



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Winter 2007, V. 21, No. 1

From the President

Dear Friends,

Last fall, at our Annual Meeting, we were fortunate to have as our speaker, Ken Desmarais who spoke on Challenges to Managing New Hampshire's Public Lands. Ken is Administrator, Forest Management Bureau of the New Hampshire Division of Forests & Lands. The Division of Forests & Lands is part of the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) which also manages the State's Parks and Trails. Ken's talk was very interesting and he showed a great deal of interest in working with FOP and the State units operating Pisgah Park to maximize land use for resource conservation. Ken also indicated he would try to assist in the continuing effort to bring the Park equipment, including computers and other office equipment, up to minimal standards to enable the Park to be apprised regularly of the status of various activities and initiatives being conducted by State government.

According to Ken, he plans to meet with people from Antioch College to go over information that was presented to the Friends of Pisgah last summer in conjunction with discussions of a Master Plan for the Park. After that meeting, Ken will set up a field meeting for everyone involved with Pisgah to discuss the limited timber harvest that is to be conducted in the Park. FOP looks forward to continuing to work with Ken. Ken also reminded me that a computer for the Visitor's Center is being updated and should be ready soon. We will all appreciate having it up and running with email access so that FOP as well as other State offices can contact the Park Manager more readily. The current computer and monitor were donated by various organizations well over 4 years ago and are ancient by computer standards.

I have more good news. Mr. James Oehler, State Habitat Biologist, will be at our March 6th meeting and have some interesting comments for us. If you know of any members or their friends who might be interested, please inform them to be at the Visitor's Center on Old Chesterfield Rd at 7 PM. Hopefully we will be able to accommodate all who wish to attend.

The Council of the Friends of Pisgah State Park continues to be concerned about Park operations. Owing to significant state budget revenue shortfalls, the Park is operating with 67% less personnel so there is consequently lesser capability to keep the Park in shape for users. Problems exist with State enforcement of existing rules such as those relating to wheeled vehicles. The FOP is greatly interested in continuing to work with the State agencies directly responsible for the Park to ensure that the citizens of New Hampshire, particularly those of the southwest corner of the state, have a viable park with minimal environmental degradation in the future. Our favorable interaction with Ken Desmarais is a result of our continued efforts on behalf of Pisgah. We have contacted various other State officials, receiving good responses from a few but limited to no continued interaction and positive feedback from others. We need to have better working arrangements with other State units which often seem unwilling to utilize local volunteer groups such as FOP in the process of management and conservation of State Park resources.

Well Friends, as I indicated to you in the fall Update, we must continue to be vigilant and proactive if we are to protect Pisgah State Park as a premier natural park in the state park system. Please help us to raise awareness among legislators and state entities such as Forests and Lands concerning the need to preserve and enhance this great park. Let your legislators and the Trails Bureau know how much you appreciate the great job being done by our Park Manager under trying circumstances. Also, please take time to renew your membership in the Friends and invite others to join. Contributions above membership dues are greatly appreciated.

One final note, for those of you who are familiar with the Park and the signs which were once at historic sites in Pisgah, our volunteers, in conjunction with the Park Manager have been producing new signs which will be laminated to preserve the pictures and text. FOP had purchased a laminator for Park use.

State Representative Parkhurst at Next FOP Council Meeting

Representative Henry Parkhurst of Winchester, representing Hinsdale, Chesterfield and Winchester in the State House, will speak at the next meeting of the Executive Council of the Friends of Pisgah. The meeting will be at the Visitor Center on Old Chesterfield Rd, Winchester on Tuesday, February 6th at 7:00 p.m. Interested members of the FOP or others interested in the Park may wish to attend.

