

MATC Executive Committee Meeting
September 7, 2012
University of Maine at Augusta

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice President, Tony Barrett; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Corresponding Secretary, Dick Doucette; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Directors, Dennis Andrews, Bob Cummings, Craig Dickstein, Laura Flight, Bruce Grant, Dan Simonds, Don Stack; District Overseers, Ron Dobra, Dick Fecteau, Tom Gorrill; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; Guests, Steve Clark, Wind Power Committee, Hawk Metheny, ATC New England Regional Director, Carole Haas, MATLT, Susan Thompkins, Rising Tide PR.

Absent: Directors, Rebecca Clark; Overseers, Peter Roderick, Rick Ste. Croix.

Call to Order: President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. He explained that the September meeting is usually one of the busiest of the year. With several guests in attendance, he called for introductions.

Secretary's Report: Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report for the May 4 meeting. Dave Field noted two corrections; on page 3, Lloyd Griscom's name was misspelled and, on page 7, the National Hiking Society should be corrected to the American Hiking Society.

Elsa Sanborn asked about the reference on page 6 to the east - west highway being co-aligned with a pipeline. The words "and is co-aligned with a pipeline" will be removed from the report.

Dave Field placed a motion to accept the report as amended. Elsa Sanborn seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. Craig Dickstein asked about the continued financial support for the Kennebec ferry by the family of Alice Ference. Lester said he contacted them and they affirmed their intention to continue to fund publicity for the service.

Elsa referred to note 10 and explained that the financial commitment for the 75th Anniversary Celebration still had a couple of items pending, but that expenditures and income just about balanced.

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

Resignation: Lester announced that Peter Roderick has resigned as Overseer for the Kennebec District. Craig Dickstein has indicated that he would be willing to fill out the term.

Tom Gorrill placed a motion to appoint Craig Dickstein as interim Kennebec District Overseer. Dick Doucette seconded the motion.

Craig and Peter have discussed exchanging positions so that Peter then does the fieldwork, and Craig attends meetings.

The Executive Committee voted to approve the appointment.

Lester asked to place New Business first on the agenda as some attendees had traveled a distance.

Proposal for ATC Staff Position in Maine: Hawk Metheny referred to documents he distributed with statistics, facts and figures to justify an added AT position in Maine. He noted that ATC currently has 45 staff total with three in New England, which is responsible for a third of the Trail mileage. He emphasized that this is an addition, not a replacement. He asked for feedback from the club.

Bruce Grant asked how much of this person's time would spend in the field, to which Hawk responded about 40%. Hawk envisions the person doing prep work in the off-season to be able to maximize efficiency during the hiking season. Hawk said he would like to see the regional office pick up some of the work volunteers in the field now do.

Tony questioned the distribution of jobs. He asked if adding someone here would have an impact on Trail-wide staffing, to which Hawk answered that, if the New England Region hires one more, ATC will reexamine job "descriptions."

Hawk said he needs some letters of support to help move the proposal forward. He stressed that he needs support for the general concept, and that parties involved can work together on the details. He also reminded that his proposal is a draft and funding may be an issue; once the position is approved, funding can be discussed.

Dick Fecteau voiced club support for the proposal. Dave Field said the numbers Hawk presented help raise awareness to the needs. He added that some of the programs, like boundary assessment, are funded through ATPO.

Tony questioned the funding, as the position will serve Maine only, and in view of two capital campaigns in the works. He asked if fund raising would be focused in Maine. Hawk assured that the position and its funding are not meant to be competitive, and would be handled at the organization wide level and its funding streams. Dick Doucette placed a motion of support for the concept of having an AT staffer in Maine. Dave Field seconded the motion.

No vote was taken on the motion, as the purpose of the discussion was to gage club support for the proposal.

Maine Trail Center Update: Lester spoke on progress on the Maine Trail Center. He referred to the report Alicia Nichols e-mailed. He explained that she's worked with the Ad Hoc (Friends of the Appalachian Trail in Maine) Committee. He announced a meeting on October 11, and said the committee is looking to get club members to do some of the work the PR firm has been doing. He also said Alicia has investigated some grant sources to offset costs for fund raising. Alicia included these in the e-mail report she sent to Executive Committee members.

