

## Northern Lights and Arctic Adventures In Norway

March 13, 2023 – March 23, 2023 (trip# 2317)

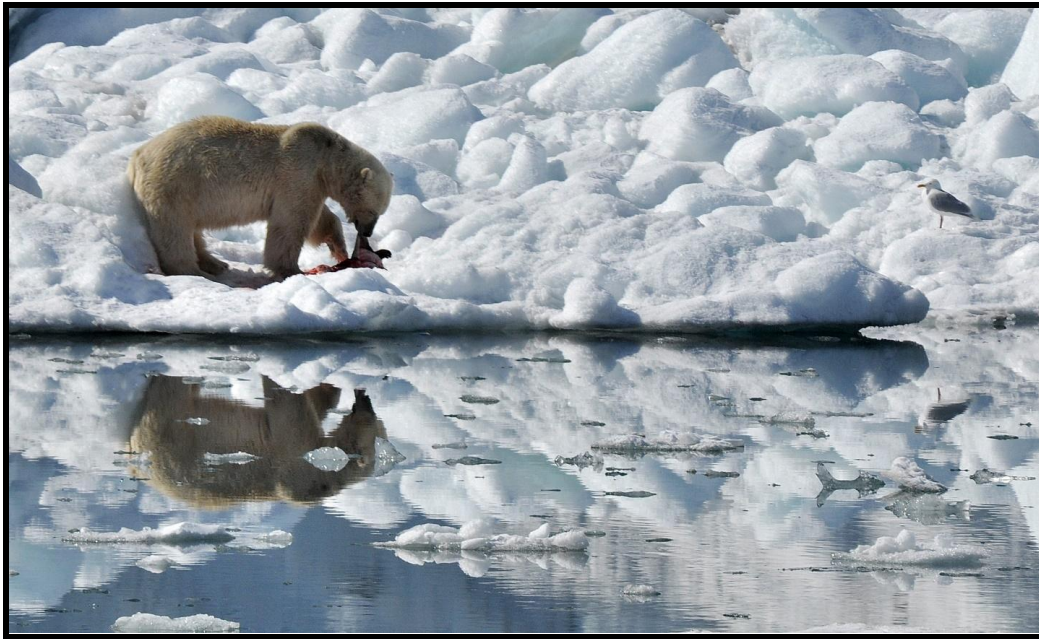


*Northern Nights* (Photo by Thomas Lipke on [Unsplash](#))

## Overview

Join us for an exciting and active winter adventure in Norway. The trip includes spending over a week north of the Arctic Circle participating in unique polar activities amidst a backdrop of stunning landscapes. After two nights in Oslo, we fly north to Bodo where we board a boat for an overnight cruise amidst the spectacular Lofoten Islands. We then spend several days exploring the area with snowshoe hikes, a northern lights safari, a scenic bus tour, a fjord cruise, a reindeer sled ride and an evening absorbing Sami culture while eating dinner seated around a warm fire in a traditional Sami tent. We then fly north to the Island of Svalbard at 79 degrees north latitude where we will enjoy an exciting journey onto the Arctic tundra aboard a snowcat where we will explore the remains of an old Norwegian mining town and have great views over Adventfjorden and to Longyearbyen. After the Snowcat tour we will visit an Arctic camp for dinner and have the opportunity to sit outside and enjoy the Northern Lights. We will then spend a day dog sledding, and exploring ice caves inside a glacier before we fly back to Oslo. Although we cannot guarantee you will see the northern lights, we have provided as many opportunities as possible to maximize the chances of experiencing this stunning natural wonder.

Accommodations include several nights in 3-4 star hotels, a night aboard a cruise ship, and cozy former mining cabins.



*From Boat Above the Arctic Circle (photo: Saul Rothstein)*

## **Trip Difficulty**

This trip is rated [3 - easy](#). Although this is mostly a cultural trip, reasonable fitness and stamina is expected as it will be very active, and there will be two half day snowshoe excursions. We will be on the move most of every day, and often outside in cold conditions.

## **Itinerary Summary**

Our adventure begins and ends in Oslo, the capital and largest city in Norway. It is a cosmopolitan hub with world-class museums, restaurants, architecture, and art, and yet it still maintains the relaxed atmosphere of a much smaller town. It was ranked number one in terms of quality of life among European large cities, and was the European “Green Capital” in 2019 for its dedication to environmental sustainability. After a guided tour of this beautiful city, we will have some free time for independent exploration.

