



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Winter 2011, V. 25, No.1, Revised 2/23/2011

From the President

Greetings All,

I have just returned from a beautiful ski tour along the Southwoods Trail in Pisgah. It is a winter wonderland in the Park, with snow blanketing the forest floor while decorating the trees, especially the hemlocks, with puffy mounds of snow. We can thank the winds for not blowing it away as usual when a snowfall comes our way! If you head into the Park on skis, do be mindful that when you venture off the groomed trails, the icy crust will be waiting for you. It can be slippery under the pole tips, but I was actually surprised at how skiable it was. Be alert when heading downhill and don't get going too fast or the crust might take you down! I found if I shifted my weight onto my heels more, that help keep me from sliding under the crust. I also have the benefit of the cross country version of back country skis that are shorter, wider and have some metal on their edges. They are perfect for bushwhacking and variable conditions, climbing over stone walls and barbed wire fences and fording streams. They are not so perfect for groomed tracks ... And there are always snowshoes. ... I trust folks are getting out and enjoying the wonderful winter conditions we have been fortunate to have this year. There have been lots of snowmobiles in the Park, with the groomed trails in the northwestern portion of the Park, looking good. We started off a little sketchy and I know things can change quickly! So get out and enjoy!

I would like to put in a plug in for the FOP who have been taking responsibility for plowing out the Visitor Center, allowing access for the Park Manager, Norma, as well as providing parking for snowmobiler's who come to the Park expecting to be able to park their rig at one of the main access points. The state was not getting the job done, so the Council took responsibility. The management and future management of the Park are still in limbo. We recognize that the state, like so many others, is dealing with a fiscal crisis. But we believe that oversight and responsible stewardship of Pisgah State Park continues. The Friends of Pisgah, and others who care for this incredible place that sits in our midst, will need to step up to the plate to do everything we can to ensure that such a treasure is passed on to future generations to enjoy. ***As we move forward, we need to keep the original purpose and intent of the creation of Pisgah, firmly in mind: for the State of N.H. to secure property for a State Park in the southwest region of the state (properties a number of landowners did not want to sell) making such purchases possible using Federal funding specifically dedicated to outdoor recreation to "enhance the health and well-being of the American people."***

I want to recognize all the people who sent comments to the state regarding the impending management plan for the Park. There were many! We are taking the opportunity to share some of those responses with you in our newsletter. I also want to welcome our newest Council member, Marti Hobbes. Marti is a frequent visitor to the Park and, of course, an FOP member. Marti lives in Chesterfield and will be helping us with publicity. We look forward to having her at the table! I'm delighted we can share a piece on beavers, contributed by Patti Smith of the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center in Brattleboro, Vt. I have also enjoyed reading her regular column in the Brattleboro Reformer which is what inspired my contacting her for an article in the Update. Thank-you Patti for sharing your knowledge and great love for the natural world! So, stay informed, be involved, and share your newsletter with a friend. Let's broaden the ranks! Gee, maybe I should go on Facebook ... See you on the trails!

Kathy Thatcher

On the Trail

Kilburn Pond

Mar 19, 2011. Co-sponsored by FOP and the Harris Center. Looking for critter tracks and other wildlife sign with Jeff Littleton, expert tracker and field ecologist from Moosewood Ecological. At the pond, the topic will be natural history of beaver – their food, lodging, etc. Meet Jeff and co-leader Cynthia Nichols at 10 a.m. at the Kilburn Pond Trail Head on Route 63 in Hinsdale. Back around 1 pm. For further information, contact Jeff at 603-363-8489.

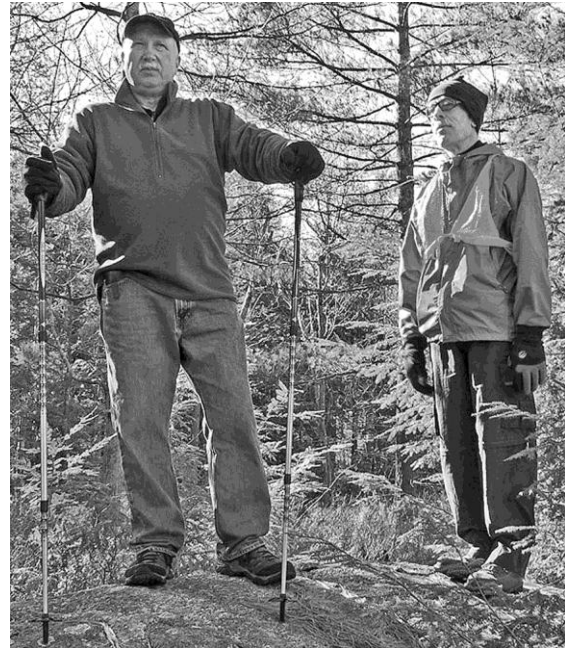
Meeting with DRED Director George Bald

This snowy winter has struck another blow. Our Council Meeting with DRED Director George Bald was postponed after the double dose storms of February 1 and 2. The meeting was reset for Wednesday, February 16. FOP is dealing with DRED to try and resolve many citizen concerns, especially those of the citizens of southwest New Hampshire, relative to the viability and preservation of Pisgah Park and the outdoor opportunities it offers.

