

THE GLOVER'S LEDGER

A Monthly Newsletter

welcome! // Kolipaid!

Crunch...crunch....crunch.... No, that's not the leaves this time! November // Mzatanos, the freezing river maker moon, has brought frost and snow. Stay warm out there, and enjoy the new sights and smells of the season. Well wishes from our neck of the woods, to yours. Take care // wlinanawalmezi

Glover's Ledge was established on N'dakinna, the unceded ancestral homelands of the Western Abenaki peoples past and present. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude the land (ki), the water (nebi) and the alnôbak (people) who have stewarded N'dakinna through generations and continue to do so today.

Mzatanos: m-ZAH-tah-nos -> More about the Abenaki Moons [here](#).

My thanks and gratitude to Jesse Bruchac for his teaching of the Abenaki language. See westernabenaki.com for more.

IN ABSENTIA

Article and Photos by: Kim Snyder

We all experienced an absence this year. No concerts, no social gatherings, no contact with strangers, no hugs, no closeness. Intimacy was distant, love sent through a screen or a pane of glass. For our own safety and well-being we had to create these absences.

We turned to nature. When our inside spaces threatened to accelerate the spread, we took to the boundless gifts of green spaces for everything: our gatherings, our exercise, our distraction from the horrors of life. We went to parks for our gatherings. We went to mountains for our exercise. We went to scenic vistas for our distraction from the horrors of life.

For Antioch students, we went to Glover's Ledge. Camping, distanced meals, exploration when the inside was too confining, dog walking, data collection for Bio-blitzes, work on thesis projects, and fun. For myself, visits to Glover's Ledge were a necessary deep breath of air in the middle of a stifling week.

Every week, I would trek out to the vernal pools carrying nets, notebooks, and boots for hours of silent data collection. On the surface, it was necessary labor; data for a thesis that seemed it would never be done. Underneath, it was a weekly meditation on life and loss. I gaped at jellied egg masses as they quite suddenly appeared and thickened each week with algae. I froze to witness winter wrens and oven birds dart down to the water's edge. I absorbed the new sounds as peepers, wood frogs, hawks, and warblers returned week by week, filling the silence with pulsating reminders of the audacity of life. I felt my heart catch in my chest, beat momentarily hijacked by the ultrasonic thump of a grouse beginning its mating display.



Data collection at the vernal pools.



Glover's Ledge is in my soul; it has my tears of frustration, fear, and joy soaked into its glacial soils. When I was present there, I was absent from the mania and the concerns of a world in chaos. It took me away.

Now imagine, if you can, nature through a distance. Through a screen or a photo only. Green in absence. Glover's Ledge gone. What is missing? And what do we feel?

Let's imagine if we dare, this past year without green spaces.

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IN ABSENTIA *continued*

There is upwards of 1.8 billion acres of public lands accessible to US citizens. Parks, bike paths, national seashores, lakes, mountains, conservation easements. Spending time in a park, refuge, or waterway is the best way to foster a sense of appreciation, stewardship, and love towards that same land. I certainly did with Glover's Ledge. But America's public lands are in a precarious balance that is tipping slowly into decline. Public lands are already in debt and many are in need of improvements or maintenance. Many parks already suffer from overcrowding, maintenance backlogs, and staffing limits. Symptoms of a greater problem: ambivalence. We as a nation cannot decide if our lands are meant for equity or for extraction. The idealistic debate continues, with evidence mounting against the equity argument. Minorities don't visit public lands as often, because of the economic and stigmatized barriers in their way. Public lands are a rich, white man creation, not a safe or affordable space for a black or brown child. So the rich white men decide the lands' fate is to make them richer. They scrape and whittle away, until the lands are so degraded that they are seen only as shells surrounding greater valuables. Death by a thousand cuts. A viral hijacking to turn green into black.



A year without natural spaces.

No hikes, no scenic vistas, no close contact with wildlife, no solace, no deep breaths.

Bird song at a distance, only old photos of vernal pools.

Absence lost.

So what can you do? When contact was lost, we turned to Zoom and to those magic barriers of 6 feet of emptiness to maintain our connections and passions. In the absence of public lands, there is no such replacement. We must preserve and protect instead.

Fall in love with your local park, ask your friends and family members who may not usually come to join you on your next outing, volunteer for a cleanup, or make a donation to your favorite conservation non-profit. Share the stories of your escapes to green spaces while the world hunkered down in fear. We can't address the leading causes of public land erosion individually; but we can create the mindset that parks and streams and forests are essential. And we all deserve a place in them.

