

Monadnock Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date: February 5, 2015

Time: 4:00 pm

Location: Jaffrey Civic Center

ATTENDEES	AGENDA
✓ Ann Royce (Town of Jaffrey)	1. Welcome & Introductions
✓ Beth Kintz (Monadnock State Park)	2. Review of minutes from previous meeting
✓ Carrie Deegan (SPNHF)	3. MAC Financial Report
✓ Dave Adams (Town of Troy)	4. Division of Parks & Recreation update
✓ Don Upton (Town of Troy)	5. Monadnock SP Manager's update
✓ Ed Germain (Town of Dublin)	6. Monadnock SP Volunteer Program update
✓ Hiel Lundquist (Town of Fitzwilliam)	7. SPNHF update
✓ Jane Difley (SPNHF)	8. MERE update
✓ John Smith (Town of Jaffrey)	9. Mountain Patrol recertification courses
<input type="checkbox"/> Ken Desmarais (Forests & Lands)	10. Elect new Commission Chairperson
✓ Peter Palmiotto (Antioch, MERE)	11. Open Floor
✓ Phil Bryce (Parks & Recreation)	12. Adjourn
<input type="checkbox"/> Polly Pattison (Town of Marlborough)	
✓ Robin Haynes (Chair, Town of Fitzwilliam)	Guests:
<input type="checkbox"/> Sterling Abram (Town of Dublin)	
✓ Tara Blaney (Parks & Recreation)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Will Abbott (SPNHF)	
✓ George Frame (SPNHF)	
✓ Wendy Weisiger (SPNHF)	

1. Welcome & Introductions

Welcome by MAC chair. Moment of silence for Charlie Royce.

2. Review of minutes from previous meeting

Two changes/additions to be made to the minutes. The committee voiced that if at all possible the new bathroom unit to be built at the park headquarters should be a composting unit and made available all year. Also, the minutes should reflect that the box for the iron ranger at the Gap South parking needs to be replaced. Park Manager added that all of the iron ranger boxes are being replaced by the spring. Moved to accept minutes, seconded, and passed by verbal vote.

3. MAC Financial Report

One expenditure to Keene Medical Supply for oxygen. Balance on hand \$3,968.31. No vote to accept financial report as there was not an opportunities to make changes.

4. Division of Parks & Recreation update

Based on feedback from MAC, Division staff looked at several options for where the new toilet facility should be placed. There has been talk about creating a large visitor center near the current location of the park store. This structure could be added onto over time and would include additional toilet facilities. Monadnock State Park is in need of and worthy of a large facility similar to the visitor center at the Flume. However, funding for this type of project (\$2-5,000,000) may prove to be difficult and the lack of toilet facilities at the park headquarters is a problem that needs to be dealt with now. A new toilet building could be constructed near the "Old Toilet Building" and service the visitors parked in the second parking lot. It was concluded that a composting toilet building will be constructed in the area of the OTB (which will be converted and used as storage). This new facility will be able to be utilized all year. A question was raised about what kind of composting toilets were going to be installed. There has not been a decision made yet since the project has not been put out to bid. However, the Division has been talking to Clivus about different design options and requirements.

In addition to toilet building discussion, parking was also discussed. The gravel parking lot (Lot #2) would be expanded and reconfigured to better allow visitors to self-park. A center island would be created that would allow for trees, grass and picnic tables. On each side of the island there would be two rows of angled parking. Picnic tables would also be available on each outer edge of the parking lot. These tables would be mainly used as places for people to lay out their gear and prepare for their hike as picnicking is not a popular activity at Monadnock. The current picnic area would also be reconfigured to allow for additional parking. There is no timeline for this project. Parking was discussed as part of the Master Planning process. This current parking project would work towards upgrading the existing parking options. Currently, parking at the park headquarter is very labor intensive for park staff. With the creation of these new parking layouts park staff hours could be used in a more productive manner. Plans moving forward will use the Master Plan as a guide.

There has been discussion about the existing picnic pavilion. It is in really rough shape. Should it be removed? Should it be salvaged? The current thinking is to save as much of the existing pavilion as possible and rebuild it by the Main Toilet Building. That location is where most people congregate before and after their hike. This would centralize where people are. Reconfiguring the driveway up to the office could be a part of this project of moving the pavilion. Currently, in front of the office looks like a maintenance area as opposed to the entrance of a park. This area is used for parking park vehicles, staff parking, bus parking, and 15 minute parking. The pavilion needs to be at least repaired as it is becoming unsafe for the public to be around. However, the consensus is that there may not be enough usable material in the current structure. It may cost more to renovate than to build a new structure. The current location is disjointed from where people congregate. It is out of the way.

