

Maine Appalachian Trail Club
Executive Committee Meeting
November 4, 2016

Present: President, Lester Kenway; Vice President, Mike Ewing; Recording Secretary, Janice Clain; Corresponding Secretary, Doug Dolan; Treasurer, Elsa Sanborn; Overseer of Lands, Dave Field; District Overseers, Craig Dickstein, Ron Dobra, Tom Gorrill, Rick Ste. Croix; Directors, Tony Barrett, Bruce Grant, Laura Flight, Don Stack; Club Coordinator, Holly Sheehan; ATC Regional Director, Hawk Metheny; ATC Resources Manager, Claire Polfus; guests, Ken Spaulding (Nominating Committee), Jeremy Koch

Absent: District Overseer, Dick Fecteau; Directors, Audrey Laffely, Sherri Langlais, Dick Welsh

Call to Order: President Lester Kenway called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He called for volunteers to help plan the January 14 meeting and the February maintainers, members and monitors meeting. Ron Dobra volunteered to help with the January meeting. Lester also asked Executive Committee members to approve Bates College as the site for the annual meeting, and received an affirmative response.

Recording Secretary's Report: Janice Clain presented the Secretary's Report for the September 9 meeting. Laura Flight corrected the name of the privy product; it is Bio Quest. Lester called for changes to numbers of stone steps in the Maine Trail Crew report. He also called for changes to the wording of references to Piscataquis Country funding; this is for payment in lieu of taxes, not for TIF. Franklin County TIF funding was for projects on the AT. Craig Dickstein clarified that Dave Field sent reporters to Craig for the Waterville Sentinel, not Claire Polfus. Rick Ste. Croix corrected the report that privy steps were replaced at Hurd Brook not Nahmakanta Stream.

With corrections made, Doug Dolan placed a motion, seconded by Craig Dickstein, to accept the Secretary's report. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Elsa Sanborn presented the Treasurer's Report. It showed a balance of \$638,120. The capital campaign line is low because expenses have been paid out now that the campaign is actively under way.

The President accepted the Treasurer's Report on behalf of the Executive Committee.

Corresponding Secretary's Report: Doug Dolan presented a brief report as Corresponding Secretary. He said e-mails had picked up since the last meeting, mostly from hikers looking for information on Trail conditions.

Nominating Committee Report: Mike Ewing and Ken Spaulding spoke on meetings of the Nominating Committee. Audrey Laffely, the third member of the committee, was not present. They spoke to the document they distributed asking the Executive Committee to consider five points: 1) increase the number of members on the Executive Committee, which they don't recommend; they prefer to increase participation without increasing numbers; 2) set term limits, which they don't recommend, for fear of instability and loss of institutional knowledge; 3) establishing longer, staggered terms, which they do recommend; 4) add job descriptions for Directors; 5) establish an evaluation process for Executive Committee members. Mike explained that staggering terms would prevent a situation in which all members leave at

the same time. The committee's proposal is for three year terms. To a concern that all overseers would leave at the same time, Ken explained that most people will stay to the end of their term. To an observation that in recent years most people who have a choice don't leave, Ken emphasized that the intention is not to send away people who are dedicated and hard workers. Craig Dickstein agreed that we need to have clarification of standards for participation. Currently Executive Committee membership turns over because of natural selection, not because of documentation of deficiencies. Lester explained the definition of term limits; a specified number of terms that any one person can serve in the same position. The discussion revolves around having people who are willing to serve actively. Mike Ewing agreed that a term limits suggestion may not make any real changes; a lot depends on the committee's last recommendation, for a system for evaluating effectiveness. He added that the rotating system would cut the nominating committee's work, as only a third of positions would be open in a given year. Hawk Metheny observed that there are pros and cons on both sides; setting fixed limits may send away good people. ATC is going to set staggered terms, starting at the next biennial meeting. In future, ATC will have an annual business meeting. Bruce Grant sees the overseer positions as crucial, given the necessary institutional memory. It is critical that someone is ready in each district to move into the Overseer position.

