

**Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizen Committee
May 21, 2016
Pittsburg Fire Station**

Members Present:

Bing Judd, Chair
Steve Ellis
Merrill Dalton
Ramon DeMaio
Richard Moquin

Gene Chandler
Harry Brown
Paul Doscher
Rick Samson
Jeff Rose

Glenn Normandeau
Jim Gallagher
Matt Sampson

Members Absent:

Hasen Burns
Ken Hastings

Chairman Judd called to order at 10:00 am asking committee members and the public to rise for the pledge of allegiance.

A moment of silence was held to remember founding committee member Ron Hughes. The committee wanted to extend their appreciation of Ron's work with the committee and community.

Glenn Normandeau motioned to accept the minutes of the September 19, 2015 meeting as written, Harry Brown seconded the motion. There was no discussion and they were approved.

Monitoring Compliance

Regional Forester Maggie Machinist reported that there were 5 monitoring trips on the property and there are no issues per the easement. The annual meeting with the landowner was held on May 11, 2016.

Public Recreational Use/State Park Update

Sandy Young handed out his road summary report detailing work done. This spring it has been dry and there were few winter issues to address. Last year appx 50-60 miles of roads were graded. This year's AOP hasn't been finalized. Sandy & Chris met with the landowner to go over budgets, road reclassification, logging plans and where improvements can be made to benefit public use and timber management. Perry Stream Land and Timber was invited to coordinate land and public use management. The Fish & Game Department was invited later to coordinate the Natural Areas with the headwaters work and Trout Unlimited also participated to discuss a habitat restoration project on Indian Stream.

Work will continue on the Deer Mountain Fire Tower trail and overlook this summer with the Northwoods Stewardship Center youth employment program and the SCA NH Corps. At Lake Francis the remote sites proposed are still being worked on and a new dock/ramp system is being explored for the boat launch.

Region staff has been working with the Cohos Trail and the equestrian group. Final mapping of the equestrian trails is being completed and will be sent to the landowners for approval. A new multi-use trail (summer non-motorized/winter snowmobile) is in the planning stages to connect Coleman State Park with the CLH property.

Sandy is negotiating with two organizations (foot/bike race and a SUV club tour) who would like to hold events on the CLH property. He will consult with the landowner once he has details.

Phil Bryce, Director of Parks and Recreation, addressed the committee about road management. The number one issue for the Division is the maintenance and funding of the road system. Glenn Normandeau stated that the Natural Areas have the same issue.

Plan Revision

Johanna Lyons began her presentation with a reminder about management foundation documents, easement and 2007 Public Access & Recreation Management and Road Management Plans, and the roles & responsibilities of the Division, the citizen's committee and landowner. At the September meeting it was agreed rather than a full rewrite of the plan that an amendment could be done. Since then a technical team was convened composed of the state management agencies, landowner and representatives of the citizens committee and they identified management issues to bring to the public. Two public outreach meetings were held, one in Concord and the other in Pittsburg. Johanna then presented a PowerPoint of topics to the committee for discussion.

Scenic Vista: The Division will work with the landowner to identify important scenic vistas and cooperatively manage the vegetation in those areas to preserve view at Ruk's Look and Diamond Ridge.

Fees & Donations: The Division will install "iron rangers" at high use areas to collect donations for the maintenance of the areas.

Boat Management: The landowner has requested that the Division develop management strategy for the boats stored in and around the ponds. They would also like derelict boats removed and the property cleaned up. The basic outline is as follows

- Boats will be allowed to be left in a designated area one week before fishing season starts (or as soon as the roads open) to one week after fishing season ends.
- Boats must either have a NH registration number or owner's name and telephone number displayed.
- Boats left on site after fishing season is over will be removed by DPR and a towing/impound fee will be charged.
- Boats left after 90 day will be sent to NH Surplus Property program.

Comments:

- Matt Sampson offered to assist in the cleanup. He would like boat storage to occur on the F&G dam easement areas. He also could support the special use of ATVs or other motorized equipment to bring boats into more remote areas as long as it's coordinated.
- Harry Brown suggested that access to some remote ponds may only be by snowmobile.