The campsites at the park headquarters are not on Reserve America and not rented. This doesn't make sense as the Division is trying to increase revenue. They are only utilized during the winter months or as overflow. This is due to the concern of mixing Family camping with Youth Group use of the area. The camping opportunities at the Gilson Pond Area will be made 100% reservable through Reserve America and the family sites 1-7 and park headquarters will be first-come first serve, walk in sites. Current use at GPA shows walk-in sites rented almost every weekend so the interest is there why not make them reservable and shift the walk-in use to the headquarters. At headquarters, Youth Group camping and Family camping are in two separate loops. If there were only a few youth group sites taken, sites 1-7 would be rented for first-come first-serve. If the youth group camping was full, sites 1-7 would not be rented. Camping would need to be available for Trails Week volunteers. Since they are walk-in only, this shouldn't be a problem. If they were to be reservable, a block would need to be put on those sites. If walk-in occupancy isn't what is expected the sites would be made reservable and block out the weekends when the sites are needed for volunteers.

The Division is in negotiations with the Town of Jaffrey regarding the lease agreement for the property on the mountain. There is another parcel down by the base that has the Poole Reservoir dam. The Division is not interested in adding this parcel to the lease. The Division has always felt that a State Park is an asset to

the local community. This can be show in property tax values. Does the town feel the same way? Some of the messaging the Division is getting from Jaffrey town government is that the park is more of a burden on the town rather than an asset to the local community. The language of the original lease talks about the state having the knowledge and the resources to manage this type of property and it would be in the best interest of the town if the state managed the property on Monadnock. There will be another one year extension to the existing lease. This will be voted on during the upcoming town meeting.

Why is it called "Park Headquarter" rather than "Main Entrance"? Park headquarters sounds like a maintenance/administrative office area where the public would not be welcomed. It wasn't called park headquarters until the campground at GPA was developed. It was decided to change it to Main Entrance.

The Old Toll Road saw the old concrete slab for the booth removed and the new one installed by Mountain Shade. The contractor also made improvement to the drainage for the parking lot and trenched in the utility lines for the new toll booth. This work cost \$18,000. The new toll booth was installed by the end of December and cost \$6,000. In regards to the potential bus stop at OTR, according to Mass DOT, if we do not want it we don't have to have it. The proposed bus schedule would not work for our operation. There are no facilities available for people waiting for the bus. This may pose a security/safety risk. It was decided that this is not a good idea.

5. Monadnock SP Manager's update

Review of the Manager's annual report: Park Headquarters brought in just shy of \$500,000 and 80,000 visitors. Gilson Pond brought in \$51,000 and just under 4,000 day use visitors. The Old Toll Road collected about \$73,000 and had 15,000 visitors. The iron rangers at the back trail heads and Gap collected just under \$2,000. The report will be sent out electronically to all MAC members.

First day hike went well. Nice winter day (no snow). There were 80 participants. There were two hike options, one shorter interpretive hike, and one hike out to Little Mountain.

The beginning of winter saw little snow but a lot of ice showed a steady inflow of novice hikers. Stime was spent making sure people were prepared for icy climb ahead. Retail revenue selling Microspikes is high. Many high visitation winter weekends hitting \$1,000 in day-use collections.

Spring projects include tiling the floor of the MTB and installing "new" stall partitions. Heavy clean-up and work (dead tree removal, picnic table replacement, painting pit toilets) at both Annett State Park and Rhododendron State Park. Installation of fire rings at R3-R5 at Gilson Pond Campground. Installation of large group sized fire rings and grills at the youth group sites. There is a division wide push to have staff on for a longer season providing that personnel rules allow this type of scheduling. This will allow for more maintenance projects to be completed and for bathroom facilities to be open longer.

6. Monadnock SP Volunteer Program update

Almost all of the trailheads have been adopted out (six trails need to be adopted.)The program logged 1,399.25 volunteer hours (trail work, park ops, mtn patrol, interpretive activities, training, and coordinator hours). Most of the hours are logged by the trail adopters (maintaining the trail corridor, drainage and water bar maintenance, installing bog bridges, brushing in of boot legged trails, blazing, cairn maintenance, graffiti removal, and removing and clearing winter storm damage). One of the trails that is still in need of an adopter is the White Dot. It would be nice to have it adopted by the start of the summer season. Since it requires a lot of care and attention it may be best if an organization adopted it.

