



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Winter 2004, V. 18, No. 1

From the President

Dear Friends,

Well, not an awful lot has been going on with FOP since the Annual Meeting, except with the Blood Farm Barn which FOP is moving from Westmoreland to Pisgah Park. The Building Committee has met and gone over some of the items to which the Division of Parks expects us to commit. We questioned a few and I have talked to one of the Park Recreation Specialists. Hopefully things will be resolved soon and we can continue to get ready for the big start this spring. Many aspects of the project have to be considered: removing the roof and siding from the barn to coincide with the timber framer's dismantling of the framework; getting ready for excavation for the foundation; removing trees, stumps and rocks at the new site; and preparing for getting electricity, water, phone and the alarm system into the basement.

This is just a start as we have to have a place to store the building parts at the site while the foundation and ground work progresses. We are hoping to have volunteers, skilled and unskilled, come and help with the project. It is starting to get exciting, and if you want to join in, please call.

Aaron Sturgis from Preservation Timber Framing Inc. was at our last Executive Council meeting, and showed slides of the barn and a few close-ups of repairs that have to be made to some timbers. His talk was very informative and he had answers to questions put to him.

I look forward to getting this project into high gear soon, and remember, if you would like to join in, please call me at 603/336-5462 and I'm sure we can put you to work.

Bill Roberts

Rails – Trails Advisory Committee

As you may be aware, FOP is a strong supporter of trails activities in the area surrounding Pisgah State Park. We have been involved in projects such as the Wantastiquet – Monadnock Greenway and local rail-trails. In this connection, we are pleased to report that the Pisgah Mountain Trailriders have applied for a Rail-Trail grant to repair and upgrade sections of the Fort Hill/Ashuelot Rail Trail in Hinsdale. When the rails on this rail-trail were taken up in a salvage operation some years ago, the stone ballast, and even gravel, was removed, causing several low points which impound water. This makes the trail difficult to use, especially by mountain bikers and hikers in the summer.

The grant, if funded, would provide funds to excavate and relocate railroad ties which now impede drainage along the ditches. The grant also would fill in low spots and sink holes with gravel and provide material to re-grade and repair the drainage ditches. One thousand cubic yards of gravel will be spread at different locations to a width of twelve feet.

The Pisgah Mountain Trailriders, a dedicated group of volunteers (approximately 240 members) and a group member of FOP will undertake the work. The matching funds for the grant will come from funds raised through club dues, booths, raffles, grant-in-aid funds, donations, and in-kind labor. Upon grant approval, the work is expected to begin in June 2004 and be completed by August 2004. This grant request has been endorsed by the FOP Rails – Trails Advisory Committee.

John Summers

From the Park Manager

Mid-Week Workdays

The workday season ended about as it started – with several planned workdays being canceled due to weather. We lost two workdays in October and two in November. I think we lost, due to weather, more than half of our scheduled workdays in 2003. Even with those losses, we did manage to reach the top goal for the year, the replacement of all the bridges on and near the Kilburn Loop. We finished the last bit on December 3rd. Our final mid-week workday of the year was held on December 10th, at which time we had our annual thank-the-guys pizza and goodies lunch. Thanks Art Savory, Gil Cameron, Gerry Goslant, and John Larson!

Winter Activities

The winter, to this point (February 5th), has been a bust for snow-lovers. The lack of snow, along with the extreme cold of recent weeks, has kept the activity level low so far in 2004.

December 2003 was a strange month. Early in the month, the two snowstorms seemed to presage another snowy winter, but warm temperatures and lots of rain took care of that. In fact, there was so much water in the woods that in many areas, there was standing water in places I'd never seen it before, even during spring run-off.

Meeting Room Lighting

The meeting room at the Visitor Center now has permanent lighting, thanks to Jan Carpenter and Wilton Clark. Jan provided the lantern, a rather unusual homemade design she happened to come across. Wilt performed his usual meticulous overhaul, including re-wiring it, painting the hardware, and fashioning hand-made reflectors for the four bulbs. He also installed and wired it, and, while he was at it, installed a light in the pantry off the meeting room. It's a big upgrade from the clamp-on work light that we had relied on

An Excerpt from an Interview with J. Ray Donovan Conducted by Edith Atkins in 1974

Ray: "As a boy I used to take off with a sandwich and an apple with a single barrel shotgun. I'd go up to the Reservoir and stay overnight at one of those camps, and then go off up to past the upper reservoir pond and over to Kilburn up to Baker-Hubbard, swing back down to North Round and Lily and on out to Chesterfield Road and home, some 30 miles, and go to a dance that night."

