

Pisgah State Park Steering Committee
 November 19, 2009; 5-7 pm
 Meeting Minutes
 Location: Antioch University

Next Meetings:

Attendees		
Name	Title/Affiliation	Representing
Tim Butterworth	State Representative	Chesterfield, Winchester and Hinsdale
Ken Desmarais	Forest Management Bureau	Division of Forests and Lands
Emily Hague	Monadnock Conservancy	Monadnock Conservancy
Tim Hill	Forester - Cheshire County	Forestry/Timber Harvesting
Don Kent	Natural Heritage Bureau	State Agency
Tim Murphy	Southwest Regional Planning Commission	Regional Planning
Robert Smith	Friends of Pisgah	Friends of Pisgah
Kathy Thatcher	Friends of Pisgah	Non-motorized Recreation
Ted Whipple	Town of Winchester	Town of Winchester
Mark Zankel	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 Dates

To be determined by email/doodle.

October 22nd Minutes

October 22nd minutes were accepted with recommendation to include last names for speakers throughout the minutes.

Tim Butterworth also inquired about information on park attendance mentioned by Chris Gamache in his October presentation. Upon further discussion, it was surmised that Chris was likely referring to NH State Parks in general, rather than Pisgah State Park specifically. Cynthia Nichols will follow up to confirm.

This led to a discussion about the need for a survey to determine park use and attendance at Pisgah State Park.

Website and Email Information

- Pisgah1@dred.state.nh.us - available for public comment at any time

- <http://www.nhdfi.org/new-hampshire-state-lands/state-owned-reservations/pisgah-plan.aspx> - this is the site where the current drafts of information that the Steering Committee is considering are available

Open Discussion: Management Plan Production, Public Information and Recreation lead by Ken Desmarais

Ken attended the recent Friends of Pisgah Annual Meeting and reported that there was a lot of good discussion and that important questions came up.

Questions like:

Will Pisgah continue to have a park manager?

Who will manage and maintain the buildings?

Who will staff the visitor center?

Who will maintain the trails?

Ken followed up on these questions by speaking to Commissioner George Bald.

Their discussion focused on the question of how to proceed with the Steering Committee's Management Plan efforts in light of the upcoming release of the overall Parks Strategic Plan from the the Division of Parks and Recreation and the recently proposed Trails information for Pisgah State Park specifically.

Ken proposed to the Steering Committee that we break the Draft Management Plan into two sections, A and B.

A: Natural Resource section to be released this year, and

B: Recreation section to be developed over the next 6-12 months.

Ken also said that he would like to continue serving on the Steering Committee until its conclusion.

(Ted Whippie - noted that it might be good to get the minutes from the Friends of Pisgah annual meeting - Bob Smith took the minutes and indicated that he'd be happy to share them with the Committee)

The Steering Committee went on to discuss Ken's proposal.
The main themes of the discussion were:

- This would allow the Steering Committee to complete the Natural and Cultural Resources Plan for Pisgah approximately on schedule, and then focus all our attention on the Recreation Plan for Pisgah.
- This approach would give the Steering Committee time to see the Division of Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan and to mesh the Recreation Plan for Pisgah with it.
- It would be important to:
 - Make sure that there's continuity in the members of the Steering Committee who would participate in developing the recreation plan.
 - Make sure that recreation strategies are developed with consideration of the Vision Statement and the natural resources plan.

Considerations for Developing the Recreation Plan:

- Division of Parks and Recreation participation
It will be important to the process that the Division of Parks and Recreation fully participates in the development of the Recreation Plan.
- Baseline information about trails status and park use is needed.
- It would be most useful to have 4 seasons of information to create a full picture of both park use and trail status.

There's potential man-power to gather the information with local students and Friends of Pisgah.

- Public Information Meetings -

The Spring public forums for the release of the Management Plan could be utilized as a place to start gathering more information about parks use in general, answer some questions and find out what other questions the public might have.

