

Direct link: <http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20151022/NEWS/151029619/101123/NEWS>

'NO MORE WAR'

## Peace walkers stop in York



Peace walkers head up Route 1A Thursday afternoon heading to York Beach. The group will end their close to 200-mile walk from Ellsworth over the weekend in Kittery and Portsmouth. Photo by Deborah McDermott

By Deborah McDermott  
[dmcdermott@seacoastonline.com](mailto:dmcdermott@seacoastonline.com)

Posted Oct. 22, 2015 at 5:48 PM  
Updated Oct 22, 2015 at 6:19 PM

YORK, Maine — About a dozen Maine peace activists walked into York Beach Thursday evening, on nearly the last leg of a journey that began in Ellsworth Oct. 9 and will end over the weekend in Kittery and Portsmouth.

The fourth annual Maine Walk for Peace is sponsored by numerous statewide organizations, with the goal, said organizer Bruce Gagnon, of drawing attention to military spending. “The mainstream media pretty much ignore us, so we try to make contact with as many people as we can. We’d talk to people on this walk and they’d tell us they’re depressed. They don’t think their government listens anymore. So they thank us for what we’re doing and say, ‘You inspire me.’”

Each year, the walk focuses on a different issue. This year, because the walkers went down coastal Route 1, passing Bath Iron Works and ending at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, the theme is the Pentagon’s impact on the ocean.

Russell Wray of Hancock, representing Citizens Opposing Active Sonar Threats (COAST) said he was particularly concerned about the effects of sonar from naval vessels on sea life. Studies indicate sonar affects whales and dolphins, who change feeding patterns to avoid the noise. “All marine life can sense sound, not only whales and dolphins. The Navy is blasting very loud noise into the ocean,” he said.

Also on the walk was Buddhist nun Jun Yasuda from the Nipponzan Myohoji order. She said she attends and leads peace marches all over the country, and has walked in Maine numerous times. Asked why, she said, “Why (do) people keep killing each other? If people keep fighting, we will destroy the planet. Anytime I can say, ‘No more war,’ I will.”

**Friday, Oct. 23** — Walkers head over Memorial Bridge 4:30 p.m.; hold a Demilitarize the Sea rally at Prescott Park at 5 p.m., and a potluck supper at 6 p.m. and presentation at 7 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church.

**Saturday, Oct. 24** — Walkers walk through downtown Portsmouth and back to Kittery for a vigil at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Gate 2, and then walk back to Market Square for closing circle.