

MATC Annual Conference
April 11, 2009
Farmington, Maine

President Milt Wright called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. One hundred ten MATC members were in attendance.

Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report from the 2008 conference. Elsa placed a motion to accept the report given that it was printed in the MAINetainer. Gordon Clarke seconded the motion, and the members voted to accept.

Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report and made several explanations: the inventory listed is guide books; pre-paid expenses are a half year rent for the crew camp, which must be paid in advance; expenses of \$7050 listed for base camp were spent in the search for a permanent base camp site including a soil analysis. Total assets of the club are \$503,000 and it has very few liabilities.

Listed as income for the future are four grants, two for CARE employees and two for the Trail Crew for the coming season. These grants have been received and are expendable beginning in April.

The Stewardship fund is over \$300,000.

Elsa also noted that the wind power opposition has taken some of the club's funds, and there has also been some loss of paper value for investments.

Elsa also reviewed a breakdown of MATC's 2008-2009 revenues and expenses. The club has received more than \$160,000 in grants, which were designated for the Caretaker and Ridge Runner program and for the Maine Trail Crew. Total income was \$217,000. Elsa explained that fund raising usually costs \$5000 per year and the current statement, which shows \$5677, encompasses expenses for two years. The statement indicates \$17,800 in net income.

Tom Lewis presented the proposed 2009 – 2010 budget which was prepared by the Finance Committee, and for which the Executive Committee has already voted its support. Proposed expenditures total \$235,000. This is a slight increase over the budget for last year, which was \$220,000. The club normally budgets a slightly higher amount than what it actually spends. Tom noted that some income is already in the bank, including \$20,000 for CARE from the Davis Conservation Foundation and from the Quimby Foundation. ATC has contributed \$45,000 for the Trail Crew. Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund has added \$40,000 for the Trail Crew and for CARE. In all, \$228,300 has been pledged to CARE and to the Trail Crew.

Gordon Clarke made a motion to accept the proposed 2009 to 2010 budget. The motion was seconded by several members and was approved by a majority of those in attendance.

David Corrigan reported on the Kennebec River operations for the 2008 season. 1179 hikers used the ferry service, a good showing despite high water that halted service

on two occasions. There were seven confirmed fordings. David is hoping for an even better season this summer.

Sarah Carpenter is preparing the ferry schedule for distribution. Hours will be: May 22 to July, 16 9 to 11 am; Jul 17 to Sept 30, 9 to 11 am and 2 to 4 pm; and Oct 1-12, 9 to 11 am.

Steve Clark agreed to take on the duties of Corresponding Secretary from Dick Doucette, who asked in June to be relieved of his responsibilities for family reasons. Steve explained that he used to just pick up and sort letters and now most correspondence is by e-mail. Steve received 81 contacts and answered all. The two most frequent inquiries are how to get to the trail and if it is possible to hike the Hundred Mile Wilderness in three days.

Steve asked Milt Wright to read a sampling of the inquiries. "Are there plug-ins for lap tops along the trail?" and "Is there a section appropriate for a group of nudists?" both brought laughs from the audience.

President Milt Wright read parts of his written report, beginning with the description of MATC on the LL Bean web site: "The Maine Appalachian Trail Club (MATC) is a volunteer driven public service organization formed in 1935 to manage and maintain the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) in Maine from the summit of Katahdin to Maine Highway 26 in Grafton Notch. Not a hiking or outing club, the MATC exists solely for the protection and perpetuation of the Appalachian Trail. Among the group's projects are lean-to and site construction, trail relocation, brush and blowdown removal, blazing trails and footpath improvement. The MATC also places five caretakers and ridge runners at busy back country A.T. campsites. These caretakers reach an estimated 10,000 backpackers (each year) with Leave No Trace education with a focus on youth groups."

In 2008, LL Bean honored Dave Field with its Outdoor Heroes Award, which also included a \$5000 gift to MATC.