For example:

Currently there is a great deal of interest in the recreation opportunities;

Based on the overall discussion, the Steering Committee crafted the following motion and voted to accept it:

Pisgah State Park Steering Committee Motion - November 19th,

- *The Pisgah State Park Steering Committee feels that, given the importance of the recreation aspects of the Pisgah State Park Management Plan, they would like to commit to a careful process of writing the recreation section of the Plan. To that end, they would like to ask if the Division of Parks and Recreation is interested as well and can commit to full participation over the next year.*

Annual Meeting Discussion

The Steering Committee noted that this was a good time to consider how the Pisgah State Park Management Plan would be implemented and reviewed in the years to come.

Ken noted that the Technical Team will be recommending there be a standing annual Review Committee that meets annually to update the natural resources information and consider any research, trails, education and/or other proposals that may come up.

There is a citizen group at Nash Stream that fulfills a similar function.

Public Comment

Comments can be sent anytime -
Pisgah1@dred.state.nh.us

Public Comment

Laura Sussman –

Hiked the Dogwood Swamp trail and emailed to Chris Gamache to say that the trail was not acceptable – (there are four bridges)

A bridge is in bad shape – hard to get to for maintenance

Chris Gamache responded by e-mail that yes, the trail would need to be upgraded. There are funds available in grant form for trail upgrades and that the MHTA could apply for them as well as approach an ATV club for partnership.

Laura Sussman– said that the grant process is overwhelming

Mark Zankel – asked:

Is it the practice of the State to ask users to apply for grants to get money to upgrade state lands –

Ken Desmarais: sometimes – often if a group approaches the State for a trail – then they will prepare a Memorandum of Agreement and hold the group responsible for the trail's maintenance.

Laura Sussman – I think the word “maintain” is operative –
And the chances of getting volunteers to do this on a regular basis is difficult.

Beth Phippard –

When we get to surveys – I don't know how we're going to get good counts –
Ex. – they need to be out there in Sept. – when we have the (horse) benefit ride

Otherwise it's not likely that you'll find horses out there – so many of the trails are closed off to horses –

Ken Desmarais – asked if there's a way for the club to keep track of use?

Brent Hunsinger – there are certainly accepted methodologies that will cover trail use
Also -there are easy methods:

Example – Green Mountain Club – sign in book –
Estimate that 90% of folks use the sign-in book
Would be a low cost way to get a lot of information

Ask for Date, Name, Mechanism, Destination

Emily Hague – wanted to ask Laura Sussman – it seemed that the presentation seemed to indicated that there is some funding of trails – is that right?

Ken Desmarais– from trails registration money – there's funding called Grant and Aid – that may be primarily for motorized but maybe can be used for non-motorized activities.

Mark Zankel – noted that, although most of it does go to motorized; there is money that is available for non-motorized

Don Kent asked Laura Sussman – regarding your statement – Horses and ATV's are not compatible – is that what you've experienced?

Laura Sussman – it's not my experience that they are compatible – ATV's are loud, and without any intention, will scare the horses

Jeff Scott

What's the status on the Iron Rangers?

Ken – will be bringing that up

Brent Hunsinger- it seems like a parking sticker would be a great way to gather funding-
Parking Lots are very visible

Ken Desmarais– knows that Parks can take donations –

Cynthia Nichols proposed putting an Iron Ranger in downtown Keene with information about the park

Representative Carr –noted that he is pretty sure that the issue of multi-use and the study of it is pretty non-conclusive –

In urban settings it seems like it might work but on back trails it's pretty different –

Motorized users can go as fast as they wish – and with special event rides – like ATV's – you can have many users on the trails at once; one example is 300 ATV's gathered to ride from Mass – Keene on rail trail –

Recently – in Pawtuckaway – there was a death related to a large event

In some states – all the uses are separated

It would be good for Trails Bureau to study this further

Draft Minutes