We venture north of the Arctic Circle by plane and boat to experience the coastal beauty of the country. Following an overnight boat cruise, we have a few days to enjoy the smaller towns of the area, and have time for snowshoeing, reindeer sledding, a fjord cruise, learning about the Sami culture, and more. There should be tremendous scenery at every turn, and although it is never guaranteed, a few opportunities to see the northern lights. In particular, we are staying in a village considered one of the best locations in Norway for viewing the Aurora Borealis, and will have a great opportunity for a Northern Lights viewing experience at Hamn Lighthouse.

The trip culminates with a flight even further north to the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard which is about midway between continental Norway and the North Pole. The islands were first used as a whaling station in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and then were abandoned.

In 1936, the Soviets acquired the rights to mine the local coalfields. During our few days in Svalbard we will enjoy a snowcat tour to an abandoned Norwegian mining town deep within the Arctic Circle, the chance to ride and mush dog sleds, and the exploration of an ice cave inside a glacier.

We fly back to Oslo for a final dinner together before it is time to head home or to other adventures.

## Trip Details



Map of Norway showing some of the places we will visit

## Itinerary

The itinerary below describes our daily plans. The following abbreviations are used to indicate meals provided by the trip: B = breakfast, L= Lunch, D = dinner.

### **Day 0 (Sunday March 12, 2023):**

Fly from the US to Oslo, Norway.

### **Day 1 (Monday March 13, 2023):**

After your arrival in Oslo make your way to the city center and our hotel, the Clarion Hub Hotel. We suggest you take the Airport Express to Oslo Center, from where it is a very short walk to the hotel. After we get together to meet and discuss the trip, we will have a welcome dinner at our hotel. (D)



*Vigeland Sculpture Park In Oslo (photo: Dan Stone)*

### **Day 2 (Tuesday March 14, 2023):**

After a leisurely breakfast, we will be met at 10 AM for a three-hour guided walking tour of central Oslo. Highlights may include the Oslo City Hall (the setting for the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony), the State Opera House, and the Vigeland Sculpture Park. Afterwards we will have time to explore the city independently. We recommend taking

in some of Oslo's fascinating museums, which are likely to delight those with an interest in maritime history! Highlights include the Viking Ships Museum, Kon-tiki Raft, Polar Ship 'Fram' and the Akershus Fortress. Edvard Munch's famous painting "The Scream" can be found at the National Gallery. Dinner is on your own. There are many nearby restaurant possibilities in the Oslo city center. (B)

### **Day 3 (Wednesday March 15, 2023):**

This morning we fly to Bodo, in northern Norway, where we will be met on arrival and transferred by coach to the Hurtigruten port. Since our cruise does not depart until 3 PM, we can leave our luggage on board the ship and have a couple hours to explore Bodo, or perhaps enjoy the lunch buffet (not included) on board the ship before we set sail. At 3 PM, we depart with an overnight sail to Finnsnes, on the northern island of Senja. The cruise crosses the beautiful Lofoten archipelago, making several brief port calls en route to Senja, including at Stamsund and Svolvær in the Lofoten Islands. We have dinner on the ship and sleep on board in twin/double cabins. (B, D)

