



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION of PARKS and RECREATION
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To: The Honorable Sherman Packard, House Speaker
The Honorable Jeb Bradley, Senate President
The Honorable Kenneth Weyler, Chair, Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee
The Honorable Christopher T. Sununu, Governor

From: Brian J. Wilson, Director, Division of Parks and Recreation
Cc: Michael York, State Librarian

Date: January 29, 2024

Subject: State of the Parks and Historic Sites, Annual Report FY2022

I am pleased to provide you with the FY2022 Annual Report of the State of the Parks and Historic Sites. In accordance with RSA 216-A:3-c, VI, the “director of parks and recreation shall report biennially to the house and senate committees with jurisdiction over the state park system on the state of the parks and historic sites.” This progress report highlights the Division’s implementation of its Strategic Development and Capital Improvement Plan, January 2010 (“Plan”).

The Plan identified five main challenges to solve to achieve the Division’s vision for state parks and historic sites: 1) Stewardship, 2) Funding, 3) Statutory Framework, 4) Management and Operations, and 5) Marketing / Programming and Products.

The Division’s Strategic Development and Capital Improvement Plan, January 2010, can be accessed through the NH State Parks Reports website:
<https://www.nhstateparks.org/about-nh-parks/park-administration-legislation/financials-and-reports>

STEWARDSHIP “The State of New Hampshire is responsible for the stewardship and maintenance of every park and historic site in the system, regardless of the ability of the property to generate revenue (Plan, pg. 57).” Notable accomplishments over the course of FY2022 include:

ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) Projects

- **Mt Washington Sewage Treatment Plant & Water System Upgrade**
 - On site construction to start in June, 2022.
 - ARP Funding allotted: \$1,020,000. Other sources of funding will be:
 - Capital Budget appropriation of 2020 \$1,684,558.
 - LWCF matching funds 870,859.
 - Total construction funding for this project \$3,575,417.
- **Mt Washington Sherman Adams Building improvements**
 - In-house production of bid documents in 2022.
 - ARP funding allotted: \$1,475,000
- **Cannon Mt Station sewage pipeline**
 - Underwood Engineers under contract for design options
 - ARP funding allotted: \$1,200,000. Current cost estimates are in the \$3M range.
- **Park Utility upgrades**
 - Water and electrical systems design for **Ellacoya RV Park, Greenfield and Jericho**
 - ARP funding allotted: \$830,000
- **Coleman Lodges main building renovation**
 - Alba Architects in the design development phase
 - ARP funding allotted: \$800,000
- **Roofing and Repairs**
 - 22 potential roofing and repair projects, including Cannon Mt Station
 - ARP funding allotted: \$1,550,000
- **Franconia Notch highway signs**
 - RFP is being drafted
 - ARP funding allotted: \$100,000
- **Ragged Neck upgrades**
 - Interior renovation of toilet building completed in April, 2022.
 - ARP funding allotted: \$250,000
- **Hampton RV Park electrical upgrade**
 - RV electrical hookups upgrade to 800amps, three phase completed in May, 2022.
 - ARP funding allotted: \$347,000
- **Campground Expansion Projects feasibility studies**
 - **Jericho, Mollidgewock, Crawford, Pawtuckaway, Bear Brook Bear Hill & Catamount Pond**
 - ARP funding allotted: \$9,010,000

CAPTIAL & OPERATIONAL PROJECTS.

- **Ellacoya State Park, Toilet Building Renovation** – Substantially complete. A couple of electrical punch list items still to be completed. All inspections have passed.

- **Milan Hill State Park** – Contractor mobilized May 17; Pre-Con meeting held on May 18 with a scheduled completion date of August FY23.
- **Franconia Notch State Park**, Cannon Summit Station Sprinkler Project – Work delayed, revised completion date of August FY23.
- **Pawtuckaway State Park**, Toilet Building #4 – Work on-going, anticipated completion date in the second or third week of June.

