

Pisgah State Park Steering Committee
 October 22, 2009
 Meeting Minutes
 Location: Antioch University

*Next Meetings:
 November 19, 5-7 pm*

Attendees		
Name	Title/Affiliation	Representing
Tim Butterworth	State Representative	Chesterfield, Winchester and Hinsdale
Rick Carrier	Board of Selectmen	Town of Hinsdale
Ken Desmarais	Administrator	Forest Management Bureau Division of Forests and Lands
Chris Gamache	Chief	Trails Bureau Division of Parks & Recreation
Emily Hague	Monadnock Conservancy	Monadnock Conservancy
Don Kent	Administrator	Natural Heritage Bureau Division of Forests and Lands
Robert Smith	Friends of Pisgah	Friends of Pisgah
Kathy Thatcher	Friends of Pisgah	Non-motorized Recreation
Ted Whippie	Town of Winchester	Town of Winchester

Draft minutes - Not yet Accepted by Committee

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 Dates

November 19th, 5-7 pm

Past Minutes

September 14, 2009 accepted.

Presentations

Public Recreation in Pisgah State Park
Trails, Dispersed Use, Current and Future
Chris Gamache, Chief, Bureau of Trails

Chris presented information about the existing motorized and non motorized use within the Park, existing trails nearby, recreational market and trends, general park concerns, future considerations, and possible solutions.

The presentation will be available on the website.

Pisgah State Park Technical Team Update
Cynthia Nichols presented the current format proposed for the Management Plan and the Table of Contents. The current chapter on Cultural History, incorporated into the proposed format, was distributed for comment.

Public Comments and Questions

Rep. Dan Carr asked if it would be more appropriate to fit various recreational activities into the proposed Management Criteria areas.

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Chris Gamache replied that it could be looked at from that perspective, it is something to consider and discuss, however it was not done at this time because the primary obj. seemed to be to maintain the trails that exist rather than building new trails. There are considerations regarding which trails will be “shared use” and what needs to be built to maintain both. Work has been focused on building upon the existing infrastructure

Emily Hague asked if it would be possible to consider Rep. Carr’s point with the proposed loops.

Rep. Tim Butterworth asked about motorized recreation finances:
What is the revenue from snowmobile and ATV registration? –

Snowmobile Registration fees:

NH Resident - club member	\$48	non member:	\$78
Non NH club member	\$63	non-member	\$93

ATV Registration fees:

NH - \$54

NH Non - \$73

Registrations yield about \$4.2 million to the Trails Bureau.

Don Kent noted that from the beginning the thinking has been don't change things/leave them the way they are. It seemed like that was the common feedback we were receiving and the approach that's been in the back of our minds throughout this whole process

Rep. Butterworth talked about the 2nd Dartmouth College Grant, piece of land up in northern New Hampshire and was wondering if it makes sense to look at how they manage their trails.

Chris Gamache noted that most of the roads are gated to motorized vehicles, but the Trails Bureau does use the logging roads.

Don Kent mentioned that one of the reasons for loops is to avoid the cost of self created trails; trying to get coordinated activity and buy in for compliance is a lot less costly in the long-run than trying to deal w/problems as they come up.

Rep. Butterworth asked if that can increase safety and what are the costs for enforcement?

Chris Gamache indicated that it is difficult to pin a number on, that Fish and Game is the primary department for enforcement. Most of their funding goes into one pool.

Rep. Carr mentioned that there are other enforcement tactics, for example NY State can impound the vehicle on the spot, but NH doesn't have the authority to impound ATVs.

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Chris Gamache said that they have thought a lot about how to increase the enforcement, they would need about 40 employees, and currently F&G has about 38 conservation officers. Local communities are very busy dealing with their own problems.

Jeffry Scott commented that it seems like the "problem" is motorized vehicles, if there's a problem get rid of it, get rid of the motorized vehicles. So, is gating the park an option?

Don Kent – this is the 1st meeting that we've heard that motorized vehicles are a problem –

Chris Gamache mentioned that the cost isn't the problem; the problem is dealing with the things that we don't normally work on. It's the need to get out on the hiking trails and the bridges that we don't normally do

Kathy Thatcher commented that the problem has always been the enforcement

Chris, referring to motorized recreation said that whether we can afford it, the public wants it and we still have to manage it, including active management and maintenance.

Don Kent said the question is – are people having direct problems with the motorized vehicles?

Rep. Carr mentioned that he was almost run over, but back to the point regarding the zoning and the criteria areas, the suggestions that have been made such as dogwood swamp and NEMBA, how much do these new proposals affect the areas that they are in?

Don Kent said what he would like to hear from folks about is about the proposals on the table.

Emily asked if the State is required to offer all the opportunities, and is our task to determine where to put things? The intensity of the uses both trail and management should be coordinated more.

Chris Gamache asked if trail expansion would be in the higher management criteria areas. Would we be looking at adding trails?

Kathy Thatcher asked how do the MOAs address change in conditions on the ground?

Brent asked about whether an ATV trail next to Dogwood Swamp is compatible with the wetland designations?

Ken Desmarais mentioned that question would be good to put before Jim Oehler – the wildlife biologist.

Beth said the reason for picking the Reservoir trail vs. the Dogwood swamp trail is the potential ATV conflict.

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Rep. Butterworth asked is the timber harvest revenue and the registration fees enough to responsibly do the job that we need to do? Shouldn't we be charging the non-motorized users?

Laurel Powell suggested that people that come to the visitor center would be happy to pay. A large majority of motorized users are out of states, they love Pisgah and are amazed at the beauty and maintenance.

Chris Gamache said NH ATV registration fees are more than in other states and NH is worlds ahead of others in maintenance.

The meeting was adjourned at slightly after 7 pm.