Around the Park

General

With the prospects so far for another sparse snow winter, we find more limited use of the Park than normal for this stage of the year. I note, living just a mile south of the Visitor Center, that, as of this writing, we have had no plowable snow. This fact seems to have enabled the Volunteers and Park Staff to devote time to the refurbishment of the signage for Pisgah. However, there is little to report relative to Park operations since we issued our Fall newsletter. The recent ice storm which produced little damage to the south end of the Park here in Winchester did, however, cause some damage north of here over at Kilburn Pond. It is hard for me to realize, living here at about 1000 ft elevation and only about 8 air miles (but 22 driving miles) from the Horseshoe Rd Trailhead, that there would be such a difference in precipitation amounts or behavior. We had about ¼ inch of ice on trees at this location on Old Chesterfield Rd but the ice around Kilburn was sufficient to take down many trees.

Midweek Work Days

As you may know, our Volunteers help the Park in many ways. The Midweek Work Crew provides assistance to the Staff on one Wednesday a month from April to November. The Crew normally is not active during the Winter. However, Crew members often hike in the Park in the Winter, especially when the going is easier with no or little snow on the ground. After the recent ice storm, one of the Volunteers discovered the fallen trees on the Kilburn Loop. Some of the Volunteers got together and assisted in the removal of the obstructions caused by the trees less than a week after the damage occurred. Thank you guys!

The work done by the Volunteers is just another illustration of the assistance that the FOP provides to Pisgah Park. Your membership supports these efforts.

Matt Donachie

Wandering in the Woods of Pisgah

As we wander into the woods, after the leaves have fallen and the gray landscape stretches before us, we are presented with a perfect time to take notice of the small green world that lies under our feet. Due to the lack of snow this winter, I have found myself drawn to the amazing array of greenery spread out along the forest floor. Beautiful ferns, wintergreen, partridgeberry, to name a few, and a great variety of mosses. Or what I thought were mosses!

What I had thought were different types of mosses were actually clubmosses, which are not true mosses. One major distinguishing difference is that while mosses rely on their surrounding environment for water and nutrients, the clubmoss has a well-developed vascular system allowing it to endure changing environmental conditions. Clubmosses also are equipped with waxy leaves that hold in moisture during winter and dry spells. Additionally, they contain a chemical that protects them from freezing and ice damage and contain, as well, an alkaloid that produces an unappealing taste to browsing herbivores. No wonder this class of plant is one of the earliest land plants still found in the present-day landscape! These plants existed in the time of the dinosaurs and, according to one source, grew to be the size of trees. In the ancient forests, clubmosses covered large areas which, after dying and the passage of time, became the coal we now unearth.

One similarity that the clubmosses have with the true mosses, as well as ferns and horsetails, is that they are spore plants. Reproduction occurs from spores, or sporangia, instead of seeds. The spores are contained either in cases in cones at the top of the plant or at the base of the leaf. The spore, as the reproductive cell, splits and evolves into both the sperm and the egg which combine to produce a new plant.

Some of the more commonly found clubmosses on jaunts through Pisgah, are the ground pine, [*lycopodium obscurum*]; bristly clubmoss [*l. annotinum*]; staghorn clubmoss, [*l. clavatum*]; and running cedar, [*l. complanatum*].

The ground pine, often referred to as princess pine, is deep stemmed with a branching tree-like appearance, eight to 12 inches tall. One to three, yellowish cones sit atop the branches. Bristly clubmoss has an above-ground creeping stem, with branches that fork and ascend up to 12 inches high and cones directly above the leaves. Staghorn clubmoss is similar to bristly but with softer leaves or “needles”, with cones emerging out of a bare stalk at the top of the plant. And finally the running cedar, also called running pine or ground cedar, has an above ground stem, with branching characteristics with smooth, flat greenery and one to four cones sitting at the top of a slender stalk. All of these plants can be found in dry areas.

So get out, take a look around, if the ground stays bare a bit longer, who knows what you might find!

Kathy Thatcher

Trails

The FOP monthly trails maintenance workdays program continues to be a great success. We have really been having a lot of fun the last several months. Joining us are some new volunteers; Matthew and Ellen Edson, Bob Barnard, John Hudacheck and John Ferrara with his dog, Sky. Rhonda Winegarner has returned with her high school students Amy Baxter, Adam Felton, Joe Reed, and a new recruit Cody Traceski. These Upward Bound students love the hikes and bring enthusiasm and a great energy.

