

Maine Appalachian Trail Club
Executive Committee Meeting
September 7, 2010
Randall Student Center, UMA

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice president, Tony Barrett; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Corresponding Secretary, Steve Clark; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Directors, Dennis Andrews, Craig Dickstein, Bruce Grant, Bill Eddy, Bill Millis, Don Stack; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Dick Fecteau, Peter Roderick; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; Windpower Chair, Tom Lewis; Guidebook Editor, Ray Ronan; Guests, Diano Circo, Carole Haas, J T Horn, Hawk Metheny, Bill Plouffe.

Absent: Directors, Bob Cummings, Steve Gaffney; District Overseers, Tom Gorrill, Rick Ste. Croix, Jullian Wiggins.

President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 6:58.

He welcomed all Executive Committee members and guests, and explained that he had attached a list of the year's meeting dates to the e-mailed agenda for this meeting. Those meetings, except the one on May 6, will take place at UMA.

Secretary's Report: Janice Clain presented the Secretary's report for the May 7 Executive Committee meeting. She explained that she had corrected the spelling of consultant Jean Vissering's name.

Elsa Sanborn placed a motion to accept the Secretary's report as distributed and with the correction.

Dave Field seconded the motion. The vote to accept was unanimous.

Treasurer's Report: Elsa Sanborn distributed print copies of the Treasurer's report to members who had not received copies via e-mail. She noted nothing unusual in the report, and total assets of more than \$412,000. Don Stack placed a motion, seconded by Peter Roderick, to accept the Treasurer's report as presented. The vote of the Executive committee was unanimously in favor.

Corresponding Secretary: Lester Kenway announced that Steve Clark planned to resign as Corresponding Secretary due to health issues. Lester reminded that the club bylaws state that the Executive Committee has the authority to select a replacement for an officer. Steve recommended Phil Pepin to fill the remainder of his term as Corresponding Secretary. Phil has held that position in the past. He has just finished his third hike of the Appalachian Trail, and has served in other positions in the club, so understands the club and its needs. The position of Corresponding Secretary has changed in recent years, and now entails mostly e-mail correspondence. Steve recognized that Phil has developed good computer skills, which will be useful in the position.

Lester said that he had talked with Phil regarding this position, and that he would do so again to discuss concerns of Executive Committee members that official correspondence should not include personal opinions, but should reflect the goals and philosophy of the club. Dave Field noted that the Local Management Plan defines guidelines for the MAINEtainer

editor. He suggested that Lester review those guidelines with Phil to establish Executive Committee policy and procedure regarding the position in question.

Steve Clark placed a motion, seconded by Bill Millis, to appoint Phil Pepin to serve the remainder of his term as Corresponding Secretary. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Wind Power: Tom Lewis presented an update on the Highlands Wind Power Project and the position of the MATC in regards to it. Bill Plouffe, who has been retained to represent MATC in LURC proceedings, was also present. Tom said a lot had happened since the annual meeting. He recently communicated information through e-mail to Executive Committee members.

Tom explained that, given the history of the proposed Redington Wind Power Project, which was successfully opposed by MATC and several other conservation groups, the Highland developers, Independence Wind, are trying to reach out to conservation groups to limit potential opposition. They have expressed a willingness to remove some of the turbines on Stewart Mountain to achieve that aim.

The Highland project calls for forty-eight turbines, and would be the largest wind power installation in the state if built as proposed. After LURC voted to deny the Redington application, the Governor's Task Force on Wind Energy and the state legislature set large tracts of lands designated as expedited zones for wind power development, several of which border AT lands. While the current regulations provide a more streamlined process within the expedited zones, LURC is required to consider the impact to scenic resources of state and national significance.

Bill showed a series of computer generated visual simulations prepared by ATC and the US Forest Service. The simulations depicted the impact to views from the Bigelows, from various sites and with various turbine configurations; without wind turbines, with the full complement, and with some turbines removed.

Tom solicited guidance from the Executive Committee as to the positions his committee should take in regards to discussions with the developer and before LURC. There was extensive discussion among Executive Committee members, who expressed concern not only for this project, but for the precedent it would set for other installations along the trail and for the cumulative impact of, potentially, multiple wind installations. Members also commented that visual simulations, no matter how well designed, could not convey the full effect of direct sunlight on windmill blades and of lights on the night views. Steve Clark suggested a compromise in return for a promise of a conservation easements and other benefits that preserve AT lands from further encroachment by wind power developers.

After further discussion, Steve Clark placed a motion to authorize the Wind Power Committee not to oppose the project if the developers remove turbines 1-26. Bruce Grant seconded the motion. Lester Kenway called for a vote on the motion. Thirteen members of the Executive Committee voted in favor, with none opposed and two abstaining.

High Peaks Conservation Project: JT Horn and Diano Circo, presented two conservation initiatives of the Trust for Public Lands, undertaken on behalf of the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust within its High Peaks Project. The lands in question border NPS / AT lands. The TPL is eligible for Forest Legacy funding for fiscal year 2011-2012 to achieve its initiative.