Edith Atkins: "Did you ever get lost up in there?"

Ray: "I've got turned around at times, but it's an easy place to get turned around on a cloudy day when it's foggy. Without a compass, which I couldn't afford to own in those days (I was a teenager), I would sit down and wait 'till I could hear a train running in the Connecticut Valley. I knew that was west, so I'd just head east and keep going 'till I hit a road. That was the easy way out there."

Jim Bearce

ATV's and Pisgah Park

We've received quite a few phone calls questioning the presence of ATV's on trails where they are not normally permitted, so I'll explain the current Division of Parks and Recreation policy.

Originally, wheeled vehicles of any type were not permitted in the park once there was continuous snow cover, and until after mud season (defined as ending May 23rd). Then, several years ago, the Division changed this policy. ATV's were permitted, in the winter, to use those trails that were open to them in the summer/fall months; it was also at this time that winter ATV use of the state-owned rail-trails was permitted.

This pattern held until last winter; at that time, policy was revised to permit the use of ATV's, during the winter, on all trails that are open to snowmobiles. This means that, in winter only, ATV's are permitted on all trails except: Southwoods, Kilburn Loop, and Pisgah Ridge. Those diamond-shaped "Permitted on this Trail" signs that many have questioned us about are put up in the early winter, once there is continuous snow cover sufficient to allow the use of snowmobiles, and are removed (except on ATV summer trails) in the spring when the trails are closed to snowmobile use.

This winter did create a problem with the melt-off of the early snow and wet weather of the second half of December. Many trails were soft and wet, and did suffer some damage from heavy ATV use before this month's arctic temperatures froze them solid (and deterred most park visitors!). Hopefully this set of weather circumstances won't happen again. Please give the Park office a call if you have any questions about this (or any) policy or rule.

Jim Bearce

Annual Meeting

The Friends of Pisgah Annual Meeting was held on November 18, 2003 at the Chesterfield Town Hall. There were 22 members in attendance. Owing to a problem, our scheduled speaker, Aaron Sturgis, from Preservation Timber Framing, Inc., was not in attendance. (Note: Aaron did make his presentation to the FOP Board later – see “From the President”, page 1.) Some photos of the meeting are on page 4.

Various reports were made. Bill Roberts summarized the project to remove the Blood Farm Barn to Pisgah and to re-erect it there. The Barn Committee has been working with the state for design of the barn foundation. Archeologists will be looking at the new barn site opposite the Visitor Center on Old Chesterfield Road in Winchester.

Jan Carpenter (Historian) reported on the task of getting furnishings for the Visitor Center. Eighteen items were donated during 2003 but the Visitor Center still requires additional 18th century furnishings. Let us know if you have any items you would care to offer as tax deductible donations to the Friends. You can leave a message with the Park (603/239-8153) or Bill Roberts (603/336-5462) or Matt Donachie (603/239-6590) and we will arrange for Jan to get in touch with you.

Jim Bearce gave a comprehensive summary of the status of work in the Park. (See Jim’s report on the preceding page.) A major concern, in addition to State Park budget constraints, was the condition of roads in the Park owing to heavy rains in the summer of 2003. Norma Reppucci thanked all who helped with the FOP Annual Picnic, especially John Summers who furnished the canoes and kayaks.

Other reports included a brief summary of Trails activity by John Herrick, the Treasurer’s Report, and a summary of current membership and the Update (newsletter) mailings for the year. John Summers gave a comprehensive review of the Planning and Strategy Committee and Rails – Trails Advisory Committee activities. Among items mentioned was a grant from the Chesterfield Conservation Committee to FOP to maintain the Wantastiquet – Monadnock Greenway right of way and an invitation to Craig DellaPenna (Rails to Trails Conservancy) to look at the Fort Hill Line (in Hinsdale). FOP wished Craig to observe silted areas and suggest remedial action as there is no current remedial action underway by the state. (Note: other action is now in process, see “Rails – Trails Advisory Committee” report on page 1. John also reported on the Pisgah State Park Management Plan on which a committee has been working with Antioch College for some time. Antioch has been getting public input for the future state master plan and FOP intends to provide as much information as necessary to ensure that the original objectives for the formation of the Park and objectives of the FOP in supporting the Park are not compromised.

