



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Summer 2004, V. 18, No. 2

From the President

Dear Friends,

Let's start by saying the last two months have been rather contentious. Rumors spread that ATV and trail bike trails were going to be expanded in Pisgah Park because the administration of the Park was transferred to the Trails Bureau in March. The Trails Bureau is a branch of Parks and Recreation and still under Director McLeod's leadership.

At our May 4 Council Meeting, held at the Visitor's Center Director McLeod attended and explained the reason for the change. Also in attendance were Senator Thomas Eaton, Representatives McKim Mitchell, Irene Pratt and Barbara Richardson, all of whom I had invited. Mr. McLeod answered many questions and, I hope, eased the minds of those in attendance.

I have received a letter (see page 2) from the Director answering the questions that were asked of him by Representative Mitchell. I also include answers (see page 4) to a list of questions (see page 3) that was presented to the Director.

Finally, the barn project is in full swing. At this time the roof has been removed and the dismantling started on May 24th. Remember, if you would like to join in and help, please call me at 603/336-5462 and I'm sure we can put you to work now or later at the Park. We are in the process of getting estimates on excavation, foundation and roof. Since Monday, May 24, Joel McCarty and crew have been there at the site. Stop by and check the progress as the siding is removed and the rafters and beams are gradually removed, tagged and placed on a flatbed trailer. You may also notice the crew will be staying on site in tents and a camper.

Norma Reppucci is the acting Park Manager and some of you (midweek work crew) have been working with her in her new capacity. We wish her a very successful tenure at Pisgah Park.

I hope you have a pleasant summer and will be out in Pisgah (bugs permitting). Don't forget the 17th Annual FOP picnic on September 18th.

Bill Roberts

From the Acting Park Manager

This year has proved to be quite interesting and full of surprises. As most of you already know, Jim decided to resign as Manager of Pisgah owing to the restructuring changes at the Park and throughout the state. His last day was April 15th. We sure have missed him and wish him the best of luck. I am still here filling in as Manager until the position is officially filled. I was asked to hire persons for two seasonal positions to assist and work with me. One position is Mon – Fri (40 hrs) and the other is just weekends (16 hrs). Both of these are for 6 month periods. I am very pleased to let you know that Robert Florence is working Mon – Fri with me. He began on May 14th and has been a great help. I'm sure you all will enjoy meeting and/or working with him if you have the chance. I have had a few interested applicants for the weekend position and am now in the process of officially filling the position. We no longer have the responsibility of all the other smaller Parks such as Chesterfield Gorge, Pierce Island, Bear's Den and Rhododendron, that we always have had to manage. The result will be to focus more time on Pisgah and in the Park getting projects done. There are lots of washouts and repairs that seem to be increasing with the frequent heavy rains and storms of late. The Trails Bureau will be helping us with their equipment and needed materials to try and fix these problem areas. We look forward to a successful summer.

Norma Reppucci

Communications to and from Parks and Recreation

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT of RESOURCES and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION of PARKS and RECREATION
172 Pembroke Road P.O. Box 1856 Concord, New Hampshire 03302-1856

K. SEAN O'KANE
Commissioner

May 13, 2004

RICHARD MCLEOD
Director

William Roberts, President
Friends of Pisgah, Inc.
183 Tower Hill Road
Hinsdale NH 03451

Dear Mr. Roberts:

Representative Mitchell has asked me to respond to a set of questions in response to concerns raised over the change in staff reporting at Pisgah State Park. These concerns were discussed at a Friends of Pisgah (FOP) meeting on May 4th. Representative Mitchell agrees that these concerns be addressed to you.

