

## 10-year Master Plan Committee

Guy Gosselin – Public (Chair)  
Howie Wemyss – Auto Road  
Wayne Presby – Cog RR  
Tim Moore – Citadel Broadcasting

David Neely – USFS  
Mike Pelchat – State Park  
Scott Henley – MWO  
Walter Graff – AMC

To: Paul Fitzgerald, Chairman  
Mount Washington Commission

Paul:

I am pleased to submit the accompanying draft of a proposed 10-year plan to you and the Commission for consideration. The Committee opted for a broad, consultant-facilitated approach to the issue of developing a new view of the Mount Washington State Park that will maximize the experience of visitors, that will promote Mount Washington as the premier State attraction, and that will create a unifying design theme for needed improvements and new construction.

The Committee was not unanimous in that approach with one member continuing to hold the view that the Committee should itself provide the details of summit planning.

One important outcome of the Committee's work has been an examination of the original charge of the Mount Washington Commission. Atty. Suzanne Gorman, of the Office of the Attorney General, has provided a rewrite of the evolution of that charge, which appears in the Introduction to the 10-year plan.

Respectfully,

Guy Gosselin  
Chair

# MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION

## 10-YEAR PLAN

JANUARY 1, 2010

**INTRODUCTION:** On September 10, 2008, the Mount Washington Commission (MWC) created a Master Plan Committee and charged it with developing a 10-year plan for the summit of Mount Washington and submitting said plan to the MWC in September 2009. The master plan was to address the following issues:

- A. Capital improvements to be made over a ten-year period;
- B. The proposed operation of the summit by the MWC;
- C. Promotion of the use of the summit by the public as a recreational, historic, and scientific attraction;
- D. Protection of the unique summit environment;
- E. The negotiation of public and private rights upon the summit;
- F. Cooperative agreements between private interests and the Commission;
- G. Proposed amendments as may be desirable to the MWC enabling legislation being RSA 227-B.

Individuals appointed to serve on the Master Plan Committee were:

Guy Gosselin, Public – Chair  
Walter Graff, AMC  
Scott Henley, MWO  
Tim Moore, Citadel Broadcasting  
David Neely, USFS  
Michael Pelchat, State Park  
Wayne Presby, Cog RR  
Howie Wemyss, Auto Road

The Mount Washington Commission (MWC) was created July 2, 1969 (RSA ch. 227-B) to “manage the summit of Mount Washington property owned by the state of New Hampshire.” (Laws 1969, ch. 427.) The responsibilities of the MWC at that time included developing a 10-year master plan for the summit for submission to the Legislature in the 1971 session, that would encompass (a) capital improvements to be made by the State over a 10-year period, (b) the proposed operation of the summit by the commission, including fees to be charged for the facilities operated by the MWC, the method for collecting such fees, employment of personnel, franchises to be granted to concessionaires, and any other items deemed necessary to the proper operation of the summit by the MWC, (c) promoting the use of the summit by the public as recreational, historic or scientific attraction, (d) protection of the summit as to its unique flora and other natural resources, (e) the negotiation of public rights-of-way to the summit over private lands which benefit from the improvement of facilities on the summit, and (f) cooperative arrangements between private interests and the MWC relative to collection of fees, joint personnel and like subjects. (Laws 1969, 427:1.) The MWC was also charged

with collecting fees then being paid to the State for use and lease of state-owned facilities on the summit, supervising work done on the capital improvements authorized by the Legislature in 1969, and cooperating and consulting with the Division of Parks concerning the daily operation of the summit as carried on by the Division of Parks. *Id.*

The MWC submitted its proposed 10-year plan for operation and management of the summit on January 1, 1971. In the plan, the MWC recognized that the residual responsibility for the operation of the summit park is lodged with the Division of Parks, and that the authority to delegate this responsibility lies with the Legislature. The MWC also recognized that the authority to lease or concession activities within the summit park premises is lodged with the Division of Parks, with the approval of the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) and Governor and Council. However, given its charge of managing the summit, in addition to the specific recommendations for the improvement and operation of the summit property, the MWC recommended that the State continue to "consult and advise with a group of business and professional people oriented to the recreation industry in the Mt. Washington region who would be willing to assume the responsibility of a board of directors to the Mt. Washington State Park." (Mount Washington – A Ten Year Master Plan, 1971 at p. 27). The MWC recommended that the advisory board assume responsibility for the oversight of construction, including the operation of then existing facilities until the new structures were completed, and advise concerning new operating personnel, budgets and concessions, "providing the benefit of its experience and judgment in all matters relating to the operation of the State-owned facilities." *Id.* at 27-28.