CONSULTANT SERVICE

- **Pawtuckaway State Park**: Historic District Area Form complete, park has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Fire Towers** Historic Individual Inventory Form and Management Plan: Consultant is Public Archaeology Laboratory. Assessing 15 fire tower sites. This assessment will inform a management plan for them.
- **Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion** State Historic Site, Seawall Repair: Archaeology survey in progress for seawall repairs (FEMA project). Repair scheduled to start in September and be complete by April 15, 2023.

BUREAU OF TRAILS PROJECTS

- All districts have projects being done on the rail trails, some of which include:
 - The Bureau solicited for bids in July to remove two more miles of rails and ties on the east segment of the **Ammonoosuc Recreational Trail**. A total of eight bids were received and a contractor was selected. Removal will start September 7th and will be completed by December 1, 2021. The Cross NH Adventure Trail (xNHAT) will donate funds for the match to the Recreational Trails Program grant.
 - The washout on the **Sugar River Recreational Trail** was exacerbated by the summer rains, which allowed the Bureau to receive an emergency DES permit for repairs. Trails Bureau staff, including the new Bureau Chief, worked quickly to create a permanent solution using natural materials to the washout that has been ongoing for years.

BUREAU OF HISTORIC SITES PROJECTS

- **Fort Stark** general improvements
 - Parking lot design completed; Toilet building feasibility in progress
 - ARP funding allotted: \$615,000
- The main lodge at **Weeks State Park** is finishing some restoration work, with plaster repairs, historic paint scheme, and an era-appropriate pool table that resembles that of John Wingate Weeks' personal billiards table.
- Four 1930s exterior lighting fixtures from **Bear Brook's Catamount Pond Pavilion** are nearing their extensive restoration. Grand Light in Connecticut is in charge of this project, with the lights expected to be installed this fall.
- **Nansen Ski Jump** is undergoing regrading of its two landing hills. The \$300,000+ project is in partnership with the Nansen Ski Club, who is spearheading the jump site's revival into an operating and FIS-certified jump.

- An historic paint analysis done on the **Gerrish Depot** was recently completed, giving insight into the evolution of the oldest extant railroad station on the Northern Railroad. This data will inform restoration efforts planned for next year.
- **Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion**, seawall repair by Riverbend Masonry, \$166,300. Completion by Spring, 2022.
- **Franklin Pierce Homestead** parlor's 1824 Dufour wallpaper was conserved by the Northeast Document Conservation Center in May. For weeks, trained specialists re-adhered the paper, infill painted, and treated for past silverfish damage.
- A years-long restoration project in the **Wentworth Coolidge Mansion**'s billiards room was recently completed. This work included hanging custom reproduction flocked wallpaper, returning the woodwork to their original color, and various plaster repairs. The room now looks as it would have in the 1750s.
- At the **Robert Frost Farm**, the front yard was restored, including removal of a picket fence added in the 1960s, removal of invasive Norway maples, replanting of sugar maples, repointing of the brickwork, and window re-glazing. Inside, a bulging wall in the dining room plaster was repaired.
- **Daniel Webster's Birthplace** saw six of its windows restored.
- **Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion State Historic Site**, Seawall Repair: Archaeology survey in progress for seawall repairs (FEMA project).

FUNDING “The funding model has been interpreted to rely solely on annual profits from park and ski operations to support operations of the entire Division of Parks and Recreation. Consequently, sufficient funding to support the park system through this fund has been achieved only infrequently. The result is a structural deficit that has produced challenges to the integrity of state parks. New funding models need to be investigated, (Plan, pg. 59).” Notable accomplishments over the course of FY2022 include:

- The Division's **Financial Report** as required under RSA 216-A:3-e, III, is filed under separate cover within the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, FY2022 Annual Reporting.
- On November 19, 2021, the Fiscal Committee of the General Court approved the **Division's Fee Package for the marquee winter 2021-22 and summer 2022 seasons for products at Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway & Ski Area**, in addition to Flume Gorge entry products for summer 2022. Further, the Fiscal Committee approved the 2021/22 Cannon Mountain Winter Special Use Policy, which expands upon Cannon's standard operating parameters. (FIS 21-344)
- **NH State Park Plate** As of 05/09/22, there were 17,685 plates registered. FY22 to date revenue is \$1.2M. The total revenue earned in FY21 from State Park Plates topped \$1 million, closing at \$1.3M.
- **Donations** Parks closed FY22 with \$75,428.44 from 10,735 online donations.

