

Monadnock Advisory Commission

Meeting: Thursday, April 20, 2023
4pm at the Inn at East Hill Farm

Minutes

1. Welcome & roll call

Members Present:

Brian Wilson (DNCR)
Katy Wardlaw (Town of Dublin)
Carrie Deegan (SPNHF)
Ann Royce (Town of Jaffrey)
Dan Rogalski (Town of
Marlborough)
Dave Adam (Town of Troy)
Hiel Linquist (Town of Fitzwilliam)
Robin Blais (Town of Fitzwilliam)
Sterling Abram (Town of Dublin)

Non-members and guests present:

Tara Blaney (Parks and Recreation)
Dylan Summers (SPNHF)
Peter Palmioto (Antioch/MERE)
Mary Shotton (Monadnock State
Park)
Will Kirkpatrick (Monadnock
State Park)

Members Absent:

Don Upton (Town of Troy)
Terry Maugeri (Town of
Marlborough)
John Smith (Town of Jaffrey)
Scott Rolfe (Forests and Lands)

2. Review of minutes from previous meeting

11/10/2022 minutes approved.

3. MAC chair update

Robin will step down as chair. No volunteers to take that on from those present, Robin will reach out to Don Upton. Will require a vote, will try for next meeting.

4. MAC Treasurer's report & update

Started with a balance of \$2743.38
Deposit of \$182 from various donations = \$2925.38
Check for \$250 to Chris Kintz for Wilderness First Aid = \$2675.38

Ann is stepping down as treasurer, Dan Rogalski will take over. Motioned and seconded, all were in favor.

- We need a letter from the MAC Chair to the bank to make this happen. Possibly complicated by changing of the Chair.

5. Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests update

Started the 5-year Trail Maintenance Plan with Dylan Summers, the new SPNHF Stewardship Project Manager, and Andrew Pacuk, the new DNCR Non-Motorized Trails coordinator. This will map out a process for assessing and addressing trail problems, and will help to target fund-raising.

Planning on assessing 2 trails/year (this year the White Dot and White Arrow) to update the 2014 full-mountain assessment. Then we'll start prioritizing and addressing needs the following year.

Monadnock Trails Week will be July 13-17, a Thursday to Monday this year. Will still have Affiliation Crews and a community event. Specific project TBD, probably something on the White Arrow since it will have just been assessed.

No big pro-crew project this year – last year SPNHF helped by hiring Tahawus, this year we need to let those funds replenish, and we can look toward something for 2024.

Working on a Parking Pass for new SPNHF members. This would be a single-use pass to hike Monadnock from the Old Toll Road entrance. Looking to highlight the relationship with DNCR. It will be paper, collected at tollbooth. Can be used to make a reservation.

Working on mobile interpretive outings for Outerspacial. Hope to have one ready for this year. Possibly something an SCA interpretive ranger could help work on. Open to suggestions for subject matter – history, tree ID, etc. Robin mentioned the reflection of sunrise off Mt Greylock lighthouse seen from Pt Surprise certain times of year.

Timber harvests:

- Gap Mtn timber harvest cut short by our short winter. Hope to continue this summer, but operators are in short supply as well.
- Ash harvest at Dublin Trail and Demonstration Harvest at Marlborough are postponed, hoping for this winter. Ash harvest will be a mass regeneration harvest – selecting male trees and leaving females will hopefully stimulate re-growth. Hope to balance regrowth and bio-controls with mortality from Ash Borer.
- Sprague/Jewell lot set for this winter, won't impact hiking trails.

Pumpelly Trail update: Brian Hotz met with Sterling Abram and Katy Wardlaw (Dublin) about contacting land owners to help protect trail corridor. Greene property does have a right-of-way, but it turns out the Bourne property does not.

- There is an old ROW for the Dublin Riding and Walking Club...may research if that could be used. Probably defunct, but Brian will try.
- Dublin is excited that Brian is able to devote the time and effort to this.

6. Division of Parks & Recreation update

South Region: We have adds out for seasonal staff. Can be heard on NHPR. Looking for anyone 16+, though only 18+ can drive a State vehicle, so we always need some of those.

We just ran a “Park Manager University” training for park managers, assistant managers, and key staff. Went well, something we are looking to do annually (this is the second year).

DNCR – welcome new director Brian Wilson. Brian started mid-November, working through 11 advisory boards/commissions. This time of year a lot of seasonal staff are coming on, he’s trying to make it out to parks and to trainings to meet staff.

