

Maine Appalachian Trail Club
November 3, 2017
UMA

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice President, Tom Gorrill; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Corresponding Secretary, Doug Dolan; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Ron Dobra, Craig Dickstein, Mike Ewing; Directors, Tony Barrett, Bill Brooke, Tom Carr, Laura Flight, Bruce Grant, Audrey Laffely, Dick Welsh; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; ATC Regional Resources Director; Finance Committee Chair, Tom Lewis; Trail Champions Campaign Director, Alicia Nichols

Absent: District Overseers, Dick Fecteau, Rick Ste. Croix; Director, Irene Syphers

Call to Order: President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 6:58 pm. He made two announcements: he asked for help preparing for the January meeting and help with planning for the Maintainers, Monitors and Members meeting in February. Mike Ewing and Laura Flight offered to help plan for the February meeting, and Ron Dobra and Tom Gorrill volunteered to help with preparations for the January meeting.

Recording Secretary's Report: Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report for the September 8 meeting. The following corrections were cited: Alicia Nichols corrected a statement in the Treasurer's Report regarding capital campaign information that is requested by the Capital Campaign Committee, not provided to it; in the report of the Communications Committee, Laura Flight stated her opinion on hiring a paid consultant to work on the club web site; in the report of Communications with Jeffrey Smith, Dave Field stated that Jeffrey Smith has placed a memorial in the Poplar Ridge lean-to; in the report on restructuring of committees, Tom Gorrill suggests moving supervision of the Kennebec Ferry to another committee.

Bruce Grant placed a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Elsa Sanborn seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted to accept the report.

Treasurer's Report: Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. It indicated \$746,000 in assets and showed activities for April through October.

Dick Welsh questioned the operating funds of - \$102,295, and Elsa confirmed that the club has been spending more than it is taking in. We've paid out expenses for operating, and ATC has not sent their contributions; it's a cash flow issue. Lester accepted the Treasurer's Report on behalf of the Executive Committee.

Elsa read a lengthy statement in which she detailed changes that resulted from the club's financial audit and the capital campaign that have the doubled the time commitment of the Treasurer. She ended her statement with: I will complete my term that ends in April, but it is time for me to move on."

Finance Committee Chair Tom Lewis acknowledged that financials are still not being produced by Quick Books, the permanent on-line system the club has adopted. We need to finish the transition, so financials are coming from only one source, with one procedure.

Corresponding Secretary's Report: Doug Dolan presented the Corresponding Secretary's Report. He has not received many e-mails. Club officials have moved to gmail accounts linked to their position titles. Some Executive Committee members haven't been set up with passwords to have e-mails forwarded to the gmail account.

ATC Report: Claire Polfus spoke to the ATC report she e-mailed. Various ATC representatives did a lot in Maine this summer, and the data is not all consolidated yet. The ATC report included a Monson Visitor Center report.

The day of this meeting was Irene Syphers' last day. Through the course of the season, she managed to visit almost every campsite in Maine. She compiled a campsite inventory, which is intended to update the campsite inventory from 2000. Claire hopes to share the information with the Campsite Committee this winter, to improve services for next year. The Nature Conservancy inventories all undesignated sites in the Rainbow Lake to Abol lands. Claire plans to share that data with appropriate people later.

Irene also inventoried hazard trees, and noted 794 monitor trees and about 600 remove trees. Removing high priority hazard trees takes a long time, and some require rigging, and some require a long walk. Craig Dickstein asked for notification when anyone goes out to work on hazard tree mitigation in his district, and he will inform maintainers; they might have better information about access to a site.

Ron Dobra asked about the asset inventory, which was completed this summer, in particular if Claire will add information about additions from the Trail Crew and Campsite Committee. Claire said overseers may be asked to supply information on any new bog bridging.

Lester referred to the October 23 meeting with TNC to discuss the signs on Debsconeag Lands. He said that issue is still not resolved.

Claire spoke to the report of the Kennebec Ferry survey; the documents provided to the Executive Committee were used for a presentation at the RPC meeting. The survey was administered out of the Monson Visitor Center and by ridge runner Kim Rosenbaum on the Trail. About 85% of hikers said they would be willing to pay a fee. Ferry operator Greg Caruso is not willing to take cash, so there would have to be on-line payment through the web site, either before or after the service. Members of the Executive Committee had many questions about the ferry service, and if there was a way to improve it, either with bigger boats or by a reroute to an easier crossing. There were questions about easements on the lands on either side of the river, and about the land under the river, which belongs to the state of Maine. (Dave Field has since learned that the land on both sides of the river ~~and under the river belong~~ to the power company.)

Claire seeks input on resolving the issue of the ferry, which now costs considerably more than when it was established. Dave counsels trying to "shame" people into paying, but admits there's no way to enforce paying a fee. He advises explaining the cost of the service and the threat to the service if it's not covered. (In the Great Smokies there are mandatory fees and hikers pay.) Ultimately, no one will be denied crossing.

Craig Dickstein feels that some hikers won't give contact information, to avoid paying a bill. Claire says you send one bill if someone doesn't pay, but don't pursue too strongly. Craig suggests a box or a pipe for a donation; some hikers are willing to leave cash;

Claire says many hikers don't carry cash, so we need something else. Audrey Laffely favors a suggested donation, and thinks that's more feasible; some people will pay more. Another suggestion is to create informational ads that tell people how much it costs to operate the ferry; Lester questions whether that tactic would be successful.

Cell phone service at the river crossing is not guaranteed, and depends on the carrier, so an on-line payment at that spot is not reliable. Claire suggested we use the Monson Visitor Center on-line store as a point for payment. Elsa reminded that we need to consider the cost of collecting money, including sending bills, credit fees, and administrative fees.

Craig cautioned that we slow down the level of service if the ferryman has to deal with payments.

Claire noted that finding a sustainable solution for the Kennebec ferry has been a priority for her position. She asked if there are any strong objections to continue to examine this issue. The consensus of Executive Committee members in attendance was "go for it."

Wind Power Report: Tony Barrett spoke for the Wind Power Committee. He said there had been no action since the last meeting. The next Wind Power Committee meeting would take place on November 14. They planned to discuss changing the name of the committee to be more representative of threats to the Trail.

NERPC Meeting Update: Claire Polfus presented information about the recent RPC meeting. From various club reports, there were several concerns about seasonal housing. Attendees had a tour from the man who built the new facility at Moosilauke Ravine Lodge. The new crossing at Pierce Pond Dam was approved.

Communications Committee Report: Lester spoke about the Communications Committee. Stan Moody has agreed to serve as committee chair for one year. Stan was the web master for the Portsmouth Navy Yard and currently maintains the MATC on-line work trip report. Stan feels we should move the web site first, then rebuild it. We will ask Stan to bring the topic to the January meeting, with a brainstorm session in the morning. Doug Dolan suggests we start by defining the shortcomings of the existing web site, then determine the best direction. Bill Brooke suggests we define the various use cases: who uses the site?, how?, with what?, what are they looking for? All other components of club communications are well in place; the web site is the focus of concern at this time.

Lester asked who would be willing to work with Stan. Tom Carr, Mike Ewing, and Bill Brooke volunteered.

Lester said he was advised we should leave Oxford because they didn't have a high enough level of security.

Campsite Committee Report: Laura Flight reported for the Campsite Committee. She was not able to send a report in advance of the meeting. Recent projects for the Campsite Committee include: Frye Notch lean-to sill replacement; a visit to Horns Pond for reconnaissance for the privy replacement there in 2018. Laura worked with Bill Millis, representing the CARE Committee, regarding the role of the ridge runner with regards to the privy. They plan to drop materials at Horns Pond by helicopter, the delivery financed by ATC.

The Campsite Committee met recently, and Claire updated them on hazard trees. They are considering what to do with full privies not on the work schedule. Possible solutions include: move the privy, build a new privy or use a wet willy (box toilet), which doesn't require a ~~special~~ Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Permit. Bruce Grant suggests gathering a crew that could build a crib over an existing pit, which doesn't take so many man hours.

Lester reminded that stairs are allowed but not recommended for accessible privies.

Laura explained that the Campsite Committee has become a privy committee, and they have other campsite issues which are being neglected. She believes that, if they had more project leaders, they could build more privies in a year. Lester asked if delivery of materials would facilitate the process of building privies, as transporting the kits has been very time consuming. Laura's committee will investigate that option.

The Campsite Committee supports Tom Gorrill's restructuring proposals.

CARE Committee Report: Holly Sheehan reported for the CARE Committee. They are moving towards calling all the personnel ridge runners, a designation ATC is using for all its on-site trail employees.

Elysha Dyer has been a good addition as group registration point person. She kept ridge runners informed about groups registering to camp at their sites, even as she was hiking the PCT.

Holly reported that training is getting better. Monson ATC personnel trained with CARE personnel, which was beneficial. There were more on site trainings, and all ridge runners participated in trainings at Baxter State Park. Funding was ample, some from grants, some from ATC, and some from the counties in which the sites are located.

The next CARE meeting was scheduled for December 3.

Club Coordinator Report: Holly also spoke to her report as Club Coordinator. The date for the Recreational Trails grant submission was moved forward by two months, which caused problems. At the time of this meeting, all grant proposals had been submitted. Holly serves on the Recreational Trails Committee, as a reviewer for back country trails. She's reached the end of her permitted terms this year, and is hoping MATC can send another member to serve on the panel, as she considers it a worth while opportunity.

Maine Trail Crew Report: Lester reported for the Maine Trail Crew and referred to the complete report he distributed prior to this meeting. Two employees withdrew early, but he deems that it was one of the most productive seasons ever.

Longley Property Update: Lester spoke on the Longley Property. He explained again the three phase plan: 1) offer the property at its appraised value to local individuals; Craig said those who were approached refused, and thought we should accept an offer; 2) ~~offer~~ advertise the property nationally, ~~at the appraised value~~; 3) go through a realtor. Lester recommends another meeting soon to determine how to proceed.

Resuming work with Trail Finder: Claire explained that ATC has a Sewall [Foundation](#) Grant for developing local trails around Monson. ATC officials want to develop trails around Monson, and list them on the Maine Trail Finder website, and distribute information through the Visitor Center.

Maine Trail Finder wants to work with trail managers, not just list hikes on their own, as some other programs do. Claire wants to work with them and with MATC representatives. Locals may not be aware of the resources of the AT, and MTF would be a way to educate the public and promote the club; show them the AT is not just for people from away, it's for Maine people.

Lester outlined two steps; a process for how to work with Maine Trail Finder; a map of the trails in Monson, with maps distributed in the Visitor Center, and posted on the MTF site, which has grant funding.

Ron Dobra placed a motion that the Executive Committee accept Claire's proposal to develop a trail map for Monson, and then post it on the Maine Trail Finder site. Tom Carr seconded the motion. The motion was accepted.

Bruce Grant placed a motion to table the discussion of the MTF process to the January meeting. There was no second.

Claire explained the following process: MTF writes the description, then reviews it with MATC district overseers. MTF posts it on their site and maintains the site, updating when necessary. MATC doesn't put in that much time.

Tom Carr placed a motion that MTF be allowed to work directly with district overseers. Craig Dickstein added to the motion that district overseers have the autonomy to approve MTF postings without coming to the Executive Committee for approval. Dick Welsh seconded the motion.

Ron Dobra is concerned that we're increasing trail use. Dick Welsh reminded that MTF has the right to post anyway, and that MATC involvement in the process allows us to have input and oversight. Tom Carr added that, not only does this give us some input, it also gives us publicity, as they give us credit on their web site.

The Executive Committee approved the motion.

Trail Champions Campaign Report: Alicia Nichols spoke on the Trail Champions campaign. ~~Funds collected to date total \$320,063.~~ They are still looking to double the committee. Lester is preparing for a major solicitation.

Nahmakanta Stream Lean-to: Lester reported that the Nahmakanta Stream ~~camp~~ Lean-to ~~site~~ is finished. It's the first lean-to that meets accessibility standards. ~~handicapped accessible.~~ This project took nine trips, and Lester observed that it didn't have the same level of participation and support as in the 1980's ~~past~~, even with communication by digital means.

Trail Memorials Policy: The club still needs to create a policy for memorials on the AT. Club representatives have already had a request for a memorial on the trail for the latest victim, the Canadian man who passed this summer near Cranberry Pond. Dave Field has looked through club documents and minutes of past meetings and could find no written guidelines.

Bruce Grant placed the following motion: MATC will not support the placing of any physical memorial on the Appalachian Trail system in Maine under the jurisdiction of the MATC. Dave Field seconded the motion.

Elsa explained that we do have a memorial fund, with several small donations, but no named memorial fund, which requires at least \$2000. The process is in place for financial memorials.

The Executive Committee approved the motion by unanimous vote.

Laura Flight asked how to deal with enforcement. Craig Dickstein suggested Lester compose a form letter to clarify the policy.

Overseer of Lands Report: Dave Field reported as Overseer of Lands. Corridor monitors have been busy even into fall. The American Hiking Society worked in Gulf Hags in September. Dave spoke of the Whitecap acquisition under the auspices of MATLT and supported by funding from Roxanne Quimby. The parcel comprises 1574 acres along the NPS corridor and reserves a right of way for a footpath along the White Brook trail.

Bald Pate District Report: Mike Ewing reported on the Baldpate District. He said his first year was very interesting. He walked through the length of the district on white blazed trail, and parts of the GLT. In future, he wants to focus on more one-on-one meetings with maintainers.

Whitecap District Report: Ron Dobra reported on the Whitecap District. He walked about 3/4 of the district. He has three openings, West Chairback Pond to Chairback Gap, Chairback

Gap shelter, and the White Brook Trail. He and Lester have been scouting for a relocation of the A.T. over 4th Mountain. ~~some precarious areas on Fourth Mountain for a reroute.~~

Ron spoke to his experiences hiking on the Ice Age Trail and to signs he saw posted on that trail to publicize the role of volunteer maintainers. He recommended that MATC develop a similar posting. To that end, Rob Dobra placed a motion that the club accept the concept of posting signs at trail heads and road crossings clarifying volunteer maintenance, with wording as shown on the Ice Age Trail example he distributed. Craig Dickstein seconded the motion.

Dave Field has placed laminated paper signs at trail heads and campsites with a similar message, as well as general information about the club. Tony Barrett questioned adding another sign. Dick Welsh acknowledged that many hikers don't know the trail is maintained by volunteers, and advertising the volunteer nature of the club would provide good PR.

Dave Field estimated that we would need about twenty signs.

The Executive Committee accepted the motion with one opposed, and one abstaining.

Ron also spoke to a proposal to expand the parking lot at Gulf Hags, which sees heavy use throughout the season. Ron has been discussing an expansion straight back from the current parking lot, towards the river, and on BPL land. This will be a topic for further discussion at a later date.

Kennebec District Report: Craig Dickstein reported for the Kennebec District. He mentioned the Bald Mountain Pond acquisition plan, referring to correspondence by J T Horn of The Trust for Public Land. He has seven new maintainers. One volunteer rehabbed the north peak trail on Moxie Bald unsolicited.

Craig spoke of the Pine Island Camps, which been assigned to maintain three miles of trail for the last sixty years. Craig has reassigned the section with a letter to the camps to encourage them to remain involved.

The Kennebec ferry served 2800+ hikers, a 6% increase over last year.

This season, Peter Roderick installed 120 feet of bog bridging on his section, and the district saw some other smaller bog bridging projects.

Craig has reviewed all signs and sent an order to Louis Chartier. Craig found a listing for a sign pointing to Harrison's Pierce Pond Camps. He requests we reinstall signs pointing to Harrison's Pierce Pond camps. Claire explained that it's against NPS policy to post any signs on the Trail that advertise a commercial establishment. This topic calls for more research; we will talk about advertising on the trail at the January meeting.

Craig asked for a decision on the Caratunk trail connector, which is actually in the Forks. The Executive Committee concern with the proposal at the last meeting was the multi-use designation. Craig explained that planners have restricted use to non-motorized means. They're willing to restrict the trail to hikers only. Craig explained that they're trying to enhance hiking opportunities in the area.

Craig Dickstein placed a motion stating that MATC supports the ~~Old Canada Road Scenic Byway~~, a .6 mile blue blaze side trail that would connect to the AT. Ron Dobra seconded the motion.

Lester asked if we have authority to approve this without the designer having approval of all the landowners. Claire reminded that the proposal would need to go through RPC; even though it's state land, it connects to the AT.

The Executive Committee voted nine in favor, four opposed and 2 abstaining. The motion carried.

Claire asked that proponents please use the appropriate forms.

President's Proposal for Nominating Committee: Lester named the Nominating Committee, Tom Gorrill as chair, Audrey Laffely, Ken Spaulding. Ron Dobra placed a motion to accept the Nominating Committee as named by Lester. Elsa Sanborn seconded the motion. The Executive Committee approved the motion.

Proposal for New Committee Structure: Tom Gorrill spoke to the document he distributed to review and revise the club's committee structure. The goal of the restructuring is to increase communication and coordination within the club, to reduce the president's work load, and to redistribute the work load among committee members. Some of the major points are:

Add a Grafton Loop Trail overseer and a campsite overseer. The number of directors would be reduced to accommodate these additions.

Combine Development and Membership into one committee, with several sub committees ~~Add~~ **Renew** the Training and Education Committee. Overseers would **plan for and conduct** ~~run~~ the Maintainers, Monitors, and Members gathering in mid-winter.

Add a standing Nominating Committee because of the changes in terms we added last year.

The above changes would require changes to the constitution **and bylaws**.

Tom wants a sense of support and an indication whether to proceed. Any constitutional changes would have to be voted at the annual meeting, which would require a documented announcement in advance of that meeting. ~~The details can be revised, but we do have to explain the reasons to the membership.~~ **We will also need to explain to the membership why Executive committee changed ~~to~~ the by-laws. are necessary.**

Lester suggested that the Nominating Committee bring the wording for the constitutional amendments, so the Executive Committee can vote at the January 13 meeting.

Craig questioned the campsite overseer given that there are 45 campsites, and suggested two campsite overseers, one for the north and one for the south.

Craig also questioned designating a Kennebec ferry overseer position; he'd prefer that supervision remain with the Kennebec District Overseer.

Discussion of the committee structure will continue to the January meeting.

Monson Library Proposal: Bruce Grant spoke to the Monson library proposal to be a trail community supporter. He placed a motion to state that MATC supports the Monson Library proposal to be a community supporter. Ron Dobra seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Lester reminded that JT Horn sent an updated report on the TPL Bald Mountain Pond project.

With all discussions concluded, Dick Welsh placed a motion, seconded by Elsa Sanborn, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Janice Clain
Recording Secretary
December 10, 2017