

**Director's Report**  
**STATE PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**Division of Parks and Recreation**  
**April 2, 2021**  
(Last report date was Sept. 1, 2021)

**FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE UNDER COVID-19 CONDITIONS**

- **FY2021 Park System Comparative Statement** (sent separately) covering Week 36 from July 1, 2019 to March 11, 2021, has day use revenue at \$8.2M, up by 2.6% from the previous fiscal year. Cannon Mountain is currently at \$3.0M, down 28%, and Hampton Meters is at \$1.178M, down 24.5% from this time period in the previous fiscal year.
- **FY2021 Parks Retail Comparative Statement** (sent separately) covering Week 36 of FY2021, Parks retail is at \$1.365M, down 37.5% from this period in the last fiscal year. Cannon retail is currently at \$756K, down 57.5% and Mt Washington retail is at \$660K, down by 49% from the previous fiscal year.
- **NH State Park Plate** As of 03/03/21, there were 13,766 plates registered. FY2021 to date revenue is \$751.9K. FY2020 revenue earned was \$976,400, up slightly by 14% compared to FY2019 revenues.
- **Camping Reservations for 2021 holiday weekends** To date, camping reservations for Memorial Day weekend is at 89% occupancy and at 85% occupancy for the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend.
- **Donations** Online donations for calendar year 2020 totaled \$89,592 from 12,219 donors, up 305% from \$22,107 received from 3,163 donors in 2019.

**FRANCONIA NOTCH / CANNON MOUNTAIN**

- **Cannon Mountain** Opened in what is typically Week 4 this season (Dec 12<sup>th</sup>); Warm weather in November, December, and January made snowmaking challenging; Pumped 270 million gallons for snowmaking this year, excellent coverage; Natural snow total 125" as of late March (typical Nov-Apr seasonal average is 150-180").
  - Loss of \$1.5M in revenue (July–March) by not running the Aerial Tramway due to pandemic; Ski Area visitation and revenue numbers lagged far behind early versus last year and 10-yr averages; Ski Area visitation and revenue numbers have been closing the gap steadily from Weeks 4-18; We did not operate last year in Weeks 19-22, and had limited operations in Week 18.
  - As of Week 18 ending on March 21<sup>st</sup>, we are now within 9% of a typical year in ski season revenue and visits; As of Week 18, we are now within 5% (visits) and 7% (revenue) of the 10-year averages; For weeks 4-18 (when we've been open), revenue and visits are ahead of last year and the 10-year avg.; We expect to continue to gain ground during Weeks 19-21, and may re-open for the weekend of Week 22
  - Aside from the \$1.5M revenue loss from not running the Tram, we're essentially running even; Current trending and the use of FY19 actuals for comparison project us to come in at 0\$1.5M negative; We believe that we can improve upon those typical expense projections between April and June; To essentially run even from an ops perspective during the COVID-impacted FY21 would be a win.
- **Flume Gorge** will continue with online only / advance only reservations this spring-summer-fall; likely increasing capacity from 200 persons/hr. to 250-300 persons/hr. Working on a building usage plan,

whether Flume Gorge patrons only or as a Welcome Center; Safety and social distancing are of course of paramount importance

- **Aerial Tramway** has not been in operation since last March 13<sup>th</sup>&14<sup>th</sup> (capacity was 25); Loss of \$1.5M in tram tickets & retail revenue thus far in FY21; Discussion is ongoing re: specific parameters for summer operation; Planning to open in some capacity over Memorial Weekend with 25%-50% capacity dependent upon CDC/DHHS guidance and Crew input; Online only / advance only sales for both Tram tix and bike rentals; Access to building is limited to Tram users; No buses or groups.
- **Lafayette Place Campground** We operated at 93% capacity last year due to proper spacing of sites and we'll maintain COVID-19 protocols; We'll re-open the store to one-way through traffic this season to boost revenue; We may re-open the sites along (abutting) the Lonesome Lake hiking route.
- **Echo Lake Beach** We'll likely bump capacity from 250 to 350-400; We'll continue to only rent boats to those admitted to the Beach; All COVID-19 protocols will continue to be followed; We'll re-open the store to one-way through traffic this season to boost revenue.
- **Hiker access & interaction** Main hiker parking was shifted to Tram lot in 2020; Cannot operate both the Tram and Hiker Interaction (main parking) from the Tram lot and must shift hiker parking & interaction (and shuttle ops) back to Exit 34-C; No shuttle service in 2020, but shuttle service in 2021 is under discussion; Huge costs associated with running a properly distanced shuttle system, including more shuttles & lowered capacities, more drivers, and higher rental and fuel costs.
- **FNSP Events** Most events proposed to us may either impact public use or proper spacing within the park; Any SUP's granted will be dependent upon the vendor's COVID-19 plan and ops plan; Vendor must present us with a solid COVID-19 mitigation plan and limited impact upon public usage.
- **Media** "[Ten Best Ski Resorts Readers' Choice 2020](#)" (Cannon Mountain) USA Today.com

