

Maine Appalachian Trail Club
September 8, 2017
UMA

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice President, Tom Gorrill; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Directors, Tony Barrett, Bill Brooke, Tom Carr, Laura Flight, Bruce Grant, Audrey Laffely, Irene Syphers, Dick Welsh; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Ron Dobra, Mike Ewing, Rick Ste. Croix; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; Finance Committee Chair, Tom Lewis; Club Member, Don Stack; ATC Regional Resources Manager, Claire Polfus; Capital Campaign Director, Alicia Nichols

Absent: Corresponding Secretary, Doug Dolan; District Overseers, Craig Dickstein, Dick Fecteau

Call to order: President Lester Kenway called meeting to order at 6:59. In opening remarks, he suggested that the Executive Committee consider setting a time limit for this meeting, with an additional date for a special additional meeting in October.

Recording Secretary's Report: Janice Clain spoke to the Recording Secretary's Report of the May 5 meeting. Alicia Nichols called for a correction to the report of the Trail Champions campaign. The correct figure should be \$320,000, not \$328,000. Dave Field placed a motion to accept the Secretary's report as corrected. Elsa Sanborn seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted its approval.

Treasurer's Report: Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. To Tony Barrett's question about the net income of - \$32,000, Elsa explained that it reflects about \$50,000 due to MATC from ATC. To Tom Gorrill's question about the \$140,000 entry for the capital campaign, Elsa explained that it is net, not gross. Tom would like to see capital campaign funds separated from ordinary reporting. Alicia Nichols explained that this information is provided to the Capital Campaign Committee.

Lester accepted the report for the Executive Committee.

Facebook Incident: Doug Dolan was not present to give the Corresponding Secretary's Report. In his absence, the Executive Committee had the opportunity to discuss the recent incident created by a controversial post on the club Facebook page. When some concerned hikers reported another hiker defacing MATC trail signs, an accusation was posted on Facebook to identify the suspected party. The hiker in question explained privately that he had been trying to correct vandalism he found. As a result of the post, he was denied service in a hostel and his sponsors questioned their support of his hike. After his explanation, the original post was deleted and a retraction appeared on the page. As MATC's PR agent, Josh Petrin was involved, and he recommends that the club reach out to the hiker to officially apologize and that we contact his sponsors to rectify the situation. Claire Polfus said she had talked to the hiker in question, and recommended that he explain himself. He has posted several messages to the MATC Facebook page, and seemed grateful for the retraction.

Doug indicated to Lester his intention to resign the Corresponding Secretary's position, effective April 1. Tom Gorrill regrets that Doug, who has done so much for the club, should feel guilty and responsible to the point of resigning. Others in attendance offered their own support for Doug.

Lester recommends that the club devise a protocol for Facebook postings. Tom Gorrill recommends that anyone who posts send a draft to Lester and Josiah before posting, and

Bill Brooke suggests we should independently verify any potentially controversial information before posting. Lester referred to Susan Tompkins' emergency response protocol; make no posting until an "official" stance is determined, and after contacting the President and then the PR office. Claire offered that an active Facebook page is helpful, and recommended that we not put too much bureaucracy, too many steps, as they would impede use of the potentially useful tool.

Lester will make an apology to this hiker, and will make sure we have a process for the future.

ATC Report: Claire Polfus distributed the report from ATC to Executive Committee members. In addition to the report, Claire announced the fall Youth Stewardship Coalition workshop, November 10-11.

Wind Power Report: Tony Barrett spoke to the Wind Power Committee report he e-mailed. The correct date should be September 6.

Bill Brooke said he had attended a wind power informational meeting in Bingham. Tony had an indication that there would be no information at that meeting that we didn't already have. No projects were selected for last year's RFP. New projects will be selected in January. There is considerable information about transmission lines. Bruce is concerned that opening new highways will open more opportunities for transmission lines.

ATC Maine Conference Report: Tony Barrett distributed a report on the PR benefits of the ATC Maine Conference. He signaled television coverage, the feature article in Down East, and newspaper articles. The conference was well received, and gave a positive image of Maine, its resources and its hiking organizations.

