

Maine Appalachian Trail Club
May 1, 2015
University of Maine at Augusta

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Directors, Dennis Andrews, Tony Barrett, Bob Cummings, Laura Flight, Bruce Grant, Sherri Langlais, Dan Simonds, Don Stack; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Craig Dickstein, Ron Dobra, Tom Gorrill, Dick Fecteau; Member, Tom Carr; VISTA Volunteer, Tom Sobol; Guest, Rex Turner.

Absent: Vice President, Mike Ewing; Corresponding Secretary, Doug Dolan; District Overseer, Rick Ste. Croix.

President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. He introduced guest Rex Turner, Recreation Planner with the Bureau of Parks and Lands.

Secretary's Report: Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report for the March 6 meeting. Hearing no calls for corrections, Tony Barrett placed a motion, seconded by Sherri Langlais, to accept the minutes. The Executive Committee voted its approval.

Treasurer's Report: Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. She noted very little activity in April, with net income of \$1065. The club paid for renderings for the Trail Center, which were displayed at the Annual Meeting. It paid \$2600 for insurance for the Forks property and a few other small items.

In an update, Elsa reported that envelopes with records for capital campaign contributions and pledges were distributed to Executive Committee members. Nine members have paid pledges in full.

On another matter, Elsa reported that the Membership Committee wants to make changes the club's membership cards. It has updated language and corrected the club address to Augusta. It offered three choices for a slogan on a green band, and sought Executive Committee input. The cards will be plastic and members will receive a sticker for the year on renewal. Dave Field placed a motion, seconded by Craig Dickstein, to accept the committee's recommendation for the membership card design. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

The Executive Committee accepted the Treasurer's Report.

Bureau of Parks and Lands Proposal: The Bureau of Public Lands has been working with a committee in Greenville to create a new trail system that that would intersect with the AT. Rex Turner presented the concept and explained that BPL has monies available to create new trails with deadlines in 2016 to locate trails, and in 2018 to complete construction. One proposal is for a Blue Ridge Trail from Rum Pond, outside Greenville, along a ridge and connecting to the AMC network paralleling the AT. No field work has been done to date, and all is concept at this point. The proposal is for

about a 30 mile loop suitable for a multi-night backpacking opportunity. It will require several very narrow easements. BPL is looking for input as to how will such a trail network will be viewed by the AT hiking community, and for input as to whether to build a five mile connector to the AT. If approved, such a connector would establish communications links. At this point, BPL is simply trying to determine whether to invest time and money into continuing with plans.

Bruce Grant asked about the biking aspect, and whether there would be a connection to the proposed biking trail from Baxter through the Nahmakanta parcel. Rex explained that there is that possibility, but that any biking trails on the Blue Ridge would be high degree of difficulty, challenging and technical. To Bruce's concern that bikes would get onto the AT, Rex responded that they won't encourage biking further south than KI Road.

Ron Dobra asked if this proposed trail will bring traffic for AMC and if they are thinking of using active logging roads. Rex responded that they'll want to keep people off the roads, and give them a good experience, with good viewpoints. They are more likely to cut tread and create a constructed trail.

Lester Kenway signaled comments from AT Resources Director Claire Polfus. BPL might not have to avoid AT lands because of the NEPA process, and she recommends that MATC representatives proof this proposal on the ground.

Rex further explained that there are very few backpacking loops, trails where hikers can start and stop at the same trail head, available in Maine. This proposal tries to establish such an opportunity, and is a cost effective possibility. He appreciates AT opinions and emphasis on protecting the Appalachian Trail. He noted that such a loop may increase numbers and put pressure on the Trail, and that there are still question about potential campsites, which are planned on some of the ponds in the 50 acre parcel.

Ron Dobra offered support for the idea of more opportunities for long distance hiking in Maine. He placed a motion that MATC encourage Rex Turner and BPL to continue with planning, do more investigating and, if they field flag a route that they invite MATC to participate and evaluate. Dick Fecteau seconded the motion.

