

Director's Report
STATE PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY COUNCIL
Division of Parks and Recreation
September 1, 2020
(Last report date was Jan 10, 2020)

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- **FY2020 Parks & Retail Comparative Statement** (attached) covering period July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, has day use revenue at \$9.265M, down \$897K or 8.8% from the previous fiscal year. Cannon Mountain closed at \$4.484M, down 12.3% and Hampton Meters ended at \$1.827M, down 19% from the previous fiscal year. Parks retail closed at \$2.338M, down 11.5% from FY2019. Cannon retail closed at \$1.807M, up 1.0% and Mt Washington closed at \$1.297M, up 6.7% from the previous fiscal year.
- **FY2021 Parks & Retail Comparative Statement** (attached) covering Week 6 of FY2021, total revenue including Cannon/Franconia Notch and Hampton Meters is at \$3.614M, down 28% from the previous period. Retail revenue is at \$845K, down 59% from the previous period.
- **NH State Park Plate** As of 03/07/20, there were 11,876 plates registered. FY2020 revenues earned are \$976,400, up slightly compared to FY2019 revenues earned at \$854,185.
- **July 4th weekend** 25,982 campers; 29,546 day use visitors by advance reservation; 6,472 seacoast parking meter transactions representing 16,000 visitors for a total of over 70,000 visitors! Does not include untracked visitors at Hampton Beach, Franconia Notch or Mount Washington.
- **Enterprise functions**, including day-use reservations, camping reservations, and donations are reported below.

COVID-19 IMPACTS TO DIVISION OPERATIONS

We have had a very challenging but successful season so far under the circumstance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. State Parks provided draft reopening guidelines early on to the Economic Re-Opening Task Force (of which we are a member) and have continued to be engaged in protecting public health while we open up for business as much as possible. The pandemic has been even more challenging due to the increased demand for our parks. We have responded by managing capacity through a park system wide reservation system, implementing enhanced cleaning procedures, screening, use of PPE's by staff, and communicating with guests the many operational changes they may encounter when visiting State Parks.

Southern area parks opened in March, two months earlier than normal, as visitors seeking relief from Stay-at-Home orders overwhelmed hiking trails. State Parks were stressed further when many other recreational areas and trails were closed to public use. Restroom facilities became a major issue because of the closure of most all other businesses and facilities. To keep staff and visitors safe, regionals and park managers developed park-specific operations plans even before the Re-opening Task Force guidances were established. With the hiring freeze, staff from the Concord Office were re-deployed to assist in the field on weekends. It was a massive effort to print signage, redesign the website and push social media to provide visitors with detailed COVID protocols and park-related communications, and to obtain PPEs and sanitizing supplies during the shortage from inventive suppliers, such as hand sanitizer from a whiskey distillery and cloth face coverings from Ragged Mountain Equipment of North Conway.

Hiring staff has been difficult with higher competing wages, later recruitment due to the hiring freeze, the short training duration, and the loss of up to 25 J1 students at the seacoast.

Visitor relations this year were harder than ever. Staff were constantly confronted by angry visitors about the restrictions put in place: mostly about not having a place to park, being ticketed for parking illegally, and for the parks being full. Young staff experienced higher than normal confrontations with guests, including a crowd of intoxicated adults. There were dramatic increases in trash being left behind.

No shows under the reservation system is an issue across the park system. These reduce the number of people who actually get to use the park and also can make it difficult to explain why a parking lot so empty. A policy had been instituted to allow non-reserved visitors to enter the park in the mid-late afternoon based on outstanding reservations and the number of visitors who have left for the day.

PARK OPERATIONS

SOUTH REGION

- On May 15th, the **Bear Brook** campground was the first to open, following the Governor's Economic Re-opening Task Force guidance for campgrounds.
- All **south region campgrounds** are open at 100%. We are experiencing higher occupancy rates than in previous years as we moved from the initial 50% capacity limitations.
- We **anticipate one of the busiest fall seasons ever** for both day use and camping. We are keeping south region parks open longer to offer more recreational opportunities to the public.