The evening culminated with the usual refreshments and conversation.

Founders Plaque Provided for Visitor Center

The Friends of Pisgah Executive Council has decided to recognize the unique contributions of those visionary folks who started FOP to support the Park. A “Founders Plaque” in bronze has been produced to honor the original members of the Friends of Pisgah. The plaque will be mounted in the Visitor Center. The plaque was presented to Bill Mitchell, the first, and for many years the only, President of FOP. Be sure to take a look at the plaque and a companion one that recognizes the volunteer workers who constructed the Visitor Center given by the Friends to Pisgah State Park in the late 1990s.

Share This Newsletter with a Friend or Leave It Where Others May Read It

The Friends can use additional exposure to increase membership and maintain our program of assistance to Pisgah State Park. One way you can help is to share this newsletter with a friend. Maybe you have a reading area at work where you could leave it for others to read. If you have a spot but don't want to part with your copy of Update, give Matt Donachie (603/239-6590) or Jim Bearce (603/239-8153) a call and we'll send you an extra. All of the area libraries get copies but any extra visibility for the FOP would help us.

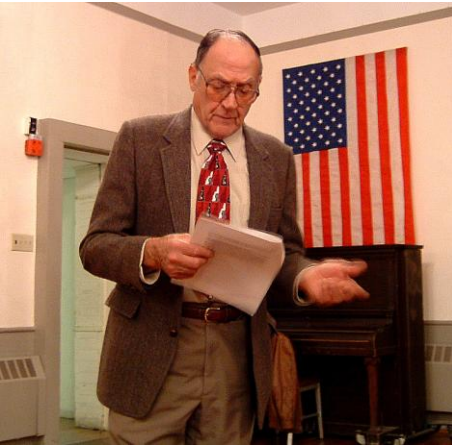
Special Funds

The Friends of Pisgah maintains some special funds for appropriate projects. The Visitor Center was one such project. We have funds set aside for education and/or in honor/memory of special individuals with ties to FOP. Recently we received a gift “In Memory of Tom and Ernesta Lacey”.

If you wish to donate to a special cause/fund or to create one with FOP, please contact President Bill Roberts or our Treasurer John Larson



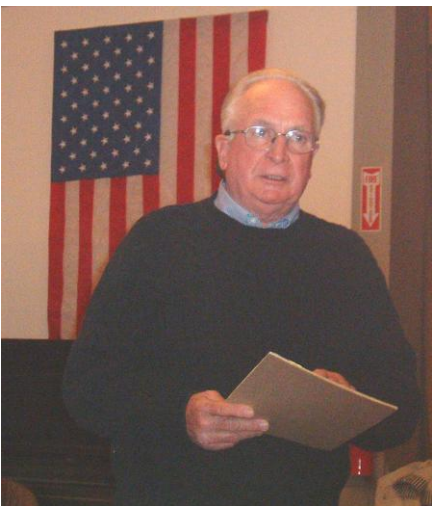
Refreshment Line at the Annual Meeting



Bill Roberts Discusses the Barn at the Annual Meeting



Jim Bearce Reports on the Park at the Annual Meeting



John Summers Giving His Reports at the Annual Meeting



Snow on Cheese Rock on Old Chesterfield Road
(Just a reminder that it is still winter!)

Animal Tracking in Winter

Now that milder but still cold temperatures have returned and there seems to be a bit more snow on the ground, perhaps you'll be taking a ski/snowshoe/hike or snowmobile tour in Pisgah. Keep your eyes open! Here and there, sometimes in solitary array and sometimes in profusion, there are the tracks of the critters large and small that inhabit this Park we all care about so much. I am no tracking expert but at least the snow does tend to highlight the tracks that otherwise might be missed in the grass/dirt of the other seasons of the year. Thus, I am more aware of the animals in the winter than in any other season.

Within the heavy forest there is not always much to see but along the trails or crossing them in the Park one often sees evidence of the otherwise hidden activity of the forest animals. Shrews, mice, voles and other small mammals frequently cross the trail. Squirrel activity also can be detected. Sometimes we run across the tracks of the wild turkey, a rabbit and, occasionally, evidence of a coyote (from tracks and territorial markings). Frequently, particularly along the margin of meadows and fields, we see the tracks of deer. Moose also exist in the Park but, although I have had them in our yard on four occasions in the past dozen years, I have never seen them in the Park. Nor have I seen porcupine in the winter. The bears, of course are taking the season off! As for bobcats, I have seen one on Old Chesterfield Rd (outside the Park), tracks in our field and yesterday heard one while skiing down the Broad Brook Rd. However, I have never seen any identifiable tracks of the elusive cat in the park.

