



***Weeks State Park
2011 Park Manager's Report
and Season in Review
Prepared by Rachel Bruce***

The State of New Hampshire's Department of Resources and Economic Development's Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Forest and Lands cooperatively manage Weeks State Park. This includes the Bureau of Historic Sites and Bureau of Trails. The Department of Transportation manages the scenic auto road.

Modeling and promoting environmental stewardship, the management of Weeks State Park is as wonderfully diverse as the park's natural landscape and visitor experiences. With a crew of dedicated professionals, the park's management team works diligently and collaboratively in order to maintain and improve: visitor recreational and educational experiences, historical buildings, and natural landscapes and features.

The Division of Forest and Lands manages approximately 400 acres of the park's forest. The highly skilled North Region Forester, Maggie Machinist, is responsible for managing the park's forests. The North Region Forest Ranger, knowledgeable Captain John Accardi, and his conscientious staff, oversee the management and operation of the park's fire lookout tower. From the tower, approximately ¼ million acres of forests can be monitored for forest fires. The Division of Parks and Recreation's Bureau of Trails wonderfully manages the park's trail system. Clint Savage is the contact for motorized trails and at this time, Chris Gamache, Trails Bureau Chief, is the contact for non-motorized trails. The Division of Park's Bureau of Historic Sites manages 22 acres, which includes the summit and its historic buildings. The Park Manager works to support all aspects of daily park operations, and because the Division of Park's staff is on the mountain daily from May until October, they cooperatively communicate and work with all agencies.

As predicted, this season proved to be another busy one: the busiest one yet! The end of the season visitation numbers are certainly exciting with approximately 7,014 people visiting Weeks State Park between May 21 and October 10. We are also happy to report that we gave 2,132 tours of the John Wingate Weeks Museum. Because of the predicted busy season, one full-time seasonal position was added but shared by several part-time people. This worked very well in meeting coverage needs for special events.

The park staff did an outstanding job this summer! We are very grateful to Robert Thyng, John Dotski, Mark Jepson, Clayton Greenwood, and Serena Bruce for all their efforts and for being so diverse in responsibilities. Also responsible for so much of the

great work performed at Weeks State Park is the Great North Woods Management Area staff; Sandy Young-Regional Supervisor, Andrew Zboray-Assistant Regional Supervisor, and Nick Ashton-Regional Grounds Maintenance. A very special thank you to our Historic Site Director, Ben Wilson, for his outstanding support and professional direction. Mr. Wilson has made many of the park's improvements, special events, and the park's positive future outlook possible.

With the recognition of the passage of the Weeks Act and the celebration of 100 years of the Weeks Law of 1911, Weeks State Park was the hot spot for many organized gatherings this season. The State of New Hampshire was honored to host the following non-profit groups: New Hampshire Timberland Owner's Association, State of New Hampshire's Historical and Cultural Resources, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, The Geological Society, The White Mountain Garden Club, and The Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire.

This past season we hosted two beautiful wedding receptions and went off site to promote the park and the work of John Wingate Weeks. Park staff attended the informational and charming White Mountain Garden Club's Symposium in Sugar Hill. Thank you to the White Mountain Garden Club for all of their support and for the \$1,200.00 donation to be used for the maintenance and expansion of the park's gardens. We also attended the Weeks Act Centennial Celebration at the base of the Mt. Washington Auto Road. We excitingly look forward to attending future events.

Weeks State Park was the ideal location for a very special event this summer; the Weeks State Park Celebration. As part of the Arts Alliance 8 Days of Weeks and the Weeks Act Centennial Celebrations, the Division of Parks and Recreation and the Division of Forest and Lands collaborated with the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire. On August 13 and 14, we brought arts and culture, history and heritage, conservation, and forest fire prevention and control related activities to the public. The event was well received by visitors, with several requests for future events.

A benefit for the park and the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire was also held over the celebration weekend. It was sponsored by and held at the Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa. With over 60 people in attendance, excellent food, beverage, and ambience was provided by the Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa. Delicious sugar maple treats were provided by Fuller's Sugarhouse, and well-known and talented musicians Patrick Ross and Friends provided fantastic music. This was a spectacular first time event, and we are already planning another benefit for next season with the funds raised going toward park restoration projects.

In recognition of the 100th anniversary of the auto road, we had a very special visit from the North Country Classic Cars Auto Club. Paying tribute to John Wingate Weeks and the historic auto road he built 100 years ago, it was so delightful to see the beautiful vintage cars parade up the 1.5-mile auto road.

