

Pisgah State Park Steering Committee
 May 11, 2009
 Meeting Minutes
 Location: Antioch University

*Next Meeting:
 June 8, 2009
 4:00 - 6:00 pm
 Antioch University
 40 Avon Street, Keene, NH*

Attendees		
Name	Title/Affiliation	Representing
Timothy Butterworth	State Representative	Chesterfield, Winchester and Hinsdale
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
Chris Gamache	Bureau of Trails	Public Agency
Emily Hague	Stewardship Manager, Monadnock Conservancy	Monadnock Conservancy
Tim Hill	Forester - Cheshire County	Forestry/Timber Harvesting
Don Kent	Natural Heritage Bureau	State Agency
Catherine Owen Koning	Faculty - Franklin Pierce University	Pisgah State Park Technical Team
Tim Murphy	Southwest Regional Planning Commission	Regional Planning
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
Mark Zankel	Deputy Director, The Nature Conservancy New Hampshire	The Nature Conservancy

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: Monday, June 8, 2009
Time: 4-6 pm
Location: Antioch University, 40 Avon Street, Keene NH
Chair - Ken Desmarais
* Please bring calendars to the June 8th meeting to set dates for upcoming meetings.

Past Minutes

April 13th, 2009 Minutes
The minutes were reviewed and accepted as is.

Topics for Future Discussion:

Recreational Forum point: is the nature centered experience separate from other experiences in the park? Where do education and research fit in?

Following please find:

Discussion: Meeting Minutes and Information Sharing

Presentations

- Technical Team Presentations:
 1. Soils - Ken Desmarais: New Hampshire Division of Forest and Lands
 2. Water Resources - Catherine Owen Koning: Franklin Pierce University
 3. Wildlife Habitat - Jim Oehler; New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
 - Friends of Pisgah
Kathy Thatcher, John Summers and Laurel Powell: Friends of Pisgah
 - Pisgah State Park Recreational Survey Report
Cynthia Nichols: Pisgah State Park Technical Team Coordinator
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Discussion: Meeting Minutes and Information Sharing

The Steering Committee considered what would be the best way to increase the efficiency of recording minutes while at the same time sharing the detailed information given in presentations.

It was decided that the minutes will contain primarily:

Discussion Topics
Decisions Taken
Actions Recommended
Next Meeting Items

Presentation Information will be circulated as appendices to the meeting minutes as available from presenters.

Technical Team Presentations

1. Soils in Pisgah State Park: Ken Desmarais Administrator, Forest Management Bureau, NH Division of Forests and Lands

Following the presentation, the Steering Committee discussion included these comments and questions:

-There's a lot of hemlock present - would that tend to good carbon sequestration?

It was noted that hemlock stands and well developed organic layers in the forest floor could be areas of good carbon sequestration in general.

-Would planting White Cedar be a good idea for carbon sequestration or deer browse?

It was noted that the soils, elevation and climate in Pisgah might not necessarily support White Cedar. And while it is good deer browse, the very fact that deer love it would decrease the possibility of the cedar being able to establish before being eaten.

-The presentation showed two main soil associations and three broad forest community associations may lead to a desired level of biological diversity;

Would the three different forest communities occur just because of the soils and aspects or does it really require management to do that?

The thought is that hemlock would eventually dominate over early succession and mid-successional species without some management due to the scale of disturbance between major disturbances.

- What were the original forest types?

Historical records showed a lot of white pine without much white pine in the understory or regeneration layers. Chestnut was common before the blight

- Would Pisgah be a good place to consider for chestnut re-establishment work?

Yes, the Division of Forests and Lands is a cooperator with the American Chestnut Foundation and would consider Pisgah when planting stock is ready and available.