In 1971, the Legislature amended MWC's enabling legislation essentially as recommended. The duties of the MWC now include consulting and advising with the Commissioner of DRED in the: (a) construction of buildings and improvements as may be authorized by the Legislature, (b) operation of the summit by personnel of the Division of Parks or by private interests as may be determined by the Commissioner of DRED, (c) negotiation of leases, agreements and franchise arrangements in the operation of the summit facilities, and (d) acquisition of privately owned land and buildings as may be authorized by the Legislature, including general oversight of the development of the 10-year master plan as implemented by the Legislature. (Laws 1971, 395:1.)

Further review of the MWC empowering legislation in 1990 resulted in an expansion of the MWC from 9 members to 11 to provide for individual representation of each of the entities identified in the statute with interests on the summit. (RSA 227-B:3.) The other powers and duties of the MWC, including collecting fees now being paid to the State for the use and lease of the state-owned facilities on the summit, supervising the work done on capital improvements authorized by the Legislature, cooperating and consulting with the Division of Parks concerning the daily operation of the summit, assisting in the promotion of the development and use of the summit and advising and assisting in the protection of the flora and other natural resources on the summit remain in effect today. (RSA 227-B:6.) The continued enablement of the MWC demonstrates the value placed by the Legislature upon the collective wisdom and knowledge of the members of the MWC in the management, operation and development of the summit. While the statute mandates only the original 10-year master plan, in accord with its advisory and oversight role, the MWC, with the approval of the Commissioner of DRED, now seeks to re-

evaluate the status of the implementation of the original master plan and develop of a new proposed plan for the coming decade.

According to its enabling legislation, the MWC is authorized to institute a promotional program to solicit and receive gifts, grants and donations for the development of the summit. (RSA 227-B:8.) The committee gave considerable thought to the creation of a special fund that would be a repository for any monies raised directly by the MWC through contributions or grants. The reason for a fund separate from the so-called Mount Washington Fund (RSA 227-B:9) was a misunderstanding of the nature of the Mount Washington Fund, which is a pass-through account utilized by the Mount Washington State Park. By statute, the Mount Washington Fund is the depository of all fees received from the MWC for the use or lease of state-owned facilities on the summit and any grants, gifts or donations made to the MWC. (RSA 227-B:9.) It has been determined through conversations with Ken Plourde, DRED Business Administrator, that a "sub-org" account designation would allow tracking of any dedicated monies placed in the Mount Washington Fund.

The above was written largely by Suzanne Gorman, Office of the Attorney General.

This plan is submitted ahead of schedule in the event that expenditures might be identified urgent enough to warrant inclusion in the upcoming biennium for which input would have to be submitted by the first week of July of this year.

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## THE TEN-YEAR PLAN – 2010 TO 2019

### **A. Capital improvements to be made over a 10-year period.**

The committee was able to identify certain needs, such as inadequate toilet facilities, crowding in the public area due to encroachment of gift shop space, and general deterioration of existing structures. Individual committee members also brought forth specific suggestions for covered walkways, redesign of interiors, and utilization or replacement of the Yankee building. Since this is a complex task involving special skill and knowledge, the committee recognized that the services of a consultant would be required to whom all existing and future input should be made available. This consultant could be a firm already in the service of the Department of Parks (DP). Accordingly, the first element of the proposed 10-year plan is:

*I. The Mount Washington Commission (MWC) will retain, and closely work with, a qualified consultant who will, first and foremost, create a new view of the Mount Washington State Park that will focus on maximizing the positive experience of visitors to the principal tourist attraction in the state. The consultant will be apprised of summit needs, such as more capacious toilet facilities, better traffic flow, reduction of crowding within the existing facility, building reparability and the role of the various types of alternative energy on the summit, etc. The consultant will also be apprised of summit history as needed, and of any legal constraints with respect to ownership or mission among the various summit partners. The consultant will be free to recommend new or ancillary construction. The MWC will arrange for input to the consultant from all interested parties, including the public, and will begin acting upon the recommendations of the consultant as soon as practicable.*

### **B. The proposed operation of the summit by the MWC.**

The committee recognized that the actual operation of the summit of Mount Washington has been the responsibility of the DP since before the end of first 10-year plan, and that the present role of the MWC is to advise and consult on such matters as efficient operation, maximization of income, and appropriateness of certain enterprises. This requires monitoring of the summit operation which in turn requires periodic financial statements that have never before been requested.

For many years, thought has been given without success as to how the hiking community might be charged for their use of the summit facility. The USFS reports a 70% compliance rate with the mandatory passive collectors at trailheads. The committee recommends the installation of one or more passive collectors (not limited to hikers) on or around the summit. The collectors will require a thoughtful explanation of their purpose to the contributing public. Installation of such collectors for the coming season would provide useful data.