A very special part of the Weeks State Park celebration was The Division of Forest and Lands' and Parks and Recreation's surprise trail dedication to Ken Jordan. A new nature trail was developed and named for Ken. After almost 21 years, Ken recently retired as the fire lookout watchman at Weeks State Park. He has been an icon at the park and sincerely enjoyed conversing with and educating visitors. Park visitors routinely ask for Ken and miss being greeted by him at the top of the tower. Ken helped to protect the forests of the North Country and the people living within them by monitoring the forests for smoke and fire. We are forever grateful to Ken for his above average work ethic, charm, skills, dedication, and talent as a fire watchman and so much more. His presence at the park is greatly missed, and we wish Ken and his family well.

A very big thank you to all of the sponsors, volunteers, staff, and visitors for making the Weeks State Park Celebration weekend such a great success:

Division of Forest and Lands, Division of Parks and Recreation, John Accardi, Maggie Machinist, Ben Wilson, Andrew Zboray, Bob Durant, Raymonde Bilodeau, Mountain View Grand, Fullers Sugarhouse, North Country Classics Car Club, Donald Spaulding, John Dotski, Serena Bruce, Bob Thyng, Clayton Greenwood, Mark Jepson, Mary Sloat, the White Mountain Garden Club, UNH Coop-Extension, Brendon Prusik, the NH Department of Transportation, Brian Schutt, the Traffic Bureau, North Country Transit, Stephen Sherry, Littleton Sign Company, Lancaster Police Department, the Ninety-Nine Restaurant, The Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire and their many wonderful artists, The William Dennis Weeks Memorial Library, Barbara Robarts, Ronnie Zajak, the Mount Prospect Ski Club, Robert Bruce, Sam Locke, and All Good Foods.

With all of the special events and projects this past season, came a lot of additional preparation, organization, and work. These, and future endeavors, could not be achieved without the continued and much appreciated support and guidance of Ben Wilson, Andrew Zboray, Sandy Young, John Accardi, Maggie Machinist, Chris Gamache, and Brian Schutt. Some of the many accomplishments this season include:

- Assisted the Trail's Bureau with maintenance of the park's trail system: replaced and updated the park's trail signs and posts, cut and removed fallen trees, and opened up some trail heads
- Worked with the Department of Transportation to organize the removal of the old park entrance gate's concrete footings, and update the auto road's traffic signs: cut down and remove dead trees along the auto road, and install the new historic marker
- Finished the cleaning of the auto garage and repaired its windows
- Cut and removed brush and trees, weed-whacked, and mowed several major areas
- Improved the tennis court area and several scenic overlooks
- Developed and built sections of the new Ken Jordan Nature Trail including stairs
- Organized and setup museum for special events and Thursday evening programs
- Maintained and improved park gardens
- Conducted traffic detail for Thursday evening programs and for special events
- Developed educational materials and exhibits; conducted group tours
- Repaired and painted picnic tables and benches, cleaned the tower, and performed museum maintenance

We are always thankful to the Weeks State Park Association for their annual support. This season they again paid \$200.00 to have the upper museum windows professionally cleaned, and approximately \$255.00 for cleaning and building supplies. Also, we are always appreciative for their part in the organization of the superb annual Thursday evening program series and the park wildflower and bird walks. With some terrific assistance from Jenny Burns, Sam Stoddard conducted a well-attended GPS clinic. On behalf of the park staff, I would also like to thank the Burn's family who each year efficiently and dedicatedly help park staff on Thursday evenings.

It is also important to recognize all of our terrific dedicated walkers, hikers, and winter recreational users who routinely help the park by volunteering or reporting if something at the park is out of place or needs attention. Suggestions and feedback are always highly valued because it helps us to make operational changes, improvements to park features, visitor experiences, and recreational opportunities while protecting park fauna and flora.

What is in Weeks State Park's future? LOTS! We will continue to expand our special events and educational programming, increase outreach, maintain and improve nature trails and add interpretive features, improve museum tours by adding interactive elements and audio/visual content, expand collaboration with existing partners while creating new partnerships, improve and expand educational content and materials, start and complete major building renovations and repairs, improve habitat for park flora and fauna, and improve the summit flower gardens. In addition, for many years there has been a special colony of bats living in the park's auto garage. We have been monitoring their population and are encouraged by their presence each year. New Hampshire Fish and Game has been contacted and a biologist will be evaluating the colony. In closing, we already have weddings planned for next season, and the museum building renovations will begin late spring, 2012. We are looking forward to the 2012 season. For park updates and more information, please visit the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation website at www.nhstateparks.org or contact park headquarters at 271-3556.

Thank you again for another great season at such a beloved and special park! It is my privilege to serve the public.

Sincerely,

Rachel Bruce,
Weeks State Park Manager