



DAY 1: It was a warm afternoon when I was dropped off with my mountain bike in Ellenburg Center, nine miles from the Canadian border. The blackflies were vicious, so I kept a fast pace along the county and town roads. It was sunset when I reached Lyon Mountain, where I spent the night in an old tailings pit.

DAY 2: I continued on bike along an old railroad bed, now a gravel ATV/ snowmobile corridor. I rode through forest to Chazy Lake, then followed country roads, eventually descending toward the Saranac River. I hiked to calm, quiet Mud Pond. From there was the route's longest and, for me, the most difficult bushwhack, through blowdown, overgrown logging roads and swamps to Union Falls Flow. I eventually came out on a ridgeline on Duncan Mountain, overlooking the Taylor Pond Wild Forest, a beautiful place to spend the night.

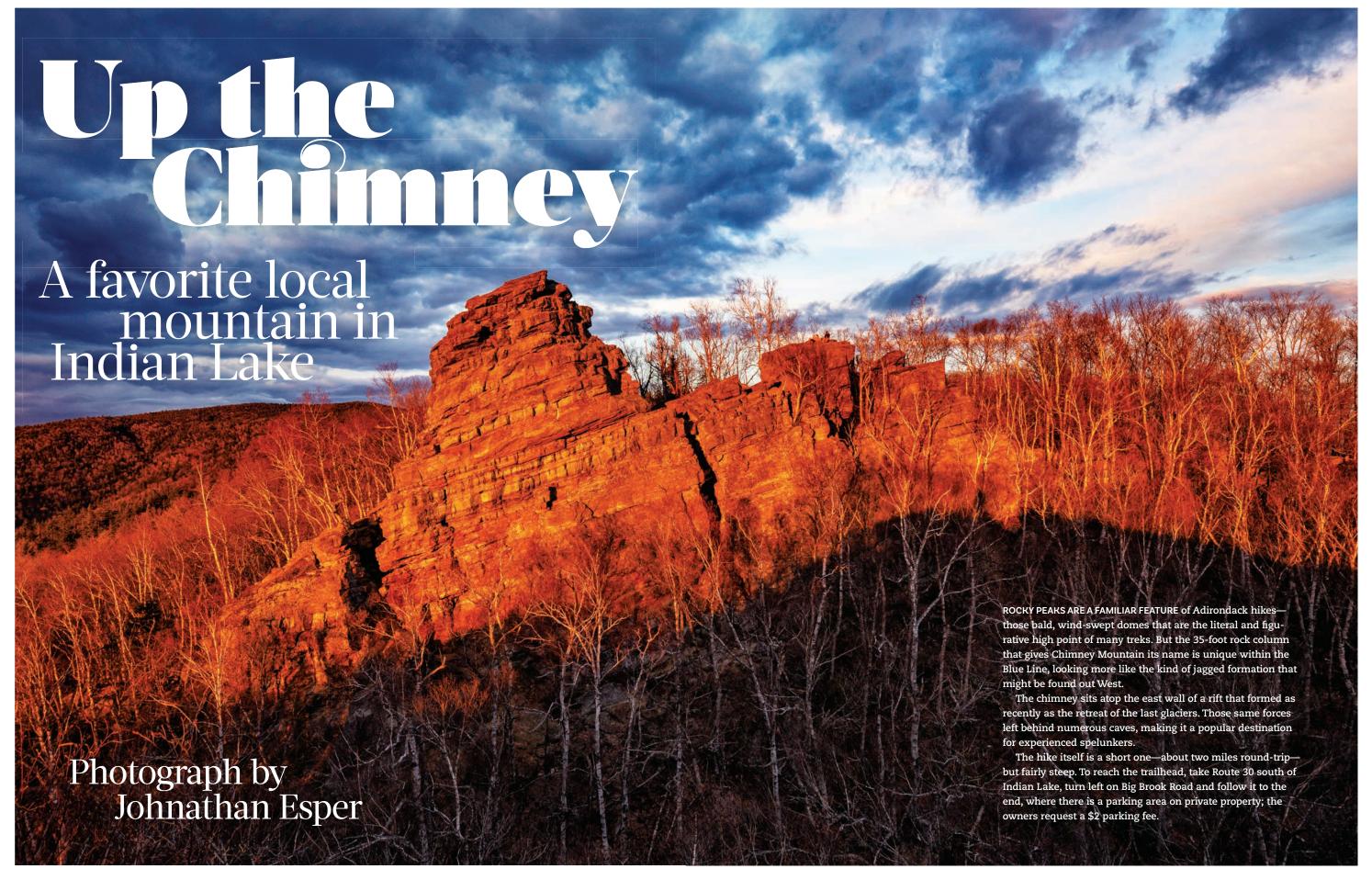
DAY 3: From Union Falls dam, the route goes off-trail through the woods and cuts over to the southern end of Silver Lake. Then it picks up a snowmobile trail around to Taylor Pond. I emerged from the dense woods onto CR8, a snowmobile trail that crosses the entire park. I swam with a loon in Taylor Pond, then bushwhacked up the north ridge of Catamount Mountain. I slept on the summit beneath the stars.

DAY 4: I made a big push over Marble Mountain, the shoulder of Esther, where the trail was covered in snow, and on to Whiteface. By evening, atop Whiteface, there were stunning, 360-degree views across the region. I descended the peak's south face toward Whiteface Landing, to Connery Pond and then along River Road, using the moon to light my way.



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