Of the recommendations made by the Nominating Committee, the first three require constitutional changes, so timing is paramount. The fourth recommendation requires by-laws changes or other actions to add or amend job descriptions and expectations for directors and to set a standard on which to evaluate. The current description is very vague and general. Lester suggested fine-tuning this suggestion for the January meeting. He thought having a documented job description would help when recruiting board members. Craig likes such descriptions, and would like to see MATC recruit representatives from partner organizations because of their specific qualifications or skills.

Lester suggested an attendance policy, and to specify committee participation, including serving as a chair, for board members. Laura Flight agreed that starting at the committee level might allow people to develop club and leadership skills.

Lester plans to meet with the three Nominating Committee members to prepare a proposal for a vote at the January meeting. Ken reminded that we need to decide whether to establish staggered terms, as it requires a constitutional change. To that end, Tom Gorrill placed a motion, seconded by Craig Dickstein, to adopt the Nominating Committee's recommendation for staggered terms for Executive Committee positions, which requires a constitutional change. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

The discussion turned to voting privileges for non- Executive Committee members, in particular assistant overseers. The Nominating Committee's proposal is that assistant overseers be allowed to vote on the board if they attend in the Overseer's place. For this reason, we may want to appoint assistants from outside the Executive Committee. The current wording implies that a non-voting assistant not be a member of the Executive Committee. Further discussion centered on whether the purpose of having an assistant district overseer was to assure voting representation or for preparation and training for moving up in club hierarchy and into the overseer position. Bruce explained that assistant overseers were instituted in case the overseer couldn't vote, so that there would be someone who knows the district.

This discussion will continue to the next meeting, and the Nominating Committee may make a proposal.

With reference to the evaluation of job performance, we need a job description before we can evaluate. This consideration is more properly handled by a governance committee, which MATC does not currently have. Possible guidelines for evaluation include a minimum number of

volunteer hours. There should be a mechanism for removing a non-compliant, non participatory individual.

An added recommendation for this entire process is transition planning. There should be a formalized plan for having someone prepared to move into a position, to ensure continuity.

Communications Policy: Susan Tompkins provided the Executive Committee with a draft Communications Policy, which is a work in progress. Susan plans to have a workshop in January. The focus of the policy is on how to react to media inquiries. Since MATC's PR campaign, the club is now known, and reporters sometimes come to individuals for statements. It is in the best interests of the organization to establish a protocol for dealing with such inquiries.

ATC Report: Claire Polfus provided an update from ATC. The report included statistics from the Monson Visitors' Center and information on MATC's work with Baxter State Park on managing Trail users. Baxter Park administrators had fewer concerns about hiker behavior this season. Numbers were significantly higher for AT hikers accessing Baxter Park and for use of the Kennebec ferry, as they were for overall Trail use and for hiking, in general. Regional Director Hawk Metheny, ATC Director Ron Tipton and Jensen Bissell met in Portland, and discussed a few more changes for next year. Baxter Park officials were happy about the education component of ATC and MATC's trail management strategy, and, overall, with hiker behavior. Claire reported that 77% of NOBO's stopped at the Visitor Center in Monson. Craig Dickstein would like to see a presence in the parking lot in Monson or at the ferry, to catch a larger number of long distance hikers, as many don't go into Monson. Dave Field praised the value of the Visitor Center for tourists passing through, and for providing education. Claire said ATC may have to relocate the Visitor Center next season, and Hawk emphasized that they would try to locate the Visitor Center as close to the Trail as possible.

Claire focused on ATC's Landscape Conservation effort. Traditionally the National Park Service has not been interested in conserving land along the Trail, but they've recently changed their stance, and are now considering accepting donations of land. If the Park Service acquired land, it would have to consider how to handle land management. Claire recommended having a plan in place and asked if anyone would want to work with her to plan ahead. Dave Field volunteered and suggested that Dick Fecteau, who was not present at this meeting, might be interested.