### **Day 4 (Thursday March 16, 2023):**

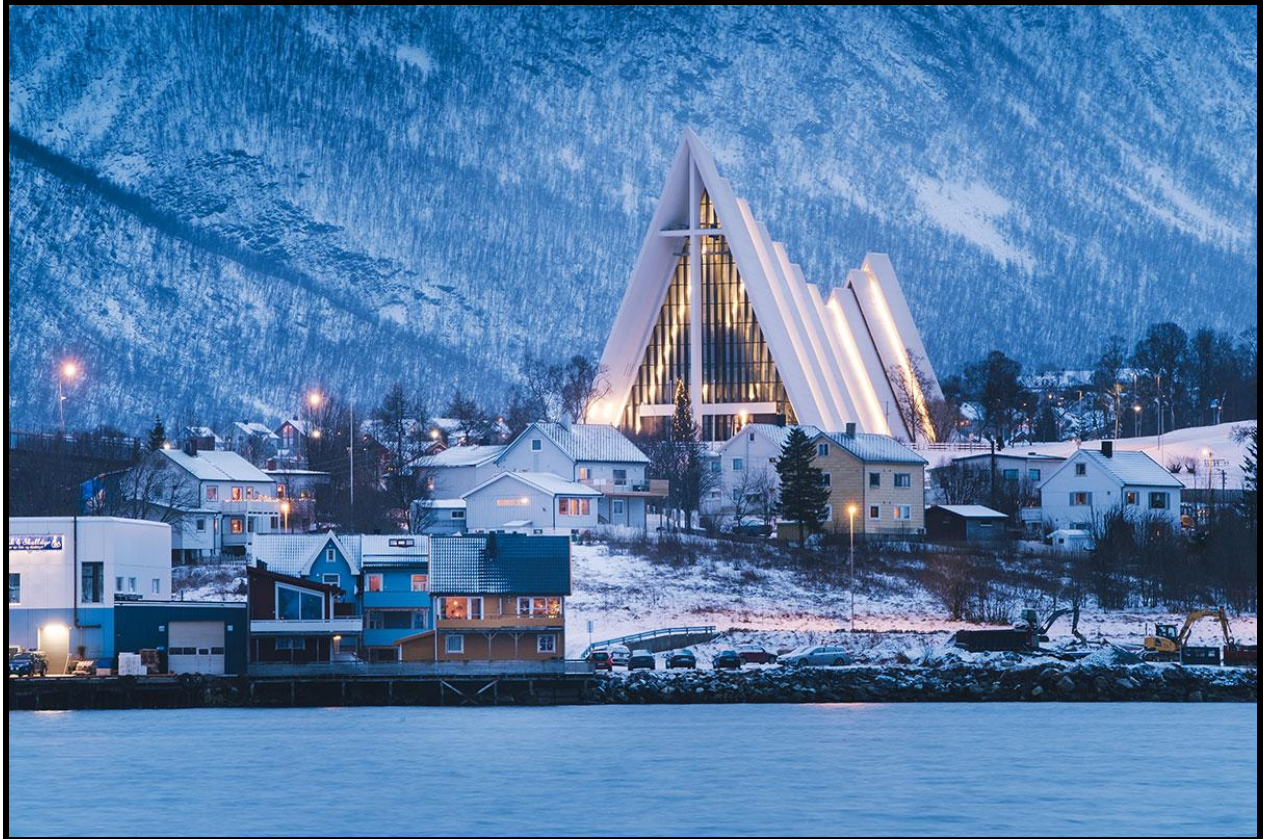
Our ship arrives in Finnsnes at the port at approximately 11 AM this morning. On arrival, we will be met by our coach driver and transferred 1 hour to Hamn i Senja, a resort by the sea on the northern coast of Senja where we will spend one night. After settling in at Hamn i Senja and having lunch, the group will embark on a snowshoe hike in the company of a private guide. We will explore the stunning scenery of Senja on this gentle hike, with snowshoes and poles supplied locally, before returning to our resort for dinner.

This evening at approximately 8:30 PM, we will enjoy a Northern Lights viewing experience at Hamn Lighthouse. Senja is considered to be one of the best locations in Norway for viewing the spectacle of the northern lights. As our rooms are close to the Lighthouse, we can stay as long as we wish to view the lights and we are not constrained by a bus schedule. Warm drinks will be provided. (B, L, D)

### **Day 5 (Friday March 17, 2023):**

After breakfast, we will be met by our driver and begin our journey north towards Tromsø. Some of the approximately 4-hour journey will be spent on the famous "Scenic route of Senja", which presents a marvelous spectacle of fjords and mountains. We will enjoy the scenery, making a few photo stops en route. On arrival in Tromsø, we check-in at the Scandic Ishavshotel for two nights.

After settling in at the hotel, we will take a short walk to the Tromso pier, where we board a boat for a cruise to discover the magnificent northern Norwegian fjords up close. Our local guide will describe the natural landmarks along the way. Hot drinks, biscuits and thermal clothing are provided during the cruise. We return to the Tromso pier in the late afternoon, with the rest of the day at leisure. Dinner is on your own. (B)



*Arctic Cathedral In Tromso*

**Day 6 (Saturday March 18, 2023):**

After breakfast, we have a short drive (approx. 30 mins) to Tromso Villmarkssenter, where we embark on a 4 hour, 3 mile guided snowshoe hike to discover the stunning scenery and views around Tromso. After the snowshoe hike, we return to town at approximately 1 PM, with the rest of the afternoon free to have lunch (not included) and explore Tromso independently. This will give us time to enjoy this lovely city, with its cozy cafes, excellent restaurants and fascinating museums, as well as the stunning Arctic Cathedral.