Rising Tide PR and Vreeland Marketing Report: Lester introduced Susan Tompkin, from Rising Tide, who has been working on PR for the club and has been sending monthly reports of meetings with club officials and work on behalf of the club. Vreeland Marketing and Rising Tide have been working together.

Susan presented a display of the club's new Facebook page and noted that "likes" for the page have grown from 800 to 1200 in recent months. Members on Twitter have risen from 0 to 500. The changes to the digital imprint of the club on line targets a younger demographic.

Susan asked for comments. Members observed that the changes enhance links and help those who are searching find what they want and easily find out about the club. She explained that people who "like" MATC on Facebook immediately receive information on any news from the club (newsfeed). Those who respond represent many more who have made contact and will likely support club projects.

Susan referred to the monthly photo contest on Facebook. The one for September focuses on trail work and maintenance, which helps raise public awareness to the actual work volunteers do to maintain the Trail.

Susan also mentioned reviewing register box cards, which provide good information about perceptions of the work MATC does on the Trail. She read a few examples of good comments from hikers. She noted that these cards are a valuable source of information about people, and they help to create a conversation between the public and the club.

Laura Flight asked how to translate that connection into people working on the ground, and commented that she hasn't gotten much response from posting work trips on Facebook. Susan replied that this means is more subtle, making outreach, rather than using a bullhorn approach, and she counseled being patient while the club builds relationships.

Lester added that there are multiple goals in building the public image of the club; "we want people to know us, we want people to help us, we want people to support us."

Bruce Grant reported that Millinocket people are commenting on knowing about MATC, which he hadn't heard before.

Monson Events: Bruce Grant and Ron Dobra spoke on the celebrations in Monson, both the National Trails Day events and the Trail Town Dedication. They said they had more guides than people, and were able to show some of the guides Trail sections they didn't know. The day was well planned and attendees seemed to enjoy themselves.

Planners for the Rangeley event in September have used Monson as a guideline, as those events seemed to work well.

Hawk Metheny commented on his experiences at a number of these events and said that he felt the genuine pride and authenticity of the community in Monson, more so than in other trail towns. He said we've begun to create a regional network, and that the trail towns will contact each other during the off-season.

As a follow-up, Bruce urged promoting community outreach. He suggested forming a community outreach committee and making more use of TTEC (A Trail to Every Classroom), giving trail communities a first shot at TTEC. Bruce volunteered to head the committee, and offered to get some who aren't on the Executive Committee to broaden outreach, in particular teachers. Dan said he would help make connections. Hawk suggested that this might attract the non-traditional volunteer.

To that end, Bruce placed a motion, seconded by Bob Cummings, to form an outreach education committee. The motion carried.

Ron Dobra said he has some ideas of people who would help.

75th Anniversary Celebration: Tony distributed a report with details on the ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the completion of the AT. Tony and others had positive observations about the day's events. He said 162 people participated in the celebration.

Tony had some copies of the program that Executive Committee members took as souvenirs. He also has some t-shirts, and Elsa said orders for them would be welcomed.

Those in attendance gave a round of applause to recognize Tony for his work in organizing the event.

MATLT Request for MATC Mailing List: Carol Haas spoke on behalf of the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust, which is requesting access to MATC's mailing list for a fund raising appeal. They are preparing a direct mail now for funding for the Crocker / Orbeton acquisition. They will also rent AMC and Nature Conservancy names. They are looking for wealthy donors by sending a direct mailing.

Lester and Dave Field researched club records and found that MATC has shared its mailing list with the Land Trust three times in the last eight years. Their question at this time is because MATC is heading into its own campaign and is concerned for overtaxing resources. Carol replied that MATLT is offering to share its own list with us.

Bruce expressed reservations and wondered if this action would conflict with Alicia's work as fundraising counsel for MATC. Lester explained that Alicia has said that, if we do it, we might be compromising sources for the future; if we don't do it, we might compromise our relationship with MATLT.

Bob Cummings added his opinion that this MATLT project is a tremendous benefit to MATC and it won't hurt us; the more people we get interested, the better off we'll be.

