

Maine Appalachian Trail Club  
May 5, 2017  
Viles Arboretum, Augusta

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice President, Tom Gorrill; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Corresponding Secretary, Doug Dolan; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Directors, Tony Barrett, Bill Brooke, Tom Carr, Laura Flight, Audrey Laffely, Irene Syphers, Dick Welsh; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Craig Dickstein, Rick Ste. Croix; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; ATC Regional Resources Director, Claire Polfus; Members, Dick Doucette, Pam Wentworth

Absent: Director, Bruce Grant; District Overseers, Ron Dobra, Mike Ewing, Dick Fecteau

President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 6:58.

**Recording Secretary's Report:**Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report for the March 3 meeting. Elsa Sanborn noted a couple of spelling errors, but nothing substantive.

Dave Field clarified that he changed Corridor Monitor assignments to make them shorter, not to correspond with maintainer assignments.

Elsa Sanborn placed a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Craig Dickstein seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted to approve the minutes.

**Treasurer's Report:**Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. As only a month had elapsed since the annual meeting, there was not much activity.

Tony Barrett asked about the entry for sales of guidebooks, which was a significant amount. Elsa explained that the club gets a check every quarter from ATC, which is what was reported. In addition, Phil Pepin bought several guidebooks, which is a regular occurrence.

Lester Kenway accepted the report on behalf of the Executive Committee.

**Corresponding Secretary's Report:**Doug Dolan reported that the only correspondence has been inquiries about a new posting for a ridge runner, which has now been filled. Lester said the Trail Crew Coordinator had withdrawn and asked that Doug keep this in mind when checking correspondence. That position involves recruiting volunteers and providing food for crews, both at base camp and to take to the work site.

**Welcome New Directors:**Lester welcomed new directors, Tom Carr, Bill Brooke, and Irene Syphers to the Executive Committee.

**ATC Report:**Claire Polfus added to the written report she sent for ATC and the Baxter State Park initiative.

ATC hired two employees, for the Monson Visitor Center, Wendy Weiger and returning Kim Rosenbaum. The facility is relocating to the Monson Historical Society, and planned to move in on June 1. Claire and the Monson staff planned to host a luncheon on June 6 for agency partners.

Alison Scheiderer is concentrating on hiring two boundary technicians for summer work in Maine.

ATC hired Irene Syphers as Maine Field Coordinator. Her projects are listed in order of priority.

AT has launched its Camp registration website. It will send e-mail to ElyshaDyer, who is the group registration contact for the CARE Committee, when a group registers. Elysha will then inform the ridge runner / caretaker at the designated site. Claire, Elysha and Holly made a presentation to camp groups in Portland. Because of growing use, many Maine camping sites have placed stricter regulations on groups, so groups are more willing to work with ATC / MATC representatives.

Claire reported briefly on the Privy Innovation Team. She explained that hiker numbers up 20% so far this season. She announced that ATC is offering a series of webinars to share best practices. Claire is also working to make Maine Trail Crew projects happen.

Claire explained the Programmatic Categorical Exemption, which will directly impact our trail maintainers and stewards. It serves as NEPA compliance for cyclic maintenance tasks, and eliminates the need for a lengthy review and documentation. It is only applicable to Park Service lands.

On the topic of side trail, Claire explained that none have been authorized in the last year; NPS hasn't reviewed them, so none have been built. This includes Rex Turner's Blue Ridge Trail, which is in the queue.

Claire announced significant changes in senior leadership at ATC, as Senior Director of Membership and Development, Royce Gibson, left in April, and ATC President and CEO, Ron Tipton, recently announced his retirement.

**Baxter State Park Update:** Baxter State Park has made some changes to the registration system it instituted last year. Hikers may no longer registering for permits at the Monson Visitor Center; the Visitor Center is only for information and education. If hiker numbers approach the limit set by Baxter State Park for a yearly cap, the park will inform ATC and Visitor Center staff daily. MATC and ATC representatives have concerns about the permit system.

Claire has been discussing with The Nature Conservancy and other agency partners concerns regarding hiker behavior, in particular unauthorized camping in the Hundred Mile Wilderness. They have devised some possible steps and solutions. They are evaluating all camping sites on that section, and are investigating easements and regulations, and whether TNC rules or NPS rules apply.

**Kennebec Ferry Funding Proposal:** Claire also spoke to an alternative funding proposal for the Kennebec River Crossing, given the increases in expenses. The proposal, outlined in information sent to Executive Committee members, is to establish

a pay per hiker model; hikers would buy a permit on-line, or would receive a bill after use of the service. This system is similar to fees for Green and White Mountains campsites. ATC has a policy against recreational fees, but this is minimal and it's for a specific service. Lester is concerned about PR and the reputation of MATC if they start asking for payments for facilities on the Trail. Dave Field explained that the original Kennebec ferry was for a \$10 fee. He reminded that Myron Avery never designed the trail to ford the Kennebec.