Dave Corrigan, who spoke earlier in the program, provided canoe crossing for hikers over the Kennebec. Dave took over for Steve Longley who was honored by ATC for his many years of service to the trail. Dave's canoe has a white blaze on the bottom so hikers can feel secure that they are staying on a white blazed trail.

Steve Clark, who also reported earlier in the day, is currently acting Corresponding Secretary for Dick Doucette, who asked to be relieved of his responsibility because of a family situation.

Terry Karkos resigned from the webmaster position in late 2008, feeling that the job took more time than he had to give. Dave Theoharides took over the webmaster position, and has been able to update the site and links. ATC is in the process of changing how it operates its own website, and David says MATC will be able to benefit from those improvements.

Mark Fortin resigned his position as club Historian, and Ray Ronan took on those responsibilities. Several club members have located boxes of materials including photos, slides and documents. Ray and Dave Field are in the process of organizing and scanning those materials. The next step to preserving these historic materials will be to find a facility where they can be safely stored. Ray has been communicating with three state

facilities; Fogler Library at the University of Maine, in Orono, the Maine State Library, in Augusta, and the Maine Historical Society, in Portland.

Phil Pepin resigned from the Executive Committee and from his position as District Overseer during Milt's term. Peter Roderick took over as Overseer of the Kennebec District and Tony Barrett joined the Executive Committee as a Director.

Milt cited changes on the trail including a mudslide on Moody Mountain in the summer of 2008. This is a very steep section with iron rungs and rock steps. Lester Kenway, Tom Gorrill, Dave Field and others have set a temporary reroute and the Maine Trail Crew will work this summer on a relocation. MATC has also rerouted a section of trail in the Bigelow Preserve, establishing a new more esthetically pleasing trail along the shoreline. The AT and Maine Huts and Trails will share .9 mile, which will serve as a connector trail for Maine Huts and Trails.

Bill Plouffe, who serves on the ATC board, is offering his legal services to help MATC and its allies with the latest wind power opposition. Steve Clark and Bill Plouffe would report later in the day's program.

In discussions with ATV enthusiasts, the National Park Service and the State of Maine have agreed to swap some land along the Barnjam Road, near Redington Township, to allow passage of all terrain vehicles along a logging haul road. NPS prohibits motorized passage vehicles on its trails. With the swap, the ATV passage would be on state lands.

As President, Milt has reported volunteer hours to the National Park Service. From October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008, 600 MATC members volunteered 20,067 hours in service to the trail, though Milt feels that some hours were not reported.

Milt acknowledged Club Coordinator Holly Sheehan for her service as half time club coordinator. Her efforts helped to raise more than \$100,000 in grant monies for the club.

Milt introduced the Executive Committee members: Vice President, Lester Kenway; Secretary, Janice Clain; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Rick Ste Croix, Julian Wiggins, Peter Roderick, Dick Fecteau, Tom Gorrill; Directors, Dennis Andrews, Don Stack, Bob Cummings, Bill Eddy, Bruce Grant, Bill Millis, Craig Dickstein, Tony Barrett.

Lester Kenway reported on the search for a permanent base camp location. A Base Camp Committee has spent more than a year looking for a suitable property. Their search criteria have been: a location central to the AT, on the Route 2 corridor, within reasonable distance to transportation hubs in Bangor, Augusta and Portland; a location accessible to MCC in Augusta; 2-6 miles from a commercial center; few or distant neighbors; approximately 50 acres of wooded land or close to public property that is forested; a parcel that has "interesting" land features and that is large enough for bunk houses; soils adequate for a septic system; preferably land that is available for purchase rather than lease.

The committee has identified and visited fourteen different properties, but has yet to make a final selection, though three parcels remain on the list of favorable sites. Discussions with the Somerset Woods Trustees, one of oldest land trusts in the US, offer the most promising possibilities. Their sites have ample land for building construction as

well as for chainsaw training, and for practice with trail building. They are most interested in leasing at very attractive rates, close to nothing.