Communications Committee Report: Lester proposed tabling the discussion of the Communications Committee to the next meeting.

Lester wants information about moving the MATC web site to a new host (Oxford). The contract with the current host ended August 31. That host allowed e-mail aliases to direct e-mails to a specified club position. Dick Welsh said you can still take advantage of those aliases by using a g-mail account. Dick explained the advantages of moving the whole club web site to a new host that is more stable. Doug had been looking for a project manager. Laura explained that the committee recommended hiring a paid consultant to do the work. This should be a good topic for a reconstructed communications committee. Bill Brooke and Tom Carr are interested in helping.

CARE Committee Report: Holly Sheehan reported for the CARE Committee. The program is running smoothly now. We have not had a ridge runner on duty at Gulf Hagas for most of the season, because of hires who quit within a few days. Volunteers covered some weekends. Peter Barrett, who worked as Trail Crew Coordinator, moved into the position starting Labor Day Weekend.

Club Coordinator Report: Holly spoke to her report as Club Coordinator. She needed official approval to apply for a Recreational Trails Program grant. To that end, Bruce Grant placed a motion, seconded by Audrey Laffely, to authorize Holly Sheehan to submit applications

to the Recreational Trails Program for grants up to \$50,000, for the Maine Trail Crew and up to \$5,000, for the CARE program.

The Executive Committee approved the motion.

Finance Committee Update: Tom Lewis, Finance Committee Chair, asked to add to the Treasurer's Report. He explained that the club is deep in the transition period after adding a bookkeeper. There have been some "conflicts," as the bookkeeper may not have understood expectations. The Quick Books system was transferred to the bookkeeper; Elsa also keeps books in another system. We will need a few more months to smooth out glitches, so the bookkeeper can produce the financial statements. Tom and his Finance Committee have addressed some issues of segregation of duties over the summer. They have worked with Tom Gorrill to define and expand the Finance Committee, especially in regards to personnel, which impacts budget. As clarification, Lester reminded the Executive Committee that Christine Strubbe is a contracted service, not a club employee.

Campsite Committee Report: Laura Flight commented on the report she sent for the Campsite Committee. To date, nine moldering accessible privies have been completed. The Logan Brook project was very time consuming, in particular for the travel time and transporting materials over steep terrain. The Campsite Committee is reconsidering its goal of replacing three privies a year.

Maine Trail Crew Report: Lester reported on the accomplishments of the Trail Crew. Its season extended from May 20 to August 26, with projects on the Hunt Trail, Barren Mountain, Rainbow Lake, Gulf Hugas Mountain, Marble Brook, and the Pleasant River Tote Road. The Crew Coordinator came in late, but did an excellent job. Two excellent crew leaders, who began as assistant crew leaders last summer, set good standards and provided technical expertise in several challenging projects. Crews also had good assistant crew leaders, and an intern. Ron Dobra contacted colleges to assist us in engaging interns directly, which proved more efficient and less costly than dealing through SCA. Lester deemed this one of the most productive seasons ever. He will issue a full report at a later date.

Communications between Jeffery Smith and Dave Field: Dave Field reported that Wendy Jensen was able to address Jeffrey Smith's requests for a memorial to Geraldine Largay. Any memorial on the AT requires specific congressional approval. Jeffrey has placed a photo and statement in a lean-to near the spot where Geraldine strayed off-trail. Lester recommends that the club establish its own policy regarding memorials, and will ask some members to form a committee to address the matter. Lester mentioned the Dick Brown Memorial Bridge, which is an unofficial memorial, and Dave Field reminded that it is on state land.

Longley Property Update: Lester updated the Executive Committee on the Longley Property. MATC representatives met with realtors and interested parties on August 21. The appraisal is completed and the property is valued at \$82,000. The next steps are: phase 1) offer the opportunity to purchase the property, at no less than appraised value, to parties in the area who may be interested; phase 2) offer the property on the national market. Craig Dickstein is willing to start making contact with local parties in mid September. Lester will draft a proposal for the sale and development of the property to benefit the AT community. Tom Gorrill placed a motion, seconded by Mike Ewing, to endorse the proposed plan for the property.