## PARK OPERATIONS

### GREAT NORTH WOODS

- The **GNWMA** is looking to have another very busy camping/day use season. Calls coming in daily for reservations, what activities are in the area can I still hike to my favorite waterfall? The parks staff are looking forward to the challenge of making memories for all the guest. We can't wait to see you this summer.
- **Coleman Lodges** at Coleman State Park continues to show good occupancy for the winter and spring season. The winter has shown a 7% increase over last winter reaching 53% occupied nightly stays. The main Lodge concession area has been closed all winter. Riders were allowed to enter and use facilities following the CDC guidelines.
- **Mollidgewock, Milan Hill, Coleman, and Deer Mtn**, were closed for the 2020 camping season. These four locations are scheduled open at 100% with reservations in May.
- Remaining parks **Jericho, Umbagog, Moose Brook and Lake Francis** are also scheduled to open as soon as Mother Nature allows, starting in April if at all possible.
- Wayside areas of **Nansen, Androscoggin, Dixville and Beaver Brook** will also be open for the 2021 summer season. Openings will be in line with campgrounds in the immediate area of the wayside.
- **Forest Lake** is projected to open for the season Memorial – Labor Day. Operational plans are under development. The GNWMA successfully partnered with the **Town of Dalton** who was able to keep facilities open and clean during the 2020 season. We have reached out for their continued assistance going forward this summer.

- Winter activities continue on the **CLHWF** with feet of snow still on the ground. Landowner meetings with DNCR agencies will start taking place in April. A bridge replacement and stream restoration is planned for construction during the dry summer season.
- One of the biggest challenges the region faces is increased usage and the difficulty in finding seasonal part time staff to meet the demand and still provide the NH State Parks service with Pride and Professionalism.

#### CENTRAL REGION

- We are gearing up for a "closer to normal" year with reopening all of our retail stores for the upcoming season. All stores will be modified to handle COVID compliance. Last year our retail stores were either closed or limited to take-out windows. I anticipate day use areas and campgrounds will increase capacity availability as COVID restrictions change.
- We are actively pursuing recruitment to fill the staffing needs at almost every central region park. Manager positions have been filled but still seeking all other positions. I'm thankful for the minor steps we have taken with competitive pay and look forward to seeing the whole process completed and implemented.
- Winter parking and plowing availability at our parks is limited and the growing use of certain parks will create foreseeable challenges. Echo Lake, Cathedral Ledge, Crawford Notch, Winslow, and Cardigan all have winter parking challenges.
- Hundreds of hours were spent this past fall and early winter to remove hazard trees and we are making progress.

#### MOUNT WASHINGTON

- Mount Washington State Park staff persevered through tremendous operating challenges in the 2020 season under COVID guidelines and protective restrictions. With a 75% reduction in capacity in the Sherman Adams Visitor Center at the summit, a new Reservation system for visitors was launched and implemented to help with guest management and experience.
- Park Staff were also stationed at the entry way doors to manage visitor flow, speak to the visiting public and answer questions, and help manage traffic flow in and out of the building, which came with its own unique and new challenges.
- Even with the necessary restrictions in building capacity, the Sherman Adams Visitor Center still welcomed nearly 70,000 guests from July 18 through October 12 in a shortened season. Coupled with the additional safety and cleaning measures, the busy summit of Mount Washington had zero cases of COVID linked to any visitors, park staff, or staff from our summit stakeholders and partners.
- Mount Washington State Park worked cooperatively with the Mount Washington Cog Railway and Mount Washington Auto Road to add portable toilets outdoors at the summit for the benefit of summit visitors who were unable to gain access to the indoor facilities and further protect the summit grounds. Mount Washington State Park staff also modified a seasonal water fountain outside of the visitor center, transforming it into a water filling station for hikers who traditionally would fill water inside the building. Both of these new amenity additions were hugely successful and made great positive impacts for the visiting public.
- Mount Washington State Park is on track to open on time for the 2021 season (mid May).

#### SOUTH REGION

- Kept **Monadnock** Old Toll Road open all winter reservations on weekends.

- Parks were busy with hikers, cross country skiers, snowshoers, snowmobilers and other OHRV's all winter long had decent snow cover.
- **Pawtuckaway, Miller and Bear Brook** open with limited services for hiking on 3/12 reservations Fri-Sun.
- **Greenfield** group shelters opened for camping on 3/19.
- **Bear Brook** and **Pawtuckaway's** campground opening on 4/2.
- **Miller** Eversource project planned to start construction on 4/15.
- **Bear Brook Management Plan** is in the home stretch plan will be posted 3/26 for public comment.
- First annual **Bear Brook State Park Trail Cooperative** meeting to be held 3/30. This working group is made up of Bear Brook State Park user group representatives and state employees. The purpose of this group is to maintain and improve the trail system at Bear Brook State Park by encouraging a cooperative work environment within the park. Meetings are held 2x a year (fall and spring) in order to promote and plan for the effective and efficient management of the trails. These meetings also allow user groups and staff to discuss plans for the upcoming year such as projects, events, wildlife management, and operational updates
- DNCR purchased a 33.4 acre inholding parcel abutting Kearsarge State Forest/**Rollins State Park**.
- **Media:** "[Make a reservation before hiking NH state parks](#)" (featuring Miller) TewksburyTownCrier.com
  - "[Best State and National Parks in New Hampshire](#)" (Bear Brook) TripsToDiscover.com