If you want to identify the tracks and interesting patterns that animals produce, there are several books which may be of interest. Scats and Tracks of the Northeast (Falcon/Globe Pequot), Animal Tracks (Peterson Field Guides), A Guide to Animal Tracking and Behavior (Stokes Nature Guides) or Familiar Animal Tracks of North America (National Audubon Society Pocket Guide) can be very helpful. In addition, a most valuable book is Field Guide to Tracking Animals in Snow (Stackpole Books). Try your library or local bookstore for copies of one or more of these excellent books. If you want more general guidance to the natural world in winter, try A Guide to Nature in Winter (Little, Brown and Co). This book by Donald Stokes provides information not only on animal tracks but also on insect patterns, birds, weeds and flowers among others.

Matt Donachie

Membership Notes

It is time to renew your membership for 2004. If you would like to join the Friends, please use the form below and send to the address shown.

If an N appears after your name on the mailing label, you are not paid. Please send your 2004 dues check in now. If one of the letters P, C, V appears after your name and a membership card is attached to this newsletter, you are paid for 2004.

The Friends maintain a nominal dues structure with the intent being to encourage as many individuals and families as possible to join. Half of the single address dues provides for printing and mailing the Update and the Annual Picnic notice, as well as for the fine food you are provided at the picnic. Dues are \$10 to cover all persons at the same address. Group (club) memberships are \$20.
Cut here

If you are joining or renewing, please use this form. Your dues support our Park efforts.

Date: _____	Category <i>(Check applicable boxes)</i>	Interests
Name(s): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Picnic
Address: _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
Phone: _____ (Home)	<input type="checkbox"/> Single Address (\$10.00)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising
Phone: _____ (Work)	<input type="checkbox"/> Group (\$20.00)	<input type="checkbox"/> History/Archaeology
E-mail: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Donation	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership
		<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter
		<input type="checkbox"/> Planning
		<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations
		<input type="checkbox"/> Trails
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

*Questions? Call Bill Roberts (603/ 336-5462)
or Matt Donachie (603/239-6590)*

Send form and check to:
Friends of Pisgah, Inc.
PO Box 134
Chesterfield, NH 03443-0134

Trail of History in Pisgah Park

The history of Pisgah Park goes back centuries to the 1600s and the famous Pisgah Pines reserved by the British Government for use on His Majesty's ships. In more recent times, during the 19th Century, Pisgah flourished with small hamlets, mills and farms amidst the Pisgah Wilderness. Today, while the 19th and 20th Century landmarks are gone, a 3 ½ to 4 mile walk/hike/ski/snowshoe or even snowmobile loop trek through the Park, starting at the Visitor Center on Old Chesterfield Rd, will acquaint you with some of the activities of bygone eras. Head north and west on Old Chesterfield Rd to the Broad Brook Rd. South on the Broad Brook Rd to the Doolittle Trail and then more or less south and then east on the Doolittle Trail uphill and back to Old Chesterfield Rd. where it is a scant ¼ mile uphill to the Visitor Center again.

Along the route you travel there will be signs and often a descriptive sheet for various historical locations. For example, starting at the Visitor Center, and going north downhill you will pass (on the left) the Doolittle Orchard, Doolittle Cider Mill and Doolittle Barn sites. Just yards farther on the right is the site of the Benjamin Doolittle homestead. At present, some old farm implements are on the site but they will move to the new barn opposite the Visitor Center in the future. Lots of other sites, broken dams and abandoned water canals, plus many cellar holes await you. Look for the Nathan Field homestead nestled between two brooks; find the cellar hole of the William Whittemore home; find the King Water Mill site which dates to around 1791. As you near the Doolittle Trail Junction, look for the Dickinson Lumber Co. Boarding House site (ca 1870) on the left and the Dickinson Lumber Co. Barn site (also ca 1870) on the right.

There is a lot of history in this Park and you can connect with it by taking the Trail of History and poking around the various sites.

Matt Donachie

Update is published occasionally during the year by the Friends of Pisgah, Inc.

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