

Director's Report
STATE PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY COUNCIL
Division of Parks and Recreation
October 17, 2023
(Last report date was June 22, 2023)

STATE PARK SYSTEM FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

- **FY2024 Park System Comparative Statement** (sent separately) covering Week 14 from July 1, 2023 to Oct 5, 2023, has revenue at \$6,522,307, up by 0.7% from the previous period in FY23. Day-use, camping, Franconia Notch and State Park Plates are included in this revenue report. Cannon Mtn unaudited ops revenue is \$1.7M, up 13% from the previous period FY23. Hampton Parking Meters is \$2.0M, up by 33.8% from the previous period in FY23. This increase is attributed in part to the \$1 increase in the meter rate.
- **FY2024 Retail Comparative Statement** (sent separately) covering Week 14 has revenue, excluding Mt Washington and Cannon Mtn, at \$2.5M, down 0.3% from the previous period in FY23. Mt Washington revenue is at \$1.2M, down slightly 1% from the previous period in FY23. Cannon Mtn retail revenue is at \$412K, up 48% from the previous period in FY23. Cannon has a new POS system that has improved retail sales reporting. E-Commerce sales at \$2.7K, down by 18.6% from the previous period in FY23.
- **NH State Park Plate** As of Oct 7th, there were 18,596 State Park plates and 3,113 Moose plates registered. FY24 to date revenue is 521,340. The total revenue earned in FY23 from State Park Plates closed at \$1,736,600.
- **Donations:** NHSP received \$66,250 in online donations between 1/1/23 and 10/4/23. Fiscal Year to date, visitors have donated \$40,272.50 from 6,537 transactions. This year, we have implemented QR code signs that link to park specific donation pages to encourage guests who either don't carry cash for the iron rangers or wish to donate to their specific park at a later time. This has been a successful addition to our online donation program thus far, and we expect to see the use of these pages grow as awareness spreads.
- **Gift Cards:** Since January 1st, 292 gift cards have been purchased, a \$22,029.50 value. We anticipate this number will grow substantially over the holidays, as we have seen a large increase in sales in Nov-Dec over the last several years.
- **E-Commerce:** \$166,330.20 in E-Commerce sales have been received from 1/1/23 to 10/4/23. This amounts to 2,383 items sold. Of this, \$160,034.50 were from the sales of 1,633 season passes. Season Pass sales and renewals continue to hold strong year after year.

Pass	Qty Sold	Revenue
Individual Pass	571	\$35,845.50
NH Resident Family Pass	759	\$81,999.00
Non-Resident Family Pass	212	\$26,013.00
Seacoast Parking Pass	91	\$16,177.00

PARK OPERATIONS

CENTRAL REGION

- Overall, we had great **staff recruitment** and retention with only one park low on staff.
- **DD&M** played a key role in helping with our maintenance and operational needs in a timely manner.
- The **SCA** made some significant repairs on the **Saco Dam bridge**. They also did trail maintenance and improvements in **Crawford Notch** and **White Lake**.

- Between the new John Deere **UTVs** and 1 new to us surplus **truck** we were able to sufficiently accommodate our parks operational and transportation needs.
- We've improved our **internet connectivity** at several locations.
- In August, Commissioner Stewart and DOIT Commissioner Goulet spent a day at the 90th Annual NH League of Craftsmen Fair at **Mount Sunapee State Park**. At the fair we met with several invited guests from the tech community to tour the behind-the-scenes infrastructure and management of tech support for the 200+ individual retailers conducting business with thousands of visitors. The hope is to establish some tech partnerships to help the League at future Fairs.
- The SCA NH Corps is hard at work improving **Crawford Notch State Park**. The crew will be spending 20 days re-decking the walkway and replacing the railings on the Saco River dam.
- A top priority at the DNCR is customer service and many times to achieve this we collaborate with our sister agencies. Commissioner Stewart recently met with DES Commissioner Scott and F&G Director Mason to talk through various issues where our three agencies come together. An example of this is figuring out how to accomplish a capital budget project at **Mount Sunapee Beach State Park**. The DNCR was allocated \$740k for improvements to and operation of the boat ramp and parking. DNCR has prepped an area for additional parking. Commissioner Scott and Director Mason will send their staff to a site visit with DNCR staff soon to talk through immediate next steps and options.

GREAT NORTH WOODS MANAGEMENT AREA

- Director Wilson spent 2 days in Pittsburg for some meetings on the **Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest**. This area has had a bit of news lately, with the landowners taking a different approach to traditional working forest product and now looking at carbon credits. Part of our role there is to provide recreational management plans for the property and maintain the 240 plus miles of roads which we own.
- Director Wilson was also able to visit **Deer Mountain and Lake Francis**. While at Deer Mountain he was invited to sit fireside with some campers and spend some time hearing about their experiences at many of campgrounds. These were avid campers, and they couldn't speak highly enough about their experiences, the staff, and NH State Parks in general.
- SCRAP (State Conservation and Rescue Archaeology Program) field schools continue to receive notice from the media. The Berlin Sun published an article about the first session, at **Mollidgewock State Park**, and one from the Concord Monitor is expected soon about the second session at Bear Brook State Park.