Craig Dickstein suggested that Rex return in September for the next Executive Committee meeting with a plan on the ground. Rex invited club representatives to investigate on the ground, coordinating site visits.

By voice vote the Executive Committee approved the motion.

ATC Report: Claire Polfus sent a written ATC update. Tom Sobol explained that Claire and ATC representatives, with input from Paul and Jamie Renaud, have been working with Baxter State Park to address concerns about hiker behavior. They have created a flier outlining guidelines and emphasizing Baxter State Park restrictions. The flier includes BSP and ATC logos, and designers wanted to include the MATC logo on the bottom to show coordination and support. They also wanted input on where to place fliers.

Ron Dobra placed a motion to allow the MATC logo on the BSP / ATC flier. Dave Field seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted its approval.

Dave Field recommended placing the flier in all the hiker hostels along the trail in Maine and on official kiosks, such as the one at Gulf Hagas. Dick Fecteau noted that there are postings of Baxter State Park rules at campsites, but that they need to be updated. Craig Dickstein recommended laminated copies of the flier be posted at all campsites, road crossings, at the Kennebec ferry crossing, and on all official kiosks. No vote was necessary.

Tom will mail laminated copies to overseers and will provide them to CARE employees at their training.

Claire asked if anyone was interested in a GIS workshop, to learn to use open source mapping software. Dave Field, Bruce Grant, Ron Dobra, Tom Carr, Dan Simonds, and Craig Dickstein expressed interest.

Biennial Committee Update: Sherri Langlais and Tony Barrett presented in update on plans for the Biennial Conference, in 2017. The steering committee was in a holding mode, waiting for e-mail with a logo design. They hope to have that logo in place so they can take it to the Winchester biennial this summer. The committee will be looking for information from the 2015 Biennial survey to assist with planning for the 2017 Biennial. The Steering Committee is still in need of a "lead person" for the Promotions sub-committee and possible for the Children's sub-committee.

Tom Sobol reported that he attended a meeting in Monson for the AT Trail Towns and that they are planning to put together promotional materials for their three communities to display at Winchester.

Wind Power – LD 911: Tony Barrett reported that the Wind committee met on April 7, and organized testimony for the April 22 public hearing on the proposed legislative initiative, LD 911. Four MATC members attended the hearing and testified. They felt that they had good support from the committee. The wind industry is working on their opposition. Proponents of the bill met with the DEP on Thursday and planned another work session the following week. Tom Winsor, a former MATC Vice President, is sponsor of the bill, which is very helpful to MATC's position. Susan Tompkins is prepared to inform the MATC membership of work sessions and to solicit input and participation, as well as encouraging members to contact legislators. The next work session is scheduled for May 7.

Lester commented that testimony at the recent hearing was better organized, more coordinated and focused than it was last year when MATC presented a bill.

Bruce Grant suggested that MATC contact the Maine Tourism Council and trail guides to ask them to become involved.

As the agenda turned to committee updates, Lester commented that sending reports in advance saves time and provides a better quality report than an oral presentation at the meeting.

CARE Committee: Dan Simonds, reporting for the CARE Committee, noted that scheduling for the three caretakers is now synchronized. Audrey Laffely, a former Gulf Hags ridge runner, is the new site supervisor for the Horns Pond position.

Holly Sheehan invited anyone to Bigelow Lodge on May 17 for pot luck lunch and to meet caretakers.

Tom Gorrill reported that LL Bean contributed another \$1400 worth of equipment. Holly added that LL Bean also gives \$10,000 to CARE and to Grants to Clubs, which support several Trail Crew necessities.

Sherri Langlais suggested positive publicity and thank you's for contributions; Lester noted that the club has publicized names of donors.

Holly announced a camping weekend on May 16- 17 organized by LL Bean and for which they asked MATC participation.