The first project involves lands on Crocker Mountain. TPL is working with landowners, which are interested in selling parcels they can't use for commercial purposes. The tracts are zoned for development. TPL is negotiating for timberland pricing. The state supports the project, as the Bureau of Public Lands would manage the lands in question. BPL is a dedicated revenue agency, so would welcome additions of harvestable timberland.

Completion of this transaction will provide viewpoint protection, an ecological reserve for side trails, and prevention of wind, ski or housing development. It would also reinforce the working relationship MATC has with BPL.

The Orbeton Stream property is a companion project to Crocker Mountain. These lands include a working forest and would add a conservation easement to protect native brook trout and Atlantic salmon, which spawn in Orbeton stream.

The landowner sees the value of conservation easement; although it prohibits development, he will continue to earn revenue on this arrangement. The project establishes viewshed protection, prevention of housing development, keeps the AT remote, and the easement maintains status quo.

MATLT and TPL requested a letter of support from the MATC president saying that the club supports both the Crocker Mountain and Orbeton Stream Conservation Easement initiatives. Dave Field placed a motion, seconded by Bill Millis, to authorize the MATC President to draft such a letter. The Executive Committee voted to accept the motion.

Barnjum Road ATV Use: Dave Field reported on the Barnjum Road land swap discussed at an earlier meeting. The swap involved trading of several parcels of land with the state, to settle a requirement in the legislation that provided funding for NPS land acquisition from Saddleback ski area and to allow ATV users to cross the trail on a logging road in Mt. Abram Township. The negotiations have been very complicated, and ATV interests have not given up their primary wish to retain an ATV crossing near Eddy Pond.

Dave described a proposal he had made as an Advisor to the Maine Appalachian Land Trust. The Land Trust is concerned that ATV clubs may use current NPS denial of the Eddy Pond crossing as a basis for opposing the Forest Legacy proposal to acquire lands on Crocker Mountain, in Madrid, and in Mt. Abram Township. The proposal is to settle the legislative requirement for the NPS to deed some of the Saddleback acquisition to the state, and to defuse the ATV issue in the interest of a larger conservation goal. The proposal would recommend that the NPS transfer a 100-foot corridor along an old logging road, the Old Hudson Road, and through the corridor near Eddy Pond to the State. Inherent in the recommendation is that the State, through the BPL, and the snowmobiling clubs would police use of the ATV trail through the corridor. The NPS is already promulgating a regulation that would allow snowmobile use of this route. This action would remove the Barnjum Road from discussion, as it would provide a better alternative for ATV enthusiasts.

Dave said that Pam Underhill strongly opposes granting permission for ATVs to use park lands, but is open to discussion of the transfer to the State. Pam hopes that this concession will help the ATV community support the Forest Legacy proposals, mentioned in the previous discussion. Dave added that ATC would have to agree to the change in policy.

Dave explained that he is not looking for a vote, but is seeking feedback as to whether the proposal deserves further discussion.

Dick Fecteau considered this a great idea if it removes the Barnjum Road from consideration, and if it includes language to compel ATV clubs to police themselves, especially

in regards to Eddy Pond. Bill Millis remarked that a legal ATV crossing might channel some of the bootleg crossings. Dick Fecteau interjected that the Rangely ATV'ers are more interested in the Old Hudson Road to access Eddy Pond than in the Barnjum Road crossing.

Dave thanked the Executive Committee for giving him a good sense of the direction to take.

Club Coordinator Report: Holly Sheehan reported that she was preparing a Recreational Trails Program grant proposal. She needed the approval of the Executive Committee to complete and submit the application. She asked for authorization for the president to sign the grant application.

Elsa Sanborn placed a motion, seconded by Bill Millis, to authorize the president to sign the Recreational Trails Program grant application. The vote of the Executive Committee was unanimously in favor.

Holly also announced that she is applying for a mini grant to cover first aid for chainsaw training. She needed the Executive Committee's approval on this grant proposal, as well.

Elsa Sanborn, seconded by Bruce Grant, placed the motion to authorize submission of the mini-grant proposal. The vote of the Executive Committee was unanimously in favor.

Maine Trail Crew: Lester Kenway reported on the Maine Trail Crew. This has been a successful season, which saw more volunteers than in recent years. Lester said a detailed report would be forthcoming. He reported that the crew leaders and coordinator this year were very capable and effective. He added that the crews ended the project on the north slope of White Cap. It took 17 years to complete, and boasts 757 steps, one of the longest stone staircases on the AT. MCC also worked on five projects along the AT.

Base Camp: Lester also reported on plans for the new Trail Crew Base Camp. Renner Architects, which the Base Camp Committee chose to design its new complex, will provide a schematic of the design. Renner is knowledgeable regarding building and energy conservation. The company provided the highest quality building design at a reasonable cost.

Lester asked the Executive Committee to authorize the Trail Crew Base Camp Committee to pay Renner Associates up to \$19,000 in the next four months to carry out a schematic plan. Bruce Grant placed the motion, seconded by Craig Dickstein. The vote of the Executive Committee was unanimous.

