

Director's Report
STATE PARKS SYSTEM ADVISORY COUNCIL
Division of Parks and Recreation
June 14, 2018

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- See **Comparative Statement of Parks & Retail Income** covering 07/01/17 to 05/31/18
- See **Comparative Camping Report FY2008-FY2018**
- **State Park Plate** As of 06/02/2018, there are 8,295 State Parks Plates registered; FY 2017 revenues earned are \$545,190; FY- YTD 2018 revenues earned as of 05/31/2018 are \$620,605.
- **Donations** The online Donation Program commenced in Dec 2016. FY2017: 1,307 donors, \$8,988 (an error in the online system resulted in few donations taken in Dec; the error was fixed); FY2018: 2,113 donors, \$14,168. The Director sends a signed letter of thanks with encouragement to purchase a state parks license plate to NH donors.

FRANCONIA NOTCH STATE PARK/CANNON MOUNTAIN

- **Cannon** ski season had a strong finish in March and April that offset losses in January and February. Cannon finished within 5% of last winter season and 5% ahead of its 7-year winter averages. Cannon should finish between \$250K and \$450K net positive depending on the timing of a couple of key payments. Cannon has finished positive in 9 out of last 11 years.
- Next year's **winter season pass sales** are up 57% (revenue) and 70% (volume) as of June 4th.
- Construction on the new **ski patrol hut** project will commence this year and be ready for the opening of the 2018-2019 ski season.
- A new five-year contract with a food and beverage vendor at **Franconia Notch / Cannon** will include a half-million dollar joint capital plan.
- The **Flume Gorge** \$1.7M renovation is nearly complete. The retail shop and restrooms were expanded, a winter entry was added, and the parking lots paved. Retail is booming thus far with the Flume Gorge off to a solid start this spring / summer season.
- A proposal for a new playground at **Lafayette Campground** has been accepted after 10 years in the making. Installation is scheduled for September following Governor and Council approval.
- **Echo Lake Beach** is experimenting with promoting midweek days and weekend visitation is decent thus far. Boat rentals are fairly brisk on weekends with the high season approaching.
- **Hiker parking** on Rte. 93 has not been a major issue yet, but may become far more robust as summer kicks in. An RFI was issued to solicit transportation companies to provide information for a shuttle service however there have been no responses.
For more information: <http://www.nhstateparks.org/visit/state-parks/franconia-notch-state-park.aspx>
- Underwood Engineering is undertaking a study of the septic system for the **Cannon Mountain** Summit Station. They will recommend how best to treat sewage from the mountain station during the winter months.

- Other Capital Projects: \$900K (non-general fund) in **infrastructure projects** headed to G&C for approval on June 20; \$200K (non-general fund) new **Patrol Hut** atop Cannon to be ready by December; and \$180K (non-general fund) **Aerial Tram** upgrade project to be completed this fall.
- Parks and the Appalachian Mountain Club have entered into negotiations regarding their lease of the **Lonesome Lake Hut** site in the park. A final appraisal report by DRA is nearing completion.

BUREAU OF TRAILS

- **Grant-in-Aid (GIA)** program paid out just over \$1 million dollars to snowmobile clubs for winter grooming of NH's snowmobile trails. GIA accepted two new OHRV clubs into the program—Mt. Pisgah ATV and the New England Mud Hawgs. The GIA program awarded over \$255,000 to clubs to help repair damages caused by last October's severe storm.
- **October storm cleanup** It is expected that an additional \$115,000 will be needed to finish repairs. The Bureau is working with FEMA for reimbursement of these expenses.
- Chief Gamache and Lisa Meffert attended the NH Off-Highway Vehicles' (**NHOHVA**) annual meeting in Warren on April 14. Twenty of NH's twenty-two NHOHVA-affiliated clubs were represented and the Association's new Executive Board members were elected.
- **RTP projects** The Bureau has nominated two RTP projects—The Cotton Valley Rail Trail and the Harris Center for Conservation Education's bridge project for the National RTP Achievement Awards. The next round of Recreational Trails Program grant applications are on-line and due to the Bureau on June 23rd; for funding in 2019.

BUREAU OF PARK OPERATIONS

Great North Woods

- **Coleman Estates** finished a strong winter season and a significant increase in revenue for the entire park over the same time period as last year of over \$12,000. The "Schoolhouse" renovation was completed this spring to serve as a function venue, numerous reservations have already been made for this year for weddings and other events.
- **Coleman State Park Campground** this past Memorial Day Weekend was 100% full for the first time in over a decade, with almost all of the visitors being ATV riders there to access the Ride the Wilds trail network.
- **Moose Brook State Park** Bathhouse renovation and addition of showers was completed on the Friday of Memorial Day Weekend just as campers were arriving for the parks opening weekend. The structure was rehabilitated by Ray's Electric of Berlin and park staff, as well as customers, are thrilled at the positive results from the project. This \$ 384,000 renovation was funded entirely by surplus operating funds.
- The **wind storm** from October 29, 2017 took a major toll on the majority of the Northern Region state parks, with subsequent winter storms causing more damage through what turned out to be a long winter of deep snows. The deep snow that lingered late into April

and early May caused significant delay with arrival of planned park staff and contracted cleanup crews, and delayed openings for Moose Brook (3 weeks), much of Lake Francis (for 2-3 weeks) , and Deer Mtn. (5 weeks) Campgrounds.