At 5 PM, we will be collected from the hotel for the start of a reindeer sledding and Sami culture tour. This is a thrilling way to explore Tromso in the company of an experienced Sami guide. The wilderness location has little artificial light, so conditions are ideal for seeing the Northern Lights, weather permitting. (Please note that we ride the sleds as passengers, and not as drivers!) After the reindeer sledding, we will be served a traditional hot meal and learn more about the Sami culture while seated around a warm fire in a Sami tent. Following dinner, we return to the hotel in Tromso in the late evening (approximately 10 PM). (B, D)



*Reindeer Sledding With Sami Guide*

**Day 7 (Sunday March 19, 2023):**

We have free time in the morning until we transfer to Tromso Airport for a 90 minute flight to Longyearbyen on the island of Svalbard in the far north. After we arrive in the early afternoon, we will be met and transferred by coach the short distance to the Miners' Cabins, our lodging for three nights. Late this afternoon, after the group has had time to settle in at the Miners' Cabins and have had lunch, we embark on a short tour of Longyearbyen by coach. The tour is a chance to learn about life in this most

remote northern outpost. The sightseeing around town is mostly by bus, so we need not get out the polar gear just yet!

In the evening, we will be met at the hotel by a local representative and briefed about the next two days' activities, including the snow cat tour, dog sledding, and ice caving. There will be time to go through our arctic equipment and ask any questions we may have about it or the activities. Then we are free to head out for dinner. We will stroll into town to try one of Longyearbyen's many restaurants. Dinner is on your own this evening as the group dinner is now on Monday March 20, 2023. (B)

### **Day 8 (Monday March 20, 2023):**

We will be collected from the Miners' Cabins at 9 am and begin our journey out of Longyearbyen and to Hiorthfjellet, a 900m high mountain located on the other side of Adventfjorden. The goal will be a high viewpoint situated approximately two thirds of the way up Hiorthfjellet (access to the summit of Hiorthfjellet is very steep and not possible in the snowcat), from where we will have great views over Adventfjorden and to Longyearbyen.

During today's tour, we'll also have a chance to stop at Hiorthhamn, where we can explore the remains of an old Norwegian mining town originally constructed in the early 20th century.

At the end of the snowcat tour, we'll stop at a cozy cabin with a fireplace where hot drinks will be served before we make the return journey to Longyearbyen, arriving back at the Miners' Cabins at approximately 2pm, with the rest of the afternoon at leisure.

At 7pm this evening, we will reconvene at the Miners' Cabins and depart for Camp Barentz, an Arctic camp located south-east of Longyearbyen that serves as a base for a number of activities in the region.

After an exciting drive through the Advent Valley, we'll arrive at the campsite at the foot of Mt Breinosa. Camp Barentz is set up with cozy wood cabins heated by large wood fires. Here we'll enjoy a hot meal accompanied by talks by our hosts. We do not need to be bound to the huts all evening, however, as if the weather is good there will be the opportunity to sit outside and enjoy the Northern Lights and the views of the Arctic tundra. Wildlife sightings are rare but possible – very lucky visitors to Camp Barentz might spy an Arctic fox!

After the evening at Camp Barentz, we'll be returned to the Miner's Cabins in Longyearbyen at approx. 10pm. (B, D)

**Day 9 (Tuesday March 21, 2023):**

We will be collected from the guesthouse after breakfast and driven to the dog kennels (8 miles from Longyearbyen). Once there we will be fitted for outer thermal clothes before setting off. Each sled will take two, allowing us to try riding as a passenger and also mushing. During the ride, we will stop at an ice cave within the glacier, taking an hour to explore its interior while the dogs rest. During the summer the ice cave becomes a bubbling meltwater river, while in the winter it is completely frozen over, revealing beautiful ice formations.



*Walking Through an Ice Cave (photo: Dan Stone)*

After exploring the cave we will enjoy a light lunch. Depending on the weather, lunch may be served inside a heated tent until the dogs are ready to move again. By the time we have finished, they will be well-rested and eager to head back down towards the dog

yard – and hopefully we are too! The return journey is mostly downhill, but we will keep to a steady pace, with time to enjoy the unspoiled wilderness.