Lester also said the Base Camp Committee is accepting resumes in its search to engage a fund raiser. He asked the Executive Committee to authorize payment of up to \$20,000 to hire a fund raising consultant. Tony Barrett placed the motion, seconded by Bill Eddy. The vote of the Executive Committee was unanimous.

Policy Change: Peter Roderick requested a change in club procedure regarding maintainer vacancies. As the club newsletter is published only five times a year, Peter proposed posting maintainer openings on the club web site to speed up the process of replacement. Other District Overseers added their own experiences with re-assigning sections.

Peter placed the motion that vacancies for trail assignments be posted on the web site in addition to in the MAINEtainer. Bill Millis seconded the motion. Dave Field asked that an amendment be added to that motion to include corridor monitor openings. The vote of the Executive Committee was unanimous to accept the motion with the amendment.

Abraham Trails: Dick Fecteau asked the club to consider assuming maintenance of the Abraham Mountain trails. He had sent details of the proposal in an e-mail. Funding for some relocation, brushing and remarking blue blazed side trail to the top of Abraham, and establishing a campsite is available through the Trust for Maine's Future. Dave Field, seconded by Don Stack, placed a motion to take on the new trail sections. It would extend MATC trails by four miles, and sets a new campsite at the former fire warden's cabin location. Hawk Metheny reminded that such a move would make those trails official side trails, which requires a process, including approval through the Regional Director.

The Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend bringing the existing Abraham Mountain trails into the MATC network.

End of Trails Festival: The End of the Trails Festival was planned for September 10 - 12. Bruce Grant said that he would set up the club display. Laura Pottinger planned to attend as representative for ATC.

Tony Barrett distributed more "Your help is needed" cards to Bruce and to all who wanted them and are in a position to get them out to the hiking public.

Green Mountain Club Invitation: Lester announced that Pete Antos Ketcham invited MATC members to the Green Mountain Club visitor center facility. Lester asks who might be interested. He commented on the technology incorporated in that center, which might serve as a model as MATC makes plans to build its new Base Camp.

Regional Partnership Committee: Bruce Grant asked about the Fall Regional Partnership Committee meeting. Hawk Metheny proposed changing the originally scheduled October 16 date to October 22-23. Hawk will announce confirmation later. He is still looking for a facility depending on the date and location of a partnership hike.

Sunday River Proposal: Lester announced that the Sunday River Ski Area marketing manager had contacted him to ask if ATC would be interested in holding its biennial Festival there. 2015 is the next date the festival will be in New England. Executive committee comments were favorable for requesting to hold the 2015 at the Maine facility.

District Overseers reports

Peter Roderick, Kennebec District, reported that he and Craig Dickstein have hiked the district to check that reports are accurate. They found a few minor concerns. Lester said that he plans to check out Chris Dorion's proposed relocation on Pleasant Pond Mountain with Sara Knowles, from MCC.

Dick Fecteau, Bigelow District, noted that the state may be looking for a new Bigelow Preserve manager in the near future, and he wants to recommend that MATC have some input.

Overseer of Lands report: Dave Field reminded attendees of the discussion regarding the dam at the Pierce Pond outlet. The owner is concerned about liability as hikers pass over it, but has never threatened to block access. Dave said we can't relocate the trail because of where the boundaries lie. The National Park Service was asked if it would be willing

to provide Mr. Cobb, the dam owner, with liability protection in return for continued use of the dam, but the NPS declined. Dave said that the matter would have to be revisited now that we know that a relocation is not possible.

On another matter, Dave reminded members of the Slippery Sliders snow mobilers' encroachment last fall on AT lands between Route 17 and Bemis Stream. The crossing was blocked by the snowmobile club in November, 2009, in company with Dave, a Maine Forest Service Ranger, and a representative of the Rangely Lakes Heritage Trust, on whose land the snowmobile trail also trespassed. Recently, a snowmobiler from the Mooslookmeguntic area raised a complaint and contacted senators calling for intervention because of perceived inequities. Pam Underhill is planning to schedule a meeting in Maine with snowmobilers and Susan Collins' staff in late October. Senator Collins contacted Lester to tell him she supports MATC's concerns.

Nomination Committee: Lester reminded that he will need to form a Nomination Committee, as 2011 is an election year. Lester will contact individuals.

CARE Report: There was no report from the CARE Committee.

Stewardship Council: Bruce Grant announced that the Stewardship Council plans to discuss how to increase membership, and to encourage people to fill leadership (committee chair) positions. The Stewardship Committee meeting is October 28-30.

Other: Dennis Andrews asked if the Sugarloaf expansion will impact the AT. Others replied that it won't impact trail use in the summer.

Hawk Metheny announced that the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands will prepare a draft management plan for lands near the Mahosacs and Baldpate after it gathers public input. Tom Gorrill has attended meetings and offered the MATC perspective. BPL plans to add one staff position to help carry out the plan. This may impact how MATC interacts with them.

With a motion from Elsa Sanborn, seconded by Bruce Grant, the meeting adjourned at 9:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Clain
Recording Secretary