We have a new website – reached the end of our agreement with the previous provider. New site will allow better ties to marketing.

We have a new marketing contract – Dry Branch Studios, helping us with publicity as well as recruiting staff. “A new point of view” is the new campaign.

Working on a “guest” check-out system for our reservations – having to create a profile in our system has been a barrier for some.

Working on the budget process and Legislative Session.

- Presenting tomorrow (4/21) to Senate Finance Committee
- The Governor did not change budget from what DNCR asked for (generally we get what we want since we’re operationally self-funded)
- Some costs have increased due to inflation, fuel prices – asking for more to cover that. So far approved through the House.
- Bureau of Historic Sites may go back to the General Fund – that would take pressure off Parks funding which would help.
- Includes more funding for seasonal staffing to help hire, train and retain new park staff.

Capital Budget – includes a few million \$ for parks:

- \$1M to Mt Washington for ecological site survey. Coming off the new Master Plan, this is meant to assess overuse as a stress on the mountain.
- \$1.2 million for general improvements – we have about \$100 million of projects on the wish-list so this won’t go far, but we’re glad to have it.
- \$1.5 million for Ct Lakes Headwaters. Conservation easement covers 100K acres up there, we need road upgrades.

Legislative update - Director Wilson provided and continues to provide testimony on various bills:

- Bill to appropriate funds for new Areal Tram – at 40+ years old it’s at the end of its life.
- Several other things – drones, dogs off-leash, out-of-state camping fees – that are mostly dead but the ideas are still out there and require following.

We have \$30 million in ARPA funds (federal) for projects for emergency relief. Trying to focus on postponed projects – septic, utility upgrades, the kind of “boring” things that are hard to fund otherwise.

DNCR now has a new Volunteer Coordinator – Andy Crowley, formerly with SPNHF, who knows Monadnock well.

Monadnock:

Winter went well – we had a lot of plowing and lost power, but avoided the worst of the damage other parks saw from the late March snowstorms.

Now working on hiring new staff. Recruiting efforts have helped – we've been getting a lot of applicants.

Planning a new staff orientation for May 5, as well as another later in June. Matt Scaccia will attend the May 5 one at least – we're looking forward to having an SPNHF presence and to build more familiarity with staff about the relationship. Also hope to have a F&G officer there to emphasize our work with them as well.

Question: What's going on with the Patch Cottage? It was on a list for foundation and roof improvements by the Historical Bureau. Will K will inquire where that is. Could we use it for something? We would like to. The lack of water limits what we could do, but it could at least be a good meeting space.

Question: What could we do to advertise Rhodo better? Signage? Better web presence? Will K would like to see this too and will put some effort into it. Will try to find out if the Fitzwilliam Garden Club is still active or has old resources from the Wildflower Trail.

7. Division of Forests and Lands update

Forests and Lands were unable to make this meeting. The only update, via Will Kirkpatrick, is that the contracted timber sale south of the Parker Trail will not start until next winter (we hope we have one) but the road entrance work will most likely be completed sometime this summer. They will keep Will posted as that progresses.

Question: The Rhodo timber sale was coming through the Fitzwilliam end, and they had planned to put in a berm to help fix the stream eroding the road into the pond. Now it looks like they're coming in through the Troy end – if that's the case, can they still fix the stream? Will K. will connect and find out.

8. MERE update

-Info-Graphics have been approved, excited to start putting them to use.

-No grad students yet for MERE on Monadnock, still trying.

-Jill Weiss of SUNY USF, continues her work conducting the Summit Survey. She has been in touch with Will.

-The Waterman Fund has grants available (\$5-10K) for work above treeling. Hoping the Crevice Community they tried to survey earlier could be a candidate for a stone staircase to keep hikers away. Possibly combining with other funds.

Will be assessed this spring by Andrew and Dylan, we can proceed from there.

9. Open Floor/ New business

FYI – Garden Club of America has been going to all state Governors, trying to designate April as Native Plant Month. Trying to educate the public on the importance of native plants.

What is the new development on Rt 124 by Dublin Rd? This is a development of 23 housing units. It was delayed for a long time by law suits, and the group against it succeeded in limiting the number of units. For years nothing happened, but now they appear to be starting.

10. Set date for next meeting

Thursday November 9, 4-6pm.

Mary Shotton will look into posting in local libraries.

11. Adjourn