Maine Trail Center: Lester spoke on the Maine Trail Center progress. A Capital Campaign Committee is forming and includes Lester Kenway as chairman, Elsa Sanborn, Mike Ewing, Sherri Langlais, and Dave Field as honorary campaign chairman. They hope to finish out the committee by mid-May.

Lester spoke on a request he received for a written proposal regarding a donation to the Capital Campaign. Dave Field placed a motion, seconded by Bob Cummings, to move to Executive Session to discuss the proposal. The Executive Committee approved the motion.

With discussion concluded, Tom Gorrill placed a motion, seconded by Bruce Grant, to end the Executive Session. The motion passed.

Club Coordinator Update: Club Coordinator Holly Sheehan commented on her report. She has wrapped up grant application work for the season and has been working on filling Trail Crew volunteer slots.

Ron Dobra asked if MATC will move to asking for grant monies for construction of privies. Holly explained that there have been several grant requests for small projects, with requests for financing several small projects bundled together; some donors like the bundling strategy, which has proved to be very helpful.

Term Limits Discussion: Tony Barrett and Lester Kenway commented on the proposal for term limits, which is similar to the ATC board guidelines. Tony asked to defer the discussion to November, as it's not so time sensitive as planning for this season in the field. Lester recommended that any term limits include an exemption clause for people who have special skills and knowledge.

Ron Dobra placed a motion, seconded by Elsa Sanborn, to table discussion of term limits until the October 30 meeting. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Grafton Loop Trail agreement with Mahoosuc Land Trust: Speaking on the Grafton Loop Trail, Lester and Tom Gorrill reported that they reviewed the agreement with Jim Mitchell, from Mahoosuc Land Trust. Lester questions wording, as

there are some sections of this trail that are in very poor condition. Tom Gorrill noted that MATC is doing a trail assessment this summer, and perhaps should wait until after that is done before making any decisions. Dave Field clarified that MATC does not maintain side trails to the standard of white blazed trails.

Lester questioned several of the items in the proposal, in particular those relating to insurance. Paragraph 8 refers to automobile insurance; MATC doesn't have auto insurance as it doesn't own vehicles. Lester is considering retaining an attorney because the matter is so complex.

Tom further clarified that the Mahoosuc Land Trust parcel is only a small portion of the Grafton Loop Trail, some of which goes over privately owned lands. If MATC has an agreement, it should be similar for each of the landowners. Some landowner agreements have lapsed, and some lands have been sold.

Dave Field questioned if this trail is worth the effort for the use it gets, to which Tom replied that several groups at a joint meeting said they do use the trail a lot. Bruce questioned whether this is still a viable trail if MATC doesn't have agreements from all the landowners. Lester explained that there was a Grafton Loop coalition, and AMC and MATC agreed to maintain equal sections and haven't had contact since.

Overseer of Lands Report: Dave Field announced that his report as Overseer of Lands is now posted on the club web site. He scheduled a corridor monitor workshop on June 6 at Gulf Hagas. All agreements for the Blueberry pickers Trail are in place except permission from ATC, and he can't submit the application to the Land Use Commission until ATC signs off.

Overseer Reports:

Baldpate District: Tom Gorrill, reporting on the Baldpate district, spoke of a meeting of the stakeholders in the Grafton Loop Trail. MATC agreed to do trail a assessment this summer and Tom and Claire will prepare an estimate of the cost to bring the trail to good condition.

One maintainer in the district had already been out and reported an average year.

Dirigo High School was scheduled to help the weekend after Memorial Day. They planned an overnight trip, and one or two projects.

Bates College planned to go out soon and will organize an alumni weekend. Holly reported that a Bates student will work with the Trail Crew this summer.

The Youth Trail Stewardship, sponsored by ATC, will experience the AT from Route 26 to West Baldpate.