#### SEACOAST REGION

- The seacoast is experiencing higher "off season" visitation than we normally do. **Odiorne Point** is open Fri-Sun as of March 12<sup>th</sup>, and is staying busy. The reservation system is still in place and we have plans to operate at full capacity this summer. The Seacoast Science Center is also open on weekends.
- Our new **Wallis Sands** manager will start in April with plans to increase our retail operations safely by displaying items outdoors and operating a window service. Wallis Sand will remain at the same capacity as last year due to the smaller beach area during high tide. We are working on plans to grade the beach and bring sand back up and equipment access ramp after losing a lot of sand in winter storms.
- **Rye Harbor** will open on April 1<sup>st</sup>, earlier than ever with the new parking meters. Last summer's meters were a success as an alternative to staffing the toll booth and we saw \$43,000 in revenue collected through the parking meters. Folks with park plates and senior citizens were generally opposed to the change due to the changes to their free access. This year with Rte.1A open we are unsure if we will see the same increase in visitation at Rye Harbor as we did last year, but are hopeful for another successful season.
- **Jeness** is set to open April 1<sup>st</sup>. Parking lot and building areas were cleaned up of winter debris to prepare for opening. The Kelp Wave statue installed by the Percent for the Arts program will get removed, refinished, and reinstalled in the next few months to freshen it up after the exposure to the elements over the winter.
- **North Hampton** will open on April 1<sup>st</sup>, and we are hoping to enter a contract to stripe the parking spaces before the summer. We will again offer an ADA accessible beach wheelchair to visitors when lifeguards are on duty.
- Communication with Town of Hampton Police Department and town officials will continue to determine what time the **North Beach** parking lots will close, and we will be adding a requirement that vehicles park "head in" and are not allowed to back in. In addition idling vehicles will be prohibited in the lot.
- **Park Patrol** is staffed up and ready to start meter operations on April 1<sup>st</sup>. They will be expanding operations further again this year to patrol and ticket at South Beach as well as up the coast to Odiorne.

They will also have a parking attendant at Jenness beach to help manage vehicles that attempt to pull into a full lot causing traffic back up on Rte.1A.

- Park Patrol visited the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy with officials from MA fisheries and Cape Cod National Seashore to learn about how Great White Shark populations are tracked and managed. We deployed two acoustic receivers off **Hampton Beach** and **North Beach** that will track and tagged sharks. The intent is to see if sharks migrating to Nova Scotia are coming in close to NH beaches.
- **Ocean Rescue** staff are planning tryouts to be held on the main beach in Hampton, due to indoor pool restrictions with covid-19. Tryouts will be held on May 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, May 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, as well as June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. They are hosting more tryout dates this year to allow for social distancing and smaller group sizes.
- The **Hampton Maintenance** crew has hired 8 J1 staff members, and we hope that they will all have their visa's approved! We would ideally host 20-30 J1 students and are continuing to try to find interested students. There are typically hundreds of students seeking work, however pandemic restrictions have greatly affected the J1 work and travel program. We are exploring options for contracting some of our cleaning out.
- **South Beach** Manager Ken Murby has retired after 15 years of service to the state, and we are reviewing applications for that position. The RV camping area will open at the end of April.
- Commissioner Stewart and Region Supervisor Meredith Collins attended the installation ceremony of the NH Mayflower Society monument at **Odiorne Point** last November.
- **Seacoast Science Center** installed solar panels on the Science Building in Odiorne. Parks installed LED lighting at **North Beach** as part of its energy efficiency efforts.
- **Media:** NH State parks, and many of the seacoast beaches made 9 of 10 spots on the "vacation idea 10 best New Hampshire Beaches" <https://vacationidea.com/new-hampshire-vacation/best-new-hampshire-beaches.html>.

## **BUREAU OF TRAILS (BOT)**

- In September, Chris Gamache left the BOT to work at Polaris Industries. North Country region supervisor Clint Savage is serving as Interim Trails Chief.
- The **snowmobile season** started with a major snow storm in December 2020 which got the season off to a good start in the southern part of the state. After losing all of that snow and having to wait to get enough snow to continue riding we ended up having a short riding season. Even with the shortened riding season and the restrictions of COVID-19, we ended up seeing a significant increase in registration. For 2020 we had 41,275 registrations and in 2021 we currently have 47,442, which is a 6,167 increase.
- The 2020 **OHRV season** started on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, with limited areas open for riding. As the weather permitted more areas opened for the riding season. Despite COVID-19 impacts, there was an increase in users looking to get out and recreate. The 2021 riding season will be opening on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, with limited riding and, as conditions, permit more areas will be opened. The registration for the 19/20 season are 35,172 and the 20/21 to date are 42,341 which is a 7,169 increase to date.
- **Grant-In-Aid (GIA) Program**
  - The Grant-In-Aid Program awarded grooming grants to 100 snowmobile clubs for the period of December 15, 2020, to May 31, 2021. Grants are still in process.
  - The Grant-In-Aid Program in conjunction with the Governor's Office of Economic Recovery and Relief (GOFERR) awarded Snowmobile Club Relief Fund grants to 30 snowmobile clubs.