Bruce Grant asked if the club has contacted Somerset Woods; Lester will make that suggestion to Craig.

The Executive Committee vote to accept the motion was unanimous.

Overseer of Lands Report: Dave Field reported as Overseer of Lands. Boundary line work continues. Members of the American Hiking Society planned to participate in their annual volunteer vacation workshop, September 18 - 22, working on boundaries in Gulf Hagas. Irene Syphers and two volunteer boundary technicians would help.

District Overseer Reports:

Mike Ewing gave an update on the Baldpate District. One MCC crew worked three weeks in the district, working in the area from Route 17 down to Bemis Track. This was the seventh year that a crew from Dirigo High School helped with a project in the district, in late spring, and in mud. Two Camp Tekakwitha boys' groups helped on projects.

Ron Dobra spoke on the White Cap District. The Trail Crew was in the district for twelve weeks. Ron has walked about two thirds of the district. He hosted two college work trips, with students from Bowdoin and Colby. Bowdoin has a cabin on North Pond, and has directed student efforts to Wilson Valley. The Colby students have helped two years in a row with carrying materials in the Gulf Hagas area.

Rick Ste. Croix reported for the Katahdin District. He reported extensive damage from winter, and the late and wet spring. **All** maintainers were out by the first of June. A severe storm on June 12 caused heavy damage at the Antlers campsite. Laurie Gonyea brought in an LL Bean crew to help. Claire Polfus and Hawk Metheny also went in to help.

Trail Champions Update: Alicia Nichols reported that the Trail Champions campaign has brought in \$322, 889. The campaign has not had much activity this summer due to work commitments of all the committee members.

The Trail Champions committee has regrouped, adding Ned Claxton and Will Hunter. They planned to meet September 13, and hope to double the membership of the committee.

All new Executive Committee members are invited to support the campaign. It is very important that the club show 100% support by its governing body.

Committee Structure Review: Tom Gorrill spoke to his proposal to examine MATC's committee structure. With help from Irene Syphers, Tom spent time last summer examining the current committees and job descriptions in the LMP. He would recommend consolidating some of the committees, revising the number to ten standing committees, with an Executive Committee member sitting as chair. He also wants to create job descriptions for all Executive Committee members.

Trail Center Committee: Tom would leave this one for now, and combine later with the Trail Crew Committee.

Campsite Committee: Laura would like separate maintainers for trail sections and for campsites; in many cases, one person has taken on responsibility for these two very different jobs. Tom recommends making the chair of the campsite committee an overseer of campsites, elevating that position to the Executive Committee, and replacing one of the current director positions. A long-term goal here is to make sure training for campsite maintainers is specific to

the work involved. Tom sees the club transitioning gradually to this protocol. The Trail District Overseer would then touch bases with the Campsite Overseer.

CARE: Leave this committee as is for now.

Communications Committee: Tom notes that this committee currently has several charges under an umbrella, including the club newsletter, web site, and guide book. He recommends combining committees that are related. Laura added that these areas have been listed separately but have worked together.

Membership Services: Tom recommends we leave this one for now, as it has a lot of duties, but perhaps include volunteer recognition. Dave Field recommends changing the name to simply membership, as the club doesn't really offer much for services, other than the MAINEtainer. Claire reminded that ATC has promoted an initiative to include more younger members, which might be included here.

Finance / Personnel /Development: Tom suggests these should be combined, as all are related. Finance and Personnel are ongoing, and Development is mostly active in the fall, preparing the annual appeal.

State Partners and Community Outreach: Tom recommends we keep these and perhaps expand them. Claire asked if this could be expanded to include Agency Relationships, to spread out contacts.

Training and Education: Tom proposes including overseers, and having them organize the February meeting, which is designed for maintainers.

