

# Monadnock Advisory Commission

Meeting: Thursday, November 9, 2023  
4pm at the Inn at East Hill Farm

## Minutes

### 1. Welcome & roll call

#### Members Present:

Bill Elliot (Town of Jaffrey)  
John Smith (Town of Jaffrey)  
Katy Wardlaw (Town of Dublin)  
Tyler Comte for Scott Rolfe (Forests and Lands)  
Tara Blaney (DNCR)  
Sterling Abram (Town of Dublin)  
Hiel Linquist (Town of Fitzwilliam)  
Carrie Deegan & Matt Scaccia (SPNHF)  
Dave Adam (Town of Troy)  
Dan Rogalski (Town of Marlborough)  
Don Upton (Town of Troy)

#### Members Absent:

Terry Maugeri (Town of Marlborough)  
(Replacement rep for Robin Blais – Town of Fitzwilliam)

#### Non-members and guests present:

Mary Shotton (Monadnock State Park)  
Will Kirkpatrick (Monadnock State Park)  
Dave Targan (Monadnock Mtn Patrol)

### 2. MAC chair update

Robin Blaise has stepped down from MAC. Don Upton volunteered to step forward as the new chair, at least for a year. Motioned (Dan), seconded (Bill), and approved.

### 3. Review of minutes from previous meeting – 4/20/23

Corrections made (spelling of Hiel and Katy's names, and of "Greylock"). Minutes motioned, seconded, and approved.

### 4. MAC Treasurer's report & update

\$7685.00 after donation of \$5,000 from one individual. Vijaykrisha (goes by VJ) Adusumilli, an IT professional from the Boston Area, has spent a lot of time on the mountain, has helped with rescues, just generally loves the mountain and is interested in what we do.

The Park has a list of items to ask for – Dave Targan is currently working on a grant with the NH Outdoor Council and is waiting to see what can be obtained that way, but there are two items that we'd like to ask for sooner. A "Sked" light-weight litter for short carries (i.e. to the helicopter landing zone), and a backpack for carrying another of our

litters. MAC authorizes up to \$1,000 for these two items – motioned (Bill), seconded and approved.

Question raised on how we should keep the MAC funds. Paperwork for establishing as a non-profit organization is burdensome, perhaps prohibitive for now. But having a way to verify someone's donation is important. We have to let donors know that we're not actually a non-profit. VJ knew that, he said that had we been one his company would have matched his donation.

SPNHF may have a way (a "Restricted Fund") to do this, but Dan had checked with someone on that and they weren't interested at that time.

Parks has a way for people to donate directly to a park, but MAC would then have nothing to do with that process. Can we make a fund that's specifically for S&R? Or trails? We will look into it.

Don has a contact with the Cathedral of the Pines who he thinks might be able to help work this out, he will check with her and connect with Dan.

#### 5. Monadnock State Park update

Manager's Report sent to attendees (available upon request). Highlights: income and attendance this year are down – rained so many weekends this summer. Coming down off of COVID surge as well.

Iron rangers continued to increase in general, new signage works great.

Rhododendron did very little business – in addition to the weather, the bloom was not a good one, and we weren't able to staff which would have helped as well. Noted that the accessible trail needs work – this is a known issue, we are looking into fixing it (possible SCA crew this coming season). First Day Hike will be held at Rhodo, hoping to drive up interest in the park. Noted that the park is not listed on the website that lists accessible parks, something to look into once we get the trail fixed.

We did not staff remote trailheads this year, use and parking issues seem to have subsided since the COVID surge.

Not as much facilities work got done this season, but still had Monadnock Trails Week, and did what we could here and there. We had one SCA crew this year who did some good work for us.

Mountain Patrol update – More rescues this year. Part of it is increased reporting of "self-rescues" where we give minimal help, but we did have a busy rescue season. But only 2 carry-outs, and one helicopter rescue.

Did a joint training with F&G and UVWRT with National Guard on their Blackhawk helicopter rescue capabilities. They can often fly in conditions when DHART can't, or is unavailable. We got to test things out with them on our one helicopter rescue this year, went very well.

Questions: 1) Is dehydration often an issue for hikers? Yes. It contributes to heat illness (though not as much as last year) and likely most falls and other injuries. This year wet rocks was our bigger problem.

Have we tried using interns to fill vacancies? We tried, offered paid internships, with no luck. Just like with regular employees, it's hard for Parks to compete with other opportunities that are out there.

We are still seeing a lot of people who don't know about the reservation system – numbers of turn-aways has not gone down, people just don't check ahead. All Trails does mention it in places, but not consistently and its easy to miss (Will has tried asking them to include the reservations in the description – they did, but we're not sure it's still there).

## **6. Division of Parks & Recreation update**

Brian Wilson sends his regards. From Tara: Parks ran a big marketing campaign this year – around \$50K on ads: digital, print, signs& posters, as well as attending several job fairs. It seemed to help, many parks were fully staffed and while Monadnock still struggled, we did have more interest than last year, particularly for our short Fall hiring season.

Cannon Mountain is still looking for a new manager.