CENTRAL REGION

- One of the biggest challenges this summer with increased outdoor activities has been managing parks that are not typically staffed and do not have the amenities and services that a typical fee-based park would have, such as bathrooms, parking, and regular trash clean up. Parks like **Ahern, Sculptured Rocks, Aresthusa Falls** and **Wadleigh** have always had their challenges, but the displacement of visitors from other areas with restricted use was unprecedented and has caused over-use of parklands. This has been a common theme for town beaches, the WMNF and other local recreation hot spots.
- Central region successfully **partnered with local towns**, from the police, town selectmen, and road crews, to address some park needs this season, but resources are needed for long-term solutions.
- **White Lake State Park** was awarded "Best base for family fun" by Boston Globe.

SEACOAST REGION

- The playground at **Odiorne Point** remains closed, Seacoast Science Center is open on weekends for visitors and midweek for day camps. Visitors are starting to get accustomed to the reservation, Odiorne is up to 75% capacity and visitors distance themselves throughout the park.
- The new **Wallis Sands** Park Manager Ryan Klink joined the seacoast team. Ryan has big ideas for Wallis Sands and hit the ground running when hired in June.
- Parking meters at **Rye Harbor** were installed to eliminate the need for a toll booth attendant, and to collect fees from a location that has historically had little revenue. NH senior citizens complained about this change as they no longer have free access, but the park is busier this year than ever. With Rte. 1A closed, people are parking here to access Foss Beach, owned by the town. Staff has increased presence there to help deal with traffic issues and illegal parking.

- We have had a parking attendant at **Jeness Beach** daily from 10am-6pm to help with traffic on the road. This has helped with traffic flow, however the staff get a lot of criticism from people when the park is full. New bathhouse continues to get used heavily and is a great replacement from the old one.
- The rocky beach at **North Hampton** now offers an ADA accessible beach chair while lifeguards are on duty to help those with mobility restrictions access the beach.
- Rip currents at **North Beach** have kept the lifeguards busy. We have seen a lot of changes in the profile of the beach since Storm Riley in 2018, which may contribute to the increase in rip currents.
- **Hampton Beach meter patrol** staff schedules were reassessed and changed this summer to provide greater park patrol presence to enforce the capacity restrictions. In July, 500 more tickets were issued than July 2019. Park patrol coverage now includes Wallis Sands, Rye Harbor and Odiorne to ticket vehicles remaining in the parking lots after closing hours. Ticketing vehicles after park closing has helped bring the number of cars left in the lots from 30 to 10.
- Rip currents at **Hampton Beach** have intensified this year, drastically increasing rescue calls. Water Safety Day and the New England Life Saving completion were cancelled due to COVID-19. Piping plovers nesting on the main beach caused some challenges in beach maintenance and raking, but there was one successful nest hatch. As of August 11, 2020 the statistics are:

Hampton Ocean Rescue Statistics		
	2019 (Memorial day-labor day)	2020 (June 1- Aug 11)
Ocean rescues	128	472
Alcohol violations	2,714	5,201
Dogs removed	709	925

- **Beach Patrol** has trained with Marine Patrol and local towns on jetskis and other water rescues so that, should an issue arise, they are able to work together using the same rescue techniques.
- **Maintenance:** We are staffed up to 15 people out of the normal 48. The Town of Hampton public works staff are assisting us with trash pick-up on Friday, Saturday and Sunday making a significant difference in our ability to keep the trash under control. Local community members and members of the Chamber of Commerce (led by John Nyhan) have also been helping to pick up trash in the morning, and encourage locals to help out during their morning walks. The Community has really been rallying together this year to work toward the same goal of keeping Hampton Beach clean!
- 50% capacity remains at **South Beach** with reservation system in place. Several Piping Plover chicks fledged and survived the busy beach. No events took place here this year due to COVID. The campground has been booked all summer, and overflow “dry camping” remains closed.
- All parks have experienced difficulty in **finding staff** to work for \$11.19/hour. We saw an increase in applications when the \$3/hr. pay increase was granted by Executive Order for Hampton maintenance staff, but we never reached full staffing as the job duties consisted primarily of trash pick-up and bathroom cleaning. In a non-pandemic year, we look to have up to 25 J1 students on staff.
- **Compliance with COVID restrictions/guidance** were challenging: In Hampton, visitors moved parking barriers, drove over or cut ropes, and parked in spaces clearly closed. Roughly 5% or less of visitors wear masks in bathrooms or when closer than 6’ to others along the boardwalk. The “no drop off” rule/signage was generally ignored at Odiorne, Wallis Sands and South Beach.

