

Hike turns into ordeal for mother, daughter

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Diane Battersby figured it would be the perfect way to spend the last day of summer vacation with her 7-year-old daughter Lorian, on a morning hike to Wyanokie High Point in Norvin Green State Forest on Wednesday.

"I thought it would be a nice mother-daughter day to mark the end of summer," the Riverdale mom said.

It was a lot more than that. Battersby's mother-daughter day

Lost pair in the dark until 3:30 a.m. rescue

evolved into an ordeal that lasted deep into the night when they got lost on the trail and their dog, Shane, injured a paw — forcing them to hunker down on the chilly forest floor. It wasn't until a search and rescue team reached them about 3:30 a.m. Thursday that the three weary hikers were headed home.

"We were on the blue dot trail and made it to High Point," the 48-year-old Battersby said. "Then on the way back, somehow we ended up on the yellow

dot trail. I don't know where we missed the turnoff, but then all of a sudden we were on the white dot trail and we were lost."

Lost in the mountains of northern Passaic County, without a cellphone and without any water. Nothing to eat except some crackers and half a peanut-butter sandwich. And a dog that had rubbed its paw raw on the rough terrain.

As dusk descended, Battersby decided it was safer to stay put than to wander the woods in the

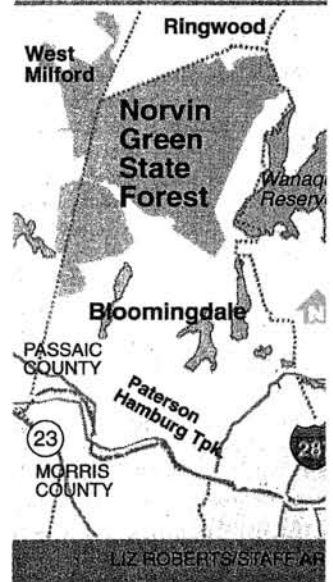
dark. So she and Lorian found a flat piece of ground, hung their backpacks on tree limbs to keep them away from wild animals and got ready to spend the night.

Battersby said she began to shiver from the cold and that Lorian began to wonder if any bears would attack.

"We said our prayers and sang our songs," Battersby said. "Then we listened for animal noises. But all we heard are owls."

Lorian had a sweater in her backpack and put it on. But her mother had nothing but the lay-

See **HIKE** Page L-5



Hike: In the dark

From Page L-1

er of clothes on her back. So she told her daughter about hypothermia, a dangerous loss of body heat.

"I told her if mommy wasn't moving, then she should just stay here until the rescue team arrived," Battersby said. "I figured it was better if she knew rather than not know."

Battersby had told her husband she was going to Norvin Green State Forest, and she figured he would contact authorities when she didn't come home. Around 8:30 p.m., her husband, David Gish, phoned Ringwood police. By 11 p.m. a search and rescue team numbering about

100 people was combing through the forest, which is primarily in Bloomingdale.

Capt. Bryan Enberg of New Jersey Search and Rescue said it's not unusual for hikers to get lost in Norvin.

"It's not a huge park, but it has a lot of trails," he said. "It can get pretty complicated."

Lorian fell asleep, but Battersby stayed wide awake. To her relief, the search and rescue team arrived around 3:30 a.m. and they began the one-hour trek out of the forest. Her husband was waiting at the entrance with a big hug for the two of them.

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