

Pisgah State Park Steering Committee

February 3, 2009

Antioch University

40 Avon Street, Keene, NH

Meeting Minutes

Next Meeting:

Week of March 9, 2009

Day of the week to be determined

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Antioch University

40 Avon Street, Keene, NH

Attendees		
Name	Title/Affiliation	Representing
Meade Cadot	Senior Naturalist/Director of Land Programs Harris Center for Environmental Conservation	Wildlife Management
Ken Desmarais	Administrator, Forest Management Bureau	Division of Forests and Lands
Bob Fee	New Hampshire Snowmobilers Association	Motorized Recreation
Emily Hague	Stewardship Manager, Monadnock Conservancy	Monadnock Conservancy
Tim Hill	Forester - Cheshire County	Forestry/Timber Harvesting
Don Kent	Natural Heritage Bureau	State Agency
Robert Smith	Friends of Pisgah	Friends of Pisgah
Kathy Thatcher	President, Friends of Pisgah	Non-motorized Recreation
Ted Whippie	Town of Winchester	Town of Winchester

Meeting Chair:

Ken Desmarais - Administrator, Forest Management Bureau,
Division of Forest and Lands

Minutes recorded by Cynthia Nichols - Pisgah State Park Technical Team Coordinator

Orders of Business

Next Steering Committee Meeting Date

Date: Week of March 9th, 2009

Day of the week and time to be determined

Location: Antioch University, 40 Avon Street, Keene NH

Chair - Ken Desmarais

Potential Agenda Items

- Funding needs for Pisgah State Park
- Potential Funding Streams
- Technical Team Presentation

Past Meeting Minutes

The January 6th minutes were accepted with one correction

They will be posted to the DFL Website

Meeting Dates

The group voted to hold the meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 4-6 pm

Please note - the meeting date will be changed. Subsequent to the meeting, we found that the day of the week and didn't work for many Committee members

Commissioner Bald and Brad Simpkins will try to attend the next meeting

Meeting Chair

The group decided that they would like to have Ken Desmarais Chair all of the meetings for ease of organization.

Discussions

Vision Statement

The group reviewed the most recent Vision Statement with Wildlife Habitat and Research and Education points added.

-The new additions were accepted.

-Consistency in the reference to Pisgah State Park as "Pisgah" was addressed.

Bullet 2 in Part 2 was changed:

The word "must" in the 2nd sentence was changed to "will"

- Ensure the protection, thoughtful planning, and appropriate siting of recreation to meet the needs of residents and visitors. The state and its partner "will" maintain any recreational improvements and monitor their impacts.

Kathy Thatcher asked about trail maintenance - for example what would occur if there were eroding trails. Ken Desmarais noted that things like eroding trails would be addressed.

Don Kent moved to accept the Vision Statement as amended and to set it aside until such time as the Draft Management Plan is available for review.

Motion accepted.

The Vision Statement will be sent to the Technical Team

Presentation : Pisgah State Park Management Costs - Ken Desmarais

Ken Desmarais presented information about the current management costs for Pisgah State Park. Ken worked with Johanna Lyons - Parks Planner to gather the background information.

Reviewing the
Department of Resources and Economic Development Management Structure

