

MATC Executive Committee Meeting
May 4, 2012
UMA

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice President, Tony Barrett; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Corresponding Secretary, Dick Doucette; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Directors, Dennis Andrews, Rebecca Clark, Bob Cummings, Craig Dickstein, Bruce Grant; District Overseers, Ron Dobra, Tom Gorrill, Peter Roderick; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; Guidebook Editor and Historian, Ray Ronan; Fundraising Counsel, Alicia Nichols.

Absent: Directors, Laura Flight, Dan Simonds, Don Stack; District Overseers, Dick Fecteau, Rick Ste. Croix.

President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Secretary's Report: Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report for the March 2 meeting. Elsa Sanborn noted the need for a correction on page 2 to clarify that complimentary club memberships are give for a one year term. Laura Flight pointed out a typing error on page 3 (ND to and). Tony Barrett referred to two statements regarding a National Hiking Day that should be designated National Family Hiking Day.

Craig Dickstein placed a motion, seconded by Elsa Sanborn, to accept the March 2 Secretary's Report with the corrections. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. She noted few changes since the last meeting. She referred to the discussion of the question of life memberships at the last meeting. She has looked through past financial statements to collect information on that question.

Elsa explained that prepaid expenses are for rent of the current base camp, some payments for meeting rooms and Alicia's fees for fund raising counsel. She emphasized that capital campaign fund raising will pay for fees for services for the base camp proposal. She noted income that included support from the Waterman Fund.

Bruce Grant placed a motion, seconded by Dave Field, to accept the Treasurer's Report. By voice vote the Executive Committee approved the motion.

Life Memberships: Elsa referred to a study of life memberships she compiled and distributed. She explained that, after analyzing membership date, she observed that life members are less likely to continue to make financial contributions to the club. She also explained that life membership monies have historically been added to the Stewardship Fund, the principal and interest from which cannot be used for club expenses and business.

Elsa placed a motion to change life member procedure to allow interest from life memberships to be used as needed while keeping the life member fee in the Stewardship Fund. Tony Barrett seconded the motion.

Elsa explained that membership costs the club \$5-10 per year for communications and services to those members. She also clarified that the Stewardship Fund can only be used for

emergency expenses that fit the club's mission.

Elsa reiterated that we don't need to take money from the Stewardship Fund, but we may at some time in the future and there should be a provision to do so. She said that the purpose of this discussion is to leave a written record.

Dennis Andrews reminded that we have borrowed from the Stewardship Fund in the past and then have repaid the borrowed monies.

Elsa questioned designating interest to a particular item; Bruce said he thought it might help with discussions and tracking of that fund in the future.

Craig Dickstein asked if the Finance Committee should be charged with developing a clear definition of uses of funds if it is not in the Local Management Plan. Elsa says it may be in the management plan.

(This matter was not settled by vote at this meeting.)

Elsa referred again to her study of the issue of life membership and the record of contributions before and after becoming a life member. Tony Barrett favored raising life membership to \$1000. The Finance Committee recommended raising the fee to \$500. Bob Cummings calculated that a \$1000 Life Membership would provide about \$7 a year, which would pay for services, such as the newsletter; he supports the \$1000 proposal.

Elsa observed that regular members are supporting life members and helping to pay personnel salary.

Dave Field said he prefers \$500 for a life membership. He advised that we not make decisions based on current interest rates, which are very low.

Bruce Grant asked how other organizations deal with family life membership. Elsa said we don't have a discounted family life membership, but we do have a discounted life membership for long-term members.

Elsa placed a motion to increase the life membership fee to \$500 and to eliminate the discounted figure effective immediately. Craig Dickstein seconded the motion.

Bruce suggested we should also discuss the regular membership fee as this just addresses life membership.

Elsa's motion carried. Tony Barrett abstained from voting as he thinks the fee should be higher.

The consensus of the Executive Committee was to suspend discussion of regular membership fees.

Maine Trail Center / PR Firm: Alicia Nichols distributed an update of her activities, with the time devoted to each, in the preparations for the Maine Trail Center. A great deal of her time has been spent on the search for a firm to help with the PR campaign. She met with a PR search committee, composed of Lester Kenway, Tim Fortune, and Milt Wright, to review RFP's (Request for Proposal) and participated in interviews with three firms. She worked closely with Lester to develop a selection matrix, and then visited the companies to conduct interviews. They considered the pros and cons of each company's proposal, which all had good points to recommend their work. They agreed on one firm, Vreeland Marketing and Design, based in Yarmouth. Theirs was also the company that had the most accurate perception of who we are, and they set the focus on real people, which Alicia had recommended. Alicia noted that the company had in its office a display of photos taken from the Trail when she and Lester arrived. All references given were enthusiastic about them and their work.