The hike/work day for December was a hike (with about 8 people) from Kilburn to Baker and back thru the Davis trail. A little work was done along the way and we actually got back later than normal, at 2:30 pm. Some of the photos on page 4 were taken on the Kilburn to Baker hike. While in the vicinity, we had lunch at Baker and looked over the old mill site there (stream photo on page 4).

The hike and work day for January was taken on a real nice warm day (again, about 8 people were present). It looked like rain so we went to the nearby FOP Dort property which abuts Pisgah Park. When we got there we thought it would be good to stretch our legs so we hiked to the Hubbard hill look out. However, we got back in time for lunch and cut some more trees at the Dort parking area till 2:00 p.m. We had three saws available that day and each sawyer had a helper to move brush so the project went very well. Now we are waiting for snow so we can burn the brush piles. After 2 months of work at the pine stand, the place looks so good I just want to drive by it again.

In our work during the fall and early winter, we have re-marked the Hubbard Hill Trail with bright pink markers. We also continued work on the Dort Property clearing so as to see views of the hills of Chesterfield and Hinsdale. Our volunteers enjoyed the vistas on Hubbard Hill and Davis Hill as well as the beauty of Baker Pond.

On our work ventures, we explored the Hinsdale Town Forest and the Arthur D. Little Explosives Research Area in late 2006. It has been a productive fall and winter so far.

Come join us on the second Saturday of every month. Meet us at the Kilburn Pond Trailhead at 10 a.m.. We work until 2 p.m. Bring your lunch, work gloves and tools and wear appropriate clothing for the season.

John Herrick (Trails Chair) and Laurel Powell

FOP Historical Group

This group normally meets monthly at the Visitor Center. Our group has been slowly growing. Rick Tatro and Cliff Struthers are working on redesigning and updating the signs placed at the cellar holes on the Historic Site Tour. Rick is working on the photographs and text. Cliff will include his surveyed maps.

Bob Barnard of Keene (and his children) plus another of our NH State Representatives, Bill Butynski, have joined the group. We have started an inventory of the tools and farm equipment in the barn across from the Visitor Center. A sketch of the colonial fireplace in the Visitor Center, with its utensils labeled and their function described, has been created. Cliff, Manager Norma and FOP President Bill Roberts have lent a hand and have provided important details for each project.

We will continue to meet on the third Wednesday (4-6:30PM) and the fourth Sunday (3:30-55PM) of each month at the Visitor Center. Please join us if you are able. Thank you!

Laurel Powell (History and Education Committee Chair)

FOP Sponsored Spring Trip

In May, the FOP will sponsor an excursion to Petersham, MA to visit the Fisher Museum at Harvard University's Forest Research Site. The museum is just down US 202 a short distance below Rte 2 south of Orange/Athol, MA. In the event you were not aware, Harvard University owns an inholding in Pisgah Park. This tract is virtually the last location in Pisgah of the renowned tall trees which in colonial times were reserved for the King's Navy. Join us on our trip to learn about the work the Harvard Forest researchers do in Pisgah and other locations. We will view their famous dioramas and hike on their trails marked with historical and scientific signs

noting the ecology and biology of the area. (Editor's Note: Having visited the Museum and associated forest, I can assure you that the walking/hiking is certain to be pleasant and informative and the dioramas and other facets of the Museum will be most interesting.) For other information on the Museum/Forest Research Site and related activities, visit the website at <http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu>.