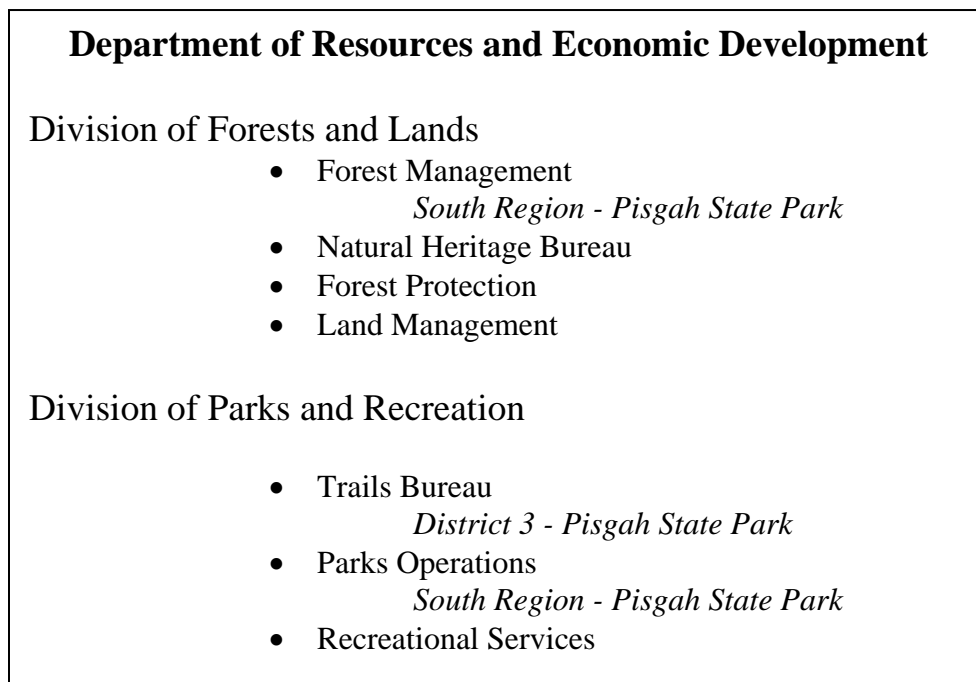


Figure 1: Department of Resources and Economic Development Organizational Chart showing the four Divisions, the departments associated with each Division, and the Region and District jurisdictions for Pisgah State Park.

Funding for Pisgah State Park comes in through the Division of Parks and Recreation, the Bureau of Trails, and the Division of Forest and Lands.

Summary Costs:

Division of Parks and Recreation - Average: \$89,934

Bureau of Trails - Average approximately \$16,000

Division of Forest and Lands; - Depends on activity - Average \$10,000

Summary Income::

Donations to Division of Parks and Recreation: \$1323

Timber Harvest on 79 Acre Parcel 10: Approximately \$37,000

Detail Information:

The general management costs for Pisgah State Park based on profit and loss statements from the Division of Parks and Recreation (DPR) was shown for the Fiscal Years 2002 through 2007. DPR supports the Park Manager salary and benefits as well as much of the manager's work related support such as office equipment and rental, and vehicle maintenance and fuel. There is currently one staff person, Norma Reppucci.

Fiscal Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Grand Total	\$95,576.00	\$99,950.00	\$102,002.70	\$82,648.00	\$82,041.00	\$77,389.00

6 year Total	\$539,606.70
6 Year Mean	\$89,934.45

Figure 2. Total management costs for each fiscal year 2002 - 2007; 6 year total cost and 6 year mean cost.

Personnel is the greatest expense at this time. Excluding personnel - the largest expenses are motor vehicle up keep and office equipment rental and leasing and heating the Park buildings.

Ken met with Senator Kelly a few weeks ago and talked about whether there could be additional personnel added, but both noted that in these economic times - that will be unlikely.

Ken noted that the Friends of Pisgah activities in trail maintenance and support for Norma were invaluable

Kathy Thatcher noted that currently volunteers meet during the week with Norma, but that it would be easier to get more volunteers on the weekends.

Ken will check with Division of Parks and see if that can be worked out

Bureau of Trails funding:

The Bureau of Trails receives about \$65,000 for the Southern region, and typically spends about 25% of their budget in Pisgah State Park.

This fiscal year the amount spent so far is \$3359.00.

Division of Forest and Lands responsibilities:

Conducts boundary line maintenance and supports Natural Heritage work.

There is about 30 miles of boundary line to maintain with an average annual cost of about \$1100/year.

The recent Natural Heritage inventory cost approximately \$100,000-

Annual Timber Inventory costs average about \$9,600

Much of the funding comes from the Forest management Protection Fund

The Compartment 14 Timber Harvest brought in \$39,808

Some of this income goes into the State's general fund but most goes into the Forest Management and Protection Fund to pay for the work that DFL and Natural Heritage do on state lands.

Ken noted that the Wildlife Habitat Management budget recently needed to be cut from \$16,000 to approximately \$2,500 dollars/year.

Funding Potential Discussion

The group had many good ideas and a free flowing discussion that covered a wide range of ideas. Below the discussion is summarized into separate topics.