- For GIA participating snowmobile clubs, the Grant-In-Aid Program will be releasing the 2021 award applications in April with a May due date for summer trail maintenance, construction, and grooming equipment purchases and refurbishments. Awards are expected to be effective July 1 to December 31, 2021.
- For GIA participating OHRV clubs, the Grant-In-Aid Program will be releasing the 2021 award applications in April with a May due date for summer trail maintenance, construction, trail grading, and equipment purchases and refurbishments. Awards are expected to be effective June 1 to May 31, 2022.
- **Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Fund**
  - U.S. Senators Welch (D – VT) and Curtis (R – UT) reintroduce bipartisan legislation to boost Funding for recreational trails. There was a House bill introduced in 2019 for full funding for RTP funds to states. This bill stagnated in Congress and has gone nowhere since early 2020. A new bill H.R. 1864 reintroduces the same language as the 2019 bill under the title “The Recreational Trails Full Funding Act of 2021”. This bill has the potential to increase RTP funds to NH. The Trails Bureau is monitoring this bill for any updates.
  - Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021 grant round is just opening. The Trails Bureau has received 27 community applications with over a million dollars in grant requests. FFY2020 is ongoing with project costs being incurred. FFY2019 is in the process of closing. FFY2022 will open for community applications from April to Mid-June (12 weeks). Department applications will open in April with a July deadline.
  - The Milan Trail Huggers Nash Stream Bridge received the **Coalition for Recreational Trails’ national award** for Construction and Design in 2020.
  - The Youth Monadnock Trail Improvement Project received the **Coalition for Recreational Trails’ national award** for Conservation/Service Corp and Community Outreach in 2020.
- Working with the Cross NH Adventure Trail (xNHAT), maintenance projects were done on the **Presidential Rail Trail** and the **Ammonoosuc Rail Trail**, earning the BOT a “thank you” from the group.
- **Media**
  - [“COVID Impact on Snowmobile Clubs Aired”](#) SnowGoer.com
  - [“Jeep Updates Badge of Honor Program”](#) (Jericho Mountain) TruckTrendNetwork.com
  - [“Build it and they will come”](#) (Adventure trail) Windows to the Wild, NHPBS.org

## **BUREAU OF HISTORIC SITES (BHS)**

- Moose Plate sales were up 7+ percent in 2020, and to date have raised over \$25 million. This has amounted to nearly \$5 million invested in historic properties and resources managed by NH State Parks and the Bureau of Historic Sites.
- 2020 Projects:
  - Three elevations of the Weeks Estate Summit Lodge were painted after stucco repairs were made several years ago. Several windows at the carriage house/garage were also restored. The auto road was also re-paved by DOT.
  - Interpretive signs were installed on the east side of Livermore Falls, thanks to some DNCR staff and the Friends of the Pemi.
  - For the second year in a row, the tern project on White Island had its most successful season.
  - Operationally, Fort Stark was open August-November, the Robert Frost Farm offered barn orientations in September, and the Weeks Estate and Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion saw marked

increase in site usage. The Franklin Pierce Homestead, Daniel Webster Birthplace, and Fort Constitution remained closed during the season.

- 2021 Projects:
  - Moose plate projects this year include restoration of exterior lighting at Bear Brook's Catamount Pond Pavilion, conservation of two 19th century oil paintings, and fencing repair at Hannah Duston.
  - Gerrish Depot is poised to have its foundation replaced and exterior envelope restored.
  - The Nansen Ski Jump was divided into two phases, with the earthworks planned for 2021.
  - The Hannah Duston Advisory Committee will finalize a plan and its recommendations for contextualizing that historic site.
  - The failing seawall at the Wentworth Coolidge Mansion will be repaired.
  - Failing masonry at Fort Constitution will also be remedied.
- **Media coverage**
  - ["Changes in the works for site honoring Hannah Duston"](#) ConcordMonitor.com
  - ["Where was Daniel Webster born?"](#) NHMagazine.com

**ENTERPRISE SYSTEM** NH State Parks has had a challenging but successful season responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Enterprise system has been essential to the success of our response.

- **Day Use Reservations:** As many of you are aware, NH State Parks utilized our Enterprise system to implement day use reservations at all of our parks last season. This program was successful and effective at controlling capacity and ensuring proper social distancing would be possible. The day use reservation program was initially launched in the fall of 2019, prior to COVID, to manage capacity at high use parks. Our intention is to continue the program beyond COVID as a way to manage capacity and limit turn-aways. Both visitors and staff have had high praise for the program, as it guarantees entrance into the park for the visitor, thus eliminating the rush that would normally occur during opening. This was less stressful for the visitors, staff, and prevented the lines of cars at the gate, which were the norm on a beautiful summer day. The final numbers for the 2020 season were 275,598 day use reservations representing 809,867 visitors. Reservations for our hiking parks have already opened on a limited basis (weekends only).
- **Camping Reservations:** We are getting ready for the 2021 camping season and are excited to welcome back campers to our beautiful State Parks! We plan to begin opening our south region campgrounds on April 30th and will continue north with openings through May. The plan currently is to have campgrounds open at 100% with the exception of some limitations on group sites. We have seen a continued enthusiasm for camping and getting outdoors in general by our guests and reservation trends indicate that we will continue to have high occupancy through the 2021 season. Reservations for Memorial Day weekend currently stand at 89% occupancy with 9 campgrounds 100% booked, and July 4th weekend at 85% with 6 campgrounds 100% booked. Our hope is that our mid-week occupancy levels continue to increase as was the case during the 2020 season.
- **Donations:** During a time of financial struggle for many, NH State Parks saw unprecedented support through our online donation program in 2020. Online donations ended CY20 with 12,219 donations totaling \$89,592 comparatively in CY19 there were 3,163 donations totaling \$22,107. This has showed us just how important NH State Parks are to our guests and we hope that this trend will continue as we head into the 2021 season.

## RETAIL OPERATIONS

- We are heading into the season with \$1,364,979 in revenue and \$810,000 in expenses (03/26). Projected to spend \$400K and generate 300k this Spring.
- Last Spring, we captured a modest \$152,423 in revenue and are projecting to generate +\$300K, if we can get off to a good start and get more locations open.
- Projected financial contribution from retail for FY21 is \$350-400K. Last fiscal year, retail contributed a record \$672,419 in profit to the parks fund.
- **Boat rentals** generated \$300k in revenue, while processing 10,000 boat rentals at 13 locations.
- **Firewood sales** generated \$316K in revenue, providing 52,666 bundles of firewood to our guests, at 21 locations across the state. Our main supplier, the DOC, ran out of wood in September. We secured 10k more bundles from Fay Logging and had it delivered by tractor trailer to our warehouse facility.
- **E-commerce sales** eclipsed \$100k in revenue, while processing over 1,000 transactions. We currently have 125 products listed online.
- In a typical season, we have 37 **retail stores**. This past season we had 23 locations and focused on opening and generating a profit at our most lucrative locations. We are expecting to open all of them this season.

