

**Bear Brook State Park Management Plan Revision
Steering Committee Meeting – 12/12/19**

Meeting was called to order at 5:32pm by Chair Tom DiMaggio

Steering Committee Members Present

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Avis Rosenfield	Non-Motorized Recreation
Armand Verville	Cultural and Historic Resources
Tom St. Martin	Town of Candia
Eric Orff	Game and Sportsmen
Dan Dwyer	Non-Motorized Recreation
Wendy Weisiger	Forest Management
Tom DiMaggio	Recreation at Large (Chair)
Matthew Lavoie	Town of Hooksett
Jeff Ames	Forest Products Industry
Suzanne Smith	State Park System Advisory Council
Sandra McKenney	Town of Allenstown

Steering Committee Members Absent

Jeff Lougee, Forest Ecology
Steve Hampl, Motorized Recreation
Carol Foss, Non Game Wildlife
Brian Adams, Conservation Commission

Division Staff

Johanna Lyons	Billy Kunelius	Christina Pacuk	Jim Oehler
Will Guinn	Tara Blaney	Melissa Doperalski	
Scott Rolfe	Pete Bowman	John Magee	

Chairperson Tom DiMaggio started the meeting by asking the steering committee to introduce themselves. The October 17, 2019 meeting minutes we're accepted without corrections.

Trails for People and Wildlife

Presenter Jim Oehler of NH Fish and Game
<https://wildlife.state.nh.us/trails/>

“Trails for People and Wildlife” is a trail planning tool that was developed by NH Fish and Game Department and other partners. Jim’s presentation discussed the disturbance to wildlife that humans can cause. Literature and studies have documented the “corridor of influence” (the response by wildlife to human presence) can range between 60’- 400’. Using the Bear Brook State Park trail map, he illustrated the varying levels of disturbance on trail corridors.

Jim emphasized that this is a planning tool that can be used to evaluate existing trails and new trails. Trails in sensitive habitats don’t necessarily have to be removed, maybe relocated to minimize disturbance or to lessen fragmentation.

Comments from presentation

Wendy: The maps you have shown were not in with the chapter

Jim: These maps will not be included in this chapter, they are for the presentation

Tom DiMaggio: Are the impacts from recreation based on summer or winter trail usage?

Jim: I'll go back to the chart. The impacts for winter recreation is similar to summer recreation.

Tom St. Martin: I am surprised to see that snow shoeing and x- country skiing has higher impacts than things such as alpine skiing or motorized use

Jim: you can hear motorized users coming so animals have time to stay clear, whereas you can't with non-motorized

Avis: Where did the research papers come from?

Jim: From North America and Europe, regardless of where you go the results are similar

Tom DiMaggio: Do wildlife ever get use to the population and disturbance?

Jim: Some species will be okay and others will not

Will: This new tool that Fish and Game has created will be revisited in the recreation chapter. We are just trying to get this idea across that Bear Brook is saturated with trails and we must maintain, change or relocate trails to fit the needs of everyone even wildlife

Chapter Seven: Wildlife Habitat Management

Presenter Melissa Doberalski and John Magee NH Fish and Game Department

Melissa's presentation described the forest types in the park and the wildlife that depend on them. Bear Brook is a large unfragmented property in close proximity to other conserved properties including Northwood Meadows and Pawtuckaway State Parks. Bear Brook wildlife management consists of fish stocking, habitat assistance, fish and game officers, an archery course, outdoor education and much more. Melissa spoke of how important wetlands are and that they serve as a critical habitat for multiple Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Bear Brook's eight ponds were listed and what kind of fish you may find in them. Other habitat lands such as peatlands, Appalachian oak pine and hemlock hardwood pine were also shown. Threatened and endangered species exist within Bear Brook and are a high priority for management.

NH Fish and Game recommends monitoring focal species and manage for high priority wildlife habitat. Document vernal pools and protect our wetlands. Provide a mix of forest age and size across the landscape. Reinforce management and conserve grasslands. Assess recreational trails and provide opportunities for the public to use and enjoy the park. Develop educational programs and evaluate the game refuge.

Steering Committee Comment:

Eric Orff: With Bear Brook being near big cities such as Concord and Manchester, it is predicted that park visitation will increase. How will mapping vernal pools and other data needed be done?

Melissa: We need to do is start doing more surveys and outreach. Assess species and resources within the park.

Will: There are specific recommendations to do this which will use new data collection tools. The foresters will record and bring in information that they collect from the field.

Tom D: How did the red pine cut effect wildlife?

Melissa: No information was recorded.

Jim: This cut created large benefits for wildlife. We need all types of forest age classes.

Will: Wildlife impacts were discussed prior to the red pine cut. The harvest was conducted in the winter to lessen impacts to the wildlife in that area.

Tom DiMaggio: Was this a positive effect to wildlife?

Will: Positive

Tom DiMaggio: Is there a plan in place if this happens again?

Will: This will be featured in the forest management plan

Melissa: Fish and game work very close together and will solve problems alongside each other so all needs are met.

Tom St. Martin: Is there a place in the management plan for ticks and mosquitos?

Jim: These are addressed on a regional basis by other agencies. It would not be feasible or practical to manage property by property.

Jeff Eames: There were many recommendations mentioned, how will all of them be met and it doesn't leave much room for getting work done.

Melissa: These are only recommendations and they will change as the rest of the management plan evolves. Ideally we would meet all of these recommendations but there needs to be a balance in all aspects of management.

Wendy: Agrees with Jeff that the ability to get work done on the ground is limited and some of these recommendations are too restrictive

Will: This is a draft and is subject to change. There are still internal discussions to be had

Wendy: Each recommendation needs to marry the other in order to still be able to get work done. For an example: the mowing recommendation, why not mow in June and not wait until July. There are ways to manage and encompass everything we need to.

Melissa: We will eventually see all conflicts and work them out and reassess and manage the problems

Avis: More factors go into growing hay. We mow Hayes field and Bear Hill field to keep it open and has the added benefit to cut down on ticks

Melissa: we use new research and best management practices to determine when we mow

Tom DiMaggio: If the wildlife population is high in the park, why do we need to protect it within the park if it is in other areas?

Jim: If you only protect a species in one area, it will negatively affect the species as a whole.

Jeff Ames: Where will Bear Brook's work with nonprofit groups and other companies be featured. Bear Paw greenways etc.

Will: we can expand on this topic and place it in another section of the management plan

Avis: Jesse Powers is the new Volunteer Coordinator for the department and is someone to talk to regarding volunteer groups and organizations

Jesse: Anyone can contact her and she can provide information about our work with other groups

Will: Carol Foss has supplied us with her comments on the chapter since she could not be here this evening.

Public Comment:

Debbie Briscoe: Hay restrictions are very important as to when you can cut and how it will affect the field and the quality of the hay.

Tom St. Martin: Feedback from the community is that we need better signage at the trail junctions and a better map of the park.

Next Meeting date for January 23rd at 5:30pm

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources 172 Pembroke Road, Concord.

Meeting Ends: 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Christina Pacuk, Park Manager