MOUNT WASHINGTON

- We have had a successful opening (beginning July 18) and operating season so far, under the new reservation system and under the COVID Guidelines, including the limited capacity of the Sherman Adams Building to 75 verses 300.
- With the limits on visitors allowed in the building, one of the most challenging issue is shelter for summit visitors in bad weather, particularly Cog riders who are left at the summit until the next train takes them down.
- Maintenance staff have completed and continuing to work on many important projects at the summit, despite the limitations in spending. A new front door will be constructed and installed on the Tip Top House before winter.

FRANCONIA NOTCH / CANNON MOUNTAIN

- **Flume Gorge** is running smoothly at 200 people per hour via online reservations only. We turn away 100+ people/hr. who don't have reservations. The Welcome Center is closed to the public. Retail revenue is within 15% of normal numbers. Food and beverage service is off by 50%. We are following all State Parks, Reopening Task Force guidance, and CDC guidelines for COVID.
- **Echo Lake Beach** is also running smoothly at 250 people/day via online reservations only. We turn away 250+ people/day who don't have reservations. Boat rentals and concessions revenue are off by 50%. All State Parks, Task Force guidance, and CDC guidelines for COVID are followed.
- **Lafayette Place Campground** is operating at 91 sites out of 98 and booking very solidly at all times.
- **Hiker usage of the park and non-venue usage** of the park (picnics, walking, boating, etc.) have truly exploded this summer; all non-venue areas and hiking routes are extremely busy Fri-Sun and quite steady Mon-Thu every week.
- We opened the **Tramway parking lot** and installed portable toilets for use by hikers. The lot is full on weekends. Staff are stationed at the lot to provide hikers with alternate hikes.
- **CLOSED:** Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway / hiker shuttles / weddings and functions. The Tramway lot is being used for hikers and is at or near capacity on weekends.
- Preparation for **winter operations** continues daily with the many changes that lie ahead. We are examining every single facet of our operation from every angle to handle COVID-19 guidance. We are examining a 20-25% overall expense/labor budget cut while planning for increased sanitation and working on crowd handling strategies and infrastructure capacity / limitations. We'll put out a "**Winter Plan**" release in early September, and then update it in October and again in November.
- **Lafayette Place Campground** was recently named "Editor's Choice" as NH's Best Family Campground in NH Magazine.
- **FNSP** has frequently (and last year) been ranked in the Top 5 in the US for state parks.
- **Bob Daniels** (Lift Maintenance Supervisor) received a 2020 NH Union Leader Hero Award for saving a life last February (2019).
- **Charlie Roy** (Snowsports School staff trainer) was named one of Ski Area Management Magazine's "11 Under 30" for his leadership qualities (2020).
- **Cannon** won the National Ski Areas Association marketing award for best video advertising campaign (2020).
- **Franconia Ski Club** was named Best Development Club in the country by US Ski & Snowboard Association.

- **Cannon** won two “Telly” Awards for its New England TV advertising campaign (2020).

BUREAU OF TRAILS (BOT)