As requested, here are those responses:

1. The Division of Parks and Recreation has diligently been trying to bring all trail signage in state parks to national safety standards. The removal of any of these signs would only increase our exposure of liability.
2. Legal ATV riding occurs on current and designated trails, Illegal riding near and in streams is an enforcement issue.
3. There are no changes planned for use of the Center by the Friends of Pisgah.
4. As a matter of note, many areas in the state park system are unstaffed. However, weekend seasonal staff coverage will be available at Pisgah.
5. Pierce Island, Rhododendron State Park, Chesterfield Gorge, and Bears Den are under management jurisdiction of the State Parks' South Region Office. Duties associated with those areas are being addressed through new and existing staff.
6. Winter maintenance is being evaluated based on recreational use need. The Division will evaluate the plowing operation and determine the best strategy (i.e. park staff, plowing contract, local group agreement) to address the need. It is not standard practice in the Division to plow all state parking lots. Sanding rarely occurs, however; we will work something out regarding the school bus.
7. Evacuations and emergency situations is a function of the Emergency Management Office and the local authorities. The Division does have local representation on the field response team. This function will continue, as the responsibility of the Park Manager.

Also, I've attached responses to questions presented at the last Friends of Pisgah meeting.

I hope these responses help to clarify the questions and concerns.

Sincerely,

Richard McLeod
Director

Cc: Honorable Thomas Eaton, President of the Senate
Honorable Representative McKim W. Mitchell
Commissioner Sean O'Kane

F. Paul Gray, Chief, Trails Bureau

(Form Provided to Attendees and Submitted by FOP to Director McLeod at May 4th Executive Council Meeting)

Questions for Parks and Recreation

- Has Parks and Recreation (P&R) changed the state position (circa 1987) that they wish to have the Friends of Pisgah involved in Park Planning?
- Why was the change in Park Status done behind closed doors without public comment or involvement by FOP (and other groups/persons) directly concerned with the Park and its environment?
- Exactly how long has the transfer of Pisgah Park from the Parks Bureau to the Trails Bureau been in planning?
- Has P&R contacted the Friends of the Wapack and others concerned with the Wantastiquet-Monadnock Greenway about the changes in Pisgah Park status and operation? These groups are concerned with the regional management of a present and future resource that may be severely impaired by any increase in motorized use of the Park.
- There was, in the late 1990s, what I believe was called a York Rake stationed at Pisgah and used to smooth park roads. Was the removal (about 3 years ago) of this York Rake the start of a campaign to let poor road conditions develop and so justify eventually turning the Park over to the Trails Bureau?
- Were there concerns about trail conditions (other than the motorized trails/roads) in the Park and, if so, why were the Park Manager and the FOP not apprised of this situation?
- Has P&R decided to limit public interaction (of school groups, volunteers, etc.) by/with Park employees?
- Has P&R decided to ignore the volunteer efforts of many volunteers from FOP, snowmobile clubs, horsemen's groups, and school groups who for years have helped maintain trails, clean trash, etc?
- Does P&R plan to limit input to the FOP Executive Council from the Manager and Asst. Manager of the Park? It is imperative that we have a monthly update of Park conditions to best assist the State in the upkeep/management of Pisgah Park. The interaction of Manager and Asst. Manager with the Council served to bring to the Council's attention all aspects of Park operations
- Will P&R sign a statement that there are no plans to increase ATV or dirt bike use in Pisgah Park? If not, why not?
- Will P&R provide Park coverage on weekends year round, through a ranger assigned to monitor parking lots and be otherwise stationed at the Visitor Center?
- Will the parking lots be plowed on weekends when it snows? If there is no weekend coverage for plowing, how will users be able to access the Park? The weekends and holidays are the highest periods of public use. The prior Manager would come in during the night at times to ensure that the lots were plowed and open to the public on a timely basis.
- Do you plan to sand the parking lots? If not, why not?
- Are you proposing to transfer some of the costs of public safety in the Park to the local governments by not having a ranger available on weekends?
- Will the phone at the Visitor Center be checked each day for messages from the public?

