

Maine Appalachian Trail Club  
January 9, 2016  
Viles Arboretum, Augusta

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice-President, Mike Ewing; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Corresponding Secretary, Doug Dolan; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Directors, Tony Barrett, Laura Flight, Bruce Grant, Sherri Langlais, Don Stack; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Ron Dobra, Rick Ste Croix; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; Finance Committee Chair, Tom Lewis; Guidebook Editor, Ray Ronan; ATC Regional Directors, Hawk Metheny, Claire Polfus; Members, Louis Chartier, Steve Clark, Richard Gower, Patty Harding, Sue Lussier, Bill Millis; Campaign Director, Alicia Nichols; Guest, Kevin Adam, Maine Warden Service.

Absent: Directors Dennis Andrews, Bob Cummings, Dan Simonds; District Overseers, Craig Dickstein, Dick Fecteau, Tom Gorrill.

President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 9:04 with introductions of those present.

**Maine Warden Service Geraldine Largay Search:** LT Kevin Adam, from the Maine Warden Service Search and Rescue Greenville office, spoke to the group two years before regarding the Geraldine Largay search. He updated the group at this meeting, after the discovery of Mrs. Largay's campsite. He cautioned that he could only give public information, as the Warden Service was still compiling a full report, to be published on completion.

On October 14, 2015, a surveyor was conducting an environmental impact survey on US Navy property. He had asked to do the work because he was interested in the Largay case. He made a lucky find, just inside the navy property boundary, walking to the campsite, which searchers had narrowly missed in previous searches.

Kevin has since this discovery met with Claire Polfus to talk about carry in carry out and Leave No Trace policies. Gerry left no signs to alert searchers; she placed herself and her campsite under a foliage canopy and behind low brush, which made it difficult for searchers to find her. She lit no fires. Kevin advises hikers to leave a trace if there's a problem and if wardens will need to search. He observed that more people who are not experienced in the woods are now using trails, and that they may not recognize when they get off a marked trail; they "see" markings on trees that they think are blazes. People are hiking more and more without maps, so they don't know the terrain; they have no visual representation. They also are relying on electronic media to guide them, and those means may not always be reliable.

Claire Polfus asked what advice to give hikers. Lieutenant Adam would advise them to keep moving, to clear a path in one direction, and to build a fire. He feels that Leave No Trace training should include some exceptions. He quoted a Leave No Trace instructor further south on the Trail who dismisses the idea that any hiker can get off- trail and lost, so doesn't adequately prepare them.

Finally, Kevin announced that reports will be forthcoming in the press, and that some will be accurate, and some not.

**Chainsaw safety training:** Lester Kenway gave a brief history of the chainsaw safety training program. 2015 was the tenth year for chainsaw training in Maine. Instructors Lester and Peter use a portion of the Forest Service Missoula curriculum. When they began the program, they were working mostly with people who had previous experience. It's different now, as many "students" have no previous experience. They always have a full class for the two-day new certifications. Peter works with recertification students on the first day.

Peter and Lester would like to extend the training for new students to include tree felling on a third day of instruction. Although trail maintenance does not usually require felling trees, there are some maintainers who would like to build bog bridges. Lester feels it's hard to squeeze everything into two days, and he proposes having new students who attend spring training come back in the fall for a third day.

Hawk Metheny spoke on the role of ATC in this discussion. He said that the concept is worth pursuing. It offers two day training in bucking and limbing for basic maintenance, and allows for more advanced training for those who want it. He added that it would help ATC with financing, because it allows for streamlining the training process.

Dave Field asked about Red Cross first aid certification, which is not in sync with sawyer training. Lester reminded that MATC offers a one day American Heart Association training at base camp for the Trail Crew and CARE employees; club members are welcome to attend.

