



***Weeks State Park  
2012 Park Manager's Report and Season in Review  
Prepared by Rachel Bruce***

***Introduction to Weeks State Park:***

The State of New Hampshire's Department of Resources and Economic Development's Division of Forest and Lands, Bureau of Parks, Bureau of Historic Sites, and Bureau of Trails cooperatively manage Weeks State Park. Another valuable agency is the Department of Transportation, which manages the scenic auto road.

Modeling and promoting environmental stewardship, the management of Weeks State Park is as wonderfully diverse as the park's natural landscape and visitor experiences. With a crew of dedicated professionals, the park's management team works diligently and collaboratively in order to improve infrastructure, while improving visitor recreational and educational experiences, historical interpretation, and natural landscapes and features. To learn more about the park's history and John Wingate Weeks, and for a detailed list of what the park offers visitors, please visit the park website at [www.nhstateparks.org](http://www.nhstateparks.org).

***Season in Review:***

The 2012 season brought back many wonderful and dedicated park visitors who made their customary walk, run, bike, hike, and/or drive to the top of Mt. Prospect. On the very first operational day of the season in May, staff and park patrons were pleasantly surprised to be greeted by a cow moose trotting down the auto road. As always, park staff is excited to greet and host visitors, even the wild ones. Park patrons come to Weeks State Park from all over the world. Some of our most distant visitors this season included residents from: Texas, Montana, California, Hawaii, Australia, Russia, Africa, and England. Every park patron who visits our unique site seems to be hypnotized by the gorgeous views from a-top of Mt. Prospect. On a special note, Weeks State Park is a park where dogs are most welcome. Once at the summit, our dog patrons will normally find a bowl of fresh water, a biscuit or two, and they even receive a friendly "pat" down by staff.

We have an update on our bat population in the carriage barn (auto garage). Emily Preston Brunkhurst, a NH Fish and Game Wildlife Biologist, has identified the bats. They are the northern long eared species. She said they normally roost in trees in the summer and in caves and mines in the winter. She added that this bat species has been decimated by white-nose syndrome, so she was very happy to learn we have a small colony at the park.

This past autumn was filled with many wet, foggy, and cold weekends. Unfortunately, this caused our overall visitation numbers to decrease. On a positive note, we did host two beautiful weddings this fall, accommodating an additional 200 visitors. Our final visitation numbers included 1,112 tours conducted with 4,847 people visiting the park. We were open a total of 76 days, and our operating schedule included five days a week for 10 weeks and 2 days a week for 5 weeks. We were also open for 4 holidays and kept the park open late for the Weeks State Park Association's 10 Thursday evening programs.

As always, we like to thank our dedicated park patrons who help us keep special watch on the park. Spring, summer, fall, or winter, these patrons routinely help the park by reporting if something at the park is out of place or needs attention. Suggestions and feedback from the public are always highly valued. Feedback and suggestions help us make operational changes and improvements to park features, and protect park fauna and flora. Thank you to the Mt. Prospect Ski Club, Lancaster Snow Drifters Club, and to the Heritage Trail volunteers for all their contributions in providing and improving park visitor experiences. Hopefully, we will have more snow this winter!

Once again, park staff put on all their different hats and performed a great job this past season. We are very grateful to John Dotski, Serena Bruce, and our newest staff member, Derek Roberts, for all their contributions and for being so diverse and flexible in responsibilities. Also responsible for much of the work performed at Weeks State Park is the Great North Woods Management Area supervisors- Sandy Young and Andrew Zboray. In addition, we are also always grateful to Forest and Lands' Captain John Accardi and the Northern District Forester Maggie Machinist. Thank you Sandy, Andrew, John and Maggie for your superior guidance, skills, and knowledge. Also, a big thank you to NH DOT, and Brian Schutt, District Engineer, for their quality work and direction with many road related issues.

We are also thankful to our friend's group, the Weeks State Park Association, for their continued annual support of \$200.00 to have the exterior upper museum windows professionally cleaned and for the e-Picture frame for the museum. In addition, we appreciate their work in the organization of the quality annual Thursday evening program series, and the exceptional park wildflower and bird walks.

A very special thank you to our Historic Sites' Director, Ben Wilson, for his outstanding support and professional direction. Mr. Wilson has made many of the park's improvements, special events, and the park's positive future outlook possible. His continued efforts in ensuring that the restoration project takes place has been a monumental task and one that he has made happen. Without Mr. Wilson, there would be no restoration plans or funding for Weeks State Park. Thank you Ben for being dedicated and having the perseverance and positive attitude in seeing this very important project through.

**Some of the many accomplishments at the park this season include:**

- Assisted the Trail's Bureau with maintenance of the park's trail system: replaced and updated the park's trail signs and posts, cut and removed fallen trees, and opened up some trail heads.
- Worked (and still working) with the Department of Transportation to seek a resolution to the safety hazard at the entrance of the park and Rt. 3. DOT blasted rock to increase the line of sight for drivers, and park staff kept tall grass and weeds cut back (some improvement made but the hazard still exists).
- NH DOT Traffic Bureau quickly replaced the stolen and vandalized traffic signs.
- General maintenance and repairs throughout the park.
- Cut and removed brush and trees on the summit, weed-whacked and mowed several major areas in the park.
- Continue to improve the tennis court area and several scenic overlooks.
- Organized and setup museum for special events and Thursday evening programs.
- Conducted traffic detail for Thursday evening programs and for special events.
- Maintained park gardens and cleaned tower.
- Repaired and painted picnic tables, benches, and signs.
- The Bureau of Historic Sites purchased a large screen television and DVD player for the museum.
- Continued the design and planning process for the restoration project of the summit buildings.
- Andrea Fitzgerald, reporter for the Bridge Weekly, wrote an exceptional article on Weeks State Park (we greatly appreciated the positive publicity for the park. The pictures were both fun and impressive).
- Hosted several special events/meetings: Park Advisory, Weeks Family conservation plaque dedication by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Ms. Barb's Nature Song's Program (Barbara Desroches, musician and educator), two weddings, and ten Thursday evening programs.

**What is in Weeks State Park's future?**

A shuttle service for the Thursday evening programs is a possibility. We are working collaboratively with our friends, the Weeks State Park Association and their Board of Directors, to look into the feasibility of a shuttle service starting in the summer of 2014. The state has recommended this idea to the board and several board members are in strong favor of the shuttle. The shuttle would provide service to program attendees from the lower parking areas to the front entrance of the museum on the summit, where the free programs are held upstairs in the great room. The association would pay for this service, which would be extremely helpful to many elderly and disabled attendees. We will be discussing the feasibility of such a low-cost service over this winter.

Collaborating with partner agencies and volunteers, we will continue to expand special event and educational programming, increase outreach, maintain and improve nature trails, add interpretive features, add interactive elements and audio/visual content to the museum and tours, improve on park signage, publicity, and operational information, complete major building renovations and repairs, improve habitat for park flora and fauna, and complete a winter timber cut and sale.

We are very excited about the 2013 season. Looking forward to the completion of the renovation project in the fall, we will have much to celebrate. Donations for the park or for the restoration project are always welcome and very much appreciated. If you would like to make a donation, please contact the Bureau of Historic Sites at 271-3556. For park updates and further information, please visit the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation website at [www.nhstateparks.org](http://www.nhstateparks.org) or contact park headquarters at 271-3556.

Thank you again for another great season at such a beloved park. It is my privilege to serve the public.

Sincerely,

*Rachel M. Bruce*

Weeks State Park Manager