Write your own questions here so you will not forget to ask them:

Notes:

**Responses to Questions
Presented at the Friends of Pisgah Meeting
May 4, 2004**

1. The Division of Parks and Recreation is willing to enter into cooperative agreement with the Friends of Pisgah for the purpose of Park Planning as it has with other mutually beneficial projects related to the Park (i.e.: the barn).
2. It is not standard practice to involve the public, volunteers or other organizations in personnel and management issues of the Division. The ability to reassign staff is within the Division's authority.
3. It is part of an overall Park staff reorganization, which occurred in March.
4. As there have been no significant changes in status or operation we have not contacted any user groups.
5. There was a York Rake assigned to the Division's Trail Bureau regional staff being used on a project at Pisgah by special request. It had been relocated to accomplish other trail projects in the region.
6. The conditions of the trails have continued to be a concern of the Division. The Park Manager has been made aware of any and all trail condition concerns on numerous occasions.
7. There is no plan to change the task of providing public interaction or to provide public information in the scope of duties assigned in the staffs job descriptions.
8. The Division continues to value the role that volunteers play on the maintenance efforts on the trails and in the Park.
9. The Division does plan to continue to have representation at FOP meetings as it does with all Friends Groups associated with the State Park system.
10. There are no current plans to increase ATV trail use in Pisgah State Park.
11. Yes, park staff will be available on weekends, as needed.
12. Winter maintenance is currently being evaluated based on recreational user need. A strategy will be determined prior to winter.
13. It is not a standard practice within the Division to sand parking areas.
14. Staff will be available on weekends. Enforcement issues will continue to be a responsibility of appropriate local and state agencies.
15. It will be checked on a regular basis, as is the case with all Park Office phones.

Let's Keep the "Wild" in the Pisgah Wilderness, Pisgah Natural Area or Pisgah State Park

However You Think of It, Be Vigilant in Protecting It!



Junction of Old Chesterfield Rd and Horseshoe Road in Pisgah. These roads and the trails generally looked pretty good to me in April., contrary to some statements from Parks & Recreation.

MJD



Hubbard Hill Trail Widening About 300 yds from Winchester Rd

MJD



Stream Along Road Near Start of Southwoods Trail

MJD

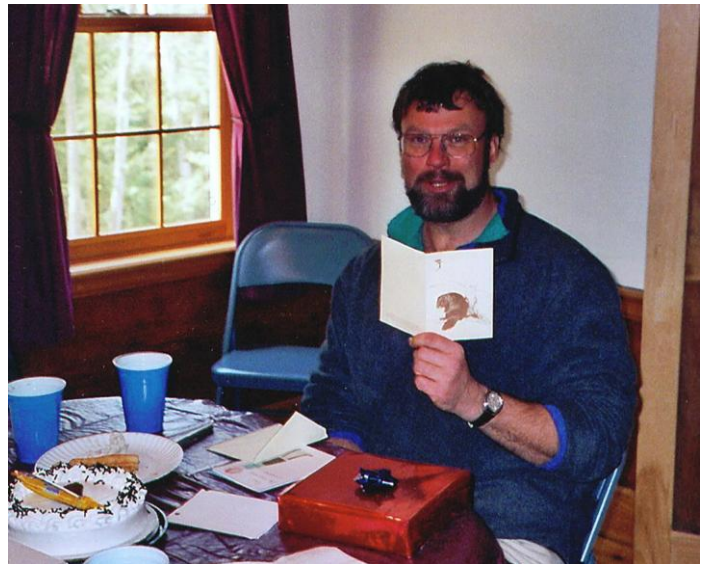
Goodbye and Good Luck Jim Bearce



Pizza Party on Jim Bearce's Last Day at Pisgah

A few friends of Jim's, including FOP President Bill Roberts (2nd from left, Jim (center), Norma Reppucci (not pictured) and other FOP volunteers and officers enjoyed a pizza lunch with Jim on April 15th

Photo by Norma



Jim Gets A Card

That is the FOP Beaver Logo on the Card!

Photo by Norma

Note: Jim now is working seasonally for Monadnock State Park in Jaffrey. Look for him when you are on the trails over there (but think Pisgah first when you want to hike).