The question for the Base Camp Committee, and for MATC, centers on the need for a significant capital campaign and the concern for whether the base camp should be on land owned by the club or on leased land.

Lester expressed disappointment in the delay in securing the base camp site, but assured that the current economy is in the club's favor as land sellers haven't caught on that prices are not as high as in the past.

Lester Kenway also reported on the Maine Trail Crew, which is preparing for its 18th year in the current format. As an historical note, Lester explained that the original Maine Trail Crew was established by Steve Clark in the 80's.

Three Maine Conservation Corps teams will be based in Garland for the summer, with two additional MCC teams based in Augusta/ Hallowell working in the western part of the state. This allows for five teams on the trail at once. MATC has engaged a new coordinator, Julian Garrett, who comes from Winslow, Maine. The crew will need a second person and Lester planned to interview candidates for the position the week following the conference.

The crew schedule is posted on the MATC website. Lester will send e-mail to overseers and to maintainers to inform them when the crew will work on their section.

The season's projects will use a combination of MATC Trail Crew and Public Lands Corps funding, which specifies youth services. The schedule includes eleven projects of two to six weeks and a couple for nine. Lester encourages all members to help out on projects, whether joining on pack in days or spending time with the crew on its work projects. He listed some of the projects on the schedule:

Nesuntabunt Mountain, Rainbow Lake west end (requires flying to the site), West Peak White Cap, near Sidney Tappan campsite, West Baldpate (year seven of a ten year project to be finished before walking on it), Flagstaff Lake reroute, Moody Mountain, inserted as emergency, White Cap north slope (close to 700 stone steps since 1993), Hunt Trail rock work, Old Blue, north side of Gulf Hags Mountain close to Sidney Tappan campsite.

Lester also announced work trips to rebuild Chairback Gap lean-to, a good social project; a trip to replace the summit sign on Katahdin, a project to be completed with Friends of Baxter State Park; and a reroute on Little Boardman Mountain to relocate the trail on National Park Service land.

On another trail issue, Baxter State Park has constructed a trail near Grassy Pond and proposed that the AT be moved to that reroute, to get last section of trail in Maine off the Park Perimeter road. A committee agreed to check the reroute, but has not had a chance to make the visit. The Executive Committee is waiting for a report from that committee before making a decision.

Steve Clark and Bill Plouffe reported on the latest events in the wind power threats to the AT. Harley Lee had originally proposed sites on Redington and Black Nubble Mountains, and saw his original proposal and a smaller, Black Nubble only proposal rejected by LURC. His is the only wind power proposal in Maine ever to be turned down. He lobbied the governor's Wind Power Task Force to place those lands on

the list of areas to be expedited for wind power sites, and lost. He has now approached the town of Carrabasset Valley, which has presented a bill in the legislature to annex the Redington and Black Nubble lands to its township, which would bring the lands within the expedited area. The bill requesting the annexation, with no mention of wind power, was to be presented to a legislative State and Local Government Committee on April 15. If this annexation move is rejected by the committee, it would be the end of Lee's efforts. MATC has hired Chris O'Neill, a former legislator, to act as lobbyist and consultant. Maine Audobon, AMC and the Natural Resources Council of Maine have joined with MATC in opposition to the annexation and to the proposed wind power site on high peaks so close the AT. Chris feels that the legislature is concerned by the "good government" argument. Steve Clark has a letter going out to the full membership with suggestions for contacting legislators. Dain Trafton, who serves on the MATC Wind Power Committee, recommended that people attend the committee meeting to show the force of their concern.

Steve also voiced concern for the public image of the organizations involved in the wind power opposition, and assured club members that MATC is not against wind power in general, only against this particular site because of its impact on the trail. He noted that the public is favorable to wind power, and cautioned that MATC be careful about its own image, being certain that we don't appear anti wind power. He also observed that, should this proposal be accepted, there would be no more review process as the "bar for approval would be set so low."