Ron suggested that MATC give MATLT access to its newsletter, as an appeal in a newsletter is less blatant. Bob Cummings said a story in a newsletter does very little, and that repeated coverage and a return envelope are more effective. Elsa said that using the club newsletter to highlight a fund raising campaign for another organization is not appropriate.

Lester reiterated that Alicia has qualms about compromising MATC's own fund raising, not only the capital campaign but also the general appeal. Dave Field questioned the timing, as well as that of our own general appeal.

To bring the discussion to action, Bruce Grant placed a motion, seconded by Dick Fecteau, to share the MATC mailing list with MATLT.

The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Rangeley Trail Town Celebration: Dan Simonds reported on plans for the Rangeley Trail Town Dedication, on September 15. The Chamber of Commerce and a couple of local business people are organizing the event. Hawk Metheny said he and Mark Wenger will attend. Dan said the town will be less busy in September than in August, which will allow for a focus on the Trail event. He said plans are coming together well.

Update on Recreational Trails Grant Application and Awards: Holly Sheehan said that MATC received the funding for the Recreational Trails Grant but has heard nothing on the Coalition for Recreational Trails Award for which we applied.

Holly asked for Executive Committee authorization to submit an application for two grants from the Recreational Trails Program, one for the Trail Crew, and the other for safety training. Elsa placed the motion, seconded by Bob Cummings, to authorize the application. The motion carried.

100th Anniversary of the Girl Scouts: Tony Barrett said he has had no news on the Girl Scouts 100th anniversary, which had advertised an AT hike for the organization.

End of Trail Festival: The Millinocket End of Trail Festival was scheduled for the same weekend as the Rangeley event. Bruce Grant said he planned to be in Millinocket to represent MATC. Lester spoke of the annual Hard Core project. Shaw's and the AT Lodge provide transportation for long distance hikers to reach a volunteer work project on the Trail. This year's project would again be on the Trail near Gulf Hugas, and would involve drainage ditching. Paul Reynaud would again plan a big feed for hikers.

Millinocket Trail Town Application: Bruce made a request for support for an application for Millinocket to be the next Trail Town, as described in a letter addressed to the MATC Executive Committee. Don Stack placed a motion, seconded by Dick Fecteau, to support the Millinocket application, and the Executive Committee voted its approval.

Crocker Mountain Ecological Reserve: JT Horn, Project Manager for the Trust for Public Lands, asked for a resolution of support for a Crocker Mountain Ecological Reserve. Such a protected piece of land would benefit the AT.

Bob Cummings placed a motion, seconded by Tom Gorrill, to grant the requested support.

The preserve in question is a subset of the Crocker acquisition and will designate a portion of that land as an ecological reserve. A major donor will contribute a large sum of money if there's a reserve.

Tony explained that JT said he's vetted the project with Carrabassett groups, including snowmobilers; JT assured that motorized ways are not included in the reserve. MATC has not been included in these talks. Club officials have been concerned that TPL came to MATC last.

Dan Simond proposed an addition to the original motion to include a concern that TPL consult with MATC in advance in future transactions. Tom Gorrill seconded the motion.

Dick Fecteau noted that the preserve will come under Bigelow Preserve management.

The motion carried as amended.

MAINEtainer Deadline: Bob Cummings announced the deadline for the next edition of the MAINEtainer on the following Friday, September 14.

Pioneer Trail on Saddleback Update: Dave Field spoke on the proposed Pioneer Trail. The total length of the trail is 1.8 miles, with .2 miles across the AT corridor. As this is a side trail to the AT, it requires approval by ATC. The section that crosses the National Park Service corridor requires NPS approval. Dave would like someone from ATC to give support to facilitate the process necessary to establish the trail. As a further obstacle, the trail is above 2700 feet and requires a LURC permit, which Dave will set in motion. ATC approval would help speed that process along.

Dick Fecteau asked who will maintain the trail, to which Dave replied that MATC has agreed to maintain it. Dan Simonds commented that the trail would benefit the town of Phillips, as it connects to the Flyrod Crosby Trail.

District Overseer Reports: Lester called for reports from the District Overseers.