- **Snowmobile season** ended on March 26, 2020 with an announcement from the Bureau that all trails were closing due to community, club and landowner concerns over COVID-19 spread. This is the earliest formal closure of trails known to have occurred in NH.
- **OHRV season** started on May 23rd, with limited areas open for riding. The Governor’s Economic Reopening Task Force approved a phased OHRV trail opening plan, which was followed throughout the summer. OHRV registrations this summer are up 23% over this same time last year. Nationally, ATV sales are up 43%. OHRV rentals are up 200% over last summer and this has led to an increase in complaints of riders being in areas they are not allowed and rentals account for more than 1/3 of OHRV accidents (and same for snowmobiles). Accidents and violation tickets are consistent with numbers from last year.
- In July we received a significant rain event that impacted more than 50% of the trails in **Jericho Mountain State Park**. Staff and contractors spent 4 weeks repairing damages and all trails have been reopened. This rain event cost the Bureau \$30,000 in unanticipated repair costs during the summer. This storm also damaged a bridge and portions of the Presidential Rail Trail, in Randolph. This damage is on the non-motorized portion of the trail and plans are to try to repair this damage in the fall. The Bureau has its new rock crusher, a unit attached to a new tractor, in operation and it is a good, new piece of maintenance equipment. This unit rebuilds the trail/road base by crushing large rocks into crushed gravel. This should save the Bureau future funds by creating gravel on-site instead of having to buy it from outside vendors. The plan is to use this new equipment on State properties first, then on lands under administrative lease to the Bureau. Clubs would like to borrow it for trails but this unit can only be operated by State employees.
- The **alternative OHRV route in Gorham** is scheduled to open on September 2nd. The goal was to have this route open earlier this summer however there were delays in getting the contractor on-site. This new OHRV route will allow the majority of traffic in Gorham to bypass the existing OHRV route, which travels through a residential area. A parking lot in Gorham, on Rte. 16, opened for use on August 26th.
- Trails Bureau staff worked on a **cooperative project** with the Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge. The State owns the trail through the refuge and was awarded Federal Highway Funds to enable us to improve it for access into and through the refuge, (it will also greatly improve the snowmobile use in the winter). The \$110K grant was accepted through Fiscal and G&C in May and work started in June.
- The Bureau and the NH Snowmobile Association (NHSA) made a presentation to the **Governor’s Office For Economic Recovery and Relief (GOFERR)** on August 26th. The presentation was to highlight the loss of fundraising revenues to snowmobile clubs and the impact that has on their ability to pay bills to maintain snowmobile trails. The Bureau is working to determine if a short-term amendment to its Grant In Aid (GIA) Rules are needed to provide additional funds for clubs this winter.

BUREAU OF HISTORIC SITES (BHS)

- Nansen Ski Club and the Bureau are moving forward with plans to rehabilitate the **Nansen Ski Jump** for the purposes of historic interpretation and future FIS (Federation for International Skiing) sanctioned jumping competitions. Engineering is now complete and bidding documents are being prepared for construction this fall/winter.

- The tern project on **White Island** had its most successful year, with a record number of nesting birds. The pandemic temporarily put an end to the steward program on site, but volunteer maintenance and work is expected to continue in a limited capacity at the end of August.
- A community-led effort is looking at how best to interpret and contextualize the story of **Hannah Duston**. A diverse and forming advisory committee will explore ways to increase traffic to the island and tell a fuller story of the 1694 raid in which Hannah was captured. Actions may include extending the Northern Rail Trail to the island, creating a response piece to share the Native American narrative, and/or adding interpretive signage that shares the island's geographic, geologic, colonial, and industrial histories.
- Interpretive signage will begin to get installed at **Livermore Falls** this fall. These signs were paid for with mitigation money from the Groton Wind Farm and delve into the site's layered history.

ENTERPRISE SYSTEM NH State Parks has had a challenging but successful season responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Enterprise system has been essential to the success of our response.

- **Day Use Reservations:** We piloted our advanced day use reservation system last fall at Monadnock State Park as a way to ensure limited number of guests would not be turned away when the park reached capacity. This program was successful and during the COVID-19 pandemic we have utilized this system at all our day use parks as a way to control capacity. During the 2020 summer season we have processed 194,869 day use reservations representing 564,430 visitors as of August 20, 2020. This has been a tremendously successful program not only to control our capacity numbers and allow for social distancing at Parks but has been a great convenience to guests by guaranteeing entrance into the park of their choice. Guests have been enthusiastic and many have requested that we continue the program in the future whether COVID-19 restrictions remain or not.
- **Camping Reservations:** We had a late start to the camping season at all of our campgrounds many of which did not open until mid to late June, missing our premier holiday of Memorial Day weekend, and then opened at 50% capacity to comply with COVID guidance. During the 2020 camping season, we have processed 27,793 camping reservation representing 54,629 visitors as of August 20, 2020. While the season has been much shorter than normal so far, we have seen a great enthusiasm for camping and getting outdoors in general by our guests. Our mid-week occupancy has seen a jump over previous years and all seem very grateful that our parks are open and accessible. Many of our campgrounds are open at 100% but some campsites still remain closed to allow for social distancing.
- **Donations:** Online donations have seen a major increase over the past couple months, receiving 1,292 donations representing \$8,139 in June and 2,282 donations representing \$15,321.50 in July. The Division received \$19,218 in all of FY19. It's a testament to how important outdoor recreation and specifically, New Hampshire State Parks, are during these trying and uncertain times.