Kennebec District: Two of Craig Dickstein's Kennebec District maintainers are thru hiking this year, and others are covering those sections. Pine Island Camps will maintain the Pierce Pond campsite. Tom Carr offered to mentor for that group.

Craig filled his last open section; the Waterville High School Outdoor Club will take on the section that Dana Thurston has maintained for several years, until his recent retirement.

Kennebec District: Craig has also received his first work trip report. The beavers are back at Doughty Pond and water is up to two feet below the decking on the bog boardwalk.

Craig had nothing to report on Longley property. He toured the property with the insurance agent on the day of this meeting.

White Cap District: Ron Dobra reported six vacancies in the White Cap District. He released one maintainer, and broke the section up. He has some interested parties. The Trail Crew will work on two six-week projects in the district.

Maintainer Agreement Wording: Dick Welsh has brought attention to the wording of the maintainer agreement. According to club by-laws, all maintainers must be club members, but that requirement is not stated in the contract. Dick has proposed wording to be added to the agreement that specifies the membership requirement.

Ron Dobra placed a motion that the Executive Committee accept the wording specifying that all maintaining volunteers must be MATC members. Dave Field asked to add the same wording to Corridor Monitor, Campsite Maintainer, and Register Box Monitors agreements. Dave seconded the motion with the additions.

Dave pointed out that liability to ATC is dependent on volunteers being members of the club. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Dick Welsh is able to track membership information in the data base on which he has been working.

Dave Field will change the wording in the LMP for any agreements from this point forward.

Katahdin District: As Rick Ste. Croix was not in attendance, there was no report from the Katahdin District. Holly Sheehan announced that Grants to Clubs monies have been received for bog bridging and privies in that district.

MAINEtainer: Bob Cummings announced a June 15 deadline for articles for the summer edition of the MAINEtainer.

Maine Trail Crew: The Trail Crew Committee announced that all staff, trail crew leaders, assistant leaders, and the crew coordinator, have been selected. Two interns have also been selected. Lester announced opening "The Island" base camp on May 15 and 16.

Annual Meeting Review: In a review of the Annual Meeting, comments included the following: the venue was awesome; the dual projection screens were helpful; the space was small and the audience was cramped (MATC was originally scheduled for the theater, which wasn't equipped for the electronics the club needed); facilities for break out workshops were excellent; afternoon sessions had very little time to present; the early date was better for MATC, but conflicted with the annual Friends of Baxter meeting.

Campsite Committee Report: Laura Flight commented on the Campsite Committee report. She sent a list of projects, but the club is still waiting for LUPC approval. Laura will have to schedule projects once approval is secured.

Request for Recognition: MATC has received a request from Mike Davis for recognition at each meeting for the Geraldine Largay search. Lester explained that ATC has a policy not to memorialize people lost on the trail and MATC has observed the same policy.

Bruce Grant placed a motion, seconded by Bob Cummings, to permanently table this suggestion. The Executive Committee approved the motion, with two members on record as opposed.

Lester will contact Mike and explain the policy and invite him to contribute to a memorial fund for Maine Trail Center, which will include a recognition wall.

Proposed Change to Bylaws: The Membership Committee proposed a change to club by-laws that reflects acceptance of renewal of membership on a quarterly basis. The current wording is: "Dues shall be assessed on a yearly basis as of April 1 of each year. New members who join between October 1 and March 31 shall be given membership at no additional cost for the next fiscal year." The Membership Committee proposes to change wording as follows: "Dues shall be assessed on a yearly basis as of the first day of each quarter. New members who join shall be given membership for one year from the end of the quarter in which they joined."

Ron Dobra placed a motion, seconded by Dave Field, to accept the wording as written. Fifteen of the nineteen Executive Committee members in attendance voted to approve the motion.

Don Stack announced an article in the Gorham Times reporting on the MATC donation of guidebooks to Gorham High School.

With all business concluded, Elsa Sanborn placed a motion, seconded by Don Stack, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Clain
Recording Secretary