Tom Gorrill said there has been nothing unusual in the Baldpate District. He said there have been a lot of bad knees and medical issues with maintainers, so he has had to substitute. He announced that he has had to "fire" a couple of maintainers on sections on the Grafton Loop Trail; this is within the duties of the District Overseer, and only requires Executive Committee action if the maintainer appeals the decision.

Tom did note one privy removal.

Dick Fecteau said the Bigelow District has had a good year. One maintainer has resigned because of illness.

As Craig Dickstein was newly appointed as Overseer for the Kennebec District, he gave no report. He did mention a minor memorial at Pierce Pond, where a hiker drowned, but said it was low-key and likely to be short-lived.

Ron Dobra, reporting on the White Cap District, said one lean-to maintainer was encouraged to resign, but Ron was able to reassign it quickly to a couple of his friends. He also spoke of the business owner who had been leaving coolers of beer on the North Pond Tote Road, with a request to leave donations and signs advertising his hostel. Ron contacted the hostel owner to apprise him of Trail legal policy. The party agreed to move the stash onto his own property, but didn't comply, so Ron contacted the owner again and threatened to call the authorities, at which point the man removed the drop.

Ron announced a bog bridging project on Fourth Mountain on September 8. It entailed a minor relocation of bog bridging.

Ron also mentioned a privy emergency at Carl Newhall lean-to. He is waiting for a consensus on privy construction. AMC has offered to snowmobile materials to close to the site.

Lester explained Rick Ste. Croix's schedule, which requires him to work nights every other week. His job obligations impact his availability to attend Executive Committee meetings to report on the Katahdin District.

Overseer of Lands, Dave Field, called for feedback on the revisions to the Local Management Plan, especially those that explain the laws. He said Pam Underhill and Todd Remally want references to be more general, while Dave prefers them to be completely specific. He said he may ask for support on that wording.

Maine Trail Crew Report: Lester said he will send out a report on Trail Crew activities from this season. He spoke of the work by MCC and the Public Lands Corps on Poplar Ridge, West Baldpate, East Baldpate and North Crocker.

Partners' Hike: Lester announced the Partners' Hike in Carrabassett Valley on October 12.

Accessible Facilities on the Trail in Maine: Steve Clark, Laura Flight and Lester have researched regulations on accessible facilities. Lester thinks the matter needs to go to the Campsite Committee for a thorough study. He is particularly concerned for the financial commitment and the work load involved in converting existing facilities. Steve commented that we are dealing with common sense and compliance with the law. He referred to a draft proposal to start a discussion.

Others commented that it makes no sense to make a privy wheelchair accessible if the trail to it from the campsite is not accessible, and that the lean-to would also have to be wheelchair accessible, as well as the trail to the water source; we need to look at the entire campsite as a single entity, not just the privy.

Steve asked if we have ever had a request for a wheelchair accessible campsite. He agreed that it's a matter of bureaucracy, and suggested that, while officials may ask if we are wheelchair accessible, it's very unlikely, given the location and remoteness of normal sites.

Steve referred to a proposed motion that frees the Campsite Committee to pursue an orderly design for campsite privies and that also satisfies the bureaucracy

Lester asked for a motion to table this item, to give the Campsite Committee more time to research the matter. Tom Gorrill placed the motion, seconded by Elsa Sanborn.

Laura commented that wheelchair and disability are not synonymous; even if the trail is not accessible, structures (privies) should be.

Hawk explained that ATC may have more guidelines later in the fall, based on the Forest Service guidelines for NPS lands. He pointed out that able-bodied people have no right to judge who can and can't access facilities, and that we can't restrict access.

The motion to table carried.

NPS Regulations Regarding Mobility Devices: Lester and Holly spoke of NPS regulations regarding mobility devices (Segways). The NPS has passed a law forbidding them but, Holly said, Rex Turner is designing a plan, based on Forest Service guidelines, to deal with this issue.

2013 Election Year: Lester noted that 2013 is a year for election of MATC Executive Committee members. He plans to form a nominating committee by November 2. The Nominating Committee will have to present the slate at the Executive Committee meeting on March 2, and it must be published in the MAINEtainer by two weeks later. The election will take place at the Annual Meeting on April 13.