FOP is doing its best to ensure that the Visitor Center and Barn Museum remain open and that there is a Ranger presence in the Park. We will report to you on the status in the Fall Update and sooner on the FOP Website. See page 6 for information on the FOP Website and how to contact us. Be sure to keep your State Representatives and Senator informed about your wishes for Pisgah.

Kathy Thatcher

Some Images from Our Fall Hiking Season



Come and join FOP on our monthly hikes or special hikes (see page 1 and 6). Lots of fun outdoors in the Park. Most work/hike days last a maximum of 2 hours. On the trail we will do some cleanup work, check the state of the trail and relax at lunch, most times at some choice stopping spot. (No, those aren't ski poles Matt Edson has. They are hiking poles which at this point have given way to ski poles for sure.)

Some Miscellaneous Facts

- It takes about 1/2 gallon of water to cook a pot of pasta and 1 gallon to wash the pot
- About 25 gals of water are needed to produce 1 lb of wheat while about 2500 gals are needed to produce 1 lb of meat
- About 10% of every dollar spent for food and beverages pays for the packaging
- A resident of China uses about 13 lbs of paper per year but a New England resident uses a little more than 600 lbs
- Each CT resident in the early 1990s used the equivalent of a 100 ft tree each year
- In 1 year, an avg. tree inhales 26 lbs of carbon monoxide - the amount emitted by an auto during an 11,300 mile trip - and exhales enough oxygen to keep a family of 4 breathing for a year

Light Pollution

No, this does not mean that some pollutants weigh less than others. What is at issue is the pollution of the night sky by light. Here in NH one of the most striking features of Pisgah State Park is the clarity of the night sky. It is a genuine pleasure to be able to see the sky clear and deep overhead in a way we remember as children and the way my wife and I see it on our trips to northern BC, the Yukon and Alaska. Most Americans are growing up with no opportunity to see the stars that we and our parents knew. Just as billboards, noise barriers and other attributes of modern society have contributed to the visual pollution of our landscape, so has the proliferation of the use of light, excess light, polluted the night sky. There are ways to reduce this pollution. Consider pressing your governments to reduce light pollution, there is the technology to do it. Do your part too, turning off outside lights when not needed and shielding those that must be used.

Comments on the State Master Plan Proposed for Pisgah State Park

In the last quarter of 2011, the state asked for and received comments on the proposed Master Plan for Pisgah State Park. One of our FOP Council Members has analyzed the 242 total responses received. About 39% wished to increase horse trails, 23% were concerned most about maintaining the Park as wilderness, 22% suggested increased bike trails while 8% wished to prohibit such trails, some 19% wanted no ATV trails or to prevent any increases in such trails, and 11% wanted to be sure to have a Park Manager. Other actions were suggested by amounts of less than 10% by the respondents. These varied responses indicate to me that, in general, the residents of Cheshire County and southwest NH favor continued use of Pisgah State Park as a recreational, not commercial, resource. The State seems to feel otherwise since it is intending to increase logging in the Park, even now suggesting that the second logging cut originally said to be around 100 acres this year might go to 400 acres! (per 2/23/2011 email from Ken Desmarais "The official acreage of the timber harvest is 104 acres. DRED has no intention of increasing the size of the timber sale.") I have reproduced comments or excerpts from a few respondents. The full letter immediately below poignantly indicates the feelings of many local residents.

Hinsdale, NH

Mr. Ken Desmarais

The plan for Pisgah State Park is not what the people in our area, Chesterfield, Winchester and Hinsdale had looked for.

Growing up in this area we always had a place to hike, fish, swim and camp. We called this area "God's Country" till it was taken away from us when the state took it over so many years ago. At the time all the real nice camps were burned and left as ashes. No one person on the so called N.H. park committee had the heart or feelings to build or leave a lean two just for protection in cases of storm, rain, snow, accident or such. What harm would it have been?

I said back then and still feel the same today, it is or was just one big political "pull."

Not any one has the knowledge of what this [park] means to our area. All you up in Concord want is our tax dollars. This is a beautiful spot in our state, one I grew up in to enjoy, but the more I hear of what you want to do makes me sick.

You ought to pay more attention to your or our N.H. State Park Campgrounds, fix them up to what they were 40 years ago, bring them up to date. Put in electric for campers, try to make a profit, all we hear is how in the red the NH Parks are.