SEACOAST REGION

- Just getting underway is an accessibility study for Hampton Beach State Park. Passed as a capital project in the last budget, we are working on forming a group to bring on a consultant to provide recommendations to increase accessibility. We look forward to seeing how that study unfolds, and what ideas it may produce that we can replicate at other parks. The kickoff meeting for that effort is in a couple weeks.
- Commissioner Stewart give a big shout out to the entire team at **Hampton Beach State Park** for an amazing Water Safety Day in July. She brought her girls to learn about water rescues and participate in the drills the lifeguards perform regularly. And, she was impressed with how well the guards interacted with all the kids and loved seeing so many parents and grandparents showing their sincere appreciation for the work they do.

SOUTH REGION

- The SPNHF reported that the **Monadnock Trails Week** saw "39 volunteers +16 leaders & staff had contributed approximately 735 hours to trail improvements. Projects included 75' of stone steps on the Marlborough Trail, 4 huge timber steps on the White Dot Trail, a 25' stone staircase on the Dublin Trail, plus trailhead improvements at SPNHF trailheads and brush clearing (for blueberry habitat) on Gap Mountain's middle peak."
- At **Bear Brook**, we thank the America's State Park Foundation and the Bronco Wild Fund for the donation of an all-terrain mobility electric wheelchair to enhance accessibility at the park.

- On Sept 17th, we celebrated the 80th anniversary of **Bear Book**. The day was filled with activities, exhibits and nature hikes. The park has a rich history, having been shaped by the Civil Conservation Corps during the 1930s and officially becoming a New Hampshire State Park in 1943. We were joined by the Division of Forest and Lands, N.H. Trails Bureau, N.H. Fish and Game, Allenstown Fire Department, the Student Conservation Association, Derry Trail Riders and the New England Mountain Bike Association in support of this event.
- A major ARPA project will occur at **Greenfield**. The park will be closed for the 2024 season.
- **Silver Lake** was closed this year due to cyanobacteria problems. We are working with DES to develop a lake management plan.
- Most parks were fully staffed this year due to the large hiring campaign we did this spring.
- Notable happenings at **Pawtuckaway** include ARPA Project Pivot; South Region Staff and SCA built and installed 3 new kiosks and IRs on backside; SCA work on North Mountain Trail; created water bar and rock steps to prevent erosion and improve trail quality; installed large new kiosks at Beach and Canoe Launch; began working with Breaking Chains to continue work on proposed disc golf course.
- The *Monadnock Ledger-Transcript* reporter who wrote the article about upcoming changes at **Greenfield** State Park let us know it “was our most-read article online last week and has been shared a lot....people really love that park!”

MOUNT WASHINGTON

- Closing for the season after Sunday, **October 15th**. Over 325,000 estimated visitors have come to the summit since opening on May 26th through October 8th. Final numbers will be tallied after closing, but visitorship is down slightly compared to last season.
- The weather has affected visitation at the Park this season. Mount Washington recorded its **snowiest June on record**, and this has also been the **wettest summer on record** at the summit by far.
- The **Capital Improvement Project** at the Park saw significant progress, despite the weather. 2 brand new 20,000-gallon water storage tanks have been buried and are in the process of being filled. The tank installation required significant digging and rock/ledge drilling before they could be placed and buried due to them being in a new location on the summit.
 - The new tanks are expected to be fully installed and hooked up to the Sherman Adams Visitor Center to begin their life as the main water supply for the facilities for the winter.
 - The new Wastewater Treatment Plant did not meet its expected installation due to the manufacturer not being able to complete the build out in time. The new facility will be completed and delivered to Gorham in the coming weeks, but the installation and activation will not occur until June of 2024. The current Wastewater Treatment Plant has been set up to continue serving the State Park and Mount Washington Observatory staff and guests for one more winter season.
 - Including the installation of the new Wastewater Treatment Plant at the summit, there will be a few more final tasks to complete this Capital Project in the Spring and early Summer of 2024, including any final aesthetic and wrap up work and the removal of the pair of aged out water storage tanks that were part of the summer water system.
- In July, Commissioner Stewart joined a group of graduate students from Bangladesh who have been studying at UNH this summer. Also in attendance was TNC, Forest Society, AMC, Observatory, and the Cog which brought us up and down **Mount Washington**. A great opportunity to showcase the strong partnerships in NH – collaboration is the only way to maintain a balance of missions and ensure proper stewardship of our special places.

BUREAU OF HISTORIC SITES (BHS)

- ARPA funded condition assessment studies ongoing at **Wentworth Coolidge Mansion** and **Fort Constitution**.
- **Fort Stark** ARPA project kicking off in October 2023, park closed during construction activity.