Pisgah Park Summer & Fall Outings

June 5th **Pisgah State Park Historic Hike** **9:30 a.m. – noon**

This hike is sponsored by The Historical Society of Cheshire County (HSCC). The hike is open to anyone. It will travel from the Park Visitor Center past the remains of former homesteads, mills, boarding houses, and dams that once made up a lumbering and farming community for about 4 miles (to the Doolittle Trail at Broad Brook Rd), following the Old Chesterfield Rd and the Broad Brook Rd. HSCC will arrange to station vehicles at the end to transport folks back to the Visitor Center if needed. To make a complete walking loop, take the Doolittle Trail back to the Visitor Center for a total hike of about 5 miles. Meet at the Park Visitor Center on Old Chesterfield Road in Winchester or, if you wish to car pool, meet at HSCC in Keene by 8:45 a.m. Bring a lunch, drink and bug repellent. Contact: Tom Haynes, HSCC 352-1895 or hsc@hscnh.org.

June 12th **Tour the Dort Property** **9:30 a.m. – noon**

Meet at Rte 63 and the Dort property driveway a little north of the Kilburn Parking Lot. We will look at the boundaries of this property donated to the Friends and check out trees and other landmarks in the area. Leader: John Herrick 256-6301.

July 10th **Pisgah Mountain Hike** **9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Meet at the Kilburn Parking Lot. We will see many mountain views and will come back by Baker Pond so we can see the new views on the Davis Hill Trail. Leader: John Herrick 256-6301. Bring a lunch and drink.

August 14th **Parker's Perch Hike** **9:00 a.m. – noon**

Meet at the Upper Reservoir Parking Lot. We will walk along Pisgah Reservoir then up a twisty old trail to where you can look back at Harvard Forest and the Pisgah Reservoir. Bring snacks and a drink.

September 11th **Harvard Forest Hike** **9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Meet at the Upper Reservoir Parking Lot. We will go in along the Reservoir and up the Chestnut Hill Trail and then see the last Big Tree still standing in the Harvard Forest. We'll walk through the blow downs from the 1938 Hurricane and come back on the Dogwood Swamp Trail. Bring a lunch and drink.

September 18th **Annual Picnic** **late morn – afternoon**

Keep the date available. The picnic will be at the Visitor Center. Details will be provided by mail and in the local newspapers in September. Last year, the weather was excellent, the food was good and we had a great attendance with nearly 50 people at the event. Plan on coming to meet the Park Staff and the FOP officers as well as other FOP members.

Note: Other hikes/events may be scheduled later. Check the bulletin boards at the trailheads or call the Park for any additions.

Brief Background on Pisgah Park Controversies

In March, Manager Jim Bearce notified the FOP Council that it was probable that management of Pisgah was going to be transferred from the Parks Bureau to the Trails Bureau. The stated missions of the two bureaus are different although both are under Parks and Recreation. Jim and Norma Reppucci were formally notified of the change some time around the end of March or very early April. The Council discussed the changes at their March and April meetings. Jim resigned on April 15 and Norma became Acting Manager.

The nature of the Trails Bureau's efforts around the state in the past has suggested heavy involvement in promoting motorized trails use, not in conservation or multiple use of resources. There seems to be a great emphasis on ATV use as demonstrated by past unusual actions such as defining an ATV as a snow machine (vehicle?) when there is snow on the ground (so that ATVs, in the winter, could use trails previously off limits to them). Pisgah had been receiving 7 day a week coverage by the Staff. The Trails bureau concept appeared to be 5 week days of work with no weekend coverage and limited interaction with the surrounding community plus limited interest in the natural values of the land. The Trails concept is foreign to the past use of the Park and of the FOP mission statement. Consequently, in view of the Pisgah Park situation and a concurrent event on the Rail Trail in the Swanzey to Fitzwilliam to MA border corridor, several actions were taken:

- President Bill Roberts of FOP sent a letter to outgoing Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) Commissioner, George Bald protesting the transfer of Pisgah from Parks to Trails. Bill invited Director Richard McLeod of Parks and Recreation to attend the May FOP Council Meeting which Rich did. A lively discussion was held and some written results of the meeting are given in Bill Robert's message as well as in the copies of Rich McLeod's letter/attachment that are found in this issue of the Update.
- Action was taken by Rail Trail abutters to limit ATV use and promote responsible ATV activity.
- A group of interested persons (Pisgah Defense Coalition), many of whom are FOP members, was formed to limit the further encroachment of ATVs in the Park and to promote enjoyment and preservation of the natural environment of Pisgah.