- **E-Commerce & Season Passes** Parks closed FY22 having sold 3,256 items through its online store, resulting in \$194,326.97 in revenue. Of that, \$171,695.00 is revenue from season passes (1,733 sold). The 2021 holiday season proved to be one of the most successful to date, with 972 items sold from Nov 1-Dec 31, 2021.
- **Gift Cards** 645 Gift Cards were sold in FY2022, with a total value of \$43,828.11. The Division will promote three new gift card styles, featuring beautiful scenes from within the park system.
- **Retail Programs**
 - NH State Parks generated \$1 million in net profit from its retail sales.
 - State campgrounds sold and process 78,402 bundles of firewood.
 - State beaches rented watercraft 10,068 times and generated \$334,101 from the rental fleet of 295 watercraft.
 - State campgrounds sold 30,000 bags of ice and generated \$75,000 in revenue from those sales.
 - State Parks entered into an agreement at Odiorne Point with their first food truck vendor ever contracted directly by the agency.
- **Bureau of Historic Sites**
 - **Moose Plate** sales are up (10% in overall sales). Plates now number over 73,000. These funds provide critical revenue for the Bureau and other historic assets throughout the Park system.
 - The **Bureau's Financial Report** as required under RSA 216-A:3-e, III, is filed as part of the Division's Financial Report and is filed under separate cover within the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, FY2022 Annual Reporting.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK “Clarify statutory intent and framework within which the Division operates to reduce cumbersome, conflicting, and contradictory legislative direction so that operations can achieve the vision, (Plan, pg. 61).” The Division actively participated in the following legislative activities during the 2022 Session:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| HB
1579 | HB 1579 relative to landowner liability on land authorized for outdoor recreational activities
HB 1579 (4/14/22) |
| SB
346 | SB 346 requiring the Hampton Beach Area Commission to conduct feasibility and impact studies for the construction and maintenance of a pier south of Boar's Head in the Town of hampton.
SB 346 Testimony (4/6/22) |
| HB
1579 | HB 1579 relative to landowner liability on land authorized for outdoor recreational activities.
HB 1579 Testimony (1/20/22) |

- HB 1292** HB 1292 permitting the use of drones or unmanned aerial vehicles on the statewide trail system.
[HB 1292 Testimony \(1/12/22\)](#)
- HB 1456** HB 1456 relative to the Hampton marine memorial.
[HB 1456 Testimony \(1/12/22\)](#)
- SB 346** SB 346 requiring the department of environmental services to conduct feasibility and impact studies for the construction of a pier on Hampton Beach.
[SB 346 Testimony \(1/11/22\)](#)

MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS “The Division needs to be more consistent, efficient, and effective and needs to take advantage of innovation and partnerships to increase the quality of stewardship. Additionally, the Division needs to learn more about current and future park use and recreation trends all in an effort to generate more net income from certain facilities and programs, (Plan, pg. 63)” Notable accomplishments over the course of FY2022 include:

DAY-USE & CAMPING RESERVATION SYSTEM

- **Day Use Reservations.** FY21 was the first full fiscal year that day use reservations were available, and visitors enjoyed the convenience of the reservation system as well as the guarantee of entrance to the park. This has also helped the staff by reducing traffic at the tollbooths as well as time spent processing transactions in person. Day use reservations grossed almost \$7.6 million from 292,236 reservation transactions in FY21.
 - CY21, visitors made 166,109 day-use reservations, resulting in almost \$5 million in revenue.
 - CY22 to date (5/20/22), visitors have made 10,408 reservations, with \$165,000 in revenue.
- **Camping Reservations.** CY21 ended with \$4.68 million in camping reservation revenue, from 63,922 reservation transactions. We closed the year with 141,130 camping visitors, not including primitive camping transactions conducted through the iron ranger. At this time, CY22 to date (5/20/22) camping reservations have generated \$1.44 million from nearly 18k transactions. Trends have shown that our customers tend to book their reservations either 11 months ahead (the beginning of the booking window) or in the weeks before their arrival, so we are eager to see an increase in reservations as the season progresses.