Two other wind power issues may impact the AT, one in Roxbury that is 9-10 miles from trail on Old Blue, and one on Stewart Mountain, in Highland Plantation. Both are projects proposed by Independence Wind, a company headed by Rob Gardiner and Angus King. The Roxbury project is far enough away from the trail that it is not an issue for the AT community. The Stewart Mountain project is still in the planning stages. The proposal is for about 30 to 40 wind turbines along the mountain ridge in an L-shaped formation. Transmission lines are already in place. The highest point, at 2500 feet and about 4 miles from the closest point on the AT, is visible from Avery Peak and from a point near West Carry Pond. It would also be visible from the trails on Sugarloaf. Bill Plouffe and Milt Wright met with Rob Gardiner and Angus King, who had already spoken to other groups and were concerned for MATC reaction. They had done one visual assessment, but they needed to do one from Little Bigelow. MATC representatives mentioned mitigation because of the visual impact on the trail and the Independence Wind representatives agreed to discuss the plan. At this point, the greatest concern is for the views from West Carry Pond, which is about 3 1/2 miles away from Stewart Mountain. Rob Gardiner is in the process of making another visual assessment. Steve Clark has talked with Jody Carton and Pam Underhill, and they will have another party perform a visual assessment from a couple points on the trail using Forest Service methodology. The date for the assessment is in mid May. ATC has established a policy regarding wind power, which MATC has also followed; it may oppose, remain neutral, or endorse the project. MATC and ATC will make a statement based on their assessment.

Steve Clark thanked the members of his committee, which includes Bill Millis, Bill Plouffe, Dain and Vera Trafton, and Bob Cummings Tom Lewis and Tom Winsor.

Paul Sannicandro was not available to talk about Baxter State Park trails.

Dave Field provided an historical presentation of the building of the AT. Dave has obtained a copy of the informational movie, now on DVD, made and distributed by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. The film, which has captions but no narration, has a half hour of footage on how to build and maintain a trail, and on the tools to be used. The film was made in the 1930's and includes demonstrations featuring Myron Avery.

Laura Flight, AMC president and MATC Campsite Committee chair, reported on the activities of her committee, which has been reconstituted in the last year. The committee first investigated what its charge is as stated in the Local Management Plan. They are in the process of setting an individual management plan for each lean-to. One of their priorities for this year is enhancement and replacement of Chairback Gap lean-to. Work trips are scheduled for July 11-12 and Sept 12-13.

The committee has also revised forms to help camp-site maintainers report on their sites. Information submitted using these forms will be posted on the website.

Peter Roderick, chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officer candidates. Those candidates are: President, Lester Kenway; Vice-President, Tony Barrett, Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Corresponding Secretary, Steve Clark; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Rick Ste. Croix, Julian Wiggins, Peter Roderick, Dick Fecteau, Tom Gorrill; Directors, Dennis Andrews, Bob Cummings, Craig Dickstein, Bill Eddy, Steve Gaffney, Bruce Grant, Bill Millis, and Don Stack.

Peter placed the slate as a motion, seconded by Gordon Clarke. The members in attendance voted to accept the slate.

Peter acknowledged the other members of the Nominating Committee, Tom Gorrill and Nancy Fischer.

Milt Wright presented the rationale for calling for an amendment to the MATC constitution. Article VI, section 3, deals with Executive Committee voting when not in a scheduled meeting. Milt has asked that the phrase "or electronic mail" be inserted in two sentences, to meet the current available means of correspondence.

The motion was placed and seconded and approved by a majority of those in attendance.

Lester Kenway presented an expression of appreciation to Milt Wright for his service to the club and his service as president for the last two years.

Matt Stevens, ATC Conservation Resources Manager, gave an update on the New England Office and services available. New England regional office is now located in South Egremont, Massachusetts, in a building donated to ATC in 2004. Matt explained that he will work more closely with MATC than in the past as he lives near the old regional office in Lyme, NH. He added that one district officer has been eliminated and that the ATC budget has shrunk because of the economic situation in the country. He explained that ATC has granted \$10,000 to the CARE program in past years, but will not

be able to make a contribution this year. ATC has also not been able to fund the sawyer training sessions to the same extent as in past years. The spring course will go on as scheduled. ATC has had to reduce from four workshops to two in the region, and one of these is in Maine. ATC is looking for some funding to help out with fall training, but that session is uncertain at this time.