ATC Conference: Steve Clark asked about the ATC conference meeting. He noted that it is scheduled on an 18 year cycle and it should be hosted in Maine. Lester explained that we have to send our committee to the previous conservancy ATC conference to declare our intention.

Maine Huts and Trails – Caribou Valley Road: Tony Barrett, Dick Fecteau and Lester have met with Maine Huts and Trails to discuss their proposed trail in Caribou Valley. The parties are negotiating to provide MHT a secured way across the Trail in Caribou Valley. The plan is for a ski trail but without mechanized grooming. Lester said the Partners Hike will provide an opportunity to observe this set up.

To a question as to whether there is to be one or two trails, Lester responded that MHT has relocated its hut to about two miles away from the AT on Caribou Pond. He added that, if it connects to our trail, we'll have to go through a long process to secure approval.

Tony noted that the East Flagstaff trail is used for both hiking and skiing. Lester added that Maine Huts and Trails wants an all season trail from Bigelow Station to Caribou Pond. This impacts MATC because it invites access to the AT.

Dave Field asked if it requires an Environmental Assessment, to which Hawk replied that it means cutting trees in the corridor, so needs approval. He added that it won't be approved if they plan to use heavy machinery.

Elsa placed a motion to table the discussion until after MATC representatives have a chance to observe the situation when they go on the Partners' Hike. Bob Cummings seconded the motion, which was approved by the Executive Committee.

Maine Huts and Trails and Bigelow Preserve: Maine Huts and Trails wants to connect their hut on Stratton Brook Pond to the Bigelow Preserve trail system. Lester explained that, as it's on state land, the process is different; it connects to our trails, but doesn't concern ATC / NPS. Planners are working on it now. They are aware of the visual impact concerns, but technically we have less control than on other proposed trails. The Bureau of Parks and Lands will ask for MATC support to connect with our trails. Maine Huts and Trails wants to provide access to all the trails in the Bigelow Preserve.

Lester called for an ad hoc committee to work on this issue. Dick Fecteau, Tony Barrett, Dan Simonds, and Lester volunteered to form the committee.

New Trail at Little Wilson Falls: The Bangor Daily news has quoted AMC's Bryan Wentzell saying that AMC has been engaged to build a trail to Little Wilson Falls. That organization wants to build a trail into the NPS corridor to a site of an endangered species. Lester reminded that they have to follow the process laid out by the Park Service and MATC before building a trail. Hawk explained the process; the trail has to be recommended by the club to go to NERPC, which then sets in motion the process for investigation and approval.

The Piscataquis Tourism Development Authority wants to contribute funds for building this trail from their grants in lieu of taxes.

Tony Barrett said he checked out the trail in July. He saw flagging and recent trail construction. Ron says it's been there a long time, and that outfitters have promoted waterfall tours.

Lester gave his opinion that we can leave the situation as is or build a good trail. There was also the question of the gate across the access road, and the concern for the added burden of a new trail. Ron asked if we would enforce protocol, to which Lester responded that we can't do anything until they make a proposal. Hawk says we've never had a proposal from an outside entity for a trail to enter the corridor.

Elsa added her opinion that there should be a good marked trail into the area, and it would benefit us, and the public, if we were involved.

Tony suggested a dialog with the landowner, who has given a significant amount of money to both MATC and MATLT. He suggested a conversation with Mark Leathers, of James W. Sewall Company, Roxanne Quimby's manager, to establish points for MATC to have a stronger voice to balance AMC and Piscataquis County.

Brian Wentzell suggested a meeting with all those concerned. Lester wanted a sense of the group's thoughts before going into a meeting.

Call for VIP Hours: Elsa reminded Executive Committee members that she needed VIP hours by October 10 for the year October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012.

Partnership with Maine Huts and Trails on a trail from Coburn Gore to Quebec: Lester spoke on Maine Huts and Trails trail from Coburn Gore to Quebec. They hope to extend their trail from Quebec into Carrabassett Valley. Lester reminded that this is not about the AT, but if it's going to connect with the AT, we should be involved. It was Larry Warren's original Maine Huts and Trails trail.

With all discussions concluded, Dave Field placed a motion, seconded by Craig Dickstein, to adjourn. The meeting concluded at 10:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Janice Clain
Recording Secretary