

MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION
September 12, 2025, MINUTES *(Approved 11/20/25)*

A regular meeting of the Mount Washington Commission (MWC) took place at the Pope Memorial Library in N. Conway. Chair Kirsch called the meeting to order at 10:01a.m., with a quorum present.

PRESENT were Chair Rob Kirsch/MWObs; Phil Bryce/Public; Rep. David Paige/NH House Carroll Dist. 1; Ryan Presby/Cog Railway; Tobey Reichert/Mt. Washington Auto Road; Sen. David Rochefort/NH Senate Dist. 1; Drew Scamman/Townsquare Media; Chris Thayer/AMC and Howie Wemyss/Public.

Also in attendance were Chris Aslin/MWC counsel; Drew Bush /MWObs, Nate Kenison-Marvin/DNCR counsel; Dick Bouley/Cog Railway; Patrick Hummel/MW State Park Mgr.; Josh Sjostrom,/WMNF Androscoggin District Ranger; Georgia Murray/AMC Senior Scientist; Allen Brooks/public; Albi Fioravante/DNCR Concord; Rob Bermudes and Tim Lewis/public.

Minutes. Revised minutes by combining Auto Road and Cog Railway sections under partner reports. Mr. Bryce made a MOTION to approve the revised minutes of June 13, 2025; SECONDED by Mr. Presby. Sen. Rochefort ABSTAINED. The revised minutes were APPROVED.

Commission Meetings. The October 17 meeting date was changed to October 10 and will be held at an AMC location if there is one available. It was decided that the November meeting will be an evening meeting with a Tighe & Bond presentation at the beginning of the meeting. The meeting will tentatively take place on a Wednesday or Thursday evening on November 19th or 20th at the North Conway Community Center. Discussion led to consensus on changing the format of the Commission agenda to have more focus on the substance of meeting discussion and abandon the recitation of the full range of Commission responsibilities in every agenda.

Master Plan. Mr. Fioravante reported that the NHB assessment portion on endangered plants has been sent to Tighe & Bond. Discussion incurred on the importance of not including the location of endangered plants in a public report in order to protect them. Mr. Hummel reported that there is no current evidence of harvesting though the MWSP staff is asked on occasion of location of endangered plant species which they do not divulge.

Two separate contracts will be bid out this fall with a start of work in the spring of 2026. One contract will be for inspection of the five (5) 20 thousand gallon fuel tanks. The other contract will be for water and soil sampling of the Yankee well spring and other areas of suspected contamination releases. Results of the studies will be incorporated into the Tighe & Bond assessment. The Commission indicated that the investigation scope should include all areas of possible contamination identified in the investigative call attended by Tighe & Bond and former summit employees from the 1950s through the early 2000s, and that sampling explore possible contamination from the 2003 summit fire. Mr. Fioravante agreed to include those areas and to share a draft scope of work before any contracting occurs. Mr. Bryce asked about pursuing public funding and cited the Hampton Beach Master Plan resulted in receiving significant funding.

State Park Report & Operations. Mr. Hummel reported that the waste water treatment plant has been doing fine this first season. Tip Top house heating system has been fixed and the electrical system analyzed by an electrical contractor. Lights have been ordered and should be installed by the spring of 2026. Planning on promoting the reopening which should be in the summer of 2026. The roof at the Tip Top house is at end of life. Mr. Bryce asked about fire detection there. Currently there is none.

Season visitation was down and therefore revenue was down. Unfortunately, there were two fatalities this summer. Drones were used for active search and rescue for the first time. Will be working with Androscoggin Search and Rescue to learn more on drone usage. Gov. Ayotte visited Mt. Washington and Good Morning America did a segment on the summit this summer. Mr. Hummel's meeting report notes are attached.

Flora and fauna. Georgia Murray of AMC gave a great presentation on Pollinators in the Alpine Zone. The presentation included information on public posting of observations using the app iNaturalist.

Promotion of summit. Discussion on the World heritage site UNESCO designation process took place. It was questioned if any restrictions would be associated with the designation. It was determined that the restrictions would not be significant. It is a lengthy time consuming and potentially expensive endeavor. Mr. Bush said the Okefenokee swamp designation took three years and cost approximately \$600,000. There are significant economic benefits to this designation. It would be good to have prior domestic cultural and historic designations to add to an application. Mr. Hummel said they did mention this during the governor's visit, and she was supportive, but we would need to get further along before presenting this to the legislature. Mr. Wemyss asked if there is someone who can advise us on whether Mt. Washington is of UNESCO designation caliber before we start the application process. Is bringing more tourists to the region sustainable? The Commission thanked Mr. Bush for pulling this information together and decided it would be well served if national designations were first obtained before applying for the UNESCO designation. The 250th celebration of this country next year is a good opportunity to pursue this.

Partner Reports.

AMC. 150th AMC anniversary in 2026. 70% of the relay from VA to ME legs have been adopted by volunteer leaders. Mr. Thayer's meeting notes are attached and incorporated into these minutes.

Auto Road. Mr. Reichert reported focus has been on maintenance and upkeep given the drop in visitation. The entrance way and parking lot has been finished. Visitation rebounded in August and are hoping for a better fall.

Cog Railway. Mr. Presby said they are continuing with projects which include new loading gates and paving. His August visitation also was strong.

MWObs. Mr. Bush provided his report on MWObs activities. His report is attached and incorporated into these minutes.

Townsquare Media. Mr. Scamman relayed that damage on their building has been addressed. The replacement of this building is on hold because other cell companies (Verizon, T-Mobile, and AT&T) are planning on putting a building in and taking down the Townsquare Media building. Townsquare Media would then work out of the new building. Mr. Hummel replied that this could not be considered until after the summit assessment has been completed, per the DNCR Commissioner.

WMNF. Mr. Sjostrom updated that August was busy and that the WMNF has continued to have closures in visitor centers due to staff shortages. The Glen Ellis parking area improvements have been successful. The Madison Gulf bridge has been out, but an agreement is in place with the National Park Service for design of replacement.

Public Comments. None

January 24, Franconia Notch State Park, Park HQ	May 9, Bretton Woods Ski Area Lodge	October 10, Cancelled
March 14, MWObs, No. Conway	June 13, Tip Top House, Mount Washington State Park	November 20, 6:30 PM, Mt. Washington Room, Cranmore Mt. Resort, N. Conway
April 11, AMC Highland Center	September 12, Pope Memorial Library, N. Conway	

Adjourn. There being no more business, Mr. Wemyss MOTIONED to adjourn the meeting, SECONDED by Mr. Thayer All in favor, motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Submitted by Wendy Smith, MWC clerk.