Craig Dickstein recommended a survey to gauge hiker opinions, to be distributed by ridge runners and Visitor Center staff. One suggestion was to recommend donations, and Claire may include this in the survey. An immediate objection to a donation box was the protocol against leaving money on the Trail. Craig is concerned for compliance, especially when there is no reliable means to enforce the policy.

Craig suggested that Claire check with ATC legal before creating a survey. He reminded that ATC has HR (human resources) personnel funding in its budget, and suggested that ATC look at its HR budget to see if there's funding there, calling the ferry operation a personnel position. Craig is also concerned that hikers who won't pay will ford, which is dangerous. This raises the question of liability, in particular in dangerous areas. Claire assures this is one of two priorities with the new NPS superintendent.

**Wind Power and Power Lines Committee Report:** Tony Barrett reported the latest developments for the Wind Power and Power Lines Committee. Legislative bill LD 901, our effort to change scenic impact evaluation guidelines, was between public hearings at time of the MATC annual meeting. More landowners opposed this bill, while in the past it was the wind power developers that mounted opposition. In this case, lobbyists amended the bill to reflect their own wishes, and the new bill passed 7-3. The consensus of MATC's Wind Power Committee is that we withdraw the bill as it no longer reflects the intent and the title of the original bill.

MATC has spent six years trying to bring a successful bill to the legislature to protect the scenic view shed of the AT. Tony, on behalf of the committee (Tom Carr, Laura Flight, Audrey Laffely, Lester Kenway, Bill Plouffe, Bill Millis and Tony Barrett) agreed that we may not have gotten the results we sought, but we've raised awareness of the importance of natural aesthetics and scenic degradation caused by poorly-sited projects.

Lester thanked the Wind Power Committee for its efforts.

**ATC 2017 Maine Conference:** Tony Barrett spoke on progress toward the Maine ATC Conference. Registration started on Monday, May 1, and 227 had registered for conference, 27 for the Arts Symposium. Organizers have seen positive responses from news outlets.

The AT Journeys magazine published the full schedule and registration information. Specific volunteer opportunities are available for registration on line.

**Pacific Crest Trail Promotion:**Hawk Metheny and Brian King are promoting a Pacific Crest Trail book tour, including a presentation on May 25, in Portland. The author, Barney Mann, plans to go to the Canadian border, hike south on IAT, then to the AT. A 90-year old member of a YMCA relay team that promoted the opening of the Pacific Crest Trail in 1935, and who now lives in Portland, Maine, will be at the presentation.

**Communications Committee Report:**Doug Dolan spoke for the Communications Committee. The next project is the web site. The committee is still looking for a project manager. They want to establish a scope and appoint a project leader. The goal is to change the platform and make the website mobile accessible.

Doug showed examples of the new club brochures. No redesign was required. They used a less expensive printer, lighter materials and bought a two year supply. Don Stack is working on a post card for register box responses.

**Campsite Committee Report:**Laura Flight referred to the Campsite Committee report she distributed. Volunteers pre-built two privies for the coming season, including one that will be assembled at the ATC Conference.

The committee has acquired permission to drive to the AT corridor to access the trail to Logan Brook campsite. That project will need volunteers every weekend in June to transport materials and construct the privy. Lester will need volunteers every weekend in July to finish the Nahmakanta Stream campsite.

Tony Barrett added that MCC is hoping to build a cairn at the conference. Claire cautioned that they make sure attendees know that cairns are only to be built by the Trail Crew.

**CARE Committee Report:**Holly Sheehan reported for the CARE Committee. The season was scheduled to begin two weeks later, with pack-ins and training for new personnel. When the person who was assigned to the Gulf Hagas position withdrew to take another job, the Hiring Committee moved other caretakers and re-advertised. At the time of this meeting, all positions were filled. (One person withdrew the day before training, and the Hiring Committee had to find a replacement, who began the season late, only to resign shortly afterwards. J.C.)

CARE and Monson staff trained jointly, with Claire and CARE Committee members participating. They scheduled to meet with Baxter State Park staff in late June.

Holly called for some hiking boots to be donated for decorations at the Maine ATC conference.

**Club Coordinator Report:**Holly Sheehan added to her Club Coordinator Report, which detailed her fund raising efforts, her work for the Maine Trail Crew, for the CARE Committee, on the Steering Committee for the ATC Maine Conference, and for the Annual Meeting. She would shortly hand over the Trail Crew piece to the Crew Coordinator. She was planning to write a grant proposal to Weyerhaeuser to continue

funding the Gulf Hagas vista clearance project begun last season. She also planned to write another grant application to fund bog bridging.