- **Storm damage** also affected Milan Hill, Mollidgewock, Umbagog, Jericho, and Forest Lake State Parks that required heavy cleanup at those areas, but was isolated to specific areas that only caused closure of individual campsites and areas that did not delay opening of those parks.
- **Ellis Camps at Umbagog** weathered winter well and were opened to the public on Memorial Day weekend with just routine spring cleanup. The cabins have quickly gained popularity since opening last year and are showing a nearly 90% reservation booking through Labor Day Weekend. The Bathhouse construction project continues towards a fall of 2018 planned start date, a contractors' pre-bid meeting occurred on June 5th at the park which was attended by 3 companies. Bids are due on June 20. Construction is scheduled to start in September.

Central Region

- Central Region is all geared up for the season. A new small walk-in retail store opened at **Wellington** so customers can see what we have to offer and to generate increased revenue.
- The boat rental building was moved off the beach at **Sunapee** and will be used at the campground to offer the campers some retail items there.
- A wetlands survey was completed at **Sunapee Beach** to determine what areas might be available for additional boat trailer parking.
- New Kubota RTVs were added to **Wellington** and **Ellacoya** to help staff get around the parks and to rake the beach areas.
- Plans for the replacement of the toppled concrete retaining wall along the shore of Lake Winnepesaukee at the RV park in **Ellacoya State Park** will be out to bid on June 12. Construction is scheduled for September.

Seacoast Region

- Parks around the state are still dealing with storm clean-up from the past few months. At **Hampton Beach**, the annual beach grading took place to bring the beach back to its usual prime condition. The Piping Plovers returned to nest. The Sand Sculpting event has started its setup.
- **Parking Meters** have been installed and operating as of the beginning of April at beach-side parking lots, and the summer staff arrived.
- **North Hampton** repairs to the lost parking lot are complete and the beach opened in May. We've received a lot of positive feedback on the restoration.
- **Jenness** received a fresh coat of pavement to repair areas damaged due to Winter Storm Riley. Construction is scheduled to start in September. A small staircase was built at the northern end of seawall that will be removed in the winter but will reduce the number of people walking down the parking lot to access the beach.

- Our partners at the Seacoast Science Center (SSC) held the annual “Rescue Run” at **Odiorne Point** State Park with a record turnout. They will be holding the “World Ocean Day” celebration on June 10th at Odiorne, which includes free admission into the Park.
- The review and approval of the operating plan for the **Seacoast Science Center** is nearing completion. In addition, Parks and the Center are working closely together on ensuring alignment in the Center’s new strategic plan.

South Region

- The **Bear Brook** Park Manager was hired from a selection of internal candidates.
- **Miller** opened for the season on April 14th. **Pawtuckaway** opened May 1 followed closely by **Greenfield** and **Bear Brook** on May 4 for camping, and **Chesterfield Gorge** opened for the season on May 5.
- **Monadnock** is busy with spring hikers and was a popular destination for the April 22 “Meet the Mountain Day” hosted by Antioch State College. The design for the addition to the main toilet building reached the 35% review on June 8. Plans call for winterized toilet rooms, a family bathroom and a heated gear changing room.
- Plans for renovating the old 4-H toilet building at **Bear Brook’s Bear Hill Camp** are being developed with the idea that construction could be done by the DD&M crew. This is part of an overall effort to restore the site and open up it up to public camping.
- The accessible horse mount ramp at Hayes Field in **Bear Brook** was completed in May.

Mount Washington

- Open for the 2018 season, the **retail and concession** areas are under the new leadership of Meg Hilton. She has taken on the project with great enthusiasm and has her staff up and ready.
- The mountain operations team has all of the **buildings open and ready** for the public and the waste water and water systems are prepared for the crowds. The early season guests have been pleased with the experience despite some interesting weather patterns.
- The **Mount Washington Commission** is reviewing ownership issues at the summit with the Attorney General’s office.
- Studies are nearing review and completion regarding expanding **septic capacity**.

