost in the streets of London and asked the boy for directions. He was so impressed with the boy’s helpfulness that he asked to meet with the scout leader, Mr. Baden-Powell. After learning more about the scouting organization, Mr. Boyce returned to America and founded the Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910. The primary goal of this organization was to develop the “character, citizenship, and physical fitness of America’s youth.”

Since 1910, scouting has grown. Summer camps have been established, troops have been designed for boys younger than eleven, and the Girl Scouts of America was founded in 1912. Today, millions of youth worldwide participate in scouting organizations.

The following is a copy of the Boy Scout Oath. Read the oath and then think about how it and the organization the oath represents might have helped Donn survive while he was lost in the woods. Write your ideas below. Then, research to find out more about the scouting organizations in your area and what they are doing to help your community.

*On my honor, I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.*

Name _____

Dated Language

Lost on a Mountain in Maine was first written and published in 1939. Although this story occurred many years ago, it is still being published, read, and marveled at by people today. Can you think of any other stories that have lasted over the years? Why do you think they have? Discuss this with the class.

Since *Lost on a Mountain in Maine* was written so long ago, the text includes many slang expressions, descriptions or phrases that are not common in our language today. Read the sentences from the story listed below. Each contains a word or phrase that may sound unusual to you. Rewrite the sentences so they sound more like something someone might say today. Look through the text to see if you find any other unusual words that would be uncommon in our language today.

1. "It kind of scares a fellow, especially when you are alone and awfully cold."

2. "The sleet formed slick, thin ice on the sleeves of my reefer, and I had to wipe it off my face."

3. "Dungarees are all right for dry hikes, but they're terrible when they get cold and wet."

4. "Christmas! I was surprised. Those sneakers were slashed all over."

5. "You see, at that time I didn't really think I was in a bad fix."

6. "Funny how you can get chummy with the wild animals when you're in the woods."

7. "The next thing I really remember was Mrs. McMoarn. She was grand."

8. "I heard the telephone ringing like mad..."

Name _____

Who is Donn?

Read and respond to the following questions about Donn Fendler. Be sure to use examples from the text to support your answers. When you are finished, share your answers with the class.

1. Donn Fendler survived for nine days with almost no food and no shelter. Even his clothing was in rags and provided very little protection from the environment. What kept Donn from giving up and just lying down in the woods to die? _____

2. List five values that were important to Donn. Explain why they were important. _____

3. Drawing upon the text, give a physical description of Donn Fendler. _____

4. If you could have met Donn Fendler when he was twelve years old, do you think you would have been friends? Explain. _____

5. Why did Donn's story attract so much attention from the media? Can you think of any current survival story that has attracted media attentions? _____

Name _____

Senses

When people become frightened, their senses become enhanced. People can often see, hear, and smell things that they might not notice if they were not frightened. This is because of a natural physical change that occurs in the body as a self-defense mechanism. Fright causes stress to the body, and as a result of stress, the body releases adrenaline or epinephrine from the adrenal gland. This chemical has several effects on the body. It prepares the body for defense by stimulating the heart, constricting blood vessels, raising blood pressure, and releasing sugars into the blood stream. These physical changes help prepare the body by making it more alert and, thus, better able to cope with uncertain situations. You may remember a time when you were in a frightening situation and you could hear your own heart beating. Your breathing became shallower, and you had a strong awareness of everything around you. The release of adrenaline is one of the ways your body naturally prepares for survival.

Although Donn dictates his story to Joseph Egan weeks after the event, he still recalls several vivid images. In many of Donn’s descriptions, he emphasizes how he feels, what he sees, what he hears, or what he smells. As you read these examples from the text, think about how Donn must feel and what he is thinking about his own survival.

- “I listened. Only the whining noise of the wind in the stunted trees—no, there was another noise—rocks falling, far off to the right—a slow, heavy crunching sound—then silence, deeper than before.”
- “The wind was sharp, and it blew so hard that the rain and sleet stung like needles.”
- “I never smelled anything so bad as that blanket. I almost had to hold my nose, but I went to sleep just the same.”
- “I climbed onto a tree trunk and I could see a big bog full of dead trees. Each one looked like a soldier. The sun was shining on them and some of the branches looked like silver.”

Now, think of a time when you were very frightened. Close your eyes. What images, sounds, smells, and tastes do you recall? Do a free write below and on the back of this page. When you are finished, underline all the words which represent the awareness of your five senses.