SEACOAST PARKING ENTERPRISE SYSTEM

- An RFP was issued in February, 2022, combining the metered parking and enforcement aspects of the parking enterprise system. The new system will enhance the guest experience by offering a pay-by-phone option. The system will remind guests when time is about to expire allowing them to renew their time if they choose. The solution also offers enhanced enforcement options such as License Plate Recognition that will

allow the meter patrol officer to scan a license plate and have it uploaded into the system automatically. This will increase accuracy and the ability to obtain owner information and collect on outstanding violations.

SCA (Student Conservation Assn) NH CORPS

- The Programmatic Agreement for project year 2022, was approved by Governor and Executive Council on March 9, 2022.
- SCA received a 3-year AmeriCorps grant for program years 2023, 2024 and 2025. New programmatic agreement will be developed to be approved this summer.
- Program Year 2022 started in April with 27 AmeriCorps members arriving.
 - 9 Interpretive Rangers
 - 18 Conservation Services crew members
- 15 Conservation Project hitches scheduled statewide; of note 3 hitches at **Monadnock State Park** and 2 hitches at **Crawford Notch State Park** to address deferred trail maintenance funded by the Recreational Trails Program. Projects include spring cleanup, camping shelter building, kiosk construction, and trail work.

BUREAU OF TRAILS

- **Grant-In-Aid (GIA) Program:**
 - The 2022 summer applications have been received and are being reviewed. The GIA advisory committee meetings for both OHRV and Snowmobile applications was held in May, where over \$1M was allocated for OHRV projects and \$1.8M was allocated to snowmobile projects.
- **Recreational Trail Program (RTP):**
 - Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021 community are completed except one which is scheduled to be completed by August 31, 2022. Department projects are ongoing with project costs being incurred. Projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of this calendar year.
 - Two non-motorized parking lots were built in **Pawtuckaway State Park** using RTP funds and Trails bureau staff labor. One additional parking lot is scheduled to be built by the end of this year.
 - Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 has not yet been approved from the Federal Highway Administration through the NH Department of Transportation, but the request has been submitted. There are 23 community led projects that are tentatively scheduled to start after Governor and Executive Council approval.
 - FFY 2023 community applications are due on June 17th. Department applications are due on July 29th. The RTP workshops will be held on May 18th and May 25th to assist applicants with applying for the grant.

BUREAU OF HISTORIC SITES

- In partnership with the NH Fish and Game Department, the tern research project, which takes place on **White Island**, had another successful year. The researchers there saw record success with the endangered birds' hatchling rate.
- The **Hannah Duston Advisory Committee** was established to assist the Bureau of Historic Sites with interpreting the 1874 statue in Boscawen. The committee will solicit input and make recommendations on how best to share and contextualize the story of Hannah Duston, including narratives from Native American perspectives, and increase the site's recreational opportunities. The Committee met several times in FY2022 and minutes are accessible from the Committee's website:

<https://www.nhstateparks.org/about-nh-parks/park-administration-legislation/commissions-and-committees/hannah-duston-advisory-committee>

- The **Wentworth Coolidge Commission** was established under the Governor's Executive Order 89-10. An annual report is filed by separate cover within the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Annual Report, FY2022.

MARKETING / PROGRAMMING & PRODUCTS "Create a user experience that meets the current and future recreational needs of all guests and anticipates and meets changing user interests, (Plan, pg. 65)." Notable accomplishments over the course of FY2022 include:

- During the summer season, **Parks partnered with DHHS & Convenient MD** to welcome the State Vaccination Van at 10 state park locations, with multiple visits at several state parks. Parks is offering complimentary day passes to those who get vaccinated at a state park.
- SCA (Student Conservation Assn) NH CORPS **Discover the Power of Parks** interpretive program was offered at 10 parks starting 6/17. Schedule and program descriptions at, <https://www.nhstateparks.org/news-events/discover-the-power-of-parks>.
- NH State Beach Patrol hosted **Water Safety Day**, a program for children and families based off of common rescue techniques, as well as teaching kids the importance of water and beach safety. Members of NH State Marine Patrol, Hampton PD and Fire, Marine Mammal Rescue, Blue Ocean Society, Cinnamon Rainbow Surf Shop, Portsmouth Hospital provided information and guidance on staying safe in the water.
- Notable **Special Use Permit events** include:
 - **The Children's Festival** at Hampton Beach State Park, put on by the Hampton Chamber of Commerce, has drawn good crowds with a variety of events including shows on the Seashell stage, Safety talks with the Lifeguards and "touch a truck" events and is expected to continue through Friday.
 - **New England Disabled Sports** at Franconia Notch State Park will hold a paddling program for 9 adolescents with visual impairments.

- **Wounded Warriors** Hit The Beach at Hampton Beach State Park – North Beach. They will host the 14th annual event to help teach physically challenged veterans how to surf.
- **Bureau of Historic Sites**
 - Nansen Ski Jump is undergoing regrading of its two landing hills. The \$300,000+ project is in partnership with the **Nansen Ski Club**, who is spearheading the jump site’s revival into an operating and FIS-certified jump.
 - **Weeks State Park Association Summer Programs 2022**
 - July 29 at 7pm: White Mtns. Waterfalls - Bruce Bolnick
 - July 30 at 9am: Waterfalls Field Trip – Bruce Bolnick
 - Aug 5 at 7pm: (via Zoom) - Owls of New Hampshire - Squam Lakes Natural Science Center
 - Aug 12 at 7pm: Garland Mill - Water-powered for 164 years – Dana Southworth (sponsored by the Beliveau Family)
 - Aug 13 at 4pm: Field Trip to Garland Mill (sponsored by the Beliveau Family)
 - Aug 19 at 7pm: Concert by Islay Mist Céilidh after the WSPA annual meeting
 - Sep 12 from 1 - 4pm: Autumn Flower Walk – Matt Peters

PRESS RELEASES & MEDIA COVERAGE

6/25/2021 - Hampton Beach Campsite Lottery Now Open

There will be a camping lottery for selected camping sites at Hampton Beach State Park. The State Parks Camping Lottery is a program for the 2022 camping season to ensure greater opportunity for campers to experience our most popular camping areas.

Hampton Beach needs workers: Lakota tribe members may be the answer, 03/30/2022

https://www.google.com/url?rct=j&sa=t&url=https://www.seacoastonline.com/story/news/local/2022/03/30/hampton-beach-nh-recruits-native-americans-south-dakota-jobs/7188385001/&ct=ga&cd=CAEYACoUMTAwMjkyNDY5OTE1OTIxNTY5NzYyGjExOWM5OWIxMGYyZjVmMwY6Y29tOmVuOjVt&usg=AFQjCNE8U9JdT4k_HSUFfkAxnDKhrX4qhQ

A summer class that involves digging in the dirt (very carefully), 03/28/2022

<https://www.concordmonitor.com/archaeology-new-hampshire-nh-anthropology-45641162>

This moment atop Mt. Washington to honor our fallen service members will give you chills, Q96.1 06/01/2021

<https://q961.com/this-moment-atop-mt-washington-to-honor-our-fallen-service-members-will-give-you-chills/>

Lifeguards make multiple rescues at Hampton Beach on Sunday: Seven rescued, all returned to their beach day, WMUR.

www.wmur.com/article/lifeguards-make-multiple-rescues-at-hampton-beach-on-sunday/36711319

\$3 Million Mittersill Performance Center On Track To Be Completed In September,
Caledonia Record, July 21, 2021. www.caledonianrecord.com/news/local/3-million-mittersill-performance-center-on-track-to-be-completed-in-september/article_92bb816e-6708-5af3-8c69-f7fa332fbfad.html

Fritz Wetherbee: John Wingate Weeks, WMUR, Aug. 3, 2021 www.wmur.com/article/fritz-wetherbee-john-wingate-weeks-1627992404/37208481

More information on the Division's activities and accomplishments are accessible through its NH State Parks website, including Employment, Who We Are, What We Do, Projects & Improvements, Administration & Legislation, and Press Releases:

<https://www.nhstateparks.org/about-nh-parks>

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