BUREAU OF HISTORIC SITES

- There was a small electrical fire in the attic of the Mines Building at **Fort Constitution**. The building is leased to UNH for use as a marine biology lab and UNH has accepted responsibility for clean-up and repair of the building. Parks inspected the site and provided direction to UNH regarding repairs in this historic building.
- The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. was awarded the **Nansen Ski Jump/Wayside** contract to prepare a National Historic Landmark (NHL) nomination.
- Painting of the **Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion** visitor center is complete. The new Alaskan yellow cedar roof on the Mansion is one third complete. Every shingle had to be hand dipped in red stain to get the correct finish for the roof.

- An RFQ was just released for consultants to create all new interpretive signs at **Livermore Falls** Easton’s West. The RFQ due date is 6/27/18.
- All four of the new **retail operations** are doing very well.
- Plans have been developed for replacement of the entire roof structure of the generator building at the **White Island Light Station**. The bidding schedule is being coordinated around the tern nesting season and the onset of rough winter seas.
- The Nansen Ski Club has expressed interest in expanding their activities at **Milan Hill State Park** to the newly renovated ski jump.

COMMUNITY RECREATION OFFICE

- Parks staff participated with the Division of Travel and Tourism Development in staffing a display at the **Montreal Outdoor Adventure Show (OAS)** in April.
- The Division enjoyed participating in **WildNH Day** hosted at NH Fish & Game on April 25. F&G reports record crowds enjoying the free and family-friendly event with over 10,000 attending. Close to 3,000 s’mores were prepared and handed out to the non-stop line at our booth as kids, parents, and the Governor were greeted by Parks mascot “Chumley”.
- **LWCF** Grant Round 29 applications have been scored and selected. A total of 12 projects were selected with funding separated into two phases. Current available funds will be able to fund the first 7 projects. Application are currently being compiled for National Parks Service (NPS) approval for:

City of Franklin	Mill City Park at Franklin Falls	\$ 200,000.00
Town of Newmarket	Landroche Field Splash Pad and Bath House	\$ 199,407.00
Town of Lincoln	Riverfront Park	\$ 200,000.00
Town of New Boston	New Boston Rail Trail Rehabilitation	\$ 100,000.00
Town of Plaistow	Plaistown Area Recreation Complex Trail Net	\$ 51,500.00
Town of Salisbury	Maplewood Field - Bleachers & Playground	\$ 25,000.00
Town of Littleton	Littleton Health Park	\$ 200,000.00

- Once the FY18 apportionment is released we will plan to fund the remaining 5 projects:

Town of Windham	Moeckel Pond Dam Reconstruction	\$ 150,000.00
Town of Auburn	Eddows Recreation Fields	\$ 78,995.00
City of Somersworth	Jules Bisson Park Rejuvenation	\$ 45,000.00
Town of Milford	Melendy Road Pedestrian Underpass	\$ 62,196.50
Town of Moultonborough	Kraime Meadow Park Facilities	\$ 62,500.00

- The **Volunteer Program** has reported just over 1,000 volunteer hours for the calendar year, through May. Amongst the highlights of work completed thus far, includes:
 - Southern New Hampshire University organizing multiple staff volunteer work days, including campsite Spring cleaning at Bear Brook State Park, nor’easter storm clean up at Rye Harbor State Park, painting benches for the Seacoast, and an upcoming work day at Kingston State Park.

- Other businesses have helped with additional nor'easter clean-up efforts at Rye Harbor State Park (ARS Restoration), painting and clean up with our Friends group at Fort Stark Historic Site (CommuniTyler), Campground Spring Cleaning at Pawtuckaway State Park (Medtronic), and we're working with Eversource to set up a volunteer work day at Mount Washington State Park in July, assisting with invasive plant species removal.
- Our Friends Groups and Trail Clubs have all also helped our staff in getting Parks and trails cleaned up and ready for the season around the State.
- An ADA accessible horse mount was completed in Hayes Field at Bear Brook State Park. The idea was initiated by and the materials supplied by the Derry Trail Riders with our own staff completing the construction. It was utilized for the Derry Trail Riders Spring Ride in May and a ribbon cutting will take place this Fall.
- In coordination with our Friends groups and user groups, new trails have been approved and will be constructed this season at Bear Brook State Park and Pisgah State Park and significant trail improvements will be made at Cathedral Ledge State Park.
- For the second year, the Division of Parks and Recreation has purchased an **insurance policy** to protect 15 volunteering organizations with liability coverage while they are engaged in approved activities on Department lands.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

- In addition to the above listed construction projects \$240,000 has been spent on **Seacoast Storm Damage** repairs and mitigations. The March 2-8 storm declaration by Homeland Security is pending Presidential signature for official FEMA declaration. All seacoast park areas have been repaired and opened.
- Active FEMA project # DR-4355-NH for the **October 30th, 2017 Wind and Rain Storms** include declarations for Belknap, Carroll, Coos, Grafton, Merrimack, and Sullivan counties. Within the declared area, 70 damaged areas have been identified. We are working with FEMA and Homeland Security on a final list with cost estimates by July 3rd.
- **Pit toilet vaults** have been installed at the Basin in Franconia Notch, Mollidgewock campground, and Milan Hill Campground. Vaults will be installed during June at Moose Brook, Miller State Park and Pillsbury. The new pit toilet cabs are under construction by B. Davis Construction of Peterborough and are currently at 85% complete.
- Bids for **re-roofing** multiple buildings at Bear Brook State Park including Bear Hill Camp, Spruce Pond dining hall, and the Bear Brook maintenance area are due on June 7. Roofing work is scheduled to commence this fall.