**Trail Champions Campaign:** Mike Ewing and Sherri Langlais reported that the capital campaign, now titled the Trail Champions Campaign, is making good progress. The Capital Campaign Committee includes Chair, Lester Kenway, Elsa Sanborn, Mike Ewing, Sherri Langlais, Laura Flight, Tim Fortune, and Bethany Dodge, from LL Bean. Alicia Nichols is Campaign Director and Dave Field honorary chair. The committee has been meeting monthly since August and has identified an A list of potential donors. They are creating naming opportunities, having identified areas to which donors can give their name in return for large donations and without infringing on the club's mission. The committee planned to meet soon to work on solicitation skills.

Susan Tompkins introduced the video she and Vreeland Marketing created for the promotional campaign as part of the campaign's quiet phase. It is targeted at people who have no contact with the Trail community. Vreeland Marketing also helped devise the new name "Trail Champions."

Susan stressed, as has Alicia Nichols on a number of occasions, that the campaign is in its quiet phase until it secures a significant amount of donation pledges. Club representatives may meet with individuals and groups before the campaign goes public, and will use this video to present their cause.

The committee distributed the campaign brochure, which includes photos, quotes from the video and an application for a naming opportunity.

Lester Kenway gave an overview of a presentation done for another group. The next one was scheduled for January 11 with the Friends of Baxter State Park. At that

presentation, Lester planned to give a brief history of the Trail in Maine and its current condition, and would present the concept of the trail center and how it can help the organization, as a possible place for their annual retreat and for training in trail maintenance.

A typical presentation then gives the reasoning for why the club needs a trail center and why the center will be located in Skowhegan, which is equidistant from the Trail's end points in Maine, accessible to a main highway, on a scenic spot overlooking the Kennebec, and with practice ground for training.

Plans for the center include a solar drying room to facilitate equipment maintenance, a main building with kitchen, with seating for fifty, five bathrooms with showers, and solar panels and monitors on the roof. It is designed to meet LEED standards, but the club won't apply for LEED certification as it's expensive. Plans also include three smaller buildings to house the crew. It is projected to be open for use from February to November. All utilities will be underground. Lester noted that there have been a lot of changes in construction details during the nine years the club has been considering the project.

In general, then, the format for presentations to other groups includes: 1) why there is a need; 2) what the facility will be like; 3) how it will benefit the group viewing the presentation.

**Guidebook Review:** Ron Dobra and Ray Ronan spoke to the group regarding the AT guidebook, which is the main source of revenue for the club. Ron learned in December that AT headquarters in Harper's Ferry had only 288 of the Maine guidebooks, with more being sold since then. Brian King, ATC Publisher, expects they will run out by end of the year. With that in mind, it is time to review and revise entries in the Maine guidebook. The document needs two Executive Committee approvals. Ray estimates that, with the time from input to packing day, he should have a new edition to Brian King by the end of March.

Ron raised the topic of the format for the guidebook. Brian King says electronic guidebooks have not been successful. Ray and Brian have talked and agree that a print document is best; the club just finished selling 10,000 books in six years, so it is certain they will sell. The Trail in Maine isn't changing significantly, so the next paper edition will be valid for longer. He noted that digital apps are popular and convenient, but will not replace books; while digital information is free, it is not always accurate

Claire suggested that maps could be improved to include more usable information, such as a clearer topography format, "bail out" points, and information about off-trail resources. She said some other groups redo their guide books every year. Hawk recommends looking at the new Long Trail map.

Lester requested that Ray include other people on this edition, as it will be his last. He cautioned that, as we can't compete with apps on price, we have to compete on quality. He recommended including more color and more photos to be more interesting. Tony Barrett agreed that we need attractive physical maps, and he had information for Ray on Maine sourced cartographers who can help improve the appearance of our maps.

**Term limits:** After the discussion of term limits at the October 30 meeting, Lester agreed to make a proposal for this meeting. He distributed a balanced consideration of the

pros and cons of term limits, and some options for devising and implementing them based on the current makeup of the Executive Committee. He hasn't created a proposal because the topic is a lot more complicated than he anticipated. He would like to establish a committee to discuss the topic.

Lester has considered a three term limit, similar to the ATC Board of Managers. He spoke of his own experiences with that board, on which Dave Field had also served. He noted that the Friends of Baxter and Kennebec Land Trust had to drop their term limits protocol because they couldn't find enough candidates to fill positions; ATC has used the protocol successfully because they have a large pool from which to draw, given the extent of its geographic extent. The three term limit allows wide variety of participation, but in Maine we'd be challenged to find a lot of candidates to fill out the Executive Committee. We have very little turnover and, if we instituted a three term limit, fifteen of nineteen current members of the Executive Committee would be replaced, including all the overseers

Finally, Lester recommended that we take some time to consider improvements to the current makeup of the Executive Committee. With two major projects looming, the Biennial and the Trail Champions campaign, both of which need continuity, changing the experience level of the Executive Committee could have implications. He proposes using 2016 to do an analysis of the current situation and the possibilities for changes; prepare a constitutional amendment for April 2017, then start the process of rotating out in 2019, with staggered changes. He would like a committee to plan a structure for instituting changes.

President Lester Kenway called the business meeting to order 1:04 pm.

**Secretary's Report:** Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report of the October 30 meeting. Elsa Sanborn signaled some typographical errors. Hearing no other corrections, Elsa Sanborn placed a motion, seconded by Don Stack, to accept the minutes. The Executive Committee voted its approval.

**Treasurer's Report:** Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. Ron Dobra questioned entries for administration expenses. Elsa explained that these entries include expenses for the MAINEtainer, telephone, postage, insurance, fees. Tom Lewis added that there's a breakdown of those expenses in the budget. Ron also questioned the net income deficit. Elsa acknowledged that the club spent more than it took in, but that the club is still waiting on a couple of grants; some of the imbalance is due to timing. Elsa does expect there will be a negative income at the end of the year.

It should be noted that the President received the Treasurer's report on behalf of the Executive Committee.

**Preliminary Budget:** Tom Lewis spoke to the preliminary budget as indicated in a draft sent to Executive Committee members. It reflects information received, and will be updated as the Finance Committee receives more information. It is broken down by programs and then by sources of income and resources. It will be revised by the March meeting to include information still forthcoming.

Tom explained that a full audit of the club finances and programs is underway, conducted by Purdy Powers. It is the club's first audit ever, and was initiated as a result of the capital campaign planning. The first part of the audit is to be completed in January. The audit will include a management letter and a report, which will signal any issues of concern.

Tom and Elsa will bring the results to the March meeting. Ron Dobra asked about monies for structures and trail maintenance and whether the budget includes money for bog bridging. Tom advised that all overseers send requests to the Finance Committee for inclusion in the final document. Any concerns regarding the budget should be addressed to Tom or Elsa; the Finance Committee wants to develop a budget that is accurate.

The Longley property in The Forks is still listed in the budget and will be addressed soon.

There was a note under CARE regarding a proposed field guide for Saddleback and Bigelow. That discussion would come up again later in the meeting.

As this was just an update, it called for no action from the Executive Committee at the time.

**Corresponding Secretary's Report:** Corresponding Secretary Doug Dolan reported that e-mail traffic had been light. With the announcement that Dennis Andrews resigned his director's position, Doug asked whether the club should continue to maintain a post office box in Augusta, which Dennis has monitored. Elsa Sanborn explained that the club gets a couple of important items a month at the box, and that it's been the official address of MATC for 60 years. Rick Ste Croix volunteered to take over the task.

**ATC Report:** Claire Polfus added to her ATC report. The Maine Youth Trail Stewardship program is entering its second year. The goal of the program is to get more youth out on the Trail. It has received funding from a Quimby Foundation grant. It will hold its second annual youth summit on February 27 at Gould Academy, in Bethel. It has established a FACEbook group for youth under the title *Maine Youth Trail Stewardship Coalition*. The program is sponsored by ATC but is specific to Maine. ATC felt that students are interested in the Trail but didn't have skills and a place to learn them; youth want more connections to those who do have woods experience and they want opportunities to be in the woods. crew.

Last year's summit was overnight, as it had more grant funding. It was focused more on concept and not specific skills. This year's summit will be a day-long event. Participants are high school and college students, with some middle school students if their school has an outing club. They are hoping for fifty young people. It's an opportunity to train youth to prepare for trail work. While the MATC trail crew doesn't take youth under eighteen, this program, trying to be inclusive, accepts younger ones.

**Baxter Park Task Force:** Claire reported that the Baxter AT Task Force is still meeting monthly. The next meeting would be at the end of January. The task force is in a planning mode at this point because there are not many out on the Trail now.

Hawk added to the information regarding the Task Force. At last year's January meeting the Executive Committee heard about the Baxter State Park letter regarding hiker

behavior. The challenges aren't unique to Baxter. Where there's accurate use data, trends show 5% more users on the Trail per year. ATC has been generating ideas on how to respond to increased use. They plan to establish new positions Trail wide, early in Georgia, then later in the Hundred Mile Wilderness. Thanks to the media attention to inappropriate hiker behavior after the Scott Jurek incident, behavior improved somewhat. Baxter Park is still concerned with increasing numbers of long distance hikers. Jensen Bissell has proposed several options upon request of ATC staff: 1) create a permit system with a cap on numbers of northbound hikers permitted to enter the park, with registration at a visitor center in Monson; 2) move the trail off the current trail along Newsowadnehunk Stream to the Blueberry Ledges Trail and disallow northbounders from camping in the Park; 3) reroute the Trail to bring hikers through the Togue Pond gate where they would be part of the Park's current day and overnight use system; 4) discontinue the AT through Baxter State Park.

In a discussion, Claire, Hawk, Jensen Bissell and Jean Hoekwater determined that a daily cap was not feasible, because of peak days, so decided on an annual cap. They plan to monitor numbers through a registration point and permit system, in Monson, at a currently existing visitors' center. It allows more people to come in to learn about the AT, its history, its story and Leave No Trace ethics

To a question regarding what will happen after they reach the 2000 cap for the season, Claire explained that there may be some options, such as go around through the main gate and become part of the normal park visitor management system, hike into and out of the park without staying.

Following the discussion, Ron Dobra placed a motion to support the proposal for a permit system with an annual cap of 2000 northbound hikers into Baxter State Park and with permit registration at a visitor center in Monson. Bruce Grant seconded the motion.

Ray Ronan asked about those who will defy rules and Hawk acknowledged the concern, and added that the proposals considered will provide Trail authorities more of a sense of who's on the Trail and where the problems are, so we can be pro-active rather than reactive. He also explained that ATC is not asking for any financial resources from the club; they just need the club's support. There is also an opportunity for MATC to have more of a presence in Monson. ATC will hire two seasonal employees, funded by NPS, who will provide support and continuity for volunteers. There may be an opportunity for some volunteers to assist the employees. Staff will also do some ridge running, checking trail conditions, river fords, collecting accurate up-to-date information. They may even be able to organize some evening educational events.

Bill Millis recommended that staff training be integrated with CARE training. He emphasized the importance of communications with caretakers and ridge runners to coordinate the two programs. Claire has already spoken with the CARE and Campsite Committees in the last month.

Susan Tompkins urged that the club consider the image it gives to the public through media outlets, and how to inaugurate the program to highlight the best interests of MATC and the AT community.

After considerable discussion, the Executive Committee voted thirteen in favor, none opposed, to approve the motion.

**Wind Power Committee:** Tony Barrett spoke briefly on behalf of the Wind Power Committee and on power lines crossing the Trail. He said there is nothing imminent. Bruce Grant asked about a line of windmills from Baxter Park west; Tony had no information on the installation.

**Biennial Committee:** Tony Barrett and Sherri Langlais reported on plans for the 2017 Biennial. ATC says MATC is ahead of schedule on planning. The Steering Committee is contacting other like-minded organizations to see if they want to piggyback and use the Colby facilities at the same time. The Waterville city manager is a former thru hiker and Colby alumnus, and has embraced the project.

**Communications and the MAINEtainer:** Bob Cummings had been looking for several years for someone to take responsibility for the club newsletter. Jason Phelps has now taken on that task. Doug Dolan reported that Bob hand typed all the articles. Doug said the transition has not been quick and easy. He recently mailed 245 paper copies of the club newsletter, and the cost has been higher than expected.

The next issue will go forward with the current plan. Jason will need articles by the end of January for mailing by February 5. It will cost about \$1100. Jason travels a lot, but can compile the paper while on the road; he is not able to mail paper copies to non-US addresses.

The Communications Committee is still collecting printing house quotes. Members will be able to opt out of a paper copy. Doug acknowledged that most people will want a paper copy, but guaranteed there will be an electronic copy, which facilitates posting to the club web site. The electronic copy will be available early, before the printed copy.

In an effort to keep costs down, Doug asked for a motion to reduce the number of newsletter editions to four per year, with the schedule listed to accommodate required publications. Doug noted that this is the sixth policy change regarding the newsletter in the club's history, the last one was in 2006. Bruce Grant placed the motion, seconded by Sherri Langlais.

Bill Millis questioned sending paper copies and suggested posting an electronic only, with a paper copy sent by request; Doug noted that it's the only tangible benefit for membership.

The Executive Committee voted to accept the change from five MAINEtainer issues to four per year.

**Club Coordinator:** Holly spoke briefly on her club coordinator update and asked for comment. She urged that anyone who needs Grants to Clubs for projects submit requests to her now.

**CARE Committee:** Holly spoke on behalf of the CARE Committee. They held one conference call with Claire Polfus to discuss the ATC proposal for increased presence in the Hundred Mile Wilderness. CARE is asking caretakers and ridge runners to do outreach with camp and college groups during off-peak duty time, often on weekdays, as they are on duty on weekends. The CARE hiring committee is currently active and has ten applicants for positions for the next season.

Holly explained the history of the Alpine Field Guide proposal put forward by the CARE Committee. Jean Hoekwater suggested last season that Glenn Mittlehauser, an alpine botanist who has created botanic inventories and guides for Acadia National Park and Baxter State Park work with caretakers in the Bigelow / Saddleback area. Glenn conducted a workshop and created a draft alpine plant guide specific to those alpine zones. He proposed creating a guide for a tool for MATC caretakers, who have identified protecting fragile alpine zones as one of their priorities. Lester said he values the kinds of tools we're discussing; he questions whether this work is redundant. He also questions whether it's within the club's mission.

Tony Barrett questioned how much more the proposed publication will include. Dave also pointed out that those two alpine areas have been studied repeatedly, especially at the time of the ski area debate.

Lester suggested tabling this discussion to the March meeting to do more research. Holly planned to meet with Glenn Mittlehauser, and would have more solid information after that meeting.

Bruce Grant placed the motion to table the proposal, seconded by Dave Field. The Executive Committee approved the motion.

**Longley Property:** The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust was engaged to work on plans for the Longley property, in The Forks. Lester recently distributed the MATLT conservation easement document, which is ready for consideration. He explained the layout of the Longley property; the area adjacent to the Appalachian Trail (high ground), would be designated as a Forever Wild Area. As most Executive Committee members had not had time to examine the legal document, Bruce Grant placed a motion to table the discussion until the March meeting. Dave Field seconded the motion. The Executive Committee approved that motion.

### **Overseer Reports:**

Dave Field delivered the Overseer of Lands report. He had just received a "road construction" permit from the Land Use Planning Commission, which allows construction of the Berrypickers' Trail. Work above 2700 feet can begin after the nesting season for the Bicknell's thrush, in late July.