You have a beautiful State Park in Greenfield but it's in such bad shape I would never camp there again.

Try to improve the areas you have and leave Pisgah as it is, let Friends of Pisgah do what they have been doing and stand behind them, don't ruin a good thing without knowing the area and hard work [that has] gone into the Park by the volunteers.

Let's have one nice park for animals and people to enjoy as a park and not "dollar signs".

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Barbara Benjamin
Hinsdale NH

.....

".. Pisgah is a treasure, a place where people can go for quiet hiking and contemplation. We should not be increasing logging, ATV and mountain bike usage.

The draft plan on page 121 talks about maintaining a 'reasonable balance of uses, especially between motorized and non-motorized uses.' The next bullet says the aim should be to 'avoid conflicts with enjoyment of primary uses, especially those which depend upon a quiet and peaceful setting for a more solitary experience.'

Those two aims are mutually exclusive. 'Reasonable' balance of usage depends on who's in charge.....

Roger and Ann Sweet"

An Album of Pisgah Friends, Fall 2010



John Herrick at a Twisted Tree in the Park



At a Viewpoint Hiking in Pisgah



Rest Stop and Tree Study



Hiking Back Up to Horseshoe Trailhead

Congratulations Bill

Bill Mitchell (right) Celebrated His 90th Birthday in Early January. Bill Was One of the Founders of FOP and Was a Long Time President



More Folks in the Park, Fall 2010



Hiking Group in Park



Hiking Group in Park

Member Dues Need to be Paid Now

Member dues for 2011 were due by the first of the year. Please use the form on the last page and send in your renewal or new application now. Dues paid on or after the Annual Picnic are valid for the following year.

Getting Around On Foot, Snowshoe or Cross Country Skis in Pisgah – Part VIII

Old Chesterfield Rd, Jon Hill Rd and Snow Brook Trail Loop

An interesting ski trip (or hike) may be taken as a long loop from the Visitor Center. Starting from the Visitor Center on Old Chesterfield Rd, head north into the Park, downhill for about ¼ mile, passing the Orchard on your left. Views are possible off toward the area of Chesterfield and the Horseshoe Parking area by looking northwest or northwest more or less from the far west side of the stone wall along the Orchard. After a couple of hundred yard descent the Doolittle Trail is on your left. Continuing north on Old Chesterfield Rd one passes a small pond on the right and a steep gorge with a nice brook that flows out the north end and through a marshy (in warm weather) flat to cross Old Chesterfield Rd just south of the lumber harvest made a few years ago by the State.

Continue on for a total of about a mile from the Visitor Center to Jon Hill Rd. Turn right off Old Chesterfield Rd and climb on the Jon Hill Road to reach a high point near some power lines. Continue east on Jon Hill Rd up hill and down, eventually after about a mile from Old Chesterfield Rd, coming to some ponds on the right, possibly with beaver lodges in them. A small pond exists on the left as well and you are now not much more than 100 yds from the Old Spofford Rd. Pass the gate and turn left on Old Spofford Rd (there still may be a woods path to the left that sort of parallels the Old Spofford Rd). Proceed north on the Old Spofford Rd about 200 yds to the (gated) old, unused Spofford Rd parking lot for Pisgah. Turn left and enter the parking lot, crossing it to the south corner and find the Snow Brook Trail.

The Snow Brook Trail goes west sort of on a level at first, then downhill, curving quite often to reach a lower level where an old wood bridge may go right and across a brook that the trail has been following. Skiing here may be a bit tricky. At the bridge is the start of a long abandoned trail connector. Continue instead straight west along the Snow Brook Trail with a pond (which may look like a frozen meadow in winter) soon appearing to your right. Follow the pond and eventually cross one or two streams coming from the pond area and flowing to the left (southerly). One of these is Snow Brook which eventually crosses under Old Chesterfield Rd. Continuing on the Snow Brook Trail for a total of about 1½ miles from Old Spofford Rd, and after a brief moderate uphill climb, one reaches Old Chesterfield Rd about 300 yds west of the Broad Brook Rd junction.

Turn left (east at first but will eventually head south) and ski downhill to the junction with Broad Brook Rd. From the junction, proceed gently uphill past Cheese Rock (on your left) and then downhill again to cross Snow Brook (usually quite pretty here in winter). Immediately on your left, pass an old farm location. From this point you continue uphill more steeply and along somewhat curvy Old Chesterfield Rd to its intersection with the Jon Hill Road. Follow the reverse of your starting route, uphill the last mile, to the Visitor Center. An alternate return would be to turn right at the junction with Broad Brook Rd and follow the road south ¾ mile or so past several cellar holes and across a few brooks to the Doolittle Trail on your left. Turn onto the Doolittle Trail and follow it a bit along Broad Brook and then uphill for perhaps ¾ mile to Old Chesterfield Rd just north of the Visitor Center. A right turn at that point and a ¼ mile of uphill skiing on Old Chesterfield Rd brings one to the Visitor Center.