- Bunker security and parking lot upgrades.
- **Weeks State Park** ARPA project being designed by SMRT out of Portland, ME.
 - ADA accessibility and rebuilding historic north terrace.
 - Fire Tower repairs planned for 2024 funded by Moose Plate.
- **Bear Brook** Nature Center and Spruce Pond Cabins beginning demolition project in October 2023.
- **Weeks State Park** is named to the National Register of Historic Places as a well-preserved example of a summer estate built during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Weeks State Park is historically significant because of its architecture, its historic associations with conservation, agriculture and recreation, and as the summer home of Sen. John Wingate Weeks (1860-1926).
- **Weeks State Park** reports that more than 100 visitors have commented that seeing the story on *NH Chronicle*, which aired Sept. 8, prompted them to visit.
- The 25th anniversary of the “**Moose Plate**” Program was celebrated at an Executive Council meeting in June.
- DNCR staff paid a visit to **White Island** in June to check up on the Lighthouse and infrastructure there.

CANNON MOUNTAIN

- Commissioner Stewart was a featured speaker at the **Old Man of the Mountain Family Fun Day** on Aug. 3. Her remarks, which noted “Having shared memories means that we’re a community.... The Old Man gives us our identity as Granite Staters and hopefully we’ll continue that legacy going forward,” were included in the Caledonian-Record’s event coverage.
- The Cannon Mountain lift maintenance staff successfully assisted with and completed a major capital improvement project on the **Cannonball Quad Chair**, preplacing and repairing the motor and the gear box.
- **Snowmaking** staff have also been busy with capital projects, overseeing the replacement and installation of major snowmaking lines on several trails and in critical areas.
- Franconia Notch was bursting with visitors over the holiday weekend and both the Aerial Tramway and Flume Gorge were “sold out” on **October 8th and 9th**. Flume retail had a record-breaking sales day on Sunday, October 8th.
- All other staff are busy with preparations for winter operation with a projected opening day of **Friday, November 24th**.
- The **Aerial Tramway Replacement Project** bidding process will be advertised on Tuesday October 31, 2023, with a bid opening of Wednesday November 29, 2023.
- State Parks is partnering with the World Trails Network to host the final fall volunteer work day as part of the **Old Bridle Path** restoration project in Franconia Notch on October 22nd.

BUREAU OF TRAILS (BOT)

- The **NH Snowmobile Association** brought a new groomer to the State House in June. Trails Bureau Chief Craig Rennie and Assistant Bureau Chief Alexis Rudko say a lot of legislators paid a visit to learn more.
- **Grant in Aid (GIA) Updates:**
 - BOT has been meeting with leadership at NHTSA and NHOHVA over the last 6 months to draft rule improvements and clarifications to the Res 8400 Grant in Aid (GIA) Administrative Rules that will hopefully improve and simplify the grant process for clubs and for BOT administration. Draft rules have been submitted to our legal coordinator for additional review prior to submitting them to the NH Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (JLCAR).

- With the latest snowmobile registration fee increase that started in May of this year, BOT carefully reviewed the potential revenue increase to the GIA program and have adjusted the hourly grooming reimbursement rates accordingly. Overall, we are proposing to increase the rates in each groomer class by 15% for this coming winter.
 - GIA winter grooming applications were emailed to Presidents and Trail Administrators (TA's) back in August and were due Friday October 6th. The GIA winter grooming application is also posted on the BOT website and will remain there until next year's updates.
 - The BOT website has undergone significant changes with a more organized layout which will help clubs find and access key documents/links they need for the grant programs. You will also find most of GIA forms have been updated to be a bit more streamlined and user friendly for the clubs. A few of the remaining older forms will hopefully be updated before the spring grant round.
 - BOT has been working on a "GIA guidelines" document to be used as an optional supplemental that will help to address common questions from clubs that are not directly answered in the application. It is modeled after the RTP guidelines that has helped applicants successfully navigate that grant program over the years. These guidelines will be updated as needed as we work through improvements to the GIA program and Administrative Rules.
 - Staff have also been updating the GIA training session for the upcoming November NHTSA Trails Workshop in November. In addition, one of our goals is to host a comprehensive GIA training this winter for next summer's grants since they can be more complex. Ideally, we would also have a summer GIA training for winter grants but those are generally less complicated.
 - Our GIA Coordinator position is currently still vacant but fortunately for all of us, Alexis Rudko is doing an outstanding job covering and improving the GIA program in the interim. BOT has been working directly with the NH Division of Personnel to modify and update the position with the hope of getting it posted in the next several months.
- **Recreation Trails Program (RTP) Updates:**
 - FY23 RTP projects are underway, with some already reaching or nearing completion. As the projects are completed, Trails Bureau staff will be visiting as many of the sites as possible. Please reach out to Jay Scarborough if there are any questions or if you run into any issues with your project.
 - The Selection Committee for the FY24 RTP grants met on August 30th and projects have been selected. As expected, there were a number of excellent project applications making the grant selection process very competitive. All applicants will be receiving email notification of their project selection status from Jay Scarborough directly. Selected grantees' project administrators need to reply to the notification email either accepting or declining the funds.

