

Minutes of the Ossipee Lake Natural Area Working Group

DATE: 14 November 2008

PRESENT:	Bud Berry/Diane Hanley	Lakes Management Advisory Committee
	Melissa Coppola	Natural Heritage Bureau
	Jacquie Colburn	DES Lakes Management and Protection
	Joshua Dirth	Bureau of Marine Patrol
	Kevin Donovan	Parks and Recreation
	Jean Hansen	Long Sands Association
	Sheila Jones	Town of Effingham
	Don Kent	Natural Heritage Bureau
	Wayne Killiam	Business Community
	Richard Lover	Boating Community
	Allen McKenney	Boating Community
	Harry Merrow	Town of Center Ossipee
	Bryan Nowell	Forest Protection Bureau
	John Panagiotakos	Boating Community
	John Shipman	Town of Freedom
	Susan Slack	Green Mountain Conservation Group
	David Smith	Ossipee Lake Alliance

Don Kent called the first meeting of the Ossipee Lake Natural Area (OLNA) Working Group to order at 2:00 PM.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Don Kent welcomed the group, and thanked the group and the public for participating in the process. The OLNA Working Group members introduced themselves. Don Kent described the purpose, scope, and decision-making authority of the OLNA Working Group.

Melissa Coppola made a PowerPoint presentation on the chronology of rare plants and communities at the OLNA. Herbarium specimens document rare plants at the OLNA in 1962. In 1972, a multi-state collaborative nominated the OLNA for inclusion in the New England Natural Areas Project. In 1982, the State Office of Planning recommended that the south shore of Ossipee Lake maintain its natural area zoning, and institute annual monitoring to ensure plant protection. In 1993, detailed mapping by Natural Heritage identified plants and communities throughout the entire OLNA shoreline. However, two rare plant species had disappeared, and the remaining plants and communities had

OLNA Working Group

declined in number and extent. Declines in the number of rare plants and the extent of natural communities continued through the most recent survey in 2007. Natural Heritage attributes the decline in plants and communities to public use of the beach and periodic high water levels.

The Working Group and the public attendees were supportive of an OLNAs public use area. Sheila Jones emphasized the importance of enforcement. Don Kent and Joshua Dirth indicated that enforcement resources are limited, requiring the cooperation of all stakeholders. Richard Lover indicated that 99 percent of boaters are cooperative, and Allen McKenney affirmed that many rule violations occur at night. Dennis Gould of Totem Pole Park reinforced Allen McKenney's comment about nighttime behavior and urged the state to close the OLNAs at sunset. Mr. Gould also asked if the state if it would consider opening "Short Sands" to public use.

Don Kent suggested that the current public use area, as described in the "Draft Ossipee Lake Natural Area Shoreline and Nearshore Management" plan, does not optimize protection of rare plants and exemplary communities or recreation. He suggested an alternative public use area centered on the large pine. The Working Group voted to accept the alternative public use area after brief discussion.

Susan Slack and David Smith highlighted the need to define and communicate public use area rules, a point echoed by Dennis Gould and Elizabeth Gillette of the Ossipee Conservation Commission. Wayne Killiam and Jean Hansen articulated the availability of and opportunity for, volunteers, possibly including Lake Host. Elizabeth Gillette cautioned about extending Lake Host responsibilities. The Working Group was receptive of Bryan Nowell's suggestion for a pre-season, collaborative beach cleanup.

Regarding public bathroom alternatives, Allen McKenney indicated that many boats have toilets. John Shipman urged the Working Group to adopt a simple approach predicated on a carry in carry out principle, i.e., the boating public would be responsible for their own toilets or travel to a public facility. Bryan Nowell, Sheila Jones, and Kevin Donovan offered the alternative of a seasonal, shore-based facility. Barry Houston of the public suggested a small pontoon boat with a couple of heads. Jacquie Colburn recommended the Working Group investigate the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Grant Program, managed in New Hampshire by the Department of Environmental Services Water Division.

David Smith declared that the bathroom issue has two components – onshore and in the water. Bud Berry related that bacterial testing, typical of swim waters, would not recognize nutrient accumulation. Jacquie Colburn stated that an effective water quality sampling program at the OLNAs would require the help of volunteers. Susan Stark indicated that the Green Mountain Conservation Group may be able to amend its water quality monitoring program to accommodate the OLNAs; funds for sample analysis need to be identified.

The Working Group identified several issues for continued and additional discussion.

OLNA Working Group

- Communication including signs, education, and rules awareness
- Water quality
- Canoe and kayak access
- Natural resource monitoring
- Fencing
- Cleanup

The OLNA Working Group will meet again in January 2009. January agenda items will include resolution of the bathroom issue, and discussion of the issues listed above. The Working Groups goal is to finalize the management plan in March 2009, and implement critical elements of the plan prior to the start of the boating season.

Action Items

1. Sheila Jones and Kevin Donovan will investigate the opportunities for an on-shore bathroom facility and report their findings to the Working Group prior to the January meeting.
2. Jacquie Colburn will investigate the potential for CVA grant or other funding for pump-out facilities at landing locations, and report her findings to the Working Group prior to the January meeting.
3. Working Group members will individually evaluate the aforementioned issues in preparation for discussion at the January meeting. Members are welcome to share their thinking with Don Kent or the entire Working Group prior to the January meeting.
4. Natural Heritage will evaluate the potential for opening “Short Sands” to public use and will report its findings at the January meeting.
5. Natural Heritage will make copies of the PowerPoint presentation for distribution at the January meeting.

Next Meeting

The OLNA Working Group will meet 1 to 3 PM, 23 January 2009 at the Center Ossipee Town Hall.

Donald M. Kent

Donald M. Kent, Ph.D.
Chair, OLNA Working Group