Vreeland said they were willing to make improvements to the club web site, not a complete makeover; Webmaster Dave Theoharides agreed with their suggestions and welcomed help. Lester explained that Dave will continue to keep the web site updated; this company will revise and update the current format and navigation system within the web site but will not replace Dave. Elsa added that the current web site is to serve the club's membership and that changes will be to attract people who don't know us and will help them get to know MATC. The company will publicize us not only in Maine but nationally.

Ron Dobra asked how they will interface with club announcements regarding upcoming events. Lester said they will incorporate whatever we give them; we'll give them the information and they'll prepare the press releases and make the appropriate contacts. Lester explained that the newly created Friends group will be the principal contact between MATC and the PR company and will support and guide its work. The Friends Committee, composed of Lester, Alicia, Chris Dorion, Gordon Clark, Dan Simonds and Llyod Griscom, is now in place, though it hasn't met yet. He reiterated that he'd like to see more people on the Friends Committee, hoping for about a dozen members. Ron Dobra and Ray Ronan expressed interest in joining the Friends Committee. Bob Cummings stressed that a Friends Committee should be aware of the necessity of talking to the broad public and not just to our own membership. He added that it's something we've always needed and must continue to develop.

Alicia emphasized that the 12-18 month time frame she has cited is for the preparation for capital campaign and that this is only a part of that.

Craig Dickstein asked about billing and if there are any metrics for success, to which Lester replied that it's based on time and services and includes a monthly report.

Tony asked how the PR firm will differentiate between ATC and other organizations and MATC, to which Lester replied that the company has assured him they can do just that. They plan to use the AT as background and will focus on the role this club plays and the work it does. Alicia also assured that this company will focus on the work of this group.

Bruce Grant said he has two CD copies of the National Geographic film on the AT to present at a public event. The film depicts the entire length of the AT and lasts about an hour.

Bruce Grant placed a motion to accept Vreeland Marketing and Design as the club's Public Relations consultant according to the contract letter they submitted. Bob Cummings seconded the motion but cautioned the need to check that the cited figures include all expenses. The motion passed by voice vote.

Bruce Grant suggested that it would be advantageous to the club to identify jobs that need to be done and find someone to take them on; this preparation would help to expedite the PR campaign.

Special Events 2012: Several members reported on upcoming events.

Bruce Grant reported on the Monson Trail Days celebration on June 2. Michelle and Stan Moody have organized the celebration, which lasts for the whole weekend, and includes trail work and a boundary monitor workshop. The event will get the MATC name out and will provide good publicity in Monson.

Monson's Trail Town celebration is July 21, in conjunction with the town's Summer Festival. It includes a formal dedication on Saturday, followed by a reception with AT and local dignitaries. The Summer Fest offers music and fireworks on Saturday. On Sunday there will be hiking opportunities, and organizers hope to get local guide services involved. Bruce

emphasized the need to make contact between MATC and Monson town organizers (Janet Sawyer and Julie Anderson) and Vreeland.

Tony Barrett reported on plans for the 75th anniversary of the completion of the AT. He said there was a meeting on May 3 in Carrabassett. The town has endorsed the event and promised funding. Community members have stepped up and UMF will promote it as well. Maine Huts and Trails will also tie in. Tony has asked that banners and visuals for that event will be ready early to use for other events this summer. He said several ATC officials have indicated they'll attend.

Bob Cummings suggested we put out extra copies of the MAINEtainer at these events to promote the club. He announced deadlines for the newsletter for May 11 and one in August.

As Dan Simonds was not in attendance, there was no update on plans for the Rangeley Trail Town dedication.

Tony had no further information on the Girl Scouts' plans for their 100th anniversary celebration.

LL Bean planned its Outdoor Experience for May 19.

Club Coordinator Update: Club Coordinator Holly Sheehan distributed an update of her activities on behalf of the club. She still hadn't heard from the application for the Coalition for Recreational Trails Award. She reported support from Olympia Snowe for that application.

Poland Spring will give the club \$5000 for the caretaker / ridge runner program. Holly has also submitted proposals for grants from the Fields Pond Foundation and the Quimby Family Foundation.

New Membership Secretary: Lester announced that Melanie Coombs, who was present at the Annual Meeting, will serve as Membership Secretary.

