

MAINE BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS (BPL)
Department of Conservation
22 State House Station - Augusta, Maine 04333-0022

DRAFT MINUTES

CENTRAL PENOBSCOT REGION MANAGEMENT PLAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Dover-Foxcroft, Maine
May 22, 2012
1:00PM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND THE INTERESTED PUBLIC PRESENT

See attached Sign in Sheet

BPL STAFF PRESENT

Catherine Carroll, Management Plan Coordinator
Chuck Simpson, Lands Manager Eastern Region
Doug Reed, Forester - Seboeis Unit
Joe Wiley, MDIFW Wildlife Biologist assigned to BPL

Kathy Eickenberg, Acting Deputy Director (BPL)
Jay Hall, Forester - Nahmakanta Unit
Tom Charles, Chief Silviculturist
Brian Bronson, ORV/ATV Coordinator

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made by members of the Committee, BPL staff, and members of the public.

SEBOEIS UNIT

A draft list of the resource management issues and opportunities for the Seboeis Unit, and maps from the 1990 Plan that depict the existing resource allocations were distributed. Also, a summary was given of the subsequent¹ lands acquisitions that started in 2004 to complete the state's ownership of the whole shoreline of Seboeis Lake and Northwest Pond, and part of the western shoreline of Endless Lake. The BPL staff presented the **proposed resource allocations** (wildlife, riparian, remote recreation, development recreation) for the Unit and features of the State's 2012 acquisition of the south end of Seboeis Lake. The Committee members and BPL staff offered numerous comments and suggestions. The following outlines the discussion.

Questions were raised regarding **public safety while hunting** in close proximity of the shared-use roads. BPL staff summarized general rules and laws that ensure safety for the hunters and non-hunters along these roads.

Advice was given to regard **alternative routes for shared-use roads** that are currently using existing forest management roads. Suggestions were provided for more drive-to/ATV accessible campsites. ATV use of the existing drive-to campsites at Seboeis Outlet and the Endless Lake was explained.

A proposal to improve **the boating facility at the north end of Seboeis Lake** to reduce parking and traffic congestion was reiterated. Additionally, improvements to **the boating facility at Endless Lake** are to relocate the launch to deeper water which would also create a greater separation distance from the existing campsite.

The opportunity for **remote paddle water access camping at Northwest Pond and the south end of Seboeis Lake** was discussed. A couple of potential sites for a carry-in boating facility at Northwest Pond were suggested by Committee members who are proprietors of Moosehorn Camps and the BPL staff. While a **potential carry-in boating facility along the west shore at the south end of Seboeis Lake**, at the "carry trail", would be a nice, a legal right-of-way on the railbed to the "carry trail" is necessary. BPL staff is interested in negotiating public access at the "carry trail" with the neighboring landowner. There is an unimproved facility along the **east shore at the south end of Seboeis Lake** that may be well suited for carry in boat access by making minor improvements. Public access is available to this site. Committee member

¹ Since the adoption of the 1990 Plan

representing the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) voiced comparable words of encouragement for **boating access at the south end of Seboeis Lake** and added that these sites are feasible, from a sustainable fisheries standpoint, for small trailered boats. As an aside, MDIFW representative noted that the law prohibits fishways at the **dam at Seboeis Lake Outlet and Schoodic Lake**. Some Committee members asked BPL staff to consider **trailered boating facilities elsewhere** on the lake.

There was support among the Committee members to obtain more signs from MDIFW and/or the Maine Department of Environmental Protection that informs boaters of the harm caused by boat hulls and propeller blades introducing **invasive aquatic species** to waterbodies in the Unit.

A newly acquired **50 foot right-of-way to Schoodic Lake**, at first, does not lend itself as an ideal launch facility because of the steep downward approach to the lake from the railbed. The prospect of a launch will be further explored.

It was asked whether to **add another group site** at the beach at Hammer Island, which is used informally, and whether other group sites are planned for the north end of Seboeis Lake.

Committee members asked about the exact location and status of the two **“out lots”** within the newly acquired south end parcel.

There was discussion on **improving and authorizing an existing trail to Turtle Pond** for hikers **and to create a campsite**. It was noted that this trail receives unauthorized ATV traffic which is a prohibited use by virtue of Turtle Pond’s “remote pond” designation. It was asked whether there are proposals for hiking trails elsewhere on the Unit.

Committee members commented on the possible increase in interest for **cross country skiing and ice fishing opportunities**.

There were general questions asked about the LURC zoned **Deer Wintering Area at Northwest Pond**. BPL staff responded that the “yard” needs to be rehabilitated and expanded. Timber management practices, such as adjusting for ideal softwood:hardwood ratios for wintering deer, is underway, but that it’s a lengthy process. Trees (softwoods in this instance) take years to grow to be effective cover for wintering deer.

NAHMAKANTA UNIT

The Nahmakanta Unit discussion began with reviewing the key **features of the Unit** including the ecological reserve, wetland and wildlife habitat, exemplary plant and animal habitat, recreation areas, roads, and trails.