Saturday Work/Hike Crew in Vicinity of Baker Pd
 (Some of the Crew Who Hiked were Rhonda Winegarner [and students Cody, Amy , and Adam], John Ferrara, John Herrick, Matt Edson and Laurel Powell)



Saturday Work/Hike Crew at Baker Pd



Saturday Work/Hike Crew (some of the crew at upper right) At Old Mill Site Near Baker Pd



MidWeek Work Crew Redecking Broad Brook Bridge on Doolittle Trail Late in 2006



Some of the Regular MidWeek Work Crew Celebrating Christmas and the End of the Season
 (Cliff Struthers, Kim Nielsen, John Miller, Ranger Danny Ford, Jack Kondos, Gerry Goslant, and Gil Cameron, among others, make up the usual MidWeek Work Crew)



Ranger Danny Ford and Volunteer Cliff Struthers Working on the Park Roads in Late 2006

(Thank you to all who contributed photos for this issue of the Update. I could not use them all but appreciate being able to select from so many. MJD)

Donations To FOP – 2006

The Friends of Pisgah continue to receive generous gifts and donations to compliment the growing collection of antiques for our 1800's house and barn. We greatly appreciate these items and will preserve, document and display each for the enjoyment of all who visit the Pisgah State Park Visitor Center.

We send our thanks to the following people and their families.

Neil Jenness of Chesterfield – wood working tools: a Union No. 7 plane with corrugated bottom and a carpenter's adze/adz with spur; a shaping or smoothing tool.

Bill Mitchell of Chesterfield – farm tools and equipment: dairy farming equipment such as a metal milk can, watering trough, grain feeder, and an oxen yoke. Other items include a plough, a corn cutter, hay rakes and a scythe, ice harvesting tongs, a wooden barrel (possibly a cheese vat), a three legged forge heated by coal, a metal can with spigot for kerosene, a grinding wheel, a wooden seat for a wagon or sleigh and some wooden sleds.

Dr. Walter Lacey of Keene – evaporator for maple sugaring and some work sleighs/ sleds for hauling wood and sugaring.

Jean Hanson of Chesterfield – a painted sleigh

The identification and description of each item is based on preliminary research done by the FOP Historical Group that meets twice each month on the third Wednesday from 4-6:30 PM and the fourth Sunday from 3 to 5:30PM. (Feb. 21 & 25, Mar. 21 & 25, Apr. 18 & 29, May 16 & 27). See article on page 5. We welcome comments and assistance. Come and join us at the Visitor Center in Winchester or contact Laurel Powell at 336-7479 (if preferred, via email at cpowellbks@cheshire.net).

Share This Newsletter

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.

Perhaps you have a reading area at work where you could leave it for others to read.

If you have a spot to leave the newsletter or wish to give one to a friend but don't want to part with your copy of Update, give Matt Donachie (603/239-6590) or the Park (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. Remember the old adage, there is strength in numbers. The more members we have, the greater will be our ability to help the Park.

How Long Does It Last?

Going hiking? Remember the following and take care not to litter. Under trailside conditions litter will decompose as follows:

Aluminum cans & tabs 80-100 yrs
Leather up to 50 yrs
Nylon fabric 30-40 yrs
Plastic film 20-30 yrs
Plastic bags..... 10-20 yrs
Plastic coated paper 5 yrs
Wool socks 1-5 yrs
Orange peel 0.5-5 mo

(Source - American Hiker, Spring 1989 - originally from The Footprint, newsletter of the FL Trail Assoc.)

How to Tell If Your Dues Are Paid for 2007

Check the label on your Update. If you are paid according to our records, the letter P will appear after your name. If you are not paid, please remit your dues now (see last page for form). Members not paid after this mailing will not receive the next newsletter which will be published in May. Questions? Contact the Treasurer (Nancy Miller, 603-363-4145 or Matt Donachie, see box below).

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First Class Mail

Time to Renew Your Membership in FOP for 2007

Please use the form below and send to the address shown if you wish to join FOP or renew your membership.

The Friends of Pisgah maintain a nominal dues structure with the intent being to encourage as many individuals and families as possible to join. Over 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: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (Home)

Phone: _____ (Work)

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Category

(Check applicable boxes)

- New
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Willing to Assist On Committee for:

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- Other _____

*Questions? Call Bill Roberts (603- 336-5462)
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Send form and check to:

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