Categorically, the amounts distributed for 2024 RTP grants are:

 - Motorized - \$349,952.70 (30%)
 - Diversified - \$466,603.60 (40%)
 - Non-Motorized - \$349,952.70 (30%)
 - As a reminder, FY24 RTP selected projects have not been given a notice to proceed. There are several historical and environmental reviews that need to occur prior to the grant contracts being sent to Governor & Council for approval. The grant contracts are expected to go out to grantees in April 2024 for signatures with G&C approval and funds availability anticipated in June 2024.
 - **BOT Legislative items:**
 - HB 1188 5-year Study Committee: BOT staff attended the study committee meeting that was held on September 29, 2023, at DNCR HQ in Concord and there was review and discussion of SB256 and veto over-ride to establish a safety program for OHRV's, or possible introduction of 2024 legislation. The next meeting will be held at NH Fish & Game HQ on November 16th.

ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS

DAY-USE & CAMPING RESERVATION SYSTEM

- **Day Use Reservations:** 230,160 day use reservations and entrance tickets were sold in in CY 2023 to date (10/4/23). This includes all of our day use parks, as well as ticketing facilities, such as the Flume Gorge and Robert Frost Farm, but does not include Cannon Tram operations. Between advanced reservations and in person purchases, NH State Parks has welcomed over 874,000 day-use visitors into our parks so far this year (10/9/23). Visitation was impacted in the beginning of the season by continuous rain but made a strong comeback in the later months as the weather worked in our favor.
- **Camping Reservations:** 36,535 Camping reservations were made online in CY 2023 to date (10/4/23), with an additional 1,530 made through the call center, and 4,127 made in the field. These 42,191 reservations resulted in over 112,000 site nights being sold across the state to more than 137,500 campers.
- **Additional Notes:** The Enterprise System went out to RFP in July of 2023, and at this time, we are currently evaluating vendors for selection. Our current contract expires 10/31/24, and this new contract would carry the Enterprise System into the end of 2029, with the option to extend an additional 2 years. We look forward to the continued growth and improvement of this system, and its impact on both our customer and staff experience.

SEACOAST PARKING ENTERPRISE SYSTEM

On April 1, we introduced our new 42 multi-space **pay stations** to our visitors. These pay stations allow the visitors to pay using coins, cash, or credit cards using their vehicle license plate as the identifier to our enforcement officers. As with all new programs, we hit several bumps in the road, however nearly all bumps that the visitors would feel were addressed by Memorial Day weekend.

Additionally, we have increased payment options for the visitor with the added option of visitors using a mobile app (**Park Mobile**) to pay by phone. We have received rave reviews on this option. Using the app allows the visitor to sign up to receive a text when their time is nearing expiration and provides them the opportunity to add time to their stay wherever they may be (on the beach, in the restrooms, or visiting the businesses along Ocean Boulevard. When we discussed this option to the vendor, we were told that their clients see approximately 10% of their purchases done through the mobile app so it is exiting to note that 17% of all purchases were completed using the mobile app - and we anticipate seeing that number increase next year.

Moving forward to 2024 we will be installing upgraded machines that will have more modernized feel to them. Their screens will be in full color and will include images of the beaches. Although currently they operate very similar to the machines we had this season, we are working with the vendor to have some added features that were not available with the pay stations we had this season.

Although it was a wet summer, we only saw a light decrease in the number of purchases that were made this season. With the approved rate increase 5/1 – 9/30 from \$2.00 to \$3.00, we saw an increase of 33% in total revenue over the 2022 season. Below is the current breakdown of purchases and revenue collected from April 1 through October 9, 2023.

Date	# of Purchases	Purchase Amount	% Change 2022 - 2023	% Changed based on 2022 rates	
Oct 7 - Oct 9, 2023	3,464	\$7,675.75	65%	\$7,675.75	65%
Oct 8 - Oct 10, 2022	2,497	\$4,645.52			
Oct 9 - Oct 11, 2021	3,471	\$7,034.33			
Oct 10 - Oct 12, 2023	4,625	\$9,980.73			

Year to date					
April 1 – October 9, 2023	434,755	\$3,123,905.66	33%	\$2,126,382.52	-10%
April 1 – October 9, 2022	439,358	\$2,356,564.92			
April 1 – October 9, 2021	462,236	\$2,328,591.72			
April 1 – October 9, 2020*	262,769	\$1,328,399.83			

*2020 was during COVID and didn't start collecting until June.

**It is important to note that the hourly rate increased to \$3.00 on 5/1 instead of the \$2.00 in previous years.

DESIGN, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) PROJECTS (Updates available from the [Parks website.](#))

- FIVE appropriations:
 - DNCR (Div Forests & Lands / Div Parks & Recreation) \$22,570,000
 - Historic Sites \$4,045,000
 - Bureau of Trails \$4,000,000
 - Park Operations Trash Compactor Truck \$175,000
 - Roads and Parking Lots \$1,000,000 (Greenfield, Rye Harbor)

Capital Projects (A special thanks to Commissioner Stewart, DNCR staff, SPAC, MWC, the Governor and legislators.)

