



BAXTER STATE PARK ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
UNIVERSITY POLY COM
December 16 2014
10:00 A.M.

ATTENDEES:

BSP ADVISORS: UMO - Rick Bray (Chair), Rosemary Hastings, Anne Huntington, Erica Kaufmann, Laurie Nale, Michael White

USM – Darrell Morrow, Steve Hutnak, Tom Bradbury

UMFK – Tom Goetz, Jeff Dubis

BSP STAFF: Jensen Bissell, Christine Theriault, Jean Hoekwater, Eben Sypitkowski.

Bray called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Following introductions, Bray thanked everyone for attending.

4/16/14 ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES:

Goetz noted an error on the bottom of the first page. Bissell will add the necessary text “revenues from fees”. White moved the minutes be accepted as amended. Kaufman seconded. The vote was unanimous.

OLD BUSINESS:

There being no old business.

PARK UPDATE:

Bray turned the meeting over to Bissell for an update. Bissell summarized current Park conditions (varied snow depths), 2014 Park use (very similar to 2013). Theriault discussed changes to staffing in the reservation office, HR department and Ranger staff. Bissell discussed the planned change in the LE Ranger position recently vacated by the resignation of Isaac Needell from a fully commissioned sworn officer position to a Park Ranger with the authority to issue summons on Park Rules. The new position will require 3 weeks training at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Bradbury asked if we require a commitment to term of employment for LE Rangers based on the significant investment in training by the Park. Bissell responded that currently there is no requirement, but that the idea is valid and worth consideration in future hires. The process now underway should provide for a hire before the summer season. Theriault also provided detail on a planee change in the reservation refund policy. Nale inquired why we are asking for 30 days of notice for winter reservations and only 15 days for summer reservations. Theriault explained that there are fewer winter reservations and less cancellations and also less chance the Park will fill spots created from cancellations. Bissell also briefed the committee on a recent accident in the Park involving three snowmobiles and a park ranger pick-up. The accident resulted in serious personal injury to one individual and numerous summons for excessive speed. White asked if the Park has a “headlights on” policy for staff vehicles in the Park. Bissell responded that he believes that is in the SOP, but will check. Bissell also briefed the Advisory on a recent search involving a man from Ontario Canada. The search resulted from illegal and irresponsible actions from the individual and the Park will be requesting reimbursement for the search costs under Park Rule 2.2.

ABOL TRAIL RELOCATION:

Bissell then reviewed materials provided to the committee detailing plans for the relocation of approximately 1 mile of the Abol Trail. The relocation was triggered by the significant movement of soil and rocks down the Abol Slide in early 2014 and the subsequent closure of the trail for safety reasons. A relocation route was examined in 2014 and approximately 50% of the relocation has been flagged. The remainder will be completed early in 2015 as trail construction work begins. About 300’ of the relocation was cleared by MCC late in 2014.

RULES AND REGS CHANGES:

Bray moved to a discussion of proposed changes to the BSP Rules and Regulations. Bissell discussed the distributed changes to provide for bicycle use in the SFMA when harvesting operations do not pose a safety hazard and to extend bicycle use to the Dwelley Pond Trail. Bissell stressed that trail access to bicycles is not the trend, but the Dwelley Pond “trail” was formerly a portion of the Park Tote Road and retains the characteristics of a road. In addition, the trail is minimally used by hikers. Bissell noted that the proposed wording is awkward

and will need to be refined. Dubis expressed support for the expansion of bicycle use. Baribeau asked about bicycle use in the winter. Bissell explained that the existing rule does not have a seasonal limitation and bicycles have been used in the Park during the winter months when conditions have been supportive. Bissell also discussed the increasing use of “fat-tired bikes”. Bissell then moved to the proposal to add language regarding the use of UAV’s to Rule 5. Goetz provided slightly different wording from the FAA that would also prohibit rocket use in the Park. No objections to the rule changes were expressed.

GEESE MGT. – KIDNEY POND

Bray asked Bissell to preview the discussion. Bissell provided an overview of the issue of an expanding population of Canada Geese at Kidney Pond. Bissell and Hoekwater discussed actions the Park has taken to change habitat at the campground to reduce the attraction to geese. Most of the issue involves the presence of mown lawn in combination with water. Hoekwater and Bissell listed the numerous actions that have been applied, but stressed that the only effective outcome was to change the habitat to more clearly reflect wild conditions more similar to those found at Daicey Pond. Bissell stressed that it will take several years for the plantings and changes to become effective, and that to ease the direct and real conflicts between geese (droppings) and campers, the Park has planned to work with IF&W to herd the geese during the molt and transport them to Flagstaff Lake. This operation will be conducted for a year or two, but is considered a temporary fix until the habitat changes reduce the attractiveness of the site.

AT USE and TRENDS –

Bissell and Hoekwater discussed a letter issued from Bissell to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the NPS. Details of the issues encompassed in the letter were discussed. This is currently information only. Bissell and Hoekwater are seeking to meet directly with ATC and NPS officials early in 2015 to address the concerns.

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS

There being no guests, Bray asked for wrap-up comments. Nale noted that the website listing of Advisory Members is not up to date. Nale also asked about plans for the new Ranger Camp at Kidney Pond. Bissell explained that the plans were to proceed with a plan identical to the Daicey Pond RC including a shared communal living space and private bedrooms. Nale expressed her preference for divided quarters including separate living space. Dubis asked about progress on the art storage issue. Bray described that an ad-hoc committee had been formed to address this issue. Nale volunteered to participate. The committee is now White, Nale, Dubis, Huntington and Bray. The first step is an inventory of the artwork. Bissell confirmed this has not been done, but hope to complete this work this winter. Bray and Bissell then discussed the general agenda for the winter meetings including the cancellation of the January meeting. Bissell will work on scheduling the April meeting at IF&W in Bangor.

There being no further business, Bray wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukah and adjourned the meeting at 11:50 am.

Rick Bray, Co-Chair BSP Advisory