- Listed below are the top 11 retail profit locations for FY20:

1. Flume Gorge	\$ 230,000
2. Pawtuckaway	\$ 121,000
3. White Lake	\$ 78,000
4. Echo Beach	\$ 65,000
5. Bear Brook	\$ 36,000
6. Lafayette	\$ 36,000
7. Crawford	\$ 34,000
8. Wallis Sands	\$ 30,000
9. Monadnock	\$ 26,000
10. Hampton	\$ 20,000
11. Umbagog	\$ 18,000

- **Process & Planning:** Retail's most lucrative plan and process is to focus on the Flume and campground stores, while branching out from there on a case by case basis. Camping demand provides sustainability to the program and staff members are cross trained to cover the service window, prepare curbside pick-up, or process in house, if guidelines permit. This is the most efficient use of time for staff pertaining to capturing retail revenue and servicing our guests. Increased capacity at the Flume will greatly impact revenue. School groups are the path to sustainability at our beach stores and needs to be closely monitored. Boat rentals have strict guidelines on cleaning the life vests and watercraft, promoting social distancing, staff wearing PPE's, plexiglas at the service windows, and seamless payment and checkout.
- **Product Mix:** Firewood and boat rentals generate nearly a quarter of our business. Gifts and apparel combined account for a third of our business.
  - Boat rentals is our most lucrative operation, providing high margin, minimal labor, high demand, and continuous revenue. After payroll and equipment, we typically pay off a watercraft in ½ season. The average watercraft is lasting 5 seasons and we continue to discover new products and ways to process rentals, maximizing the efficiency of the operation.
  - Firewood is our best selling product and continues to be a challenging supply chain to manage and secure. Expanding the shoulders of our season has propelled the demand to new heights and our

adaptation to future needs will be essential in maintaining the enhanced experience a fire provides our guests.

- **New Developments:**

- Echo Lake Conway will have a new store at the beach this season and will be offering boat rentals. \$100k of retail profit was invested last season for the new building, deck, equipment, and fixtures.
- Susan Nagle, our Flume Assistant Manager, will be the new manager at Crawford Notch Willey House.
- Christa Rousseau will be the new store manager at the top of Mt. Washington. She was promoted from the Assistant Manager position.
- Retail is proposing a food truck at Odiorne State Park to regress traffic flow, extending the visitor stay at both the park and the Science Center, while enhancing the experience of our guests and generating valuable profit dollars.

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

**PLANNING.** Forestry and Park staff are working with a disk golf group to set up the first disk golf course in the park system at Pawtuckaway State Park. The course is taking advantage of a disused picnic area by the beach. Implementation is on hold until mid-summer until we are comfortable with the 2021 COVID protocols.

After an extensive two-year planning process “Bear Brook State Park Management Plan” will be released for public review and comment on Friday March 26, 2021. Public comments on the DRAFT plan may be submitted via email or regular mail, and will be accepted until 4:00pm on Friday April 30, 2021. Comments may also be submitted in person at a public listening session to be held on Zoom (registration required) during the evening of Thursday April 22, 2021. <https://www.nhstateparks.org/about-us/commissions-committees/bear-brook-state-park-management-plan-committee>.

**PARTNERSHIPS.** The **SCA NH Corps** restarted the program in January with 10 digital naturalist interns. They are providing programming to 13 schools and 44 classrooms in Manchester, Concord, Allenstown, Hooksett, Pembroke, Claremont and Charlestown, in addition they are providing after school support to 10 programs in Manchester and Nashua. Twenty Conservation Stewards begin training April 5<sup>th</sup>. For approximately 2 weeks they will be in working quarantine at Bear Hill Camp prior to moving to Spruce Pond Camp. The digital naturalists will end their service in mid-May, until then, weekly digital lessons and blogs are posted at [NH State Parks: Discover the Power of Parks](#).

**CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.** Construction projects have been given permission to proceed on a case-by-case basis.

- Summit Station Sprinkler System at Cannon Mountain Ski Area (in progress)
- The Profile Walkway at Franconia Notch, complete, dedicated September 13, 2020.
- Fire Tower replacement at Milan Hill, complete
- Roofing projects at Monadnock and Bear Brook (complete)
- Miller Utility Upgrade, construction starts April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Sunapee Beach trailer parking, tree cutting mid-May.
- Ellacoya Campground Bathhouse renovation, ready to go out to bid when permitted.
- Dam repair at Silver Lake, Taylor Mill and Jericho Mountain (complete)
- Seacoast Science Center at Odiorne Point energy improvements including new windows and solar panels installed (complete)

## CONSULTANT SERVICES.

- Ellacoya retaining wall repair
- Mount Washington museum temporary ventilation
- Mount Washington sewerage treatment system, bid documents in May, construction start 2022