Claire's report included information about large landowners pressuring the LUPC to eliminate the adjacency rule, which impacts management of land in unorganized territories. With implications for protection of the view shed, ATC should have a voice in the discussion. Claire will send out a survey to elicit MATC member input on the matter.

Claire is working with the Campsite and Care committees on management of groups that use the Trail.

When asked if Baxter State Park officials are talking about limiting numbers of long distance hikers, Hawk explained that it's the Baxter Authority that is concerned. Baxter Park staff recognizes that hiker behavior was much better this year, and that hikers were better informed on regulations, reasons for regulations, what to expect at the Birches. Jensen plans to send out a proposal this winter on numbers, depending on categories of hikers, including college groups, and is looking ahead to further changes in hiker numbers and behavior in the future. Hawk assured that ATC and MATC have established good communications links with park partners, and that the situation is a lot better than last year. The Baxter Task Force is still active, and holds a monthly conference call.

Claire announced that an ATC Visitor Use Manager is in place and is concentrating on both ends of the AT.

ATC Seasonal Employee Proposal: The Executive Committee postponed discussion of the ATC Field Coordinator proposal at its September meeting as neither Claire Polfus nor Hawk Metheny was able to attend. They explained that ATC hopes to add staffing capacity to Maine, to offer more support. Claire's position has grown and continues to evolve, with added tasks including the NEPA process, botanist work, and supporting boundary monitoring. The Visitor Center was a large addition to her work. Both Hawk and Claire emphasized that this is just a draft. The proposal is for a five month position, based out of Farmington, but with most time in the field. The hope is to take on some of the projects that have been important but have not been priorities, such as monitoring campsite management and measuring capacity. The goal is that the position will be complementary to Claire's position and to strengthen the link between MATC and ATC. There are similar positions in Connecticut, Vermont, and Massachusetts.

Tony Barrett observed that, with a different person in the position every year, ATC would have to recruit skilled people. Claire responded that the work of this position will depend on the person who fills it; she sees this as a pathway for ATC staff to move up in the trail management hierarchy.

Craig Dickstein recognized that this proposal is about support, not about usurping club autonomy. Lester has expressed reservations, particularly in regards to working with the Trail Crew, and would like to see a reference in the proposal to the MATC and its volunteer nature. Claire recognizes the concern. She clarified that it's a three prong collaborative approach, between MATC volunteers, ATC and the National Park Service. She emphasized that this is not a volunteer management proposal. Hawk added that we need to preserve the relationship between ATC and MATC. Hawk reiterated that this is a seasonal position to support the club, not to take it over; management is a shared effort to benefit the Trail. Claire will work with Lester to rewrite and enhance the description to clarify the position with regards to the Trail Crew. Holly clarified that the person would work with Lester in a mentorship capacity, not trying to take over management of the Trail Crew. With the majority of deficiencies in trail treadway in Maine, support for Trail work can only be beneficial to the overall stewardship of the Trail. Laura Flight added that there are many initiatives coming that might not be so attractive to volunteers, such as hazard trees and visitor management. She sees this proposal as beneficial.

After lengthy discussion, Tom Gorrill placed a motion to support the ATC proposal to request a field coordinator position, with rewriting and redrafting by Claire to address Lester's concerns. Craig Dickstein seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted its approval, with one abstention.

Wind Power and Power Lines Committee: Tony Barrett spoke on behalf of the Wind Power and Power Lines Committee. He placed a motion to support the recommendation for MATC to join with AMC to submit a bill to the 128th Maine legislature to amend the 2008 Wind Act and increase to 15 miles the distance for requiring visual impact assessments from specific viewpoints along the AT. Dave Field seconded the motion. The Executive Committee voted to approve the motion.