- 2024-2025 Budget
 - Roofing & Repair, \$1,200,000
 - Forest and Lands Facilities, \$2,800,000
 - Trails Bureau Equipment, \$1,000,000
 - Mount Washington Summit Infrastructure & Ecology Study, \$1,000,000
 - Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Road Repair and Paving, \$1,500,000
- Other Legislative initiatives
 - Northwood Meadows dam repair, \$1,000,000
 - Parking lot repairs and paving, \$250,000
 - Hampton Beach accessibility study, \$150,000
 - Cannon Mtn Aerial Tramway, \$18,000,000

Projects updates:

- Mount Washington Water/Sewage – 60% complete! Tanks are in and slabs are being poured.
- Cannon Sewer upgrade – Design is complete, and project is out to bid.
- Greenfield Electrical/Water – Most design work submitted and approved; project is out for bid.
- Rye Harbor LID/Stormwater- RFQ advertised 8/29.
- Ellacoya State Park- New Sewer line is installed.
- Belknap and Cardigan Fire Towers – 50% complete
- Fort Stark – Preconstruction meeting held 8/17, bunkers are cleaned out and security work starts 10/1 if steel fabrication is ready. Parking lot/septic work begins 10/10.
- Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion- FEMA study completed.
- NCRC Roof, Lake Tarleton Roof, Greenfield Admin Roof projects completed.
- Campground Expansion – 30% design plans from consultant submitted for review, septic test pits dug in Sept at Jericho, and we will put the well out to bid.

Student Conservation Association (SCA) crew updates:

- 28.4 Acres Improved:
 - 1,142,745' sq. of Natural Debris Removed
 - 32,670' sq. of Shoreline and Beach Cleaned Up (Including dock installation)
 - 1,770' sq. Painted
 - 61,950' sq. Vertical Mulching (view shed clearing)
 - 3,900' sq. of Social Trails Closed

- Total Number of Crew Members: 14
- Total Number of Service Hours: 1,038
 - Total Number of Crew Member Service Hours: 916
 - Total Number of Crew Supervisor Technical Support Hours: 92
 - Total Number of SCA Conservation Coordinator Technical Support Hours: 30

BUREAU OF COMMUNITY RECREATION

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM The volunteer program is continuing to show its value by addressing challenges and responding to weather-related incidents. Some of the notable accomplishments follow:

- **Friends of Pisgah** along with park manager Kim Nilsen, replaced several bridges, repaired washed out roads, and removed downed trees from blocking access to the park. The rain between May & June led to higher-than-normal beaver activity so the group worked with DNCR staff to install so-called ‘beaver deceivers’ to keep pond levels within reason and prevent flooding roads.
- **Trailwrights** held several volunteer days throughout the summer to maintain trails. Of note were multiple Saturdays on the Mt. Pemigewasset trail and the Artist Bluff/Bald Mountain loop trail in Franconia Notch State Park. Trailwrights mission is to maintain trails and teach others the skills and techniques to get the job done safely.
- Monadnock Trails Week in partnership with the **Society for the Protection of New Hampshire’s Forests** held a trail maintaining event and celebration July 13-17th. Over 50 volunteers worked with State Park & SPNHF staff to complete new projects and conduct basic maintenance across the trail network. The event has been held every summer (except 2020) for the last 17 years and now includes a Women’s’ Only Crew as well as a trailhead improvement projects for folks who cannot hike up the mountain. Building inclusivity and a community around caring for trails is the overall goal of this annual event.
- **World Trails Network** began work to Restore the Franconia Ridge project on the Old Bridle Path in Franconia Notch State Park the first week of July. Over the next 10 weeks, their contract trail crew installed over 100 5-foot-wide stone steps over 1/2 of a mile of newly shaped and surfaced hiking trail – designed to accommodate the high number of visitors. In partnership with the AMC, WTN hosted 6 volunteer days on Old Bridle Path to clear vegetation on the newly designed route, reduce rugosity of the trail surface, and mitigate the effects of erosion and high visitor use.

At this time DNCR has **more than 25 active individual volunteers, 34 long term groups under agreement, and hosts scores of single-day volunteers** under the supervision of park staff and partnering agencies, orgs, and groups. These folks are instrumental in tackling tasks ranging from beach cleanups to technical trail maintenance and play an integral role in the beauty and safety of NH State Parks. For 2023, volunteer groups and individuals are on track to surpass metrics of the previous year. As the weather improves and folks begin to send in work reports we expect to volunteer involvement continue to grow. Andy Crowley joined the Bureau of Community Recreation as the new volunteer program manager in April and has been working to connect with the various groups and ensure their continued success. Throughout the coming winter, Andy is working with these groups and individuals to improve the user experience, reduce wait-times, and digitize/automate the existing print-paper and scan email processes where possible.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND Established by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, LWCF is a federal financial assistance program to the States and Territories via the US Department of the Interior, National Park Service for the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation lands and facilities. The program is managed for the State of New Hampshire by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Community Recreation. Funds apportioned to the State may be sub-granted to local units of government. Financial assistance through approved grant awards is provided on a reimbursement basis. Project sponsors must contribute a least 50% matching share of a project’s total cost and value.

