



BAXTER STATE PARK ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES
VARIOUS UMO POLYCOM SITES
FEBRUARY 25, 2016
10:00 A.M.

ATTENDEES:

BSP ADVISORS:

UMO: Rick Bray, Laurie Nale, Anne Huntington, Erica Kaufmann, Doug Callnan, Dave Wilson, Mike White, Rosemary Hastings

USM: Robert Baribeau, Darrell Morrow, Tom Bradbury, Steve Hutnak.

UMFK: Jeff Dubis

BSP STAFF: Jensen Bissell, Christine Theriault, Stewart Guay.

Note: Due to recent weather, the power was out at Fogler Library. The UMO group secured a room in the Memorial Union and contacted the USM and UMFK groups by phone on speaker.

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

12/9/15 ADVISORY MEETING MINUTES:

Bray asked for a discussion on the December 9, 2015 meeting minutes. A comment was made to amend the last sentence under the TTII section on p. 3.

Bissell will amend that to refer to an 8 month long position. Wilson motioned to accept the minutes as amended, seconded by Nale. The vote was unanimous.

REMOTE MEETING PLATFORM

Bissell discussed the effort and risk of scheduling polycom meetings through the UMO system and posed the alternative for 2016/17 of moving to a Google Hangouts or Skype format. Bissell asked how many Advisors used a Google platform for their personal mail/browser. Discussion ensued. Bissell will work with Advisors in the coming months to test alternatives.

BSP STAFF CHANGES

Therault covered staff changes, including seasonal interview currently underway for Gatehouse Attendant, Backcountry Ranger and Campground Ranger. Therault noted the recent hires of a Maintenance, Transportation Supervisor, a Park Secretary and the promotion of Stewart Guay to the Chief Ranger position following the resignation of Ben Woodard. Therault discussed the current work to review and revise the Deputy Chief Ranger position to a "Senior Field Supervisor" and to restructure the Trails Supervisor/Trail Crew Leader positions to two Trails Specialist positions. The hiring process is currently underway for these positions. Work is also underway to hire an Interpretive Specialist after the recent resignation of Morgan Taylor.

AT/BSP USE ISSUES

Bissell discussed the Proposals for Addressing Hiker Impacts on the AT that was provided to Advisors. Bissell explained that he and Hoekwater will be meeting with Maine and NE Regional ATC staff later in the week to discuss the proposals. White stated that he didn't see an expiration date on the permit card and was concerned that the cards could be reused in later years. Bissell explained that the card color would change each year and re-use would be difficult. Wilson asked about the potential for AT hikers rushing to Monson to secure a card. Bissell stated he had considered this and that he expected it would be a topic of discussion at the meeting with the ATC staff. Baribeau asked if the ATC behavior issues were addressed, would we be having this discussion? Bissell explained that the primary concern isn't behavior or hiking with oversize groups, but that both of these issues are related to increasing overall hiking numbers. Bissell stated that ATC hiking numbers have increased an average of 6% each year since 1992. AT hikers are currently exempt from the access limitations and procedures for accessing a Katahdin trailhead that all Mainers are subject to. This was acceptable when the numbers were relatively small, but with current numbers well over 2,000 hikers each year, the increasing number of AT hikers needs to be addressed. Bissell also stated that the large majority of AT hikers are respectful and considerate, the percentage of hikers that cause problems for the resource and other visitors is small, as the overall number of hikers increases, this number of problem hikers also increases.

Discussion about various points of operational facets of the issue continued. Bradbury felt he didn't see a listing of the issues. Bissell realized that the original 2014 letter that detailed the concerns was not been included and that it will be forwarded to Advisors. Bissell thanked the Advisory for the feedback and comments and will keep them informed of future developments regarding this issue.

TRAUTMANN TRAIL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

Bissell reviewed a distributed map detailing planned relocations on the Hunt Trail above Katahdin Stream Falls. Bissell stated that significant planning remains to be done and that this work will likely not begin until 2017 or late in 2016. Bissell relayed that other layout work has been done on the North Brother Mountain Trail. Bissell also explained that work is underway to add another Trail Supervisor position to the Park to enable full supervision of the additional MCC crews now being applied to both standard trail maintenance as well as fall-line trail relocation projects. The new position would be seasonal, likely around 8 months long.

ADVISORY WINTER OUTING

Bray raised the option of a winter outing in the Park. Various possibilities were outlined including a ski trip to Foss Knowlton, or a combined ski/snowmobile trip to other locations in the Park. Bray and Bissell will work on options Advisors discussed the difficulties inherent with weekday meeting dates. Bissell stated that he has always been ready to meet at the Committee's pleasure regarding days of the week or evenings. After additional discussion, the committee decided to schedule the April meeting for a Saturday. Volunteer activities in the Park were also discussed. Bissell and Bray will work to schedule activities for 2016.

COMMENTS FROM GUESTS

Bray noted there were no guests at the meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Bray adjourned the meeting at 11:40 am.

Rick Bray, Chair, BSP Advisory