RETAIL OPERATIONS

- Going into the season, retail was trending to have its highest season of revenue ever, up 6.5% over its previous best year of FY2019. **COVID-19** was very impactful and resulted in an 11.5% drop in fiscal revenue compared to the year before.
- The good news is that a freeze on non-essential purchases, moving inventory around, focusing resources on the most profitable locations, resulted in the largest transfer in the history of NH State Parks retail. Concessions transferred \$672,419.22 of bottom line profit to the **State Park Fund** for FY20. This doesn't include Cannon or Mt. Washington retail.

- The retail program generated \$300K in **boat rental revenue** and processed over 10,000 boat rentals at 13 locations across the state for FY2020. Pawtuckaway generated the most boat rental revenue at \$94K.
- In FY2020, 52,666 bundles of **firewood** were distributed across the state, sold at 21 locations, while generating \$316K in revenue. Pawtuckaway led the way in firewood with \$54K in sales.
- Retail ran a 51% profit margin on purchases for resale and captured a 29% net profit margin on all expenses incurred in FY2020. Overall a great fiscal year, considering all of the uncertainty and changes concessions had to endure.
- **Snap shot of this fiscal year to date** – as of Aug 12th for the fiscal year, concessions has generated \$575,000 in revenue and has accrued \$194,000 in expenses. This represents a 66% gross profit margin. I don't see us maintaining that level of success for the season but it's a great start to the fiscal year. The fall transition and expense is going to need a lot of attention to maintain profit.
- We are playing small ball across the state, while moving a lot of product around, and really focusing on the products that sell while piecing out orders and focusing on **real time inventory**.

COMMUNITY RECREATION OFFICE

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- **1,823 volunteer hours** have submitted for the 2020 calendar year on DNCR land, this equates to an estimated value of \$47,817.00.
- All volunteer activities and events were put on hold from 3/31/2020 – 6/16/2020 due to COVID-19.
- **DNCR created guidelines and screening protocols** for volunteers and staff to use during the Pandemic to keep our volunteer, staff, and the public safe during this time.
- DNCR increased the number of **Volunteer Groups under agreement** from 23 to 31.
- The Volunteer Program Manager is close to completing a **DNCR Volunteer Program Manual** that will serve as a training tool and reference guide for both staff and volunteers.
- The Volunteer Program Manager has attended 22 **meetings with DNCR's various Volunteer Groups**, many of which were held remotely over Zoom and other platforms.
- **Insurance** is provided by and paid for by the Department for 8 different small non-profit Volunteer Groups while they volunteer on Department lands. Two of the Volunteer Groups previously on DNCR's insurance were able to take on their own insurance policy for their Group.
- **Surfrider Foundation** in coordination with NH State Parks and the Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce held a beach clean-up on July 26th at Hampton Beach, volunteers were able to clean-up: 43 pounds of trash, 2004 cigarette butts, 73 plastic straws, 54 plastic beverage bottles, 39 aluminum beverage cans, 10 masks, 15 latex gloves.
- The **Cardigan Highlanders** Volunteer Trail Crew tends 17 miles of trails and donated a total of 460 hours in 2020 so far, work has included cleaning 170 waterbars, clearing blowdowns from the trails, and barricading portions of the trail that have been widened due to an increase in use.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

- **The Great American Outdoors Act** was recently signed into law by President Trump which permanently funds the LWCF program at the full \$900million as originally intended back in 1965.
- **Grant Round 31** was released on May 20, 2020 and is now closed to new applicants. Project selections are anticipated in early 2021. We received 22 intent applications and after pre-on-site inspections, 16 were offered to apply, totaling \$3,874,750.00. Full applications will be due on October 30, 2020 with review and scoring happening in December. Review of these proposals will now be coordinated with the Open Project Selection Process Advisory Panel. The Panel will then make recommendations to the