Return to Longyearbyen and the Miners' Cabins. Dinner is on your own. (B, L)



*Dog Sledding In Svalbard (photo: Mike Barry)*

**Day 10 (Wednesday March 22, 2023):**

After breakfast, we will pack our bags and get ready for departure and then be free to explore the town, do some last-minute shopping, or simply relax at the Miners' Cabins. Late morning, we will be transferred to Longyearbyen Airport for our 3 hour flight to Oslo which arrives in the late afternoon.

On arrival in Oslo, we will take the Airport Express back to the Clarion Hub Hotel then go out for a farewell dinner. (B, D)

## Day 11 (Thursday March 23, 2023):

Our trip ends at the hotel after we have a final breakfast together. We will make our way on our own to the Oslo Airport and home, or possibly other destinations if you wish to extend your trip... (B)

## PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND EXPECTATIONS

You should have a keen interest in cultural explorations and enjoy a busy trip, packed with new and adventurous experiences. The trip is geared towards the outdoors adventurer who is reasonably fit. You must be comfortable being outside and on your feet most of the day in a very cold climate. In the far north the daily high temperatures may average around 15 degrees Fahrenheit and is rarely above freezing.

You should recognize that you may find yourself in closer quarters or be less comfortable than you are used to at home. You should make it a priority to help others on the trip and contribute to their having a great time. If you do that, you will have a great time.



*Dinner in a Sami tent*

## ACCOMMODATIONS

We will spend five nights in 3-4 star hotels, one night in a resort, one night on a cruise boat, and three nights in cozy cabins. The hotels and resort will provide twin-bedded (i.e. two separate mattresses) rooms. In Europe, twin beds are sometimes immediately side-by-side in a single bed-frame, while in the US twin beds are in separate bed-frames and are separated by a few inches. The boat will have twin/double cabins.

Please note that the Miners' Cabins provide comfortable but very simple rooms. As the rooms are small, we will aim to book single rooms instead of twins with two beds, except for couples who prefer to share. The bathrooms and showers are shared and down the hall. Although these accommodations will be a little more rugged and cramped than others on the trip, staying here gives us an insight into the real experience of the mining period on Svalbard. Although fully renovated, they were originally the miner's barracks.



*Twin Room in Miners' Cabin*

## **AIRLINES AND TRAVEL**

Plan to arrive in Oslo on the afternoon of March 13 (depart from the US on March 12). Additional details about arrival times and introductory meeting will be supplied later. The trip leader will assist you with information on flights from Boston, NYC, and other points. The trip ends in Oslo after breakfast on March 23. Of course, you may arrive early or extend your trip. Do not make any non-refundable travel plans until told to do so by the leader.

## **WEATHER**

Weather is likely to be cold, although due to the Gulf Stream not as cold as you might expect. At this time of year, the daily high temperature may average around 15 degrees Fahrenheit and it is rarely above freezing. Although rain is unlikely due to the temperature, it does sometimes rain in March. Any given day has about a 20% chance of snow.

## **SAFETY AND RISKS**

Participant safety is a high priority for all AMC-sponsored events. Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips, and transportation in vehicles or on foot. Aside from any personal medical problems, participants should be aware of the possibilities of sunburn, frostbite, and other cold related problems. You should regularly use sunscreen, take care to be adequately hydrated and bring water on all day trips. Please carefully read and sign the AMC liability waiver document. A separate limitation of liability statement will be required by certain providers. At this point, the dog sledding and reindeer tours will require a signed document to participate in those activities.

## **AMC MISSION**

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run in a manner supportive of and consistent with the conservation, recreational and educational principles and mission of the club. The leaders will encourage participant conduct consistent with Leave No Trace environmental and conservation principles and local regulations.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

For those interested, this excursion can involve more than a splendid hiking trip. Dan is a semi-professional photographer whose photographs have been exhibited and published in many places. Among other honors, he won the AMC photo contest three times. There is absolutely no requirement that you be interested in photography, or even bring a camera, and this is not a class or workshop. First, and foremost, it is a cultural and adventure trip in a beautiful region. However, if you are a seasoned photographer or a budding novice, or just curious, Dan will share his perspective on any of your photographic interests. Dan and Larry both plan to bring tripods to hopefully capture the northern lights in all their splendor.