Continuing the report of the Wind Power and Power Lines Committee, Tony referred to an e-mail regarding the Clean Energy RFP. None of the Maine projects have received approval to move forward. There will be no project in Maine in the near future for construction of power lines that impacts the AT.

ATC 2017 Biennial Maine Conference: Tony Barrett spoke on plans for the ATC 2017 Biennial Conference. The registration packet team is working on materials. An article with details about the conference will appear in the AT Journeys magazine in the spring. Ron Tipton and members of the steering committee met at Colby to tour the facility and to speak to campus events staff. They and other ATC officials who have met there are impressed with venue and with the collaborative nature of the organization.

Communications Committee: Doug Dolan spoke for the Communications Committee. They have devised a model for a communications policy to present at the January meeting. It includes policy for dealing with the media and with social media. They will start with a proposal for the committee to consider.

They have also worked on a brochure proposal and have a model that would cost less than the current brochure. It includes an alternate publicity product. Doug will poll those who have been using the brochure to publicize the club, and will try to find a way to measure the effectiveness of the means currently in use and those that are available to the club. One possibility may be post cards; we may be able to target postcards to the particular groups we need to address, such as CARE groups, register box respondents, or potential donors. The committee hopes to have the brochure ready for the annual meeting. Doug will also poll his own committee for their input.

Campsite Committee Report: Laura Flight updated activities for the Campsite Committee. They installed a privy at the Pleasant Pond campsite in mid September. That work trip enjoyed positive publicity from the Bangor Daily News. They have now completed seven ADA accessible privies. Members of the Campsite Committee attended the hazard tree workshop. They also moved the privy at Little Swift River. They received blanket approval from the RPC for their privy replacement plan, but will still need to undergo the NEPA process for each replacement.

The Campsite Committee planned its next meeting for November 30, to wrap up the fall, and make plans for the next year.

CARE Committee Report: Holly Sheehan reported for the CARE Committee, which held its wrap up meeting on October 16. Numbers for the season were up; staff interacted with more than 12,000 hikers. The season went well, with fewer incidents of bad hiker behavior than last season. CARE volunteers and staff felt their education efforts were showing positive results. They acknowledge that they need to improve group outreach. Elysha Dyer, the new group registration contact, has been a welcome addition to the committee. The CARE Committee will work to get information out to groups about the registration process and the reasons for registering their itineraries. The new ATC visitor use manager will provide welcome support.

Fund raising for CARE is becoming more tenuous. The Trail Crew is receiving more of its funding from ATC, leaving some sources for CARE, but more grants are funneling to the capital campaign. Holly is working with Lester, Claire and ATC for more sources for CARE funding. Tom Gorrill emphasized the support from LL Bean for the program, in particular with supplies and gear.

Holly noted the changes in titles for the caretaker sites: Saddleback (Piazza Rock), Bigelow (Horns Pond).

Club Coordinator Update: Holly added to her written report of her activities as Club Coordinator. Information for the grant from the Recreational Trails Program should be available

this week. The club was denied funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, as they fund projects on state lands, and the AT is on federal land. Claire will check on ATC monies raised in response to the Walk in the Woods numbers increase, and monies designated for more caretakers and ridge runners along the length of the Trail.

Holly showed copies of Glen Mittlehauser's Bigelow and Saddleback Field Guide of Alpine Plants. The club has ten copies, which were grant funded.

Maine Trail Crew Update: Lester reported on the Maine Trail Crew. He has distributed a printed report which, he advised, is not for general distribution because it contains names and addresses of participants. Lester termed this only an okay season; volunteer numbers were down; two leaders quit in the middle of the summer. The Executive Committee heard at the last meeting about problems with vandalism at the base camp. Low water also caused problems with the raft at Brann's Mills Pond, hampering access to the base camp.

Overseer of Lands Report: Dave Field had no report as Overseer of Lands. He will have more information at a later date.