State Liaison Officer (Commissioner Stewart) regarding submissions to the National Park Service for final federal approvals

• **PROGRAM APPORTIONMENTS/AVAILABLE FUNDS:**

Apportionment Amount	Available	Expiration	Notes
GOMESA* FY:09-17	\$122,193.00	\$25,919.00	None
LWCF FY:18	\$1,004,160.00	\$42,276.62	9/30/2020
LWCF FY:19	\$1,004,160.00	\$1,004,160.00	9/30/2021
GOMESA 19	\$709,512.00	\$709,512.00	9/30/2021
SRA 1**	\$11,484.64	\$11,484.64	9/30/2020
LWCF FY:20	\$1,028,240.00	\$1,028,240.00	09/30/2022
GOMESA FY:20	\$1,094,842.00	\$1,094,842.00	09/30/2022
Total:	\$4,974,591.64	\$3,916,434.26	

*Section 105 of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act designates 12.5 percent of the proceeds from leases in Areas 181, 181

**Special Reapportionment Account, unspent funds from previously closed or terminated projects. Not available until regular

• **Open LWCF projects:**

PROJECT #	NAME	SPONSOR	TYPE	PROJECT SCOPE	GRANT \$
33-00699	Cocheco River Park	City of Dover	Development	Construction of a paddle sports access and boat dock	\$159,675.00
33-00700	Merrimack River Greenway Trail	City of Concord	Development	Construction of a trail bridge at Terrill Park	\$106,450.00
33-00701	Pulpit Rock Conservation Area Trails	Town of Bedford	Development	Trail accessibility enhancements and	\$45,241.00
33-00702	Osgood Pond Restoration Phase I-II	Town of Milford	Development	Pond dredging and improvements to water	\$159,675.00
33-00702.1					\$175,175.00
33-00705	Hartford Brook Ballfields	Town of Deerfield	Development	Improvements to playfield, parking, and support	\$25,000.00
33-00706	Nissitissit River Park	Town of Brookline	Combination	Development of accessible trail, and acquisition	\$50,050.00
33-00707	Greeley Park Boat Ramp Improvements	City of Nashua	Development	Boat ramp and parking improvements on the	\$200,200.00
33-00708	Bristol Falls Park	Town of Bristol	Development	Restoration of access to a high-bank viewing area of	\$153,155.00
33-00709	B. Rowell Community Center Playground	City of Franklin	Development	Construction of a New Playground	\$45,045.00
33-00710	Monadnock Park Playground	City of Claremont	Development	Construction of a New Playground	\$53,753.00
33-00711	Monroe Consolidated School Playground	Monroe Consolidated SD	Development	Construction of a New Playground	\$96,396.00
33-00713	Kearsarge Mtn State Forest-Tusoni Lot	State of NH DNCR	Acquisition	Purchase of 33.4 acres 1.5 miles up from the Rollins	\$21,354.00
33-00714	Franconia Notch SP -	State of NH DNCR	Development	Construction of a New Playground	\$76,742.50
33-00715	Ellacoya State Park Playground	State of NH DNCR	Development	Construction of a New Playground	\$76,742.50
33-00716	Mill City Park at Franklin Falls	City of Franklin	Combination	Purchase of 2.2 acres, development of trails, restrooms, parking, picnic	\$200,200.00
33-00717	Landroche Field Splash Pad and Bathhouse	Town of Newmarket	Development	Construction of a splash-pad, restrooms, and	\$199,606.41
33-00718	Riverfront Park	Town of Lincoln	Development	Construction of a skate park, parking, bike-ped	\$200,200.00
33-00719	New Boston Rail Trail Rehabilitation	Town of	Development	Installation of surface material, new/fixed	\$100,100.00

