

Pisgah State Park Steering Committee
May 20, 2008
3:30 - 6:30
Meeting Minutes

Next Meeting - July 8, 2008
Note new Time: 3:30 - 5:30
Location TBA

Meeting Chair: Steve Roberge, Technical Team member and Extension Educator in Forest Resources, UNH Cooperative Extension

Attendees		
Name	Title/Affiliation	Representing
Timothy Butterworth	State Representative	Chesterfield, Winchester and Hinsdale
Meade Cadot	Harris Center and Antioch University	Wildlife Management
Ken Desmarais	Administrator, Forest Management Bureau	Division of Forests and Lands
Tim Hill	Forester - Cheshire County	Forestry/Timber Harvesting
Catherine Owen Koning	Faculty - Franklin Pierce University	Pisgah State Park Technical Team
Tim Murphy	Southwest Regional Planning Commission	Regional Planning
Bob Fee	New Hampshire Snowmobilers Association	Motorized Recreation
Rick Terrier	Hinsdale Board of Selectmen and Chesterfield Town Administrator	Town of Hinsdale
Kathy Thatcher	President, Friends of Pisgah	Non-motorized Recreation

Minutes recorded by Cynthia Nichols, Pisgah Technical Team Coordinator

Guests -
 Jim Oehler - State Lands Habitat Biologist, NH Fish & Game Department
 Don Kent - Administrator, NH Natural Heritage Bureau

Orders of Business

Steering Committee Meeting Chairs

The Committee discussed rotating the Meeting Chair responsibilities at each meeting. Meade Cadot will be chairing the July 8, 2008 meeting.

The March 25, 2008 Meeting Minutes were accepted as is to be entered into the record.

Adding New Members to the Steering Committee

It was noted that the Monadnock Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy are both active groups in the region. There was interest in adding seats for them on the Steering Committee. Ken will inquire about the process.

Discussion: Public Forums

The group discussed sponsoring upcoming public outreach forums to follow up on the Pisgah State Park Forum Series started by the Technical Team.

The next Public Forum will focus on Recreational Activities in Pisgah State Park

Date: soon after Labor Day 2008.

Organizers: Kathy Thatcher and Bob Fee

The Forum format could be informational, or moderated with a Deliberate Dialogue approach or a combination of both. The goal will be to encourage effective public discussion and comment.

It could serve as a baseline informational session to present the status of recreation in Pisgah right now and then allow groups a chance to present their desires and concerns for the future of recreation in the Park.

Presenters could include the Bureau of Trails, Department of Fish and Game

All stakeholders and should also be represented; for example, motorized and non-motorized recreation like hiking and hunting. Ecological and wildlife representatives should also be there.

Topics could include:

- Bureau of Trails - decision making process for appropriate/inappropriate use areas
- ATV and Snowmobile use laws and adherence/enforcement
- Funding - ATV, snowmobile permits, hiking fees
- Space and Time of Use - Multiple uses
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It was noted that it's important to develop a relationship with snowmobile and ATV clubs to mitigate impacts. It was also noted that any ATV or snowmobile activity requires monitoring.

Topics for Future Discussion

Other topics that came up both as something to discuss in the Steering Committee meeting and potential Public Forum topics:

- Timber Harvest Economics
- Park Usage Economics

Kathy Thatcher mentioned that there is information gathered on the weekends at the visitor Center on the Southern End of the park.

There have been efforts underway to conduct a user survey.

-Landscape Connections

Catherine has been in correspondence with David Foster at Harvard Forest to arrange for a presentation about landscape connections and management planning as well as the historical significance of Pisgah State Park in forest ecology principles.

It was suggested that it would be good to arrange a larger audience for his presentation.

Report - Technical Team's Progress to Date

Reported by Catherine Owen Koning

The Technical Team members are actively gathering and synthesizing information on topics to incorporate into recommendations for the management plan.

Catherine relayed the progress on each research topic.

Topics include:

Geology, Soils, Water resources and hydric soils, Land Use history/cultural resources, Ecosystem types, Rare plants and unusual natural communities, Landscape ecology, Climate impacts, Wildlife habitats and species, Exotic/Invasive species, Fisheries, Timber resources, recreational resources, Scientific and educational resources, and Economic resources

Discussion: Vision Statement Development

Discussion led by Ken Desmarais

A summary draft will be sent to Committee members to review.