## **COMMUNITY RECREATION OFFICE**

### VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

- Estimated that 872 people volunteered on DNCR land in 2020.
- 8,555 volunteer hours (down from 24,660 hours in 2019) were submitted for the 2020 calendar year, this equates to an estimated value of \$244,398 in donated volunteer labor and time (down from \$646,832 in 2019) – volunteer hours were down due to COVID-19 and volunteer activities being put on hold from March to June of 2020.
- COVID guidelines updated to allow volunteer work days of 10 people per group, with a maximum of 2 groups and no interaction between the 2 groups, per property.
- Increased the number of long-term volunteer groups in an agreement with the Department from 31 to 34.
- Insurance provided by and paid for by the Department covers 9 different small non-profit Volunteer Groups while they volunteer on Department lands (last SPAC report there were 8 groups on the policy).
- Volunteer Program Manager received the Rookie Award from the New Hampshire Association of Volunteer Administration for, “outstanding accomplishments of a volunteer administrator who is relatively new to the profession.”
- White Mountain Trail Collective completed 10 weeks of work at the Thin Air Face climbing area at Cathedral Ledge State Park. Work included the creation of 100 rock steps, 250 feet of scree, 10 8-12 foot long retaining walls and hundreds of square feet of rubble—work crews on this project included Access Fund and AMC.

### LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

- October 30, 2020 marked the application deadline for the LWCF Local Assistance Program Grant Round 31. Nine project proposal applications were received from nine different municipalities, with a total of \$2,139,913.00 in grant requests for development and acquisition projects. These applications were reviewed, and scored, in December by the Department’s LWCF Open Project Selection Process Advisory Panel. The results were then presented to Commissioner Stewart for her concurrence as the official LWCF State Liaison Officer. Based on the priorities of the 2019-2023 NH Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, all nine proposals were determined to be of sufficient public benefit for assistance. This office is currently working with each applicant to assemble the necessary documents and additional requirements for the federal application packets, to be submitted to the National Park Service (NPS) for final review and approval. As of this report, the NPS has not yet opened the next funding opportunity submission period, but will likely do so between March-April 2021. All local projects approved during this period will be given a project start date in June 2021.
- This Department will open the intent period for the LWCF Local Assistance Program Grant Round 32 around the end of March 2021.
- On November 9, 2020, then Secretary of the US Department of the Interior (USDOI), David Bernhardt, issued Secretarial Order #3388 relative to the LWCF. Shortly thereafter Bernhardt resigned as Secretary on January 20, 2021. In a letter to the USDOI Deputy Secretary Shannon Estenoz, dated January 22, 2021 the National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers opposed the order and outlined the following points on how it adversely affects the States’ and Territories’ authority and ability to use and distribute funds for state and local projects.  
Specific and significant problems as a result of this action include but are not limited to:
  1. It eliminates the only federal cost share program for investments in public outdoor recreation.

2. It eliminates state and local control through the SCORP process whereby local needs are replaced by federal priorities and diminishes public input.
  3. It duplicates existing habitat and endangered species programs
  4. It eliminates priority funding for urban parks in underserved neighborhoods.
  5. It eliminates the capacity of LWCF to serve as an economic driver by prioritizing acquisitions over development.
- Governor Sununu followed up with a letter to Deputy Secretary Estenoz dated February 3, 2021. In his letter, the Governor also requested an immediate repeal of the order citing its inconsistency with the intent and history of the program. The order would have disqualified the majority of local projects already selected under Grant Round 31, as well as several planned critical state projects including renovations to the Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway, and a new sewage treatment facility at Mount Washington State Park.
  - On February 11, 2021 acting Secretary of the USDO I Scott de la Vega issued Secretarial Order #3396 effectively rescinding order #3388, returning the States' authority to select projects for LWCF assistance based on priorities determined by each individual State.
  - On March 15, 2021 Deb Haaland was confirmed to be the next Secretary of the USDO I, and is now the top administering federal official over the LWCF program. Additionally, the NPS is preparing to release Volume 71 of the LWCF Federal Financial Assistance Manual (State and Local Assistance Manual), providing updates to program administration guidance.

• **PROGRAM APPORTIONMENTS/AVAILABLE FUNDS:**

Apportionment	Amount	Available	Expiration
GOMESA* FY:2009-2017	\$122,193.00	\$25,919.00	None
LWCF FY:2019	\$1,004,160.00	\$1,004,160.00	9/30/2021
GOMESA FY:2019	\$709,512.00	\$577,803.81	9/30/2021
LWCF FY:2020	\$1,028,240.00	\$1,028,240.00	9/30/2022
GOMESA FY:2020	\$1,094,842.00	\$1,094,842.00	9/30/2022
SRA FY:2020	\$27,047.94	\$27,047.94	9/30/2021
LWCF FY:2021	\$2,056,481.00	\$2,056,481.00	9/30/2023
GOMESA FY:2021	\$769,818.00	\$769,818.00	9/30/2023
SRA FY:2021 ( <i>pending FY'21 close</i> )	\$0.00	\$0.00	9/30/2022
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$6,812,293.94</b>	<b>\$6,584,311.75</b>	-----

\*Section 105 of the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act designates 12.5 percent of the proceeds from leases in Areas 181, 181 South and the 2002-2007 planning areas to be dispensed to the States in accordance with Section 6 of the LWCF Act.

\*\*Special Reapportionment Account, unspent funds from previously closed or terminated projects. Not available until regular (LWCF) apportionment of the same federal fiscal year is fully obligated.