33-00721	Littleton Health Park	Town of Littleton	Combination	<i>Purchase of 5 acres, construction of parking, pavilion, community gardens, fitness equip, trail</i>	\$200,200.00
33-00722	Maplewood Field Bleachers/Playground	Town of Salisbury	Development	<i>Installation of new bleachers, swing set, play</i>	\$25,000.00
33-00723	Moeckel Pond Dam Reconstruction	Town of Windham	Development	<i>Reconstruction of historic mill site dam, car-top boat,</i>	\$150,150.00
33-00724	Jules Bisson Park Rejuvenation	City of Somersworth	Development	<i>Construction of a playground, picnic shelter,</i>	\$45,000.00
33-00726	Kraime Meadow Park Improvements	Town of Moultonborough	Development	<i>Construction of a picnic shelter with concession</i>	\$62,562.50
TOTAL OPEN GRANTS:					\$3,070,976.91

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

PARTNERSHIPS. The **SCA NH Corps** suspended the program in March and all program members were sent home. Discussing how to restart the program in January 2021. The Discover of Power of Parks interpretive program may be suspended, but we hope to keep conservation crews on as they provide services to other landowners.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS. In March, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all projects were suspended unless already under construction. A few projects have since been given approval to move ahead and we are preparing many other projects to be ready to bid.

- Summit Station sprinkler system at **Cannon Mountain** (in progress)
- The Profile Walkway at **Franconia Notch** is near completion.
- Fire Tower replacement at **Milan Hill State Park** (in progress)
- Roofing projects at **Monadnock State Park** Manager’s House (in progress) and the 45+ buildings located at Spruce Pond Camp and Bear Hill Camp at **Bear Brook State Park** (complete)

CONSULTANT SERVICES.

- Underwood Engineering continues work on the sewerage treatment system assessment for **Mount Washington State Park** and McFarland-Johnson is assessing the ventilation system in the Sherman Adams Building.
- **Fort Stark State Historic Site** Historic District Area Form and Phase 1 Archaeological study has been completed by the Public Archaeology Library (PAL). The fort has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Place because for its military associations with the development of the US coastal defense system and retains engineering significance as an intact example of a military installation. The archaeological investigations showed that the property has been too compromised to convey meaningful information about its evolving pre-contact or post-war use.

DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

LEGISLATIVE / STATUTORY / GOVERNOR’S INITIATIVES

- Many of the **2020 legislative bills** that the Division was actively tracking were either “referred to interim study” or, “tabled” due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Director Bryce and John Nyhan serve on the [Governor’s Economic Re-opening Task Force](#) that developed plans and oversees the state and private-sector actions needed to reopen NH’s economy while minimizing the adverse impact of COVID-19 on public health. Beginning April 22nd, the Task Force meet every day initially and is now meeting once a week to receive public comment and discuss

issues. The [Universal Guidance](#) and additional sector-specific requirements have been developed to support a safe reopening of the NH economy.

RIGHT TO KNOW / REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

- FY20: 34 requests; 86.5 hours
- FY21: 9 requests; 13.5 hours to date

AGREEMENTS – The Division is working on the following:

- **Mount Washington Observatory** contract for museum and observatory at Mt Washington.
- **Mount Washington Cog Railway** track expansion at the summit of Mt Washington.
- **Seacoast Science Center** contract amendment at Odiorne Point State Park.
- **Student Conservation Association** lease of Spruce Pond Camp at Bear Brook State Park.
- Lease to operate a portion of **SPNH** lands as part of Monadnock State Park.
- **White Mountain Attractions** lease of Visitor Center in Lincoln.
- **AT&T** wi-fi service at Cannon Mountain.
- **Bretton Woods Communications** fiber optic service at Mount Washington State Park.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT PROGRAM (SUP)

- The **Special Use Permit Program** was greatly affected by the COVID pandemic this year as the issuance of permits was put on hold. We normally issue a total of 156 permits for events held annually, excluding filming and guiding permits.
 - Of the 156 permits typically issued each year, 109 events have been cancelled to date.
 - The estimated revenue loss to date for cancelled events is \$106,000.

SEACOAST PARKING ENFORCEMENT

- Due to COVID-19, **parking at the seacoast** was closed until 6/1, when the lots were restricted to manage capacity and enable social distancing.
 - Citations are typically issued from 4/1 through 10/31. In 2020, issuing citations started on 6/9
 - In 2019, there were 4,426 citations issued between 6/9 and 8/19
 - In 2020, there have been 5,162 citations issued between 6/9 and 9/19

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER AND MARKETING REPORT

NH Parks Media attention this season has been consistent and very busy. Media products have given parks many opportunities to **reinforce COVID-19 and Advance Day Use Reservation messaging**. The parks website continues to grow as the primary conduit for NH Parks and Recreation information. Goals for 2020 season have been to increase accessibility via mobile devices to compliment the Reserve America reservation system and promote the Day-Use Reservation page.