Some highlights of ideas for crafting the Vision Statement: follow.

General Comments

-It's important that it's clear

-Notes the particular and unique aspects of the park

-When analyzing if anything is missing - ask ourselves - is there any stakeholder missing?

Formatting

-It could follow the Nash Stream format with a values statement followed by bullets for specific approaches to meeting those values.

An Active Vision Statement

The wording could be active with specific statements about desired outcome

- Vision Statement

Desired Outcomes - could be arranged hierarchically

Management Plan that describes how to reach the desired outcomes.

It would be good to think about

- What you like about the Park
- What you'd like to see maintained
- What you'd like to see changed
- How to reach those goals

Setting a time horizon may be helpful, perhaps 25 years

A time horizon could help to think about how multiple uses might interact/conflict or work in tandem over time.

Recommendations for future management plan review could be put in place.

-Lack of funding might be an issue - .

Values Noted

- Educational potential
- Connectivity to the Surrounding areas
- Large size in itself
- Potential to support a large diversity of wildlife
- Economic resource to the surrounding communities through people that come for recreation or education

Tim Butterworth submitted the following statement for the Committee's consideration:

Pisgah is the largest state reserve, and in combination with the east-west corridor from the Connecticut River to the Monadnock Park and the California Brook/Daniels Mountain protected areas, is unique in New Hampshire. Many species require a large terrain, and Pisgah is ideally suited to study how much land is needed to protect habitat. Also, thanks to the long-time presence of the Harvard Forest, Antioch's Environmental Studies program, Franklin Pierce University and Keene State College studies, there is some longitudinal data too. One of the major uses for Pisgah Park should be to encourage and facilitate our knowledge of how this kind of ecosystem works."

Items noted for consideration:

- Active and passive recreational targets are different and require specific recommendations.

-Not all activities need to be maintained in all State Parks or Reservations

-Care should be taken to note activities that could impact values and desired outcomes

Specific Wording Suggestions:

From Nash Stream

3rd bullet might be good for recreational approach:

"Continue to offer public access for traditional, low impact, dispersed recreation including hunting, fishing, hiking and snowmobiling in designated areas."

This excerpt from page 4 would be good to include:

"With its vastness and variability, Pisgah is an enormously valuable resource in terms of wildlife considerations. Management practices, including timber management and other vegetative management procedures to improve wildlife habitats and wildlife observation opportunities, are a key element of this plan."

Notes specific to the Draft Vision Statement

Bullet 1

-regarding old growth -
refer to it as old growth "Stands" rather than "fragments"

Bullet 2 -

"Tier 3" - strike and put in definition in its place

Bullet 3:

"outside of the "natural area" should be cut

Bullet 4:

- if early successional or agricultural lands are to be maintained, it requires active management which is different from passive habitat support and should be explained

Bullet 5:

Could add "multi-recreational hotspot with various terrain

Forest Zoning as an Approach to determining Management

2 Slides that might be useful to the Committee and the Technical Team:

1) Table linking the Purposes of the RSAs, the Forest Benefits, and potential links to Zoning areas in Pisgah

2) Current Zoning Acreage

Note - Timber zoning - is a multiple use area zoning

Public Comment

Laurel Powell -

Liked the idea of developing the vision statement with specific outcomes to guide the management planning

"It looks like some wonderful goals will be set - and would like to make sure that it will be able to be done - and that you consider who will be doing the work - is the State of NH going to be able to follow through"

Matt Edson - Friends of Pisgah

Noted that manpower is often short and suggested including mechanisms for things to be accomplished.

Ken - noted that these are good points - we want to be sure to write the best plan, and we also need to write something that can be accomplished.

Don Kent - noted that on another property they're identifying and contacting some of the agencies that would be responsible to enable good follow-through

Bob Fee - asked what are some of the things that concern you?

Matt Edson - trail, road maintenance - parking areas, potholes, culverts, those sorts of things

Maps - there's always a shortage

Policing by fish and game -

Bob Fee -- most of the trails that we have are on private property - and one of the biggest problems that we have is enforcement -

You need to put a lot of time into getting out there - and the fine needs to be commensurate to pay the cost of enforcement -

Right now - using the court system for someone that's operating inappropriately is difficult.

DRAFT MINUTES NOT YET ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE