

Maine Appalachian Trail Club
March 2, 2012
UMA

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice President, Tony Barrett; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Directors, Dennis Andrews, Bob Cummings, Craig Dickstein, Laura Flight, Bruce Grant, Dan Simonds, Don Stack; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Ron Dobra, Dick Fecteau, Tom Gorrill, Rick Ste. Croix; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; Guidebook Editor, Ray Ronan; Fund Raising Counsel, Alicia Nichols

Absent: Corresponding Secretary, Dick Doucette; Director, Rebecca Clark; District Overseer, Peter Roderick

President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Secretary's Report: Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report for the January 14 meeting. Elsa Sanborn advised that Alicia Nichol's title should be listed as Fund Raising Counsel, not Consultant. Bruce Grant signaled discrepancies in the name of the young lady who requested help with a film project; it should be Kori Feener.

Bruce Grant placed a motion to accept the Secretary's Report with corrections. Elsa Sanborn seconded the motion. The Executive Committee approved the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. She noted a mistake in note 7, which should indicate \$19,067 in general appeal donations, and not \$16,677.

Dave Field asked about the figure for investing activities; he questioned the – (minus) sign. Elsa explained that it had to do with mutual funds earnings and the change in market value.

Dick Fecteau asked for details of funds for the Trail Center proposal. Elsa explained that pre-paid expenses are Alicia Nichols' salary for services to date, for surveys and for architect's fees.

Ron Dobra placed a motion, seconded by Bruce Grant, to accept the Treasurer's Report. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

MATC Budget for 2012: As Tom Lewis was away on business, he sent the Finance Committee draft for the 2012 Operating Budget. Lester explained that two lines, related to the Trail Crew Center and the Public Relations campaign, have not been completed. He suggested postponing a decision on the budget until after discussion of those two items. He added that part of the budget would include grants that Alicia Nichols will pursue to offset fund raising and PR expenses.

The Finance Committee has reviewed life member dues and proposes raising them to \$500 (from \$300) to better serve those life members. Elsa explained that the club has offered long term members a reduced rate for life membership.

Elsa Sanborn placed a motion, seconded by Bruce Grant, to raise the fee for Life Members.

Tony Barrett said other groups don't offer life members because they lose money for

the group. Some, such as ATC ask a much higher fee, as much as \$1000. Elsa said she researched the matter after talking with Alicia. Many life members don't make any further donations once they secure their life membership. Lester reported that the club has 154 Life Members of 849 total members. The total figure includes complimentary memberships, which are given to CARE employees, Trail Crew members and anyone who works with the Trail Crew. 350 club members don't live in Maine.

Tony gave his opinion that the life member fee is too low. He explained that he became a life member because he doesn't want to have to remember to renew each year, not because of the cost.

Bruce Grant noted that some life members are very involved. He also expressed concern about an additional burden on members when other costs are going up. He said he would prefer a distinction in involved and non-involved members. He observed that this discussion was confusing membership with fundraising, to which Alicia Nichols replied that the two are connected and that both relate to the public awareness campaign.

Other discussions centered on what membership costs the club and whether the benefit of having a lump sum that the club can use offsets the cost of membership services.

Dave Field reminded that the primary benefit of membership is to be a Maintainer or Corridor Monitor, which ultimately benefits the club. He placed a motion to table the discussion and do an in-depth research analysis of the situation and numbers. Elsa will research the numbers and report back.

Maine Trail Center - Review of the Feasibility Study and Next Steps: Alicia Nichols reviewed the numbers in the capital campaign feasibility study. She explained that many organizations that have carried out successful capital campaigns have full time paid staff and invested funds, which is not the case for MATC. She explained that the recommendations she made are an investment in a successful capital campaign. She added that, as Lester noted previously, some funding to offset the cost of this awareness project will come from grants. Alicia has identified 59 foundations that she plans to research to determine if MATC is eligible to apply for grants to fund awareness and other measures.

Because some feasibility study interviewees had never heard of MATC, Alicia's first proposal was to engage a PR firm to integrate awareness to the club into preparations for the capital campaign. She stressed that MATC must raise regional and national awareness of its work and its purpose in order to reach outside interests. The club must focus on people; through hikers, day hikers, caretakers, trail crew, ridge runners, to show what the AT in Maine means to people and to tell the public why the AT in Maine matters. She suggested focusing some publicity on Trail Towns.

Alicia urged that the club create a network of Friends. The current organization exists to do the work of maintaining upkeep of the Trail itself. She emphasized that the club needs time and resources to develop relationships with potential donors, which is difficult to do when there's no staff. The club needs to make these preparations before beginning a capital campaign. She urges that we focus on "friend raising" before fund raising by conducting outreach, organizing events such as round tables, and promoting the club organization. Alicia explained that a round table is an open forum to discuss any topic of interest; a chance to share experiences and ideas, in which all attendees participate equally. Dave Field has held several such events to promote *Along Maine's Appalachian Trail*, the book he authored.

Alicia has suggested a 12-18 month timetable to create a network of Friends to

promote the organization. She also recommends working with a PR firm and through an Ad Hoc committee. Alicia will be a part of the process, and will identify and track events, promote an AT speakers series, ND A round table series. A beginning step is to join the Skowhegan Chamber of Commerce and participate in their events.

Alicia also recommends that the club utilize technology to expand outreach to a younger generation. Alicia has participated in the club Facebook page. When she sent out a query on plans to hike the AT this year, about 400 people answered. She suggested including advertising for the club on Facebook. She also advises an update of the web site, to help connect people to the club as part of the public awareness campaign. She recommended a free QR (quick response) code, which Lester has already acquired. We now need to publish and distribute the code. Suggestions from the Executive Committee included publishing it in the next newsletter and asking Holly to put it on the preseason letter that she sends to college groups that plan to use the AT. Alicia stressed that we don't need a new web site, just a part dedicated to raising awareness to the club's purpose and work. She suggested a Maine Trail Crew alumni page on the web site. When questioned about the focus on the young, who often aren't so well off financially, Alicia explained that it broadens your base and provides links to people who do have money.

When asked about whom Alicia sees as the Friends of MATC, she replied that they are people who care about the Trail. She said Lester has put out some invitations to potential Friends, some who are club members and some who are not. Dan Simonds commented that in Rangeley there's a sense of ownership of the trail, even though local citizens might not be directly involved. He reiterated that these people may not all be donors, but may be "bridges" to donors and potential Friends of MATC. Alicia added that friends are like community organizers. Bob Cummings agreed that most of the Friends will be those who like to walk the Trail but don't have time or motivation to take on maintaining.

Talk turned to several events, already in the planning stages, which will provide opportunities to promote awareness to the club and attract potential Friends. Plans are formulating for a celebration on August 14 to mark the 75th anniversary of the completion of the trail. Plans for two Trail Town dedications are also underway.

Bruce asked if this awareness raising process will result in more costs to the club, to which Lester replied that all Trail Crew Center expenses so far have been owners' costs, which, along with the costs of Alicia's recommended measures discussed at the meeting will be recovered through the capital campaign.

Bob Cummings suggested that this should be part of the permanent agenda of the club. Lester commented that we've already made gains for the club by steps we've taken in this process. He asked for a reaffirmation of commitment to the Trail Crew Center project by taking the next step to engage a public relations firm. To that end Bruce Grant placed a motion to engage a public relations firm to conduct an awareness campaign as a step forward on plans for a capital campaign. Craig Dickstein seconded the motion.

Tom Gorrill expressed his concern that there be checkpoints, so that both parties can reassess, reduce or even pull out if necessary. He asked for a monitor to assure that steps taken are successful.

Dave Field said yes, this PR campaign should be an ongoing process for the club and gives us a process to begin to build the club.

To a question regarding the cost of an awareness campaign, Lester estimated \$50,000 over the next 12-18 months. He said Alicia proposes to raise half that sum through grant

writing. Those figures do not include Alicia's fees for her services.

Dan Simonds asked about the committee nature of the organization of the awareness campaign. Lester cited the original base camp committee as a model. He has contacted Tim Fortune and Milt Wright to work with himself in a committee format. Alicia would work with the committee to coordinate and oversee.

To Dick Fecteau's question as to how to determine the desired outcomes, Alicia replied that, since the awareness plan is yet to be developed, it is not possible to definitively establish those outcomes.

Lester urged the need to set the process in motion, then report back after initial meetings and organizing. Tony suggested we reassess after the season and after the events scheduled to date. We can collect data on the steps taken and chart their success. Alicia clarified that these measures are not full time efforts. This will be a process, and, once again, she envisions it taking 12-18 month.

Lester assured the Executive Committee that they will have the opportunity to review the contract before signing.

Dave Field wanted to know what would go into the budget that the membership would have to approve, and suggested setting a mid point of a range for expenses, say \$46,800. Lester proposed adding the phrase "up to \$50,000 to the line on the budget currently designated as "to be allocated" for the public relations campaign. The voice vote of the Executive Committee to approve the original motion to engage a PR firm was unanimous.

Dave Field then placed a motion to appropriate up to \$50,000 for the PR campaign, with 50% offset by grants. That motion was tabled until the Executive Committee decided on the terms for engaging Alicia to continue to work on plans for the capital campaign.

Lester then asked for a motion to engage Alicia Nichols for up to 18 months to oversee and coordinate the MATC awareness campaign and work with a PR firm on planning for a capital campaign. Craig Dickstein placed the motion, seconded by Bruce Grant. The actual contract will have to be approved at a later date, when it has been finalized. Several Executive Committee members reiterated their concerns regarding the terms of the contract, particularly the 30% up front payment, as these are expenses for services and not for materials. Lester explained that Alicia's fees would be billed out of that amount until it is used. He assured that he would bring back the terms of the contract for approval before signing it.

Tony urged setting checks on the progress to coincide with Executive Committee meeting dates.

Tom questioned paying Alicia to write grant applications when Club Coordinator Holly Sheehan has so much experience. Lester explained that this frees Holly to do her own work for the club, but added that Holly will be involved.

Tony questioned the cost of a PR firm, to which Lester replied that it is about \$85 to \$90 per hour.

After considerable discussion, the Executive Committee approved the motion to engage Alicia Nichols to oversee the awareness campaign by unanimous voice vote. Terms of the contract will be determined and will need approval of the Executive Committee.

After this discussion, Dave Field placed a motion, seconded by Don Stack, to allocate funding for up to \$50,000 to engage a PR firm to carry out an awareness campaign. Lester will bring the terms of the contract to the Executive Committee before committing. Tony and Craig Dickstein urged setting reassessing points at each 6 month period.

The Executive Committee approved Dave Field's motion by unanimous voice vote.

Lester said he was satisfied that the resolution to proceed with the PR campaign has been settled. He said he has also taken steps to set the process of establishing a Friends group in motion.

2012 Budget: With the preceding discussions completed, the Executive Committee returned to its consideration of the yearly budget. Dave Field placed a motion, seconded by Bruce Grant to approve the 2012 Operating Budget with the entries added. The vote was unanimous to approve the motion.

Coalition for Recreational Trails Awards: Michelle Moody has suggested to Lester that the club get involved with the Coalition for Recreational Trails Awards offered through the Recreational Trails Program. Holly explained that there are six categories for trail projects that are eligible. Lester made two suggestions for trail projects that have been funded mostly through RTP grants. He said that West Baldpate is the most impressive and has weathered nicely. The Bigelow Firewarden's Trails is more well-known and more recognizable. In either case, Lester has a lot of photos. He asked who could put together an application for the award. Tony Barrett and Holly Sheehan agreed to work on the application. With some discussion of which of the two trails to promote, Bob Cummings placed a motion, seconded by Laura Flight, to nominate the Firewarden's Trail on Bigelow for application for a Coalition for Recreational Trails Award. The Executive Committee voted to approve that motion.

Monson Trail Town Celebration: Ron Dobra reported on plans for the Monson Trail Town dedication. He and Bruce Grant have had two meetings with the town manager and other officials. They have set Saturday, July 21, for an official ribbon cutting. The date has been approved by ATC, and they hope to have representatives from Harpers Ferry in attendance. State and federal political dignitaries have also indicated willingness to participate. Organizers will have a display in the community center in the old school, a hiker cultural panel, hikes, and work trips. The post office wants to offer a commemorative stamp. The planners are still looking for help with a media package. This will be a two day festival in conjunction with the town's annual Summer Fest, so there will be extra people in town to enjoy all the festivities.

National Trails Day Events: MATC will also participate in activities in Monson for National Trails Day on June 2. Michelle Moody has arranged for camping in the field beside the Community Center. Plans have been made for a community potluck dinner on Friday evening, with bluegrass music to follow. There will be more work trips scheduled for the weekend. Michelle has posted an announcement for the American Hiking Society on its web site. Dave Field has planned a corridor monitoring workshop in Blanchard the same weekend.

75th Anniversary of Completion of the AT: Tony Barrett reported on plans for a celebration of the 75th anniversary of the completion of the AT. He said an event at Harpers Ferry is already listed on the ATC web site calendar page, but with no event is listed for Maine. He has had conversations with the new ATC director about attending an event in Maine.

Tony, Laura Flight, Peter Roderick, and Dick Fecteau have formed an Ad Hoc

committee to make plans for the event. They plan to use a different format to the one used for the 50th anniversary. Dave Field had suggested a similar cast of participants as at the 50th celebration. The festivities will take place in Carrabassett Valley and will include a short day hike to a plaque placed on Sugarloaf on the occasion of the 50th anniversary, a longer more challenging hike, and a casual barbecue. Planners want to engage the local community in the celebration. The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust will launch its Crocker Mountain campaign at the same time. The committee will have more details at the annual meeting.

Tony sought the endorsement of the MATC Executive Committee in this endeavor, particularly in the form of \$500 to cover costs of promotional materials. The planners will seek donations to cover the costs of the events themselves.

Tony placed a motion to support the 75th Anniversary Celebration with a \$500 allocation. Dave Field seconded the motion. The Executive Committee approved the motion by voice vote.

100th Anniversary of the Girl Scouts: Tony Barrett also spoke of the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts of America this summer. That organization has planned multiple section hikes and even a thru hike in relay style. There is no specific date; it's a moving event, labeled "The Great Girl Scout Hike" from March to October, going south to north. Tony has heard of no coordinator in Maine for this event. He suggested that MATC should support these plans. Ron Dobra said he has contacts with the Girl Scouts in his area and will take information. Several others made suggestions to seek a member or contact to link between the GSA and MATC.

Rangeley Trail Town Celebration: Dan Simonds reported on plans for the Rangeley Trail Town Celebration on September 15, but he had few details at this point. He will serve as liaison and will relay information on the Monson plans to officials in Rangeley.

Ultra Marathon Runner: Tom Gorrill reported on an ultra marathon runner he met on the trail last fall. The runner wants to know if there's anywhere on the AT in Maine that he can run and if he can use the MATC logo on his clothing as he competes in Colorado. Dave Field pointed out that the Local Management Plan states that we do not encourage running on the AT. As for the clothing logo, attendees expressed concerns for setting a precedent and did not have much support for the idea. The feeling was to wish the runner luck, and let him know that he can wear a club t-shirt if he wants.

End of Trail Festival: Preliminary plans are underway for the End of Trails Festival, in Millinocket, on September 14-16. The festival will include a Hard Core work trip.

LL Bean Camping Weekend: LL Bean is organizing a camping weekend in Freeport May 19 and 20, to promote camping experiences. They have requested MATC participation and would like speakers and a display from the club. Holly reported that we hope to have something, and will try to find club members to participate. As LL Bean has been a strong supporter of MATC and just gave us \$10,000, this would be good public relations for the club.

National Hiking Day Events: Tony Barrett announced that plans are underway for events on September 29 to mark National Hiking Day. Tony recommends MATC participation

to raise awareness to the club and as a venue to solicit "Friends."

Annual Club Coordinator Review: The Executive Committee went into executive session to discuss the annual Club Coordinator review. Lester, as club President prepares an annual review and sends it to the Personnel Committee, which then makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee. Bob Cummings placed a motion, seconded by Dan Simonds, to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee. The Executive Committee voted its approval.

Club Coordinator Update: Club Coordinator Holly Sheehan gave an update on her work. She has submitted applications to LL Bean Grants to Clubs totaling \$3209, to Maine Community Foundation for support of the Horns Pond side trail and to the Quimby Family Foundation to request more funding for the ridge runner and trail projects in the Gulf Hagas area.