To participate in the program the State must revise and maintain a five-year Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The current SCORP is valid 2019-2023, with an update in development for 2024-2028. The State must also designate a State Liaison Officer and Alternates (SLO/ASLO) by the Governor or by statute. The current SLO, ASLOs, and program staff are as follows.

- Sarah Stewart: SLO/Commissioner, DNCR
- Brian Wilson: ASLO/Director, DNCR-Division of Parks and Recreation
- Eric Feldbaum: ASLO/Administrator, DNCR-DPR-Bureau of Community Recreation
- Bill Gegas: LWCF Grants Program Coordinator, DNCR-DPR-Bureau of Community Recreation

Apportionment Types:

LW	<u>Land and Water Conservation Fund</u> State and Local Assistance Program regular formula apportionment.
GM	<u>Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act</u> , Section 105, designates 12.5% 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.
SR	<u>Special Reapportionment Account</u> , unspent funds from previously closed or terminated projects. Not available until regular (LWCF) apportionment of the same federal fiscal year is fully obligated.

Current Program Apportionments and Available Balances (by Federal Fiscal Year):

Apportionment Accounts	Obligation Expiration	Original Amount	Available Balance
LW-2022	9/30/2024	\$1,827,766.00	\$1,502,753.52
GM-2022	9/30/2024	\$779,005.00	\$574,745.95
LW-2023	9/30/2025	\$1,728,897.00	\$1,556,862.54
GM-2023	9/30/2025	\$1,012,338.00	\$1,012,338.00
SR-2023	9/30/2024	\$426,320.69	\$426,320.69
TOTAL:			\$5,073,020.70

The current policy for the approximate distribution of fund assistance between state and local projects is for the state to retain 40% and to provide the remaining 60% to sub-grantees. This is maintained as a long-range plan over time. A specific granting year may have a higher percentage awarded to either the state or local recipients. Sub-grants to local units of government are awarded through a competitive selection application and review process. Selected proposals are then submitted to the NPS by the state. Because the state is the official grantee, applications for state projects are submitted directly to the NPS in the absence of a scoring system. Regardless, the submittal of all project applications must be concurred by the Commissioner/SLO.

Grants Recently Approved by NPS:

The following nine grants have recently been approved by the NPS, with a federal grant period of performance of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2026. However, the subrecipient pass-through grants to local governments must be approved by the Governor and Executive Council. At the time of this report, the Division is preparing the request for the November 2023 G&C meeting.

PROJECT	NAME	SPONSOR	SCOPE	FED GRANT
33-00734.1	Patricia T Russell Park	City of Keene	Amendment to project #33-00734 to increase award due to cost overruns	\$500,500.00
33-00754	Hampton Beach State Park South-II	State of NH DNCR	Renovation of the bathroom facilities at the South Beach day-use area	\$277,777.50
33-00756	Cochecho River Park-II	City of Dover	Development of the new Cochecho River Park, on the lower section of the river	\$500,500.00
33-00757	Hedgehog Park-III	Town of Salem	Various improvements including redevelopment of shelter pavilion, accessible trail, and picnic areas	\$240,865.62
33-00758	Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Area-II	Town of Chester	Replacement of causeway bridge connecting beach and trails area to main parking	\$240,625.00

33-00759	Canal Street Riverfront Park	City of Concord	Development of the new Canal Street Riverfront Park in Penacook Village	\$500,500.00
33-00760	White Park-III	City of Concord	Replacement of the large playground	\$400,400.00
33-00761	Patricia T Russell Park-II	City of Keene	Development of a newly acquired adjacent lot into a poured concrete skatepark	\$225,225.00
33-00762	FY23 Admin Grant	State of NH DNCR	Creation/Hiring of LWCF Stewardship Specialist position, purchase and development of GIS/Database, and project site inspection systems.	\$172,034.46
TOTAL:				\$3,058,427.58

Local Grant Round-34:

The Division received twenty-four Intents-to-Apply from eighteen municipalities, totaling \$6,762,531.00 in potential grant applications. Invitations to apply via AmpliFund (online grant application platform) have been issued to those that have met the minimum criteria for eligibility. Application packets are due by December 14, 2023. Successful proposals should be given a federal grant start date of October 1, 2024.

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grants Program:

The Division submitted one proposal, on behalf of the City of Manchester, to this nationally competitive LWCF program managed and scored by NPS. Eligibility for this program is limited to state and local government projects within US Census urban areas. At the time of this report, the Division has not received official notice of grant award or denial.