- **Marketing** Although there was no marketing budget for the 2020 summer season, we continued with a campaign to promote the State Park Plate (\$7,000 GYK campaign started in January 2020) through the end of previous fiscal year. All promotional efforts were conducted using our organic social media channels. The majority of this campaign was to promote the advance day use system.
- **Social media** numbers (as of August 18th):
 - Facebook followers: 270,990
 - Instagram followers: 38.5K
 - Twitter followers: 22,193
- **NHStateParks.org website performance** (May 15 to Aug 15, 2020)

- Total page views: 4,556,092; avg. 1.50 min/session
- Top page performance (pages that are visited the most compared to other pages on our website)
 - COVID-19 page: 394,947 views; 2.26 min/view
 - Day Use reservation page: 273,231 views: 3.24 min/view
 - Flume Gorge page: 226,242 views; 3.28 min/view
- **Summary Report** for NHStateParks.org website (generated from NIBLER)
 - User Overall Satisfaction: 8.6 out of 10
 - User Accessibility: 9.2 (How accessible the website is to mobile and disabled users.)
 - User Experience: 8.4 (How satisfying the website is likely to be for users.)
 - Marketing: 9.3 (How well marketed and popular the website is.)

- **Media Attention:**

NHPR online - **N.H. State Parks, Tourist Industry Outline Plans To Safely Reopen For Summer**
<https://www.nhpr.org/post/nh-state-parks-tourist-industry-outline-plans-safely-reopen-summer#stream/0>. April 27, 2020.

Union leader - **More parks, beaches could open to 'radically different' experience in NH.**
www.unionleader.com/news/health/coronavirus/more-parks-beaches-could-open-to-radically-different-experience-in-nh/article_8bcb32fd-6948-52d4-82f1-4e7e40ee45c7.html. April 29, 2020.

WMUR 9 – **NH State Parks, campgrounds expect busy holiday weekend.** www.wmur.com/article/nh-state-parks-campgrounds-expect-busy-holiday-weekend/32647816. May 22, 2020.

NHPR The exchange - **How Will N.H. State Parks look different this Summer?**
www.nhpr.org/post/how-will-nh-state-parks-look-different-summer#stream/0. June 17, 2020.

NH Magazine - **Best of NH 2020 Fun & Adventure – Editor’s Picks, Family Campgrounds, Lafayette Place Campground.** <https://www.nhmagazine.com/best-of-nh-2020-fun-adventure/>. June 18, 2020.

The Laker – **A Visit to Ellacoya State Park is Still Fun...Just a Little More Interesting.**
<https://thelaker.com/2020/a-visit-to-ellacoya-state-park-is-still-funjust-a-little-more-interesting>

Union Leader – **Mt. Washington visitor center is open - by reservation only.**
www.unionleader.com/news/mt-washington-visitors-center-is-open---by-reservation-only/article_c3aff9e3-19ff-5fd5-a66c-991202dee1e7.html

Concord Monitor - **What you need to know before you head out to a N.H. state park.**
www.concordmonitor.com/how-to-visit-reopening-state-parks-35028822. July 1, 2020.

Eagle Tribune - **Area beaches provide joy and happiness.**
www.eagletribune.com/news/merrimack_valley/area-beaches-provide-joy-and-challenges/article_2a8ce13d-ffa7-5c4e-ab89-bb3c67c46c51.html. July, 19, 2020.

PBS – **The High Pointers - New Hampshire.** Robert Frost Farm and Mt. Washington highlighted.
www.pbs.org/video/new-hampshire-q6tqlv/. Aired July 30, 2020.

REPORTS PROVIDED SEPARATELY:

- a. Parks Comparative Statements FY2020 & FY2021, as of August 13, 2020
- b. Parks FY2020 Financial Report & Parks FY2019 Financial Report (for comparison)
- c. Parks Forecasting Report