The Keene Sentinel and the Brattleboro Reformer carried stories about the above concerns and activities. The reader may wish to consult several Sentinel stories by reporter Wil Coghlan which appeared on: April 8 (focusing on Bearce's resignation); April 28 (focusing on the DRED report on ATVs); April 29 (focusing on the Pisgah Defense Coalition meeting held on April 28); May 5 (focusing on McLeod's meeting with the FOP Council held May 4). Keene Sentinel environmental reporter, Erika Cohen, wrote two pieces on the larger context of ATV use: May 4 ("Trails Hottest Topic", after a Rails Trails meeting in Keene May 3); May 10 (taking a look at ATVs and trail use). Also, a story by Stillman Rogers appeared on the NH.com website. Yankee Magazine, May ("Off-Road or Off-Base?") and the NH Sunday News, May 23 ("OHRVs Dealing with a 4-wheel nuisance, Tearing up NH") have published recent articles on ATVs and their impact on the land.

Matt Donachie

Membership Notes

Because of the special interest in changes at the Park and the comments on those changes in this newsletter, we are mailing this Update to 2003 members who are as yet unpaid for 2004. It is your last issue. If an N appears after your name on the mailing label, you are not paid. 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. 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: _____	Chesterfield, NH	Category
Name(s): _____	03443-0134	<i>(Check applicable boxes)</i>
Address: _____		◇ New
_____		◇ Renewal
Phone: _____ (Home)		◇ Single Address (\$10.00)
Phone: _____ (Work)		◇ Group (\$20.00)
E-mail: _____		◇ Donation

*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**

Interests

- ◇ Annual Picnic
- ◇ Education
- ◇ Fund Raising
- ◇ History/Archaeology

- ◇ Membership
- ◇ Newsletter
- ◇ Planning
- ◇ Public Relations
- ◇ Trails
- ◇ Other _____

Volunteer Workdays

We had our first volunteer “Midweek” Workday on April 15th when we took down the FOP displays and the H. T. Gregory “Old Tool” Display at Chesterfield Gorge and brought them to Pisgah for safe keeping and to eventually display in the barn when it is erected. The other “Midweek” Workdays have been spent at the Park bushing back trails or roads and clearing ditches to allow drainage, etc. We plan to meet each Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. this summer at various areas unless the weather is bad and we need to cancel. Anyone who is interested in working once in a while or regularly is welcome. Just give a call to the Park Office (239-8153) and I will let you know where we will be working each Wednesday.

Special thanks are owed to Gayle Beaudoin (NH Horse Council) for sponsoring a volunteer work day in the Park on May 16th. Among the volunteers who took part, it was great to have FOP members John Summers and Marty Eaton. Bob Spoerl from the Trails Bureau and I assisted. We cleaned brush and limbed branches along the Reservoir Rd for approximately one mile. We appreciate your efforts folks.

Norma Reppucci

Update is published occasionally during the year by the Friends of Pisgah, Inc.
Editor: Matt Donachie (PO Box 11, Winchester, NH 03470) (603/239-6590) (e-mail: mattd@monad.net)
Production and Mailing: Martha and Matt Donachie **President** Bill Roberts (603/336-5462)
Copyright 2004 Friends of Pisgah, Inc. No reproduction without written permission.

Friends of Pisgah, Inc.
PO Box 134
Chesterfield, NH 03443-0134

First Class Mail