• **Open LWCF projects:**

PROJECT #	NAME	SPONSOR	PROJECT SCOPE	GRANT \$
33-00705	Hartford Brook Ballfields	Town of Deerfield	Improvements to playfield, parking, and support facilities	<b>\$25,000.00</b>
33-00706	Nissitissit River Park	Town of Brookline	Development of accessible trail, and acquisition abutting rail trail	<b>\$50,050.00</b>
33-00707	Greeley Park Boat Ramp Improvements	City of Nashua	Boat ramp and parking improvements on the Merrimack River	<b>\$200,200.00</b>
33-00710	Monadnock Park Playground	City of Claremont	Construction of a New Playground	<b>\$53,753.00</b>
33-00713	Kearsarge Mtn State Forest-Tusoni Lot	State of NH DNCR	Purchase of 33.4 acres 1.5 miles up from the Rollins State Park tollbooth	<b>\$21,354.00</b>
33-00715	Ellacoya State Park-II	State of NH DNCR	Construction of a new playground, and renovation of campground bathrooms	<b>\$265,330.90</b>

PROJECT #	NAME	SPONSOR	PROJECT SCOPE	GRANT \$
33-00716	Mill City Park at Franklin Falls	City of Franklin	Purchase of 2.2 acres, development of trails, restrooms, parking, picnic area, and pavilion	\$200,200.00
33-00717	Landroche Field Splash Pad and Bathhouse	Town of Newmarket	Construction of a splash-pad, restrooms, and accessible pathway, and kiosk	\$199,606.41
33-00718	Riverfront Park	Town of Lincoln	Construction of a skate park, parking, bike-ped trails, river access, and utilities	\$200,200.00
33-00719	New Boston Rail Trail Rehabilitation	Town of New Boston	Installation of surface material, new/fixed drainage, grading, benches, kiosk	\$100,100.00
33-00720	PARC Trail Network	Town of Plaistow	Development of a trail network on Town lands	\$51,551.50
33-00721	Littleton Health Park	Town of Littleton	Purchase of 5 acres, construction of parking, pavilion, community gardens, fitness equip, trail	\$200,200.00
33-00722	Maplewood Field Bleachers/Playground	Town of Salisbury	Installation of new bleachers, swing set, play equipment, and pathway	\$25,000.00
33-00723	Moeckel Pond Dam Reconstruction	Town of Windham	Reconstruction of historic mill site dam, car-top boat, and parking	\$150,150.00
33-00724	Jules Bisson Park Rejuvenation	City of Somersworth	Construction of a playground, picnic shelter, and accessibility enhancements	\$45,000.00
33-00725	Winslow SP Toilet Building	State of NH DNCR	Renovation of exiting toilet building with accessibility enhancements, new well drilled, and new septic and leach field	\$231,481.25
33-00726	Kraine Meadow Park Improvements	Town of Moultonborough	Construction of a picnic shelter with concession area and composting toilets	\$62,562.50
33-00727	Pawtuckaway SP Toilet Building	State of NH DNCR	Renovation and expansion of an existing campground toilet building	\$218,318.10
33-00728	Bear Brook SP-Bear Hill Toilet Building	State of NH DNCR	Renovation of an existing toilet building at the historic Bear Hill Camps	\$222,096.87
33-00729	Remich Park Improvements	Town of Littleton	Demolition and reconstruction of service building (concession, bathrooms, storage), field drainage improvements, resurfacing of perimeter pathway, installation of new playground	\$200,200.00
33-00730	Northwood Playground	Town of Northwood	Construction of a new playground, athletic fields site work, fencing	\$88,898.81
33-00731	West Swanzey AA Memorial Park	Town of Swanzey	Construction of picnic pavilion, half-size basketball court, Ashuelot River car-top boat access, landscaping	\$46,956.91
33-00732	Rockingham Recreational Trail-II	State of NH DNCR	Replacement of control gates, re-decking bridges, resurfacing trail, road edge apron paving	\$128,938.81
33-00733	Daniell Park Improvements	City of Franklin	Demolition and reconstruction of bathroom facility, installation of accessible ramp between parking area and lower fields	\$45,045.00
<b>TOTAL OPEN GRANTS:</b>				<b>\$3,032,194.06</b>

#### COMMUNITY RECREATION PROGRAM

- The 2021 First Day Hike was a successful online virtual event with 1009 registered participants posting their experiences on social media to compete for prizes.
- Due to limited capacity in our parks and the need for prior reservations it was decided to suspend the 2020 and 2021 summer Buss Pass Program
- All in person promotions events (NH Camping and RV Show, Discover Wild New Hampshire Day, Farm and Forest Expo, Montreal Adventure Show) were canceled this year.

- Memorial Bench Program has received over 10 new applications since the spring of 2020, mostly for placement along the seacoast.

## **DIVISION ADMINISTRATION**

### LEGISLATIVE / STATUTORY / GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVES

- Director Bryce and John Nyhan continue to serve on the [Governor's Economic Re-opening Task Force](#) that develops plans and oversees the state and private-sector actions needed to reopen NH's economy while minimizing the adverse impact of COVID-19 on public health.
- Several parks staff are assisting DHHS and DOS with the 2-1-1 COVID phone line, delivering vaccines and helping at the Motor Speedway mass vaccination events.
- Legislation 2021 Session (sent separately)
  - HB2 – House has included money for Jericho Mountain campground expansion/upgrade and Hampton RV campground upgrade.
  - HB25 Capital Budget – The Governor has requested the following projects/categories: communications, roofing & repairs, Mt Washington water system, and toilet building replacement.