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

- The new **ReserveAmerica** equipment and programs were installed, and staff is excited about the new capabilities this will bring for collecting and reporting revenue.
- **Campground reservations** for Memorial Day Weekend were at 99% occupancy for online reservable sites and 93% occupied for onsite reservable and walk-ins, see table. Camping is up 8.89% YTD in revenue from FY17 totaling \$2,936,811 and on track to break \$3M in

revenue for the 2nd time in history (first time was FY17). Number of transactions (reservations & walk-ins) is up 8.92% YTD from FY17 totaling 38,017 reservations.

Campground % of booked reservable sites for Memorial Day weekend	
100%	Bear Brook
100%	Dry River
100%	Ellacoya
100%	Greenfield
100%	Hampton Beach
100%	Milan Hill
100%	Mollidgewock
100%	Moose Brook
100%	Pawtuckaway
100%	Umbagog
100%	White Lake
100%	Cannon
99%	Lafayette
96%	Lake Francis
95%	Coleman
95%	Jericho Mountain
95%	Monadnock/Gilson Pond
94%	Pillsbury
91%	Sunapee
25%	Wellington

- **Carrying Capacity Study** Director Bryce met with UNH to explore an RFP for the Carrying Capacity at Mount Washington and Monadnock. The materials submitted by UNH are under review.
- **Special Use Permits** 73 permits have been issued since January.
- **Legislation** [HB1104](#) regulatory permits and time limits under 541-A (Enrolled 05/23/18); [HB1365](#) OHRV on public ways (Senate ITL 04/26/18); [SB410](#) RE: Canoe fees. New Title: Study committee on creating a boat safe card (Signed by Governor, 05/30/18); [SB560](#) updating the state trails plan (House refer to Interim Study, 04/05/18); [HB1706](#) Lake Sunapee boat launch (ITL) ; [HB1696](#) Hampton Beach capital improvement fund (ITL).
- **Legal** Town of Hampton v. State of NH – AG’s Office filed a Motion to Dismiss; we are awaiting the court ruling. Dong Yeol Kim & Junghee Kim v. DRED, in which a tree fell on a camper, was settled in the amount of \$210K. While the campground was checked that year for hazard trees, a greater effort for hazard tree removal across the park system has been initiated.
- A **Chainsaw Policy** was completed for DNCR staff and volunteers.

- **Season passes** – Concord Office Season Pass sales, 12/01/17-06/07/18

Pass Type	Qty		Fee		Revenue
Gift Certificate	64	*	varies	=	\$4,406
Individual	30	*	\$60	=	\$1,800
Resident Family	77	*	\$105	=	\$8,085
Library Pass	50	*	\$105	=	\$5,250
Coupon Book	22	*	\$24	=	\$528
NR Family Pass	11	*	\$120	=	\$1,320
State Employee	4	*	\$30	=	\$120
Seacoast Parking	7	*	\$175	=	\$1,225
Total Rev =					\$22,734

- **Advertising** The summer campaign kicked off the week of May 16. The campaign consists of radio (NHPR), display ads and social media ads in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, other New England states and Northeast Canada. The campaign is targeting women 25-54 (because women make the travel decisions), outdoor enthusiasts and families. The NHPR pieces have promoted state parks license plate purchases.
- **Social Media** As of 06/07/18: Facebook Likes: 221,856; Twitter followers: 20.7k; Instagram followers: 22.3k.
- **Website** From 03/15/18-06/07/18: 368,473 total sessions; avg. 2:07 min/session – up by 10 seconds from this past winter ; 31.74% MA, (MA JUMPED AHEAD OF NH FROM THIS PAST WINTER) 30.04% NH, 8.37% NY, 5.11% CT, 3.47% ME; 26.96% age 24-34, 21.3% age 35-44, 18.78% age 45-54

NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Sarah Stewart** started as our new Commissioner of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources on June 4th.
- **Capital Budget presentation** is on Thursday, June 21st at 11:15 a.m., LOB Room 306-308
- **“Cannon80” celebration** slated for Friday, June 29th at the Aerial Tramway, please save the date! The actual 80-year anniversary of Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway & Ski Area is June 28th.

PAB/ttl-060818