The committee also discussed the potential value of organizing a Friends of Mount Washington (A more compelling name might be found.) group that would be a resource for financial support or volunteer work.

Finally, the MWC may from time to time develop access to contributions or grants for specific summit projects. If so, it would be important to have the capability of monitoring such funds and their intended application. As noted in the introduction, this can be accomplished by monitoring the Mount Washington Fund. Therefore:

***II. In order to more effectively monitor the summit operation, The MWC will request periodic summit financial reports from the Division of Parks. The MWC will also promote the establishment of one or more passive collectors for hikers and other contributors on or around the summit. Finally, the MWC will work to organize a Friends of Mount Washington group as a resource for financial or volunteer support.***

**C. Promotion of the use of the summit by the public as a recreational, historic, and scientific attraction.**

The committee recognized two opposing issues. One is that in the absence of the Old Man, the summit of Mount Washington stands unrivaled as the iconic symbol of the state and should be so promoted. The other is that the summit is currently incapable of accommodating more visitors, and that on peak use days fails to adequately accommodate the visitors it has. This places high priority on ameliorating shortcomings at the summit prior to initiating promotional activities.

The committee also agreed that the most urgent priority is cleaning up the summit. The Cog Railway is committed to cleaning up its debris this summer, but all summit entities need to engage in this effort as soon as possible. Summit clean-up includes returning the FM and WMTW building sites to a more presentable state. Any expenses associated with this activity should be budgeted for in the upcoming state budget, if possible. If this is not possible, then necessary monies need to be found in the subsequent year.

With respect to promotion, that task is now accomplished by the several entities, including the Division of Parks, who rely on visitors for their income, and whose primary focus is self-promotion. There is a need for a unified message about Mount Washington. It is not yet clear how that message might be delivered, whether as a separate campaign, or as part of the promotional material offered by the various entities. If the consulting firm mentioned in Section A., above, is sufficiently qualified, that firm may be charged with this requirement as well; otherwise, a second consultant should be retained. Therefore:

***III. The MWC will retain and closely work with a qualified consultant who will be charged with improving the visitor experience at the summit, developing a unified message for visitors, improving signage and traffic flow, and promoting visitation to New Hampshire's premier attraction. The MWC will also initiate a clean-up of the summit as soon as possible, and will review annually the state of the summit, and arrange for continuing maintenance of a high standard of cleanliness and neatness.***

#### **D. Protection of the unique summit environment.**

*IV. The MWC will ask the New Hampshire Heritage Bureau, as well as the science departments of the AMC and the USFS to identify any deterioration in summit species over the past fifty years, to conduct a professional assessment of the present status of summit species, and to determine whether or not any species need protection and what form such protection might take.*

#### **E. The negotiation of public and private rights upon the summit, and**

#### **F. Cooperative agreements between private interests and the Commission.**

These two elements of this committee's charge are related in that they both encompass entering into lease arrangements, franchising, rights-of-way, and other legal negotiations that are not the direct responsibility of the MWC, but are nevertheless integrally related to the MWC's management and advisory role. If the summit is to function smoothly and in the best interests of the citizens of New Hampshire, it is important for the MWC and DRED to follow the spirit embodied in the phrase "consult and advise" and to promote a high degree of cooperation between themselves. Therefore:

*V. The MWC and DRED will meet as soon as feasible for the specific purpose of reviewing the proper role of the MWC, identifying any potential areas of conflict, and determining how communication and cooperation may be enhanced.*

#### **G. Empowering Legislation**

Because the legislation creating the MWC was promulgated fifty years ago, there are a number of errors or outdated wording that should be corrected. These are itemized below with items to be removed or replaced in red, items to be inserted in blue, and existing copy in quotes.

##### **1. Section 227-B:3, II**

Strike Mount Washington TV, Inc.; and replace with Citadel Broadcasting Company;

Insert between the words "group" and "shall" the phrase ,or its successor,

##### **2. Section 227-B:3, III and IV**

Delete the term ex officio in both cases.

##### **3. Section 227-B:6 "Powers and Duties"**

Precede "the commission shall:" with Commencing in 2010, and for every 10-year period thereafter,

**4. Section 227-B:6, II**

Change entire sentence to read: Submit the said master plan to the governor on or before January 1, 2010 (and at the beginning of each 10-year plan thereafter) for approval and for enabling legislation in the appropriate session of the New Hampshire Legislature.

**6. Section 227-B:6, III**

Strike the word Collect and replace with Monitor.

**7. Section 227-B:6, IV**

Strike the final clause: ,when said commission can certify it has raised or accounted for \$1,752,000 or more in gifts, grants, or donations from sources other than the state.

Therefore:

***VI. The MWC will follow the appropriate procedure to update the empowering legislation.***

Respectfully submitted,

Guy Gosselin  
for the Committee