The Committee members discussed whether certain **motorized vehicle uses in the ecological reserve** should continue or discontinue. Specifically, the discussion focused on ATV activities on the public-use roads located at the northern vicinity of Nahmakanta Lake to the Murphy Ponds and at the lower end of Fourth Debsconeag Lake. A proposal was made to completely discontinue ATV use on the public use road beginning at the Appalachian Trail Corridor (ATC) to the Murphy Pond barricade. Rationales for allowing four wheeled vehicles on these roads and options for discontinuing ATV use were explored. A number of ideas were considered including restricting the use of ATVs for administrative purposes only to the proprietors of Nahmakanta Lake Camps. Similar provisions would to Fourth Debsconeag Lake in which the shared use road would terminate at Nahmakanta Stream. The exception would be to allow ATV use by the proprietors of Debsconeag Lake Wilderness Camps for administrative use only. The Committee and BPL staff all agreed that adding signs clarifying where ATV is allowed is a must if the use is to discontinue in the ecological reserve. Some measures to block roads and spur roads may be in order. BPL will continue to inform the public of the rules for ATV use in the Unit, and work with clubs and MDIFW’s Warden Service to address ATV use in areas where there is persistent unauthorized activity.

There was also a proposal made to **discontinue the primitive snowmobile use along the Bean Spur Trail**. Nahmakanta Lake Camps use this trail to transport clients, and Committee member and proprietor of the camps explained that using alternative routes exist but are either dangerous (machines sledding at high speeds) or are rough. The **primitive snowmobile trail to Rainbow Lake** would continue.

Committee member representing the Maine Department of Transportation asked whether an **off-highway bicycle trail**, proposed as part of the department's scenic byways project, entering the ecological reserve would be prohibited. Bicycles are not "motorized vehicle uses" and are not specifically prohibited in the Ecological Reserve statute.

The Committee asked whether a proposed so-called **Millinocket to Deadwater ATV Trail** connecting a network of trails on Katahdin Forest Management, LLC (KFM) lands is realistic. The initial response from some was that KFM may consider a connector particularly if the Seboeis Unit connector trail is successful.²

Options on the fate of the **fire tower** atop Wadleigh Mountain were discussed. A third alternative, "do nothing" with the tower and let the trees grow in, was added to the list of options. Absent restoring or removing the tower BPL should explore whether the Department of Conservation is liable if the public is injured while climbing the decrepit tower.

The Committee members and BPL staff discussed practices to better manage **boat storage on remote ponds** especially where ponds are fraught with abandoned and junked boats, and litter. Like BPL, other landowners have experimented with innovative measures for solving persistent boat storage problems. Some landowners require watercraft owners to affix a label to their boat(s) with identification information so that the owner can be contacted in the event an issue arises with storage. Additionally, unlabeled and unusable boats are removed in wintertime and stored (off premises) for a six month period so that the owner can retrieve their property. Unclaimed boats are then recycled, donated, etc. Theoretically, *word of mouth* of this practice reduces the frequency of boats left unattended for unacceptable extended periods of time. Designated boat storage areas accompanied with racks/logs nearby the ponds has worked to concentrate stored boats in one location. Finally, maintaining a basic database is a way to track boat storage.

The **hand carry boating facility at Nahmakanta Lake** could modestly be re-designed to make launching easier and friendlier by installing rails for a rail cart to carry dunnage up and down the rails. Keeping the dolly system but adding a spare dolly was also suggested. Committee member and Maine Appalachian Trail Club representative thought one of their "ridge runners" could help people with logistics of launching boats as another means of making it less inconvenient. MDIFW would like to see more harvesting of the salmon fishery (for sustainable purposes), and that a drive-to trailered facility would help to meet that objective. Some expressed concern that making any or substantial improvements would spoil the peace and quiet of the lake. Ultimately, the landowner, National Park Service (NPS), has the final say on modifications (small or big) to the existing facility. BPL staff offered to ask NPS what facility improvements would be considered.

There was a discussion on whether **new campsite development** in the Unit makes sense. Some would like to see more campsites within the ATC³ and along loop trails. Others are interested in the *status quo*. Some see publicizing existing campsites as positive in that it will attract more users. Some prefer to see campsite development along existing loop trails near the outlet at Gould Brook and/or at Sixth Debsconeag Lake, and the east side of Sing Sing Pond. However, Sing Sing Pond area is fragile and some worry about numbers of people hiking Turtle Ridge increasing if campsites are introduced. Campsite development may be more appropriate along "The Great Circle" loop trail.

² See Katahdin Forest Management, LLC post-meeting notes (attached)

³ Campsite development in the ATC is governed by MATC's local plan.

New hiking trails need to be marked and advertised in brochures and/or the Internet. Consider volunteer groups, “friends groups” and the BPL’s seasonal staff to work on new trails. Alternatively, BPL may want to suspend expending resources on new trails and use resources on maintaining and improving existing trails.

Committee member and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) representative was very open to working with BPL on a **Debsconeag Trail Network**

There was a lot of discussion regarding **public access into the Unit from the west** via the Shawtown Road (some refer to it as the “Farrar Mountain Road/Nahmakanta Road”) in which BPL has a snowmobile easement, and via the Sias Hill Road which BPL does not have an easement for the public to use. Some Committee members want BPL to obtain direct, legal and free access from Kokadjo to the Unit. Committee member and Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) representative said that the organization is considering relocating a portion of the Shawtown Road.

Public access into the Unit from the east via the Jo Mary Gate requires a per person fee which some feel deters tourists from visiting the Unit. A citizen can petition the North Maine Woods Administrative Fee Committee for a vehicle fee schedule.

TNC representative mentioned **property boundary signs at the east side of the Unit** are located on TNC land and may need relocating on BPL land.

OTHER COMMENTS

The BPL staff mentioned next steps in the management plan adoption process. A member of the Committee mentioned a computer software program “WordPress” to consider using for public input/comment on a final draft via the Internet.

Committee member, Katahdin Forest Management, LLC, offered post meeting comments, herewith attached.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Catherine Carroll*