ATC is continuing its trails assessment and is working to organize the assessment to make it more efficient and less costly. A 48.6 mile section from Grafton Notch is complete and the work will move north this year. Assessors will work with Lester, and they are looking for helpers to work mid to late July.

In accordance with the MEGA transect project, ATC is working on rare plants monitoring and is revising its protocol for natural heritage monitoring. These will not be ready until next year, partly due to changes in personnel; one person, who had worked with natural resources monitoring, left and will not be replaced. A draft protocol for water quality monitoring should be ready by mid-summer.

Janice Clain presented an update on the CARE Committee, including numbers for hiker contacts in the 2008 season; Piazza Rock, 1511 hikers; Horns Pond, 1809 hikers; Gulf Hagas, 3655 hikers; and Abol Bridge, 396 hikers.

The CARE Hiring Committee, composed of Bill Eddy, Bill Millis, Barbara Gorrill and Nancy Fischer, has interviewed several candidates for the positions for the 2009 season. At the time of the conference, all but one position was filled, all with individuals who have through hiked the AT. Alexie Russ, from Brunswick, Maine, thru-hike '08, will be at Piazza Rock. Ray Brassington, from Albany, Pennsylvania, thru-hike '05, will be at Horns Pond. Joan Henricksen, currently in St. George, Utah, thru-hike '07, will be at Gulf Hagas. David Terasevich, from Vestal, New York, thru-hike in '02 and a veteran ridge runner of five seasons, will be back at Abol Bridge.

New volunteers on the CARE Committee are Rae Belanger, who will coordinate food planning and preparation for the CARE training session in June, and Geoff Shadman, who has agreed to serve as Assistant Site Supervisor for the Abol Bridge ridge runner position. He will work with Jean Hoekwater to give an MATC voice in decision making for that position.

Pack-in dates are: Horns Pond 1, May 24-25; Piazza Rock, Horns Pond 2 and Gulf Hagas, June 13.

The District Overseers gave an overview and update on their trail sections, accompanied by Dave Field's slide presentation.

Tom Gorrill, Baldpate District, supervises 47 miles of the AT from Route 26 in Grafton to Route 4, plus 24 miles of side trails. He has 33 maintainers and all positions are currently filled. Maintainers logged over 1600 volunteer hours, and installed a privy at the Knoll campsite on the Grafton Loop Trail. They still need to place a privy at Town Corner site. Tom states that volunteers in his section will need to do a lot of bog bridging this year. He also described the Moody Mountain slide last summer. The Maine Trail Crew will relocate the Moody Mountain trail this summer. The Route 4 parking lot will be enlarged and entrance relocated.

Dick Fecteau is Overseer of the Bigelow District, from Route 4 in Rangely to the Long Falls Dam Road, for a total of 68 miles. He has 24 maintainers, who logged 1619 hours in 71 trips that included 74 people. Volunteers built a new Redington Stream camp site. At the time of the conference, one maintainer position was open in the Bigelow district, a 3.1 mile section from the Caribou Valley Road to North Crocker.

Peter Roderick is Overseer of the Kennebec District, from Long Falls Dam to Route 15 in Monson. His district has 54.3 miles of trail and 22 maintainers. Volunteers in his section replaced a lot of bog bridging last season, and will continue to work on bog bridging projects this season. They brought in material by boat in the form of a raft. Peter states: "we're all about bog bridging in the Kennebec district." One other group project in the district was a trip to replace the privy at Pierce Pond. He has one maintainer position open, at the Pierce Pond Campsite. Peter recognized one maintainer, Melvin McCorrison, for 40 years of service to the club.