Overall in parks, money was slightly up but visitation numbers slightly down – we're doing a better job with retail and people (in campgrounds) are staying longer.

The Fall helped a lot – had good weather, long foliage season.

Do we hear complaints about the admission fee? Monadnock does from time to time, but not parks in general. If people are coming consistently, we remind them about Season Passes.

## **7. Societies for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests update**

Monadnock Trails Week (year 17) went well. It was a rainy year, but still got a lot done, around 450 person-hours total, from around 40 volunteers and 16 staff. Steps on Marlborough Trail, a stone staircase on Dublin, a few huge drainage structures/ steps on the White Dot, and clearing brush for blueberry habitat on Gap Mtn. Also trailhead improvements at remote trails.

SPNHF (Matt Scaccia) came to 2 Monadnock staff orientations this year, to help park staff know better about the relationship. Seemed successful, was appreciated by both new and returning staff.

They have been selected for a Rec Trails grant for work on the Dublin Trail, building up a heavily eroded section. Have a pro trail crew hired.

5-year trail plan is being worked on by Andrew Pacuk (Trails Bureau) – had a first draft, now editing. Will be a winter project for him. Made trips to survey 2 trails – white Arrow and White Dot. Will plan to do 2 trails per year.

Started trial program for new SPNHF members to receive a free pass to the Toll Road for hiking – only 3 were used this year out of 300 given out. Didn't expect a lot, but low numbers are good – lets us know that the program won't impact park business very much. Next year plan to go bigger, maybe 3,000 and not to just new members. If 30 people use them that seems manageable.

Harvest update: Heart Lot harvest under way (near the Dublin Trail), for Ash. Wondering if the Dublin Trail can be closed mid-week in Winter for a time, as they need to cross the trail? We can post on Parks website, but with the road being cleared for logging trucks it will be easier than other years for the public to get in there. It's very hard to sign as there are multiple ways to get in to Old Troy Road, and by then people have gone too far to want to turn around. But weekday traffic will never be much, it's probably fairly manageable for the loggers.

Also finishing harvest on North side of Gap. Shouldn't affect hiking.

Brian Hotz gave update (via Carrie) about land protection:

No movement on Pumpelly Trailhead. From Katy – the old road the Dublin Walking and Riding Club used to use has a Right of Way. It's parallel to Lake Rd, we could move parking closer to 101 maybe and use that?

Grand View is dividing our their building, and will sell that (keep their land). They might be interested, during this process, in selling a piece near OTR to SPNHF. Looking at the idea of expanding that trailhead? Very preliminary idea. Terrain is tricky there from 124, but further up near the Tollbooth it seems more accessible. We'll have to think about whether we'd want that trailhead bigger.

8. Division of Forests and Lands update (Tyler Comte)

Hoping for this winter for the harvest south of the Parker Trail from OTR, if weather is good. Woods road has been made, trucks can get in. Putting in a new culvert. Could be December 15<sup>th</sup> (earliest) through March 31. Informational signs will be posted. Project area is 112 acres, 17 group-cuttings within that area.

Tyler was asked about progress on the harvest at Rhodo – that's Inge Seboyer's, but a lot of road work is needed, likely pushing back to later.

Hollisters have been updated.

## 9. MERE update

From Peter (via Will):

- I have a graduate student that will be working on developing outings for “Outer Spacial” - will connect her with Carrie. Eylse Scott is her name and will be with MERE till May.
- Will share the end of season report from the ADK Summit Steward program, that’s the largest and longest lasting
- Jill from SUNY ESF, who runs the hiker survey program, is recovering from illness. I hope we will see the Monadnock results of her research soon.
- Curious if anyone followed up on the trail above Virginia falls to protect the crevice community there. We looked at it during the trail survey of the White Dot, it’s on our minds. Will K will try to get up there with Peter soon to look at it with him.

## 10. Open Floor/ New business

Documentary “Monadnock; the Mountain that Stands Alone” premiered in Jaffrey Jan 6. It was dedicated to Dr. David Knight, and is well-worth seeing. Will be on NH PBS. It was 13 years in the making.

Portable Toilets will be picked up from remote trailheads this week.

A couple on Rhododendron Road donated ~300 acres to Northeast Wilderness Trust. They now have signs up on the trail up Little Monadnock. Maybe fine but needs a look.

Manchester-Monadnock Ultra Marathon – had aid station set up on Lake Rd by Pumpelly Trail that was in the road, kind of dangerous. Will K. will connect with the race coordinator, they’ve always been very helpful and responsive in the past.

Will K. is looking into ideas/ways to get the Patch Cottage fixed up, and what we can use it for. Hiel will connect Will to the Fitzwilliam Garden Club. We’re hosting a First Day Hike at Rhodo this year, hoping to highlight the park a little and give it some attention.

Dave Adams added, and all agreed, that we would like to recognize Ann Royce and Robin Blais for all their years on the Commission.

## 11. Set date for next meeting

Thursday April 18. Sterling suggested that the Dublin Library could work as a meeting location. We’ll try it, with many thanks to Dave Adams for letting us use the Inn at East Hill Farms for the past 3 meetings.

## 12. Adjourn