2. Pisgah State Park Water Resources

Catherine Owen Koning - Professor of Environmental Sciences, Franklin Pierce University

Following the presentation, the Steering Committee discussion included these comments and questions:

Catherine pointed out that one of the most important points to consider for water resources is how the dams and reservoir act for flood protection. It was noted that poorly maintained dams can create downstream flooding hazards. This brought up further discussion and questions:

- What is the current status of the dams?
- What will be the best way for dam maintenance to be continued?
- How should beaver populations be managed?
- How would water level changes - for flood protection - affect wildlife?
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It was suggested that it would be good to get a more detailed flood history

Topics for future analysis could be:

- Assessing the surface waters and potential surrounding groundwater aquifers connections

3. Presentation: Wildlife Habitat

Jim Oehler: State Lands Habitat Biologist, NH Fish and Game Department

Following the presentation, the Steering Committee discussion included these comments and questions:

- North Round Pond, Lily pond and Fullam pond are considered high Tier
- Are there anadromous fish stream areas?

The Ashuelot River Watershed assessment has some high quality stream reaches noted but there is not a lot of information on the topic.

Big Mammal Information

NHFG big game objectives - are for the entire H2 management area

Pisgah State park falls within the H2 management area including Keene, Chesterfield and Swanzey south to the Massachusetts border.

- Bobcat

Meade noted that a study has been done documenting bobcats

- Black Bear is likely, and evidence has been seen but not specifically documented.
- Coyotes - not sure - they are usually in more fragmented habitat

Topics for future analysis could be:

More bird point surveys - ruffed grouse and American woodcock are highly likely in the area but haven't been specifically catalogued

*Task for the Technical Team:

Note the Tiers of features of interest and concern to include in the map layers being compiled to compare to and assess any management recommendations.

Presentation:

**Friends of Pisgah - Current Activities and
The History of the establishment of the Friends of Pisgah**

Kathy Thatcher, President

John Summers, Founding Member

Laurel Powell, Pisgah Historical Resources - FOP member

Presentation: Recreational Survey Report

Cynthia Nichols - Pisgah Technical Team Coordinator

Following the presentation, the Steering Committee discussion included these comments and questions:

- Would it be a good idea to review the data to determine the activities that each respondent is interested in?
- Would it have been a good idea to put the survey on the Fish and Game website?
- Should more surveys be conducted at places like the upcoming Pisgah movie?
- Is there current and past visitor-ship data available?
 - Friends of Pisgah has recorded some of the data at the Winchester entrance
 - Would it be a good idea to do more surveys and perhaps record visitor numbers at all the entrances?
 - Students from Antioch, Franklin Pierce and other local institutions might be able to help.

It was noted that the questions used in the survey were developed for the Public Forums and may elicit different comments when given without respondent participation in the forums.

-The question was posed:

How should the Steering Committee and Technical Team assess this survey information and the public forum information?

The Technical Team will incorporate the information into their assessments.

Public Comment

Beth Phippard -

Begs to differ about equestrian use -
Only have one place to park -
Need to have a loop
None of the maps have equestrian use posted -
There's conflicting information on trail use on the maps and signage

Don Kent asked -
Specifically for equestrians - besides the signs, maps and parking -
Are you asking for more trails?
Beth noted that there's conflicting information from State Parks and the Trails Bureau.

Chris Gamache noted that under the administrative rules for DRED -
Horses are allowed on any road width trails and mountain bikes are allowed on any hiking trail unless posted

Matt Edson
Asked Chris Gamache - where do you see the management of the park going now?
Norma (Reppuci - Park Manager) doesn't have an ATV right now and what are the current plans for this summer's work?
Chris Gamache answered that the ATV was borrowed for another job and is on its way back. The work will continue as it is now with summer work and winter trails maintenance.

This summer's work will include
ATV trail maintenance
Davis Hill trail finishing
Addition of Kiosks -

He noted that Norma is now within the Division of Parks and Recreation and is sharing time with Mount Monadnock and mentioned that the Pisgah State Park Manager position duties might be changed into more of a volunteer coordinator.
He also noted that Trails is working on a Memorandum of Agreement for Friends of Pisgah

Tim Butterworth -
Does the trails division do any work on the hiking trails?
Chris Gamache - No.

Laurel Powell asked: who is now in charge of park?
Chris answered that Pisgah is under the Division of Parks and Recreation

Tim Butterworth - noted that if recreational use is expanded in the park - it will be important to make the oversight and activities work together