

**Bear Brook State Park Management Public Comment  
Steering Committee Meeting – 4/22/21**

Meeting was called to order at 5:32pm by Chair Tom DiMaggio

**Steering Committee Members Present**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Avis Rosenfield	Non-Motorized Recreation
Armand Verville	Cultural and Historic Resources
Tom St. Martin	Town of Candia
Dan Dwyer	Non-Motorized Recreation
Wendy Weisiger	Forest Management
Tom DiMaggio	Recreation at Large (Chair)
Suzanne Smith	State Park System Advisory Council
Eric Orff	Game and Sportsmen

**Steering Committee Members Absent**

Jeff Lougee, Forest Ecology  
Steve Hampl, Motorized Recreation  
Carol Foss, Non Game Wildlife  
Brian Adams, Conservation Commission  
Eric Orff, Game and sportsmen  
Matthew Lavoie, Town of Hooksett  
Jeff Ames, Forest Products Industry  
Sandra McKenney, Town of Allenstown

Steve Roberge of UNH Cooperative Extension welcomed everyone to the public comment session of the Bear Brook Management plan. Johanna Lyons, New Hampshire State Park’s Park Planner reviewed how the listening session will be conducted, including ground rules and how to make a comment. Johanna stated that the closing date for written comments is April 30<sup>th</sup>, 36 written comments have been received so far.

Chairperson Tom DiMaggio read the checklist to ensure the meeting is compliant. Johanna conducted a roll call of all committee members. Tom asked for a motion to accept the minutes, Wendy motioned to accept the minutes and Avis seconded the motion, there were no corrections and they were accepted by a voice vote with Representative Smith abstaining. The public comment session was opened to the public; each person has three minutes to make his or her comment.

Dan Williams: Resident of Concord, outdoors person, hunt and bicycle. Covid has really exacerbated the problem of too many humans loving environment to death. Need to take Jim Oehler’s trails for people and wildlife to heart and use that as a guide when we are thinking about this management plan. I don’t think that more trails are the answer. Need to be spend time monitoring the trails that are currently there with regards to their potential negative impact on wildlife, areas where they might feed or bed or breed or engage in other activities.

Debbie Briscoe: I'm very pleased with what I seen in this management plan. I've been working with trails on the state level and at the town level. I'm a member and New Hampshire Horse Council and we get inquiries each year on where equestrian can camp with their horses in New Hampshire. So the new campground will be a good addition. On page 56, you need to correct the title/role of the volunteer coordinator. I think it is a good step setting up the trails advisory group. I know in the past that has been requests for certain things and it seems like it takes forever so that the enthusiasm of your volunteers dies down. One of the things we get asked in the past is how do you donate to a project? I know you can go through that different organizations, but it would really good to know what projects that are coming up and being able to donate to that specific product.

Chris Gaudet: I am affiliated with the mountain bike association. I enjoy the trails that we have there. I very much enjoy participating in the trail work days that NEMBA puts on. They're working on improving the trails that we have or re-routing trails. I know it's been a challenge to us in the past to get some new trails approved. With more and more users out on the trails, we're seeing that we're starting to have more and more user conflicts. I think that putting in some additional single-track trails to divert some of the bike traffic from the double track would help alleviate some of the user conflicts that we may have. I think it would be great if we could potentially look at enhancing services that could be available to visitors. Potentially having some sort of store refreshment center in the hiker biker lot. Include changing facilities in new facilities.

Jonathan Emery: We're seeing higher use and greater user conflict between hikers, bikers, and equestrian. I think it would be good to be able to spread more people out, give people more opportunities to see other areas of the park. A lot of the trails are clustered around a certain area.

Kate Champney: Epsom resident, third generation park user who fish/camp. Retain the archery course and fishing opportunities at the park!

Steering Committee Comments:

Avis Rosenfield: Need to clarify when horses are allowed to use certain trails seasonally, especially at the campground and Bear Hill Camp.