### RIGHT TO KNOW / REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

- FY20: 34 requests; 90.5 hours total
- FY21: 32 requests; 87 hours to date

### AGREEMENTS – The Division is working on the following:

- **Mount Washington Observatory** contract for museum and observatory at Mt Washington.
- **Mount Washington Cog Railway** track expansion at the summit of Mt Washington.
- **Seacoast Science Center** contract amendment at Odiorne Point State Park.
- **Student Conservation Association** lease of Spruce Pond Camp at Bear Brook State Park.
- Lease to operate a portion of **SPNHF** lands as part of Monadnock State Park.
- **White Mountain Attractions** lease of Visitor Center in Lincoln.
- **AT&T** wi-fi service at Cannon Mountain.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT PROGRAM (SUP) 2020 was a tough year for this program with COVID. We were able to permit 31 events last year. As a comparison, in 2019 we permitted 191 events.

### SEACOAST PARKING ENFORCEMENT

- Parking season was shortened due to COVID. Meters were in operation from 6/1 – 10/31 and lots were at approximately 50% capacity. We wrote 12,464 citations. We collected a total of \$251,230.25 in citation payments.
  - We issued more citations in the shortened season of 2020 than we issued in all of 2019. We added pay stations and ticketing at Rye Harbor State Park and Odiorne Point Boat Launch.
  - We will be purchasing more hardware to issue tickets for the 2021 season. These two units will have the capability of scanning the license plate and automatically uploading the plate number to ensure a decrease in officer error when entering the plate information. This will allow the Division to obtain owner information more quickly and collect the outstanding debt quicker.

LIBRARY PASS PROGRAM The program mimics our Resident Family season pass. Valid for 2 adults and up to 4 dependents. Pass is valid at all day-use parks. Not valid at Tram, Flume, camping, Hampton Beach

South, Wallis Sands or metered parking. In 2020 we sold a total of 52 passes for a total of \$5,460. On 3/24 we announced the 2021 pass and have already seen a huge uptick in requests including 7 new communities in two days. We expect to see more interest in the coming weeks.

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER AND MARKETING REPORT

The NH Parks website is the primary conduit for all things state parks. Therefore our primary attention has been to look at ways to increase view ability on all platforms (computer and mobile devices.) During the COVID pandemic digital the digital footprint of our parks has been an important resource. The day use reservation system and putting out COVID visitation information via the website has been very successful.

- Director Bryce gave a presentation on the FNSP Hiker Shuttle program at the **Society of American Foresters** 2020 convention. He also gave a presentation on concession operations at the **National Association of State Park Directors** annual meeting in December.
- **NHStateParks.org website performance** (Aug 15, 2020 to March 24, 2021)
  - Total page views: 4,556,092; avg. 1.50 min/session
  - Top page performance (pages that are visited the most compared to other pages on our website)
    - COVID-19 page: 394,947 views; 2.26 min/view
    - Day Use reservation page: 273,231 views: 3.24 min/view
  - **Summary Report** for NHStateParks.org website (generated from NIBLER)
    - User Overall Satisfaction: 8.6 out of 10
    - User Accessibility: 9.3 (How accessible the website is to mobile and disabled users.)
    - User Experience: 8.7 (How satisfying the website is likely to be for users.)
    - Marketing: 8.7 (How well marketed and popular the website is.)
    - Mobile: 10.0 (over the last year, we concentrated our efforts on how our website looked on mobile platforms such as cell phones and tablets.)
    - Incoming links: 10.0, there are 120,640 pages on 5,157 domains linking to our website. The volume and quality of incoming links is known to influence a website's search engine ranking.
- **Campaigns** Fall campaigns were very successful in promoting the extended camping season and our hiking parks. Holiday season campaigns included promoting the NH Parks gift cards and the retail store. We also launched a campaign and created a Facebook page for the Lodges at Coleman State Park in early December 2020.
- **Parks social media posts:**
  - [New Hampshire State Parks](#)  
November 11, 2020 ·  
**New Hampshire State Parks: Best Selling Gifts of 2020...**  
In case you still need a few ideas... [nhstateparks.org/shop](https://nhstateparks.org/shop)
  - [New Hampshire State Parks](#)  
December 23, 2020 ·  
**Coleman Lodges at Coleman State Park** has 6-12 inches of snow, which is great for snowshoeing. And they have snowshoe rentals. We also have lodges to rent and soon will have our one room heated cabins open right on the snowmobile trail. If you have never been, check it out. [www.nhstateparks.org/.../snowmob.../lodges-at-coleman-state-park](https://www.nhstateparks.org/.../snowmob.../lodges-at-coleman-state-park)
  - [New Hampshire State Parks](#)  
December 28, 2020 ·  
**Check out a First Day Hike at Wellington State Park this week.**  
Wellington is a great park to visit anytime of the year. The Peninsula Trail is an easy 30-minute hike that is less than a mile long and offers great views of Newfound Lake all along the route... Trail conditions were great on Sunday with some patches of ice/snow, so we recommend clamp on shoe

spikes. The trail is accessible from the boat launch parking area.  
Don't forget to send us your pictures. Visit our FDH page...

- **Earned media opportunities:**

[“Winter Notes: Coleman State Park offers a great home base to enjoy the Great North Woods”](#)  
UnionLeader.com

[“Winter Notes: No time like now for a winter hike at Franconia Notch”](#) UnionLeader.com

**REPORTS TO BE PROVIDED SEPARATELY:**

- Parks Legislative Tracking Report
- Parks Comparative Statements FY2021, as of March 11, 2021
- Parks Forecasting Report
- Parks 2019 & 2020 Visitation comparison
- Parks Fee Package proposal & supporting documentation