Annual Meeting Review: Lester asked for comments regarding the format of the Annual Meeting. Many attendees said it was better. They commented in particular that having maintainer meetings earlier was beneficial, but that they could have been done in less time. Bruce Grant commented that some of what we used to do in overseer groups at the Annual Meeting now is done at the maintainer gathering in February.

Lester noted that it's difficult switching between laptop formats. Craig suggested using one computer and one operator for the entire day to facilitate transitions.

Lester noted that there were no guests at the meeting and emphasized that we need to send out press releases in advance to publicize the event to the general public. He suggested we set a goal to publicize those annual meetings.

Tom Gorrill and Lester both advised that we have to revise the format of the meeting to make it more interesting. Lester suggested that a lot of the reports could be published in the MAINEtainer, leaving more time for the open forum.

Dave Field reminded that the format used to be an Executive Committee meeting in the morning, with presentations in the afternoon and a prominent speaker in the evening. He suggested that we should shift all maintainer issues to the February gathering, then look for presenters on topics focused on outdoor interests for the Annual Meeting. He added that the reports have to be given, but not necessarily given orally.

Elsa Sanborn remarked that, for some members, the annual meeting is the only time they hear information about the Trail and club events; while Executive Committee members

have heard it all, others members haven't. On that note, Craig Dickstein said his neighbor was new at the meeting and was impressed.

Accessible Facilities: The topic of accessible facilities was tabled to a later date, as Steve Clark and Laura Flight, who have been researching the subject, were not present.

Overseer Reports: Overseers present gave information on their districts.

Ron Dobra reported two openings in the White Cap District. He said he had a bog bridging project on May 26 on Fourth Mountain.

Bruce Grant mentioned the East West Corridor plans. He said that road will cross the Trail, likely at Highway 15, in Monson. A meeting with Piscataquis County Commissioners would take place on May 15, and a public meeting on May 31 at Foxcroft Academy. This is a public private joint venture and is co-aligned with a pipeline.

Peter Roderick and Craig Dickstein are going to walk part of the Kennebec District. They have scheduled a couple bog bridging projects.

Lester announced that the club has a Trimble (GPS) unit on loan from ATC and asked that overseers take it with them for notes when they go out to walk. He reminded that ATC requires an assessment of the entire trail every five years; we're at three years. As ATC doesn't have staff to help, they ask that anyone hiking help out. Lester reminded that no assessment would mean no funding.

Dave Field scheduled a Corridor Monitor workshop on June 2 in Blanchard and another on June 9 on Pleasant Pond Mountain in Caratunk. He announced a Natural Heritage Monitoring Workshop on July 28 to train for collecting information on endangered species. He also signaled an August 10-12 corridor Monitor workshop and structure demolition in Elliotsville. (This meeting has since been canceled.)

He said the National Hiking Society would be in the Rangeley area to work on boundary clearing in September. He said there has been discussion of having the Maine Trail Crew work a week longer to do boundary clearing work and that there is funding available.

Dave also announced that the AMC has expressed some interest in working with MATC on contiguous boundaries in the Katahdin Iron Works area.

Tom Gorrill reported that there are no openings in the Baldpate District. Dirigo High School planned to do two trips with Tom, to replace the roof panels on the lean-to at Sabbathday Pond and on a bog bridging project the first weekend in June.

Bob Cummings announced that the newsletter deadline would be May 11. The issue would focus on the Monson effort and outreach to others.

Other: Bruce Grant asked if the club is sending anyone to the President's meeting in August. Most of the members who usually attend are busy.

Craig Dickstein said he met with a reporter from Backpacker Magazine on a section of trail near Moxie Pond. Look for the article in a future issue.

Craig also announced a work trip in the Kennebec District, on May 26, to make repairs to the Bald Mountain lean-to roof.

Ron Dobra said the Portland Press Herald is doing an article on the Monson events.

Alicia Nichols asked how many Executive Committee members are on Facebook and several indicated that they are.

Tony Barrett and Dick Doucette commented on the meeting minutes, which are detailed and helpful. Dick said he had a good understanding of discussions and decisions at the last meeting, which he was unable to attend.

Maine Huts and Trails wants to put a ski trail parallel to the Carrabasset River and then to their hut on land owned by Sugarloaf. MATC will have to make a recommendation to have their mechanized groomer use the right-of-way for the Caribou Valley Road. Lester will meet with them on June 13.

With all business completed, Elsa Sanborn placed a motion, seconded by Dick Doucette, to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Clain
Recording Secretary