Tom St. Martin: I get that there's a lot of pressure from a lot of different user groups and everybody wants to use the park in their own way. One group that I think is somewhat invisible is the hikers. There are a lot more hikers than people realize are actually out there. I just want to be sure that the interests of the hikers get included. I'm a little bit concerned that looking at some of the comments that we saw earlier that there's a clear awareness of how the revenue of the park flows. I saw several things that I thought, well, that'd be pretty cool, but I'm not quite sure where the money will come from for that. I would like to see perhaps at least awareness or better awareness on people's point of view of revenue structure of the park. And ideally, it would be nice to see a pressure eased off of the campgrounds and onto the people that are really using the park on a daily basis.

Dan Dwyer: I represent the mountain bike association. But perhaps more importantly, my 35-years as user of the park. I spent the first 10 years using the park on cross-country skis before I

even had a mountain bike. In the last 20 years I have predominantly mountain biked. I applaud the state for actually using this process for developing a plan and for public awareness. Even though I've been in the park for 35 years, I learned a tremendous amount through the interaction with the team. So thank you for all of the knowledge of propagated through the various meetings within the report. I think the staff has a really strong understanding of who the users are and what the needs are and there's good vision and understanding amongst staff. I also want to touch on the trail project review process. Every single one of our projects has been executed consistently with the process defined by the state. It's a really good collaborative relationship we have, we strongly appreciate the resources that's been available to us and we responded in kind. The vast majority of volunteer work done is maintenance to make existing trails more sustainable and to put an infrastructure that helps all users. I'm optimistic that as we put proposals forth in the future, as we've been doing for years, that all due considerations will be given whether it's wildlife considerations, other user group's needs, or relief for other resources in the park to potentially spread out the various users and enhance the experience for everybody.

Tom Dimaggio: Musher's have kind of fallen off as a user group. Due to other people needing to use the park and plow one of the main roads. But in recent years it's become apparent to us that there's a lot of opportunity in the park, and we look forward to enhancing those opportunities in using the trails. One final thing is I just want to thank all the people who have done a lot of work to make this process go.

Wendy Weisiger: I just want to recognize the entire team from the state who put this plan together. This is a very comprehensive plan and it's really well done. It's an extremely difficult thing to put together a plan that addresses so many uses of a forest. I didn't realize until we started this process just how much is actually happening out there. This is probably one of the more difficult places to manage in terms of a State Park, just because there are so many things happening in terms of wildlife, forestry and recreation. I applaud you guys for working that all into a management plan. You have identified some things recreationally that I think are going to make great improvements that some other folks have asked about in terms of mountain biking and user experience. You've identified areas of concern for wildlife and I really do hope you work to protect those areas. You did a nice job connecting forestry and how it benefits recreation. I know you have plans to put out iron rangers, but when you do be specific, with what projects the funds are appropriated.

Eric Off: Appreciate all the hard work of the staff and others. Thanks to the public for participating tonight.

Armand Verville: Need to pay attention to the museum complex. Glad that Bear Hill is being restored. Park staff is doing a good job and wanted to thank everybody who worked on the plan.

Director Patrick Hackley: It has just been a real pleasure to hear the comments. It is an extensive plan and shows how well loved this park really is. It has just been a good experience tonight to hear from the public. There's still some work to be done to finalize the plan, however, with the input from the public and the steering committee, I think it's going to be a great plan that we can use to guide us and management going forward.

Director Phil Bryce: Thanks to all the steering committee members and agency staff for your work. The pressure is going to continue to increase at the park and this plan is going to be very important in helping make sure we continue to make progress.

David Labbe: I love the park, spent a lot of time there. I really appreciate the work you and the team has put on this. Some of the things I really thought were great. I like that you are trying to identify areas in the park for different users, right now it's like I feel like the mountain bike parking lot has a lot of pressure on that one spot and everyone moves from that spot.

Johanna Lyons closing statements: Public comments are due by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Once all the comments are in, the technical team will prepare what we call a common analysis. Which means we take the comments and put them in bulk categories so that we can try to identify issues or problems. The technical team will meet to discuss and make revisions to the draft plan sometime in May. We're hoping to meet with a steering committee in late June so that they can make a recommendation to Commissioner Stewart on the adoption of the plan.

Next meeting tentatively planned for Thursday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm

Dan Dwyer moved to adjourn the meeting; Armand Verville seconded the motion, the meeting was closed.

Meeting Ends: 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Christina Barton, Park Manager  
Johanna Lyons, Park Planner