Mountain Patrol responded to 25 involved search & rescue calls. Over 300 staff hours were logged of calls (this does not include hours spend on prevention). Many calls were for lower body injuries (ankle) however, there were several medical cases in which DHART assisted. The park/Division is working on obtaining a medical license. This will allow the mtn patrol staff to offer a higher standard of care and administer certain lifesaving medication (allergic reactions, heart attacks, asthma). Our medical control Doctor will be based

out of Keene. They will be available for consultations via phone as well as be able to supply our staff with supplies and training.

7. SPNHF update

The trail assessment has been completed by North Star Trails. The output of the assessment is meant to be interactive and adaptive. As projects are completed they can be updates on the interactive map/database which can be viewed on GIS software. The priorities of projects are displayed as colored dots on the map (green low priority, yellow medium, red high). The White Dot/Cross, Dublin, and Pumpelly trails have the most red level projects. This assessment will help prioritize work for trails week so work can be completed systematically. There needs to be a process to update the map as work is completed. What is the cost of the deferred maintenance? That depends on who does the work, volunteer vs paid professional crew. Toll Road money can be spent on professional crew to work on these identified projects and also to come up with a total dollar amount for all of the identified projects.

Projected budget

Trails week (10th anniversary)

Volunteer program

Trail work

Student/SCA crew

Professional crew \$20,000

There is a need for closer communication between SPNHF and NH Parks & Recreation when work starts to be completed.

In the process of completing forest management plans (habitat and timber) for the area outside the eco reserve (2,000 ft and higher, MERE has study plots as low as 1,800 ft) on Monadnock. Inventories have been completed this past fall. By the next MAC meeting SPNHF will have a good idea on whether or not there will be projects in these areas for the foreseeable future. Each identified project will have an outreach component. Some projects may include limiting ATV use on the property.

8. MERE update

Meet the Mountain Day scheduled for April 18th. The event will have a series of activities that will draw people to the park specifically for that event rather than trying to talk to people as they are starting their hike. There will be a botanical study happening over the summer as well as a study on Thoreau's Bog. There will also be a panel discussion on March 5th at Antioch on wilderness ethics to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Waterman Fund funding may be available to assist with trail work being done in the alpine zone above tree line.

9. Mountain Patrol recertification courses

Are there MAC funds available to assist the Park's mountain patrol staff to recertify their EMT licenses? These staff members hold the certifications specifically for their work at Monadnock. The total cost for CPR, EMT training comes to a total of \$310. Yes, this is a good idea. Motioned and seconded. The invoices will be submitted for reimbursement.

10. Elect new Commission Chairperson

No change necessary.

11. Open Floor

- a. Does the park pay a "payment in lieu of taxes" to the Town of Jaffrey? This is done elsewhere like Bear Brook. They make a payment to Allenstown (the town also has a notion that the park is a burden to the local community). They see the outflow of fire/police and don't realize the payments being made.

- b. Can you purchase a "Hike Safe" card at the park? No, that is a Fish & Game program. We do not have the authority to charge for rescue operations. That is Fish & Game's jurisdiction. May pursue this authority for the staff at Monadnock. Our mtn patrol is comparable to a lifeguard at a beach park.
- c. No attendance from Marlboro. A new representative needs to be appointed. The Division will draft a letter to send to the town asking for two representatives.
- d. Good feedback from the public on the new displays in the Visitor Center. Working on getting parks on TripAdvisor to hear more visitor feedback.
- e. Does Gilson Pond make money? Exact numbers not available at the time. Need to create more things to do at the campgrounds or in the surrounding area. This can be posted on the website. Camping revenues have not changed since 2011. The market is stagnant.
- f. Are the iron rangers being used now the old style or the new style? The old ones are currently in place.
- g. Should there be different day-use pricing based on location? If you park at a back trailhead should you be charged the same price as the developed trailheads? This is being looked at throughout the Division. SPNHF uses QR codes that link to their website for people to pay their user fee at several of their properties.
- h. When timber sales happen in state parks does that revenue go into the general fund or the state park fund? It portion is returned to the general fund. That is a set dollar value. The rest gets deposited in the management fund (boundary maintenance, road repairs, etc.)
- i. What is MAC going to do about the pipeline as it scheduled to go over the top of Little Monadnock in Rhododendron State Park as well as Annette State Forest? The Division has not received anything formal regarding this issue. No notification has been given. The agency sites on the site evaluation committee and can provide feedback.
- j. Next meeting is set for November 12th at 4pm at the Civic Center. Can there be another meeting on site at the park to continue the talk on the bathhouse and placement? Yes.

12. Adjourn