**Trail Champions Report:**Lester Kenway reported on the Trail Champions campaign. The total goal is \$4.8 million, and the club has raised \$328,000 to date. That total includes a recent donation of \$25,000 to name the vestibule. One matching \$500,000 matching donation is being considered, with solicitations on-going, including one for a six or seven figure donation.

The Trail Champions Committee is reorganizing; An update on progress will be presented at the September Meeting

**Annual Meeting Survey:**Craig Dickstein spoke on results of the survey of the Annual Meeting. He had a 15% response rate, and is already considering a more stream-lined method for collecting data in the future. The comments, some on technology and some on content, will be useful as a planning document. Craig plans to send feedback to workshop presenters.

Dick Welsh suggested a new member welcome session. Lester explained that we have offered such a session in the past, with very low attendance.

**Executive Committee Review:**In response to last year's survey of the Executive Committee, Tom Gorrill has taken on a project this summer, addressing uneven participation, with emphasis on strategic planning. Tom would like to examine jobs that need to be done and then delegate those tasks. Currently, many tasks fall to the president, who then doesn't have enough time to give adequate attention to everything. Tom plans to build new job descriptions for directors and to ask directors to be on committees. Some of his proposals will call for changes to by-laws and the constitution. He hopes to have a draft for the fall.

**Overseer of Lands Report:**Dave Field reported as Overseer of Lands. He announced a corridor monitor workshop on May 20 meeting at Mooselookmeguntic Lake overlook. He spoke on a thread of e-mails about memorials on the trail. Jeff Smith wants signs warning people about Navy land and he wants a memorial to Geraldine Largay on the Trail. Dave found MATC has no policy on memorials and he seeks advice. He did find a statement in the National Park regulationsthat prohibits establishing memorials on the Trail except with specific authorization of the director of NPS. Claire Polfus said it's important that we have a written policy and she reminded that, even with signs, there's a designated procedure. She made a suggestion to poll the Executive Committeeon their standing about memorials. Lester wants to pursue the case of our documentation on memorials, and advised that we wait until Dave has checked the records of past minutes to see what MATC has discussed and decided;we can do a mail vote after we have documentation. As to the request to indicate Navy lands, we don't put up special signs when the Trail passes through or near lands that belong to other landowners or agencies, and we shouldn't do so in this case. There are only two such bases in the U.S., the one in Maine and another in Washington state.

Dave said he has asked Ray Ronan to remove Redington Falls from MATC's maps, as it's on Navy lands.

**District Overseer Reports:**

Craig Dickstein announced that there are three maintainer openings in the Kennebec District. He has advertised the vacancies and has one definite taker. He has two people interested in the Horseshoe Canyon section and the campsite there, and planned to visit the sites with those candidates. These will be assigned separately.

Rich Aspinall is retiring as maintainer of the Pierce Pond campsite and trail. Craig will post this as two openings.

Kennebec ferry schedule fliers were printed and laminated, and ready for distribution. Craig requested that anyone who finds old schedules posted let him know, and he would remove them.

Rick Ste. Croix announced that all assignments in the Katahdin District are filled and that all maintainers planned to visit their sections within the next few weeks. Rick planned to go to Baxter State Park when the Trail Crew works on the Hunt Trail.

Mike Ewing sent a report for the Baldpate District. The Trail was still very wet, and some sections were still blocked by snow. Mike was coordinating work trips with Dirigo High School and communicating with MCC about its project near the Height of Land.

**Finance Committee Request:** Tom Gorrill announced that Tom Lewis was asking for a resolution for check signing, as a back-up. Tom made a motion that the Executive Committee authorize Finance Committee Chair, Thomas D. Lewis, to immediately have full check signing authority for all MATC bank accounts with TD Bank. Dick Welsh seconded the motion. The Executive Committee approved the motion. Lester agreed to provide the necessary officer signature for the bank to approve this change.

Elsa announced some changes in procedure for requesting reimbursement. Anyone who needs reimbursement MUST complete the voucher completely, and provide proper documentation.

**Maine Trail Crew Update:** Lester gave an update on the Trail Crew. The club has hired two leaders, two assistant leaders, and selected two SCA interns.

Lester met with an agent of a security company regarding the base camp. As there is no cellular signal to hook a security system into, the agent suggested game cameras. Lester will install a couple game cameras. He will emphasize to all crew and volunteers the need to lock all cars.

Lester made reservations for Katahdin Air to transport gear to Rainbow Lake. He is planning for site visits with crew leaders.

Several people have dropped out, leaving about half the volunteer slots filled. Nevertheless, he is expecting a good season with several good projects planned.

Lester announced that he compiled a schedule for the Maine Trail Crew projects, but sent it late to Jason Phelps; if it's not in the MAINEtainer, he will send an e-mail to MATC members to inform them of opportunities to help the MTC on projects or moving in.

With all business concluded, Dave Field placed a motion, seconded by Dick Welsh, to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janice Clain  
Recording Secretary  
July 14, 2017