Non-Motorized Trail Use

- Hiking: Sandy & Johanna met with the Cohos Trail Association to discuss their proposal. They are happy about the connector from Coleman and would like to continue to explore a hiking only trail through Whipple Ridge. If they move forward they will meet with F&G per their letter.
- Equestrian: New co-shared trail to connect Coleman to Cedar Stream Road. Continue to formalize the trails/parking areas outlined in the 2012 amendment.
- Fat Tire Bicycles: There has been a request to allow fat tire bicycles on snow covered trails in the non-motorized winter recreation area around Big Bog Brook. There is an easement issue that bicycles are only permitted on designated roads and not on trails. When the easement was written the innovation of fat tire bicycles was not contemplated and there is a question of intent.

Comments

- Paul Doscher questioned the shared use of the winter non-motorized trails with the snow shoers & skiers. He believes the tires will rut up the trails. Suggests further study.
- There did not seem to be support to send this use for evaluation if it is excluded by the easement.

ATV/UTV Riding on Designated Roads

- The Division proposes to continue primary and secondary routes across the property as approved in 2012.
- Great North Woods Riders ATV Club has presented a proposal to expand use;
 - Extend the trail system north to connect businesses.
 - Access to “special places” in the forest; Garfield Falls & Little Hellsgate Falls.
 - Change trail closing date to the Monday of Columbus Day weekend.
 - Extend operating hours until 10:00 pm.

Comments

- Matt Sampson: The current use is working well, however the proposal is too far reaching. It is incompatible to introduce ATV/UTV access to the falls. Does not support extending hours or dates of use.
- Darrin Jock: PSLT has agreed to keep the trail system on their property open longer if other landowners extended times & dates so they can connect out to the larger regional network.
- Glenn Normandeau: F&G is up to their eyeballs with ATV issues statewide and he will not support the expansion.
- Gene Chandler concurs with Glenn & Matt.
- Steve Ellis/Brendon McKeage: Pittsburg selectmen were approached about the proposal, however, people are concerned about noise in the summer when windows are open. They are looking to help businesses survive in the community. The Pittsburg PD budget was increased for holiday weekends.
- Harry Brown: People want to ride their ATVs to dinner & in the fall the sun goes down too early. Need to look at all funding available to support the trail/road network including RTP & GIA. Need to do road counts to see what is the use now and compare it to past counts. Need to do an economic impact study to show how it is helping the community.

Need to do speed assessments to be sure they are keeping to the 25 mph. When towns open their roads for ATV they should be responsible for policing and F&G should only do trails.

- Paul Doscher: What do other users think about the proposal? How much use can these areas take?
- Rick Samson: agree with landowner & F&G's comments.
- Tim Purrington, TransCanada: He would like to be part of the ATV subcommittee as a landowner that the trail could potentially cross.

Road Sub-Committee:

- Gene Chandler
- Harry Brown
- Rick Samson
- Glenn Normandeau
- Matt Sampson/John Steward
- Tim Purrington, TransCanada

Character of the Property

- Gene Chandler: Need to stop spending stewardship money on pit toilets & kiosks and spend it on the roads instead.
- Matt Sampson: Are Pittman-Robertson monies available for road maintenance to give hunters access? Glenn will look into it.
- Gene Chandler: Motion was made and withdrawn to prohibit the expense of stewardship money on the property until road funding is sorted out. Representative Chandler has requested research to see if the stewardship endowment can be used on the roads.
- Phil Bryce: Phil asked that the Division include a statement on what would happen if the kiosks & pit toilets or other public use facilities aren't installed.

Next Steps

- Additional study & sub-committee work over the summer.
- Alternative development, selected plan direction & action steps.
- Another meeting in the fall then public sessions.
- Submit amendment to landowner for approval in December 2016.

Other Business

- Jim Gallagher provided a quick update on DES management activities. Proposal for the Murphy Dam is still be evaluated and they are monitoring the TransCanada sale closely.

A motion to adjourn was made at 12:00 pm by Dick Moquin and seconded by Harry Brown, all were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Johanna Lyons, State Park Planning & Development Specialist