

The NH Division of Parks and Recreation and the State Park System Advisory Council invited over 50 key stakeholders to a workshop to review the draft goals and objectives of the Division's new 10-year Strategic and Development Plan. Key stakeholders included recreational groups; organizations that have stewardship responsibility for natural, historic and cultural resources; elected officials and statewide leaders. The informal round-table discussion was an opportunity for stakeholders to express their organization's opinions on the future management of the state parks, trails and historic sites.

A briefing packet was sent to each stakeholder prior to the workshop setting the context for the meeting. Participants were divided into three discussion groups: Stewardship; Public Officials and State Tourism; and Recreation. Each discussion group was asked to address the questions below:

- 1) After your review of the draft Goals and Objectives, is there any major direction missing?
- 2) Under each Goal, what is the first objective the Division should work on?
- 3) From the perspective of your organization or the park users you represent, what qualities in the state parks do you value the most?
- 4) What areas, resources or activities should be expanded?
- 5) Which properties should be considered for alternative management, such as leasing or outsourcing or entering into public/private partnerships?
- 6) How do you think you can contribute to make this plan a success?

In Attendance:

Appalachian Mountain Club	NH OHVA
Ausbon Sargent Preservation Land Trust	NH Recreation and Parks Association
Belknap County Sportsman Club	Pisgah State Park Steering Committee
Friends of Weeks State Park	PSNH for NH Travel Council
Hampton Beach Area Commission	Public Waters Access Advisory Board
Monadnock Advisory Committee	Society for the Protection of NH Forests
Monadnock Conservancy	Strawbery Banke Museum
NH Campground Owners Association	Student Conservation Association
NH Council on Outdoors	Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway Coalition
NH Horse Council	UNH Northeast Passage
NH Municipal Association	

**Public Officials / Tourism Group**

1. **Anything missing?**

- a) More obvious connection of tourism and community economic development (as a “goal”).  
 → add/include @ #3 (goal-2/obj.-3)  
 → add “promoting” to language of existing goal to tie community to resource.  
financial as well as social  
 Large economic driver “friends groups” as partners  
 Community “voice” in development plan
- b) Adequate means to establish a priority sort of capital items.
- c) Do a better job of identifying the need(s) and explaining a methodology of assessing and prioritizing.

MISSING: not living up to statue by not “maintaining”

? 2. **By Goal / #1 Objective**

#1	Funding Base	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII ← <u>missing</u>
			◆◆	◆			◆	Live Up To Statue!!
#2	Quality facilities meeting needs and demands	I	II	III	IV	V		
		◆◆		◆◆◆				
#3	Programs to meet needs and demands	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
		*	◆	◆◆◆	◆	*		
#4	Enhance, encourage, and enable work force	I	II	III	IV			
		◆						
#5	Strengthen partnerships							
#6	Enhance visibility, return usage, create new	I	II	III				
		◆						

add: objective of better telling the story. (example – judicial)

**Other:**

- Perhaps the lack of funding is the by-product of no plan (and vice versa). The catch 22 (*plan now basis for conversation*)

- Priorities ↔ Projects – suggest other funding sources if self-fund or state capital budget cannot support.  
ROI plans funding scheme on each item.
- Via alternative management plan → communication w/ community in which property sits to resolve use/management of ownership is critical.
- Issue of seasonal staffing (perennial issue).

## #2 **Priority Goals for Division**

### Goal 2

- Funding!! Who pays and for what services
  - Obj II -facilities ≈ parking
  - Obj. I -maintenance  
-safety
  - Obj. II -Standards ≈ what are they?  
Enhancement ≈ Signage and information and outreach
  - Obj. I -energy efficiency w/capital projects

### Goal 3

- Needs attention to water access and use.

## **RECREATION GROUP**

### #1 Draft objectives

- Water access, fishing, boating, etc should be incorporated into several goals
- “Safe” “safety” not listed as an objective
- Education not a focus ≈ on stresses, leave no trace
- Financial: pricing competitive w/private industry
- Hunting access not addressed

### #3 Qualities valued the most

- Trails and natural environment
- Safety and visibility

- Variety of trails/natural environment
- Facilities make it valuable
- Inspiration for network of opportunities
- Variety of settings/quality settings
- Ease of access
- Functioning partnerships
- Affordable and accessible
- Beach access statewide
- Non-commercial influence in future: opportunities to improve parks with same
- Connectability between resources
- Informal partnerships w/neighbors
- Effective multi-use
- Joint management
- Balance w/serenity
- Ability to offer full spectrum of opportunities to users

#### #4 Expansion

- Greater staffing / capacity of managers
- Connectivity to other resources ≈ trails
- Parking facilities for horses
- Contiguous to other conserved lands and joint management/partnerships
  - \*Loop trails: 5-20 miles
  - better identification of suitable parks for horses
- Accessible facilities / ADA
- Volunteer stewardship encouragement
- Policy on swimming at non-developed beaches
- Website and brochures outdated and not complete
- Primitive camping
- Iron Rangers
- Volunteer recognition / awards (passes, etc.)
- MOA's with other organizations for help in the parks
- Educational / interpretive opportunities

- Staffing for additional programming
- Marketing
- Individual volunteer programs in the parks
- Outreach of preparedness and appropriate use of parks
- Boat launches / parking at public waters
- Trail maintenance classes
- Pisgah
- Is expansion of RV camping appropriate for parks?  
-competition w/private!