What would extra funding be used for?:

Don Kent noted that the Committee could consider their objectives in the Vision Statement to determine what would be done with any funding generated.

Johanna Lyons supported the idea of looking forward. She also noted that both the current established needs, the legacy costs, need to be evaluated and that you need to be careful going into the future not to create more legacy costs that might not fit with the future Vision for the Park.

Don noted that it appears in the Vision Statement that a lot of what we want to do is to maintain the park in the same way it currently exists.

Kathy noted that one of the things about Pisgah that people like - is that there's nothing there and they don't want amenities - and that "Nothing costs something".

Emily Hague

Had the impression that the reason we needed additional money was for increase in staff both for trail maintenance and recreation - and wondered if that's what the rest of the Committee thought?

Kathy noted that - on the weekends - the FoP covers the Winchester entrance -
Tim pointed out that there are other staff people working there - Fish and Game, Trails

Looking to the future -

Johanna - would ask - is it well placed? Is there something else that this land needs to be and be profitable - maybe you could take a part of the park - and break it into a section that's going to be maintained for public access - and then take other sections that would be only forests -

Campgrounds -

Ken and Johanna noted that it's difficult to make campgrounds profitable.. The capital costs and maintenance can be high, and hard to offset without high volume campground use.

Examples discussed were:

Mt. Monadnock - Gilson Pond Campground

\$1.8 million to build 40 sites

at \$24/site; if all sites occupied over a 90 day season, the income would be \$86,400.

(from the information above, this barely offsets personnel costs for one person.)

There are a few parks in the New Hampshire State Park system that are profitable, but the majority are not.

Pawtuckaway is one that is profitable, and has about 190 sites

There are Grant in Aid Funding possibilities

Wildlife Habitat -

Bob Fee noted that often private land management includes wildlife habitat considerations while logging is done. Ken supported that approach, and confirmed that Division of Forest and Lands incorporates wildlife habitat considerations in their timber harvest planning.

Bob Fee would like to see wildlife issues need to be addressed to draw the wildlife into the center of the park and away from the edges

Like in Surry - woodcock buildings - brought them in since was a kid -

Bob also noted that Sportsmen aren't represented here -

Ken noted that the Ruffed Grouse society contributes to other programs

Walking Trail Maintenance -

Kathy Thatcher - stated that Friends of Pisgah is looking for funding separate from the State for some walking trail maintenance -

Don - noted that supporting non-motorized trails is an issue and asked if Friends of Pisgah is explicitly responsible for the walking trails?

Kathy Thatcher responded that it is tending to go in that direction
Weds mornings there's volunteer groups that go out with Norma

Bob Fee - suggested that there might be funding in:

- Snowmobile Fees

Fees may need to be increased in the future to accommodate higher construction costs

Newer high performance snowmobiles require better trails and ridges and the grooming equipment requires stronger bridges

- Recreational Trails Program - Federal funding

User Fees -

Ted Whippie -

Asked about user fees - and pointed out that he doesn't go hiking on the weekends because of ATV traffic -

He asked if there could be an ATV user fee -

It was noted that ATV and Snowmobile operators pay their user fees within their registration fee

Bob Fee - noted that Fish and Game has been doing a lot of enforcement

Hiking Fees -

We talked about how to garner support from non-motorized recreationists -

Johanna pointed out that it's best to ask for donations - because a demanded user fee needs to be enforced, and costs outweigh profit

In addition, there are many ways to enter the park

Iron Rangers are not very productive

The only successful area that we have that charges for hiking is Mt Monadnock

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Fundraising Ideas-

Cynthia asked if there were opportunities for the public to do some fundraising - would that be acceptable to the Division of Parks and Recreation

Johanna responded that the DPR is very entrepreneurial, and yes, fundraising efforts are welcome.

As an example - there is a group of High School students - the Lighthouse Kids - who have raised upwards of \$300,000

Emily Hague noted that - coming from the non-profit world - we find that we need to provide many opportunities to contribute

Bob Fee suggested a volunteer based program to provide future funding

Bob noted that everyone owns it - and there are likely people out there that will volunteer their time - (Often selling food on the trail is a quick and profitable fundraiser!)

Johanna encourage us to talk to other groups that are also trying to raise money and find out what works and what doesn't