## **TRIP COST**

The trip price is \$6,600 for AMC members and \$6,700 for non-members. To join the AMC (2022 pricing \$50 individual, \$75 family) click [here](#).

The trip price will cover the following items:

- Lodging, breakfasts, most dinners and two lunches (all but four dinners)

- All transportation after arrival at our hotel in Oslo to breakfast on the final morning (including all internal flights).
- Entrance fees to all sites
- Specialized equipment needed for excursions (snowshoes, poles, very warm oversuits, padded mittens, etc.)
- Emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage

Flights to Europe, airport transfers on arrival and departure, other meals, snacks, beverages (e.g. coffee/tea, mineral water, alcohol, etc.) and other personal expenses are NOT included. Note that although some gear is provided for excursions, participants need to bring their own warm, winter insulated clothing, including boots, for all other times. The leaders will provide a detailed packing list when the trip gets closer.

The trip leaders will advise you as much as you need and will facilitate group travel. There are several flight options to Oslo via other European cities. At this time, we estimate that the price for a round trip between the east coast and Oslo, Norway will be ~ \$1000.

**AMC's standard [Adventure Travel terms and conditions](#) apply.**

## **REGISTRATION AND CANCELLATION**

To apply, you must complete and submit the application, confidential medical form, supplemental medical form (if appropriate) and acknowledgement and assumption of risk and release form which can be found online here: [Norway Application](#).

Mail the registration deposit of \$2,000 to:

Larry Yetter  
277 E Dunstable Road  
Nashua, NH 03062

You will not actually be accepted, and your check will not be deposited until the leaders have determined by telephone conversation with you that you and the trip are a good match. A second payment of \$2000 is due by July 1, 2022, and the final balance due by October 15, 2022. Deposit checks from waitlisted applicants will not be cashed until they confirm continued interest in joining the trip. All payments should be by check and payable to the *Appalachian Mountain Club*.

The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the premise that your

cancellation may not raise the cost to other participants or to the leaders. Once you are notified that the trip will run as scheduled, the minimum cancellation fee is \$200. If actual costs (expenses already incurred on your behalf and any unavoidable future expenses that will be incurred as a result of your registration and cancellation) are higher, they will be assessed instead. Should the leaders be able to replace you with another acceptable participant, you may be charged a reduced penalty. This will generally not be determined until after the trip. Failure to make trip payment(s) in a timely manner will be considered a cancellation.

This trip is likely to fill quickly. If you are interested, you should apply as soon as possible. When registration is complete, we will send all participants the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all those going on the trip. In the unlikely event that the trip is canceled because not enough acceptable participants apply, everything you have paid will be refunded in full.

### **QUESTIONS AND REQUESTING APPLICATION MATERIALS**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Larry or Dan. Larry can be reached at 713-724-2856 or [yetter95@gmail.com](mailto:yetter95@gmail.com). Dan can be reached at 617-750-0511 before 9 PM Eastern Time or at [danstone987@gmail.com](mailto:danstone987@gmail.com).



## TRIP LEADERS



**Larry Yetter** is an all season leader and Co-Chair of the AMC NH Chapter Excursions (Hiking) Committee. He is Director of the popular Winter Hiking Series and instructs at many workshops throughout the year. Larry has completed the Grid (hiking each of the 48 4,000 footers in NH every month) and is currently working on other lists and adventures. He has led or co-led AMC Adventure Travel trips to the Smoky Mountains, Utah and Switzerland and has many trips planned in 2022 and 2023. Larry has traveled to all 7 continents while living on 4 of them and enjoys traveling and exploring unique parts of the world. When not hiking and traveling, Larry enjoys spending time with his family and woodworking.

**Dan Stone** is a three-season leader with the AMC Boston Hiking Committee. He has led or co-led AMC adventure travel trips to Yosemite, Albania, Colorado, the Grand Tetons and the Alsace in France. He has completed the 48 NH 4,000 footers in winter, New England's 100 highest peaks and hiked the entire Appalachian Trail mostly as a series of day hikes. He has traveled extensively, having visited 49 states and over 60 countries. He has designed most of his travel adventures himself. Dan is an avid photographer, has had hiking photos published in calendars and books, and has won first place in the AMC photo contest three times. Dan designed and led a series of AMC hiking weekends that incorporate photography. He enjoys sharing his photos and knowledge of photography with others.

