

MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION
June 13, 2025, MINUTES *(Approved as amended on 9.12.25)*

A regular meeting of the Mount Washington Commission (MWC) took place at the Mt. Washington Sherman Adams Visitors Center. Chair Kirsch called the meeting to order at 10:18 a.m., with a quorum present.

PRESENT were Chair Rob Kirsch/MWObs; Vice Chair Chris Ellms/Public; Phil Bryce/Public; Derek Ibarguen/WMNF; David Paige/NH House Carroll Dist. 1; Ryan Presby/Cog Railway; Drew Scamman/Townsquare Media; Sarah Stewart/DNCR Commissioner; Chris Thayer/AMC and Howie Wemyss/Public.

Also in attendance were Chris Aslin/MWC counsel; Drew Bush /MWObs, Earl Duval/Cog Railway; Patrick Hummel, MW State Park Mgr.; Allen Brooks/public; Alissa Tanner, USFS Deputy Forest Supervisor; Albi Fioravante, Elizabeth Jurgilewicz, and Jen Widmark/DNCR Concord; Rob Bermudes and Tim Lewis/public.

Minutes. Mr. Thayer made a MOTION to approve the minutes of May 9, 2025; SECONDED by Mr. Scammon. The minutes were APPROVED as written.

Master Plan. Mr. Fioravante reported that Tighe & Bond workshop will hold a Mt. Washington State Park Assessment Workshop at AMC Highland Center, Bretton Woods, on June 24, 2025 to solicit feedback on the draft summit assessment findings. Mr. Aslin reminded the members that if they attend the workshops, they attend in their individual capacity and not as a commission member. Comm'r Stewart added that this process is an important opportunity to provide input to the topics being addressed by the assessment.

On June 19, as part of the Summit Environmental Assessment being conducted under the MWC Master Plan, the Tighe & Bond team will host a virtual meeting with people who worked on Mount Washington in the past. The purpose of the meeting will be to identify areas that should be investigated as possible locations of contamination as the Environmental Assessment proceeds. As this is not an MWC event, members will speak on behalf of the organization they represent and not for the Commission.

Mr. Bryce gave an update on the Master Plan recommendation regarding determining the significance of the Summit to indigenous peoples. The update included information from a meeting with Rob Kirsch and Krista Humbolt from TNC, a session on communicating indigenous knowledge at the NE Society of American Foresters winter meeting with members of southern NE tribal nations and excerpts from the Native Governance Center website based in MN. He attended a presentation for foresters on indigenous peoples and public lands. Some of the key points of the presentation are:

1. Sovereignty of Tribal Nations
2. Maintaining the Native American culture
3. Access to tribal lands
4. Improving the quality of life for indigenous people
5. Establishing relationships which shows respect for sovereignty and the elected leaders. This can take a long time.

6. As providing time and information requires investment of limited resources, expect to provide compensation in return.
7. There are no federal or state recognized Tribal Nations in New Hampshire.
8. Crafting land acknowledgements do not necessarily result in improving the quality of life of indigenous peoples.

Suggestions were made on resources that may be helpful in implementing this part of the Master Plan. Plymouth State Museum of the White Mountains has an exhibit on Native Americans in NH. It was suggested to reach out to Plymouth State to see if there is a professor or graduate student who may be in this field of study. AMC has been involved with Maine's First Nation. It was noted that some of the best contacts may be in Canada. Mr. Kirsch concluded by saying to keep working on this and report back with any questions or concerns.

Fees Paid/Special Use Permits. Mr. Hummel spoke on the challenges of operations when a large capacity event such as the Mt. Washington Road race, which is scheduled for June 14, 2025, occurs at the summit. The projected number of participants for this event is 1,300. Environmental, safety, and compliance are aspects which need to be balanced. Buildings maximum capacity limits can be exceeded. Pricing of the special use permit needs to be looked at to determine if it is being priced to appropriately reflect the cost of salary time and other factors. Communication and timing are key in the permitting process. Comm'r Stewart requested that Mr. Hummel present a diagnostic of the road race event at a future MWC meeting.

Capital Improvements/Park Ops. Mr. Hummel reported that the park opened on May 24th. Visitation and revenue is currently down which could be related to the weather. The park Assistant Retail Manager has been promoted to Operations Manager. Once a waiver from the Governor's office is received, a position advertising for a new Assistant Retail Manager will be posted.

Fiber Optic from Bretton Woods has been connected and is working. Mr. Hummel is currently working with NH Department of Information (DoIT) to get everything all online. There is currently Wi-Fi available to the public which will be changed over to the new system. The state park maintenance staff has expanded the gift shop and added more seats. Mr. Hummel's meeting notes are attached.

Funding Request. Mr. Bush of the Mount Washington Observatory presented a request for funding from the MWC restricted fund for maintenance of the Extreme Mount Washington Museum. The request is for \$4,739.10 and is for materials for the sound system, exhibit upgrading, and the start of the creation of a virtual tour of the summit and a QR-code based self-guided tour on the summit itself. Mr. Bryce made a MOTION to approve the request. Mr. Wemyss SECONDED the motion. Discussion followed. All in favor, motion APPROVED.

Promotion of summit. The Tip Top House renovations are in process and should be opened to the public next year. Mr. Hummel is meeting with Mr. Fioravante, Ms. Jurgilewicz, and Ms. Widmark of DNCR to go over renovation progress. The Tighe & Bond Assessment will include a Scope of Work and an estimate for improvements to the Tip Top House. It is the 90th anniversary of the NH State Parks and NH Chronicles did a segment which included footage on the Cog Railway and the Auto Road. Ms. Stewart will be sending a link of this segment.

Partner Reports.

AMC. AMC’s 2024 Net Zero Annual Report has been finalized and is attached. This link to the AMC sustainability page has more information [AMC’s commitment to achieve net zero by 2050](#)

Auto Road. None

Cog Railway. Earl Duval of the Cog Railway said that Bretton Woods telephone company has offered free Wi-Fi service through the purchase of equipment. Mr. Bryce asked if NH Parks would be willing to contribute towards the equipment. The consensus was that they may be willing to do that. Mr. Duval will be sending a quote.

Mr. Presby reported that paving is being done and that they found the perimeter drain had been removed when the power line was installed.

MWObs. Mr. Bush provided his report on MWObs activities, see attached.

Townsquare Media. Mr. Scamman will be submitting information on the roof replacement which should be done this summer.

WMNF. Mr. Ibarguen reported that visitor information services are open and staffed, with some locations having reduced hours. Mt. Washington Avalanche Center had a successful season that ended on June 1st. Glen Ellis Falls Day Use area has re-opened after significant renovation and improvements.

Public Comments. Allen Brooks told the commission that they are doing a great job. Mr. Bryce thanked Allen Brooks for his extraordinary work on the Master Plan. The next MWC meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2025, at 10 a.m. location to be determined. The proposed 2025 MWC meeting schedule is:

January 24, Franconia Notch State Park, Park HQ	May 9, Bretton Woods Ski Area Lodge	October 17, TBD
March 14, MWObs, No. Conway	June 13, Tip Top House, Mount Washington State Park	November 14, DNCR Gorham Office
April 11, AMC Highland Center	September 12, No. Conway Community Center?	

Adjourn. There being no more business, Mr. Presby MOTIONED to adjourn the meeting, SECONDED by Mr. Paige. All in favor, motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Submitted by Wendy Smith, MWC clerk.