#5 Alternate Management

- Pierce Island: Municipal/non-profit, no loss of public access concern
- Silver Lake SP: Still open to Public Works Manager
- Want to see no loss of public access with alternative management
- Will partnering/leasing/etc. ↑ public access. Need individual analysis
- Looking at programs to change management / ↑ volunteers, etc.
- Leasing facilities, not property
- Paid port-o-lets
- Revenue stream ↑ by donations/programs
- Friends groups involvement in decisions  
-Pilot several sites. Friends not up to speed.
- Partner with WMNF on pass, or develop state park pass/trail/parking

#6 How can you help?

- User groups represented
- Mechanisms to gather input and gets group together
- User groups doing the work  
-Don't micromanage the help ≈ more freedom to do work
- Conduit of information and outreach
- Follow-up with users today of information

**STEWARDSHIP GROUP**

- #1 Only looking at existing land ≈ what about expansion? Trends to older folks do we need more or different types of “land base”

Increase opportunities such as trails → is there a way to address in the plan

Do we have a goal to acquire additional lands to protect resources such as around the historic sites (re: FPH) ≈ buffers RFH also ≈ scenic considerations.

#1/#5 What extent can extractive uses benefit parks and funding.

Partnerships → objective development

#3 (5) P/P Concessioner ≈ specific

Reduced management /services should be dead last and explore other strategies first.

#### Other/free form

Expand interpret program – value added benefit. Visitor has better experience → is it an opportunity for partnership – yes, but parks still need to support with substance/materials/training

Core program → value added augmentation – asking partner to do more than they can/should. Need a lead program manager hand to leverage the programs → SCA folks come and go.

#### *Public Private Partnerships*

P/P/P → Funding, dedicated funding (ex: LCHIP) source needed. General funding is uncertain. long term plan for sustainability .

Understand the fiscal constraints but funding for land protection is very important. What is parks role and where in the mix does it fall

Reaction to state government – cultivation of donors. Steep hurdle, it is a state agency and state gov't responsibility

F&G has had an uphill battle to raise \$ for non-game program – no more than \$70,000 – 80,000/year.

People are moved to make donations to other non-profits that work to improve HOW Gov't manages... Need to know how parks are funded and managed.

Maintain balance – dept loses visibility with partners – lose feel and presence of “state parks”. Need baseline of fundamental funding.

Keep in perspective that is has been 20 years of self-funding – does the “experiment” work... looked at F&G model but USFW matches state dollars.

Functions of state gov't – parks contribute to the state economy and need support

Plan will recommend significant policy changes.

Site/park → statewide vs local/regional interest → volunteer/non-profit

Friends Groups

State Park Foundation – partner with an organization that has contacts in the community – state process is cumbersome to accept donations or purchase items – foundations can expedite.

Small/undeveloped/no facilities – transfer geologic sites, etc.

Sponsorships – hate it, but as a manager you have to consider it.

Have groups as “sponsors” raise money quietly – this raise more \$ through private donation rather than corporate sponsorships.

Sponsorship of events or activities is more acceptable

Large museums will have underwriters for the day.

Free for All

Divest land to acquire other more important parcels, could be acceptable

Other agencies should consider parks when surplus to meet need

Need to further leverage federal funds LWCF, etc

P/P/P – need partners who can also take advantage of federal funds

FPH 2013 lease comes due – town of Hillsboro pays heat and utilities. Working on becoming more involved in the community. Town would be disinclined in renewing – costs rise and small town budgets have trouble covering. Statewide initiatives can hurt local management (free NH residents). Need more involvement from the State (re: collections/building).

Historic sites: usual MOA/agreement rather than leases is a better model – share risk.

Transfer to municipalities – one step down from the state management. Towns may restrict access (re: town residents only). Cost to manage leases and oversight.

Multi-town parks would be problematic – re: Pisgah

Hillsboro’s success is that the Historical Society is the buffer. Thinks selectmen would have sold it if owned

Divestment – how much melt-down if sold outright? Case by case basis – small acreage, sold – returned to support acquisition or other management. PR would have to be handled delicately.