District Overseer Reports:

Tom Gorrill reported on the Baldpate District. He has no maintainer vacancies. The Bemis Stream trail was reopened this year, as was part of the Grafton Loop Trail.

Camp Tekakwitha again helped with trail projects, as did Bates College and Dirigo High School. With Hawk and Claire, Tom was able to remove some hazard trees. Volunteers cleaned out the privy at Little Swift River.

Craig Dickstein reported on the Kennebec District, which is doing well. Ferry numbers showed a 20% increase by the end of season. Craig has set as a personal project a review all signs in the district, changing some of the mileage to reflect actual distances. He has published an end of year report in the MAINetainer.

Craig presented a Pierce Pond relocation proposal, which will take the Trail off the dam in response to safety and political concerns. He seeks approval to take the proposal to the RPC in March. He hopes to flag the relocation, undergo the NEPA process and build the relocation by fall. Claire commented that the reroute is not perfect, and it may need some more research. She recommended taking the proposal to the RPC in the spring. Craig will prepare the submission to NERPC, and Tony and Don will present it. Lester called for a consensus approval to proceed, and the Executive Committee did so by voice vote.

Ron Dobra presented the report for the White Cap District. He has placed the field report on-line and in the MAINetainer.

Audrey Laffely and her husband are the new maintainers on the north side of Barren, which was Ron's section. Ron's request for delivery by snow mobile of Pleasant River Tote Road bog bridging materials is in process. Ron walked through, and assessed bog bridges, in particular on the Cooper Brook section of the Trail. Boy scouts from Parkman installed bog bridging at Beaver Pond, in Elliottsville, between Little Wilson Falls and Big Wilson Stream.

Rick Ste. Croix reported in the Katahdin District. All eleven maintainers went out, reporting 32 trips for 44 volunteers for a total of 1408 hours. The Trail Crew worked three weeks on the Hunt Trail, three weeks at Nahmakanta Stream and three weeks at Rainbow Stream.

Trail Champions Campaign Update: The Capital Campaign is still looking at a total goal of \$4.8 million and remains in the quiet phase until it has secured \$1.9 million. Bethany Dodge has joined the committee, but it is too small to make fast progress.

October 22 NERPC Meeting: Tony Barrett supplied notes on the recent NERPC meeting.

Nahmakanta Stream Lean-to: The new Nahmakanta Stream Lean-to saw five work trips with small volunteer crews this season. It will still need two more trips next year.

Damage to Trail Crew Employees' Cars: Lester updated the Executive Committee on the subject of damage to Trail Crew employees' cars. There has been negotiation between MATC's insurance company and the insurance company for Rent a Wreck. Several club members discussed a proposal to donate club monies to cover employees' losses; one had insurance that covered the damage; one had no insurance. Club personnel policy excludes liability for losses of personal property. The club's legal counsel cautions against the precedent that would be set if the club or its members were to cover personal losses. Claire notes that a lawyer states that if an organization pays out of club funds, it's an admission of liability / responsibility, and could open us to other charges. Lester recommends the Executive Committee continue to think over the matter.

Maine Trail Finder: Lester referred to a letter from CCGIS which maintains the Maine Trail Finder web site. MATC has allowed several trails to be listed with them. MTF wants to add more trails, particularly trails in the Hundred Mile Wilderness. Executive Committee members are concerned that increased publicity can further impact use of trails in an area that is already heavily used. Claire explained that they're willing to work with us and to compromise, and they need our direction. She feels it's to our advantage to work with them, as their goal is to have educated hikers.

Tom Gorrill placed a motion, seconded by Mike Ewing, to work with Maine Trail Finder.

With further discussion of club concerns, both withdrew their motion, and replaced it with a motion to authorize Lester to work with Maine Trail Finder on trails descriptions. The Executive Committee voted its approval.

With discussions ended, Don Stack placed a motion, seconded by Doug Dolan, to adjourn. The meeting ended at 10:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Clain
Recording Secretary
December 28, 2016