Wind Power Committee: Tom suggests that this might be renamed Corridor Protection Committee, which would include a gamut of threats. Dave Field would like to include some other concerns. Tom asked for suggestions for wording that would adequately define the situation, such as Aesthetic Action Committee.

Nominating Committee: We need to keep this one as is.

Kennebec Ferry Committee: Tom suggests making it an overseer position, and moving it into another committee.

Any changes will need revisions to the club's by-laws, which can be approved by the Executive Committee. Changes to the Executive Committee will require changing the Constitution, which requires a vote of the full membership. Lester suggested that this project provides a good opportunity to examine and update the Constitution. As an example, the Constitution stipulates that the president should maintain contact with private landowners; as lands are now owned mostly by NPS, the situation has changed.

Irene and Tom will continue to refine their recommendations, and will present again at the next meeting.

Proposal for a connector trail: Lester spoke to proposal for a new Trail connection in Caratunk, brought by Craig Dickstein to the Executive Committee. Dick Welsh noted the trail proposed is multiuse, designated for hiking and biking, which would conflict with the club's use parameters. Lester suggested that this proposal would be more properly addressed when the Longley property is sold. Others suggested that we need to ask more questions, and get more information.

Dave Field placed a motion to table this discussion at this time. Elsa Sanborn seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted its agreement to the motion.

Proposal for Trail reroute: Claire Polfus spoke to the proposal conveyed by Craig Dickstein to reroute the Trail off the Pierce Pond Dam. Dave Field explained that NPS never acquired a right-of-way across the privately-owned dam. The owner, Gary Cobb, wants to

relinquish any liability, although he has allowed us to continue to use the dam. This proposal would move the Trail off the dam. It requires a ford, but at a point that's fairly easy, near the headwaters of Pierce Pond Stream.

Dick Welsh placed a motion to approve the relocation proposed by Craig Dickstein. Tom Gorrill seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted its unanimous approval.

Claire said this may be eligible for a programmatic categorical exclusion for trail maintenance, so may not need a NEPA review. Don Stack, in lieu of Tony Barrett, will take this proposal to NERPC.

Debsconeag Wilderness Signs for The Nature Conservancy: Claire spoke to the Debsconeag Wilderness area signs, as requested by The Nature Conservancy. Tony Barrett questioned the format of the sign they're proposing, which he referred to as a front country sign. He said it's their template, and he thinks it's too big and intrusive for back-country posting. We should ask TNC to design a less intrusive sign. Dave Field said this is really an issue with Bureau of Parks and Lands, not MATC according to the original conservation easement. MATC has been recognized as the managers of the Trail in this area, though that may not technically be correct. Dave explained that we share responsibility with BPL, so they should be involved in this decision.

After some discussion of this situation, Audrey Laffely placed the following motion: The MATC Executive Committee has no objection to TNC posting temporary paper educational signs welcoming hikers to their lands, until a permanent decision is discussed at the October 23, 2017 meeting of agency and trail partners. Bruce Grant seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Hiker Fatality in the Bigelows: Audrey Laffely reported on a hiker fatality in the Bigelow area. She was involved through her position as site supervisor for the Horns Pond caretaker. The incident occurred on August 20, between Cranberry Pond and Horns Pond.

Upcoming Events: Rangeley Appalachian Trail Days took place on September 3. The AT display was featured there.

Kingfield Trail Days would take place on September 10.

Trails End Festival was scheduled for September 15-17, in Millinocket. MATC would send its display and banners.

The AT Lodge scheduled a Hard Core work project for September 15 on the Gulf Hagas AT trail. Work would entail lining drainage ditches with rocks.

Lester scheduled a work trip on September 23 - 24 to finish the Nahmakanta lean-to. Lester scheduled a Partners' Hike October 6 on Little Boardman.

The next RPC meeting was scheduled for October 21. Don Stack agreed to represent MATC. Bruce Grant, Irene Syphers, and Mike Ewing also planned to attend.

With all business concluded, Tom Gorrill placed a motion, seconded by Elsa Sanborn, to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted
Janice Clain
Recording Secretary
October 29, 2017