Dave has received communication from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. They want to cross the AT once or twice near Spectacle Pond during a logging operation designed to improve wildlife habitat. They would be crossing in the winter, ninety degree crossings, and assured respect for the visual impact.

Ron Dobra spoke on the White Cap District. He thanked Susan Tompkins for steering Aislinn Sarnacki to him to publicize the work of trail maintainers.

Ron is preparing his annual report. He noted about 2500 volunteer hours, down about 100 hours, but attributed the decrease to four open sections.

Ron asked for permission to approve a relocation around a beaver pond near Little Wilson Stream. Ron placed the motion to approve the proposed relocation. Bruce Grant seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted its approval.

Rick Ste. Croix reported on the Katahdin District. All maintainers did go out last season. Rick and other volunteers replaced a 400 foot section of bog bridging just south of Abol bridge. He announced two maintainer openings, which he will post in the next MAINEtainer.

**Kingfield Trail Town proposal:** Bruce Grant reported that officials from Kingfield have approached him about becoming a Trail Community. They have done a lot of preparation. The main organizer is the owner of a B and B who has built her business to beyond her capacity, so is looking to develop the community further.

Bruce Grant placed a motion to authorize the MATC president to compose a letter of support for the town of Kingfield, and to suggest including Carrabassett Valley and Stratton in the trail town designation. Tony Barrett seconded the motion.

Claire recommended that this proposal include Stratton, which is actually more connected to the AT.

The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

**Campsite Committee:** Laura Flight added to her written report. She has been discussing with the Biennial Steering Committee chairs the possibility of including a model privy on site at the Biennial. Her volunteers could pre-build, dismantle, and then rebuild on the Colby campus. West Carry Pond privy is scheduled to be rebuilt in 2017, so the model could be transported there by boat after the conference.

**Trail Crew Committee:** Lester has sent his written report. He has started recruiting staff, which should be in place by the end of February.

**Trail Karma Proposal:** Lester referred to an e-mail from Moxie Niedenthal, Gulf Hagas ridge runner last season, inquiring about trail karma. She proposes a article of logo tubular headwear, also known as buffs, that Trail representatives can distribute when they observe good trail behavior. She is investigating funding from public sources for the visible reward. Claire explained that the idea came from the Baxter Task Force. Lester explained that Grants to Clubs are designated for club projects, and this proposal is more an individual initiative. Further, MATC has been close to the cap figure for Grants to Clubs. Elsa had questions about this proposal; who will control it and who will distribute rewards.

The Executive Committee took no action on this proposal at the time.

**Baxter State Park Committee:** The Baxter State Park Committee was established to keep communications open between BSP and MATC. It has met for several years, with Lester as the principal representative of MATC.

Baxter State Park has initiated a program to evaluate its fall line trails. By 2017 Jensen hopes to do two relocations of the Hunt Trail, about a mile of trail. The relocation will reduce the pitch from a 20% grade to 12%. The Trail Crew will work on the Hunt Trail early in their season.

**Annual Meeting:** Lester called for suggestions for planning for the Annual Meeting. He would like to keep the same framework as last year, and change some of the

workshops. The program will include speakers Jensen Bissell and Claire Polfus to discuss trail challenges.

The Annual Meeting will take place in the Olin Arts Center (concert hall) at Bates College, in Lewiston.

**Maintainer Gathering:** Ron Dobra reminded that the maintainers' gathering will take place on February 20, from 9 to 2 at Viles Arboretum, in Augusta.

**Volunteer Recognition:** Tony Barrett reminded attendees of the volunteer recognition program, for someone who's done extraordinary work for the trail and is not on the Executive Committee. The Volunteer Recognition Committee is composed of Peter Roderick, Don Stack, and Tony Barrett. Nominations should be sent to any of them.

Lester reminded that ATC has service awards, given for designated increments of time in service to the Trail. ATC has sent him a long list of club members who should receive recognition at the next Annual Meeting.

With all business concluded. Elsa Sanborn placed a motion to adjourn, seconded by Dave Field. The meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.