Julian Wiggins is Overseer for the White Cap District, from Route 15 in Monson to the Jo Mary Haul Road. He has one new maintainer, Geoff Shadman, who will take over the section from Route 15 to Leeman Brook. This district has many needs for bog bridging. As mentioned earlier in the program, there are two weekends set aside to replace the Chairback Gap lean-to. The first weekend, July 11-12, volunteers will cut and peel, and the second weekend, September 12-13, they will construct the new shelter.

Rick Ste. Croix is Overseer for the Katahdin District, which stretches from the Jo Mary Haul Road to the peak of Katahdin, for a total of 55.7 miles and 4 miles of side trails and including 7 campsites. There are 10 trail sections in the district. Volunteers contributed 1945 hours last year. Larry Clark has served 31 years as a maintainer from Nahmakanta Lake to the Pollywog Stream Bridge and Kevin Farr and Steve Sessions have served 39 years maintaining the section from Pollywog Stream Bridge to Rainbow Lake Dam side trail..

Rick worked last year with the Baxter State Park Trail Crew to create a new high water trail to avoid two fordings of Nesowadnehunk Stream. The Maine Trail Crew worked three weeks last summer on the Hunt Trail and will be back for another three weeks this summer.

Dave Field gave his report as Overseer of Lands. He gave a brief explanation of the expectations for corridor monitors, which are to keep track of boundary lines and monitor for encroachment on park lands. There are 31,646 acres of National Park Land with 301.27 miles of boundaries. Monitors were able to locate 185 monuments last season and inspected 24 miles of boundary, spending 297 hours in the field. Dave currently has very five corridor sections in the White Cap district and two in the Baldpate district unassigned. Dave will conduct corridor monitor training on June 6 in Elliottsville and on June 20 on the back side of Sugarloaf.

In addition to the volunteer efforts, professional surveyors promised to be on the Maine trail for a month this year.

Another project mentioned earlier in the program is the Natural Heritage Monitoring of rare plants through the ATC MEGA transect project.

Carole Haas updated the members on plans of the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust. The group is making purchases, focusing on the high peaks between Madrid, Rangeley, Stratton and Bigelow. One project underway is to protect two parcels using Forest Legacy money designated for state or private ownership of forested land. MATLT works in partnership with State of Maine and Heritage Trust. MATLT pays 25% of costs. Its primary concern is to keep development from encroaching.

Tony Barrett announced that Walkin' Jim Stolz would visit Rangeley Lakes School on April 17 for a morning program. Walkin' Jim is a hiking and outdoors advocate who speaks to groups, particularly youth, to raise awareness to outdoor opportunities and to foster community outreach. His visit was arranged by a teacher at Rangeley who participates in the ATC "A Trail to Every Classroom" program.

Carey Kish is preparing a new book on Maine AT lean-to registers. He is looking for information and will need help from club members, especially campsite maintainers. Carey's efforts will help with plans to document the history of MATC.

Steve Pinkham announced that he has written a book on Maine mountains, available in May from Down East Books. Steve researched the history of place names, fire towers, plane crashes, and tragedies and collected them in his book "The Mountains in Maine, Intriguing Stories Behind Their Names."

Dave Field announced that he is seeking ideas for a suitable location and ways to celebrate the club's 75th anniversary in 2010.

In response to a statement earlier in the program regarding the large numbers of college orientation hiking trips in the Hundred Mile Wilderness, Tony Barrett noted that Bowdoin College has announced that it plans to eliminate hiking trips in deference to the impact on environment.

Bob Cummings announced that the club newsletter is two person project. Barbara Gorrill usually helps him with clerical aspects of the newsletter preparations. As she will be away for some time, the spring newsletter will come out in May. Bob called for an April 30 deadline for submission of articles.

Bill Millis has a number of Appalachian Trail Conference posters available for free.

The conference was adjourned at 2:30 pm and members met with overseers and with other club officials.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Clain
Recording Secretray