PROJECT	NAME	SPONSOR	SCOPE	REQUEST
Pending	Sheehan Basquill Park	City of Manchester	Various improvements to SBP	\$4,004,000.00

Current Open/Active LWCF Grant Projects:

PROJECT	NAME	SPONSOR	SCOPE	FED GRANT
33-00720	Plaistow Athletic and Recreation Complex	Town of Plaistow	Development of a trail network on Town lands	\$51,551.50
33-00724	Jules Bisson Park-II	City of Somersworth	Construction of a playground, picnic shelter, and accessibility enhancements	\$45,000.00
33-00725	Kearsarge Mtn Reservation-VIII	State of NH DNCR	Development of two pit-toilets and parking lot paving, and two pit-toilets at Winslow State Park.	\$231,481.25
33-00729	Remich Park Improvements	Town of Littleton	Demolition and reconstruction of service building (concession, bathrooms, storage), field drainage improvements, resurfacing of perimeter pathway, replacement of 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
33-00733	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
33-00734	Patricia T. Russell Park	City of Keene	Park enhancements, parking, field space, play features, landscaping, parking	\$400,400.00
33-00735	Mascoma Lakeside Park	Town of Enfield	Parking, accessible route development	\$125,125.00
33-00736	Colonel Town Enhancements	Town of Lancaster	Playground replacement	\$180,180.00
33-00737	Merrimack River Greenway-II	City of Concord	Construction of bicycle/pedestrian path	\$275,275.00

33-00738	Trestle View and Winnepesaukee River Whitewater Parks	City of Franklin	Development of whitewater structures, and riverbank terrace seating	\$400,400.00
33-00740	Big River Recreation Area	Town of Barnstead	Improvements to ice-rink, and development of a natural playground area	\$75,075.00
33-00741	Littleton Riverfront Commons-II	Town of Littleton	Development of park land acquired under project 33-00721	\$200,200.00
33-00742	Mount Washington SP Sewerage	State of NH-DNCR	Upgrade to capacity and modernization of summit facilities sewerage system	\$1,045,134.09
33-00743	NH SCORP 2024-2028	State of NH-DNCR	Five-year plan revision (LWCF requirement)	\$69,144.08
33-00745	White Lake SP Area 1 Toilet Building Renovation	State of NH-DNCR	Campground toilet building renovation	\$272,772.50
33-00746	Gregg Lake Beach III	Town of Antrim	Bathroom renovation, park improvements	\$165,165.00
33-00747	Gorham Common II	Town of Gorham	New accessible playground, bathroom accessibility enhancements	\$83,963.88
33-00748	Storrs Hill Ski Area II	City of Lebanon	Ski area lodge renovations and ski jump redevelopment	\$400,400.00
33-00749	Discovery Park	Town of Goshen	Creation of new park and trail with natural playground features	\$74,688.61
33-00750	Fernald Park	Town of Farmington	New playground and park improvements	\$62,562.50
33-00751	Timberlane Public Track	Timberlane School District	Replacement of track and jumping sports facilities	\$211,148.43
33-00752	Piermont Community Playground	Piermont School District	Replacement of playground	\$68,068.00
33-00753	Stepping Stones Playground	Town of Kingston	Replacement of playground	\$43,077.03
25 OPEN GRANTS (21 Local, 4 State) TOTAL:				\$4,861,912.59

DIVISION ADMINISTRATION

AGREEMENTS.

- **Blue Ocean Society** contract for the use of a portion of the Hampton Beach Seashell Complex for the operation of a marine education center to provide visitors educational and interpretive services. *DONE, expires 06/30/25.*
- **Mt Washington Auto Road** agreement for the use of summit parking lots at Mount Washington State Park, expires June 30, 2024. *DONE.*
- **Centerplate Sodexo** concessionaire contract for food and beverage services at FNSP/Cannon Mountain, expires on May 16, 2024.
- **AMC** lease for use and operation of Lonesome Lake Hut, expires on June 30, 2024.
- **Mount Washington Observatory** lease for use of museum and weather observatory space at the summit of Mt Washington, expires September 30, 2024.
- **Reserve America** Enterprise Reservation System for park and campground reservations, POS transactions, and e-commerce, expires October 31, 2024.

LIBRARY PASS PROGRAM

This program began in 2013 and is intended to provide NH residents an opportunity to visit many of our parks by obtaining the pass from their local library. It cost \$105 and allows 2 adults (12+) and up to four dependents to enter most parks (except the Tram, Flume, Hampton Beach South and Wallis Sands) access to the park for no additional fee. It is not valid for camping or the metered parking on the seacoast. To date, we have sold **69 passes to 65 communities** across the state with at least 10 of the communities buying the pass for the first time. These 69 passes

brought 256 visits to our parks to date (99 visits to Odiorne Point State Park alone!). The pass is valid through 12/31/23 so hopefully we will see more visits in the coming weeks.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT PROGRAM (SUP)

To date, 175 permits have been written for events that take place in State Parks or on the rail trails. This includes events for triathlons, 5k runs, surfing lessons, filming permits, research projects, trainings, and more. Some of the events are for fundraising efforts while others are meant to raise a profit for the event coordinators. To date, we have received **\$92,678.81 for special use permit related revenue**. We do anticipate receiving more revenue as the permittees submit their required reports and additional fees as listed in their permits. With the season winding down, there are only a few upcoming events to report:

Event	Location	Dates	Description
Halloween Hang Ten Surf Competition	Jenness State Beach	10/21	NH Surfriders will be holding a volunteer beach clean-up along with a Halloween-themed surf competition.
NH National Guard Ranger Assessment Training	Bear Brook State Park	10/21	The event will include a 12-mile ruck (up and down Podunk Road twice) as well as orienteering.
Franconia Notch ½ Marathon	Franconia Notch State Park	10/28	Adaptive Sports Partners of the North Country will be holding its annual fundraising event
SCA Staff Trail Building Training	Bear Brook State Park	11/13 – 11/19	SCA will be offering a trail building training for its staff members. Training will include camping during the event.
RI National Guard Mountaineering Training	Lafayette Place Campground and Franconia Notch State Park	11/12 – 11/15	This Event is a trail hiking and basic military mountaineering skills for Rhode Island National Guardsman apart of the C Co. 1-43rd Infantry (ABN) which will utilize select hiking trails in Franconia Notch State Park
NH ATV Toys for Tots	Bear Brook State Park	11/12	This is a fundraising Event for Toys for Tots by the New Hampshire ATV Club which is consisting of a 20-mile ATV ride on Park trails and where riders will drop off any unwrapped toys for children in need in Bear Brook State Park.

MARKETING.

- **New website 2023:** In collaboration with Silvertch, the newly redesigned NH State Parks website was launched April 25th. The new site has an improved, mobile-friendly design and enables customers to search for features and book reservations on their phones with ease, increasing traffic and engagement. The visual design keeps NH State Parks program and facility information looking modern and up to date, appealing to visitors in New England and beyond. Some of the new features to look for:
 - The State Park Finder, utilizing Google Maps plug-in. The ability to search for a Park via an activity tile filter, region, town, or zip code
 - Improved customer navigation to ReserveAmerica – with direct paths to specific types of reservations (day use vs. camping)
 - Improved customer experience in finding the most searched-for items, such as campgrounds, maps, and trail information.
 - Use of “Reserve or Book Now” buttons on banners which are customized per page.
 - Use of picture “button” Tiles instead of dropdown menus – these use categories and menu items that link to specific pages. Tiles greatly improve ease of use on mobile.
- **Top 5 website pages for traffic (users- visited the page) from May 1 - October**
 - Flume Gorge: 1.1k, Camping: 158k, Find Parks & Trails: 99k, Fees & Reservations: 88k, Franconia Notch State Park: 71k

- Top organic searches: Flume Gorge 1.2mil, Hampton Beach 1.1mil, Mt Washington 1.1 mil, Camping 1.1mil, Franconia Notch 900k, Monadnock 512k
- **DIGITAL & PROGRAMMATIC CAMPAIGNS:** In collaboration with Drive Brand Studio Marketing Agency, a tagline for Park’s campaigns was created, “New Point of View,” to be used throughout all campaigns.
 - Summer Recruitment
 - One of our most successful campaigns, started with using a new tagline: “New Point of View.”
 - Beginning in April, Meta (Facebook, Instagram), Google, and Programmatic ads were all deployed for summer recruitment. We ran two separate campaigns, with one focused specifically on the statewide job fair.
 - Combined, these campaigns produced traffic to the website and on social media well above the industry average.
 - Additionally, website traffic increased month-over-month by 29.2% and increased year-over-year by 4.3%. Compared to the previous month, there has been an increase in new users by 27.3%—year-over-year, we saw an increase of 6.1%.
 - This campaign caused a large increase in applications and 275 new hires.
 - This approach is currently being used for Cannon winter recruitment and we have seen a significant increase in applications
- With a focus on “**Find Your New Point of View,**” themed monthly campaigns have been running since April, to increase reservations (camping and day-use) and to drive website traffic to Parks and Historic sites. Each month focused on 5 different parks and sites: one from each region of the state.
 - May: Hidden Gems – Lesser-known parks focus
 - June: Eco-travel - Eco-friendly trips and activities focus.
 - July: Babysitter’s Guide – Family-friendly focus
 - August/September: Day Trips for the Busy Adventurer – Day trips within each region
 - September/October: Fall Camping
 - November/December: Will be E-commerce focused
 - Despite the rainy summer, campaigns consistently performed well above the industry average.
- **PHOTOSHOOT WITH DRIVE BRAND STUDIO** It had been more than 5 years since there had been a professional photoshoot. We are in the process of finishing up a film shoot in the Great North Woods. The website and marketing materials benefit from updated photos and media, keeping them engaging, and reflecting the diversity and range of activities in the parks.

REPORTS PROVIDED SEPARATELY:

- Parks & Retail Comparative Statements, Week 14
- Park Ops Impact Report, FY 2023
- Volunteer Program 2022 Annual Report
- Parks Legislative Report, 2023 Session
- Parks LSR Report, 2024 Session

BJW/ttl-10162023