She announced that the federal government has blocked further funding from RTP because they had overpaid us in the past. There is a small chance we'll get some back.

Holly has worked on recruiting for the Trail Crew and has filled 24 of 53 slots. The CARE hiring committee has finished its work, securing caretakers and ridge runner for Piazza Rock, Horns Pond and Gulf Hagas. Holly has sent information packets to the new hires and is working on plans for training. She has also set up First Aid and Wilderness First Aid training programs to use grant money received last year.

Options for the MAINEtainer: Elsa Sanborn spoke of options for distributing the MAINEtainer newsletter, in particular an automated service for applying mailing labels. Bob Cummings said he will contact a firm in Scarborough with which he has worked, although he expressed that he doesn't mind applying labels manually.

Bob Cummings noted a need to modify the schedule for the MAINEtainer. He placed a motion, seconded by Elsa Sanborn, to amend the Local Management Plan to publish the club newsletter in March, June, August, October and January. The Executive Committee voted to approve the change.

Search for Membership Secretary: The club is looking for a Membership Secretary as a result of the changes made in the Development Committee charge. Lester has contacted one person and is waiting for a reply.

Volunteer Recognition: As Peter Roderick was not present at the meeting, Don Stack reported on volunteer recognition. The deadline for making nominations for the Walter D. Greene Award was March 15. The award will be presented at the annual meeting,

Winter Gathering: Lester spoke of the Maintainer Gathering and Winter Social on the previous Saturday. The Maintainer workshop was well attended, but fewer people came for the Winter Social. He suggested that we might combine the two events by offering a pot luck luncheon for general membership combined with a maintainer session. The question was raised as to whether we should offer a corridor monitor gathering. Dave Field said it is not worth doing two separate events, but he did agree that it is worthwhile to highlight best practices.

Overseer Slide Show at the Annual Meeting: Lester spoke of the Overseer slide show at the annual meeting. Several members of the Executive Committee have expressed their opinion that the slide show takes too much time, which could be better spent in meetings with District Overseers. Lester said the meeting agenda calls for 1 ½ hours for the presentation.

Bob Cummings noted that some people come just for slide show and he emphasized the need to recognize the maintainers individually. Tom Gorrill suggested a list of maintainers by district in the club newsletter and / or asking Dave Theoharides to put a listing on the web site.

Craig Dickstein said he favored having Overseer reports, but suggested a change in the format of the slide show and the timing of the display of the photos.

Ron Dobra said the District Overseers had discussed the subject at their meeting. He recommended that overseers distribute statistics on paper. He also suggested scheduling district meetings earlier in the day as many attendees leave early after a long day of business. Dave Field mentioned having maintainers meet with overseers at lunch, and Craig mentioned a break out session by overseer district. Another idea was to arrange the schedule for the Maintainer Gathering to include meetings by district.

Dave Field said slides and maintainer names can be run in 30 minutes, and that timing is up to the overseer. He said he can set a timer to pass through the slides more quickly or could play a slide show early in the morning, as attendees are gathering for the day. Other Executive Committee members agreed that the slide show can be done more quickly, giving each overseer 10 minutes to highlight the year's events.

Given the long discussions earlier in the meeting, District Overseers did not report.

Orbeton and Pioneer Trails Proposals: Dave Field distributed information on the Orbeton Stream Trail, which has been accepted, and on a proposal for a new Pioneer Trail as a spur trail up Saddleback. This development came as a result of considerations of the Orbeton Trail in discussions over the Forest Legacy. It will require a short connector trail over Linkletter land. Dave asked for endorsement of that plan. To that end, Bob Cummings placed a motion, seconded by Elsa Sanborn, to set in motion plans for a Pioneer Trail over Saddleback with an AT connector over Linkletter land. Dave Field noted that MATC will build and maintain this trail. He said he will attend a meeting of stakeholders on March 16 in Farmington. The Executive Committee voted unanimously to accept the proposal.

Accessible Facilities: As Steve Clark was unable to attend the meeting, the discussion of Accessible Facilities on the Trail in Maine was postponed.

With all business concluded, Elsa Sanborn placed a motion, seconded by Bruce Grant, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Clain
Recording Secretary