Matt Donachie

Around the Park with the Friends

Keeping Up with FOP

FOP has a web site and an email account for use in keeping members informed of events such as Trail Maintenance activities and Historical Story Circles, Hikes and Workdays affecting Pisgah Park. Please use our new web address www.friendsofpisgah.org and our email, FriendsOfPisgah@gmail.com. Feel free to contact us with your questions, concerns and suggestions.

Pisgah State Park Visitor Center and Barn Museum

Sadly, the buildings have been closed on weekends since November. As you know, the State will close the buildings according to the final draft of the management plan unless FOP agrees to take responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep. Friends of Pisgah has provided the funds to employ a weekend docent to welcome visitors, provide information and give tours of the historic buildings and farm and logging museum for the last 3 years. With this uncertainty and the need to recuperate from a broken wrist, I decided to resign the weekend Visitor Center position. Brent Hunsinger, our other docent, has been busy with his final Antioch University Graduate Internship in the Green Mountain National Forest. Both Brent and I have truly enjoyed meeting visitors and sharing all that's special and unique about Pisgah State Park.

The Council will be forming a committee to seek a replacement docent if the Visitor Center remains open. We welcome member involvement in this process. If you'd like to serve on the committee, are interested in the position or know of someone who is available, please notify Laurel Powell at 336-7479 or lpowellbks@comcast.net or notify Kathy Thatcher (FOP President) at 363-7793 or ktthatcher@gmail.com.

Laurel Powell
(History and Education Chair)

Forest Forensics

Tom Wessels' new book, *Forest Forensics, A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape* was recently released. *Forest Forensics* is the field guide version to *Reading the Forested Landscape*, Prof. Wessel's earlier book. It is the key to clues that will reveal to you a story of change over time. The book is full of beautiful photographs, a key system, detailed explanations, quick reference charts and a glossary. This book allows a wandering hiker to identify the forest's past history using simple, observable evidence.

I have been browsing through the book even though snow covers the forests I roam in. Under all this snow, I see hints of the landscape that Tom describes in his book. As I am snowshoeing, I can most certainly locate old growth trees using the guide and I can imagine the cradles and pillows (the humps created by a fallen tree's root system and the hole left by the uprooted tree) lying underneath the land that I wander up and down on. When the snow is not deep, I can examine the many stone walls to determine their purpose using this reference tool.

So if you are ever mystified by what you have encountered in Pisgah, I strongly recommend this handy backpack-sized field guide. The book covers forests like Pisgah State Park and other wooded areas in the Northeast and up into Canada. I wouldn't be surprised if some of the plates or photographs used in this field guide were from Pisgah, a place that Tom frequents. Another review can be found at http://www.antiochne.edu/news/news_detail.cfm?News_ID=1060.

Laurel Powell
(History and Education Chair)

Friends of Beavers

As a naturalist at the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center in Brattleboro, I led Sunday morning hikes for many years. Pisgah was a favorite destination, in part because of the many beautiful ponds and wetlands created by beavers. Since my days as a hike leader, I have developed another reason for admiring beavers — I have come to know a family of them that live on a stream in my own wild backyard.

In the process of developing an environment that suits them, my beavers and their predecessors have restored their valley to something of its primal condition — a string of ponds, marshes, meadows, and shrublands. Plants and animals never seen in forests live in these beaver-generated landscapes. Many forest dwellers are drawn to these wetlands, too. From my seat on the shore I have watched herons, kingfishers, wood ducks and mergansers. I have watched a spider spin her web and gray tree frogs compete for the best perch from which to call. Bears have marked trees to claim their spring feeding rights. Of all the creatures whose lives I've witnessed from my pond-side seat, the beavers have provided the most education and entertainment.

It's not just because they're always there, it is that they are so comfortable and secure in their watery world that they can share my curiosity. Most evenings, when I arrive at the pond, I am greeted by a small herd of eager beavers. Willow and Bunchberry, the parents, soon settle down beside me to munch the nutritious "beaver nuggets" I bring them. The youngsters prefer apples, and take them to the water to eat.

Not everyone shares my admiration for beavers. Trapping of beavers has long been the preferred method for resolving land use conflicts. Such solutions are only temporary, however. Beavers will return to the site one day, and these unfortunates will also need to be "removed." Without beavers, these beautiful and valuable wetlands will eventually revert to forest. Fortunately for all, an alternative exists.

Skip Lisle is the person who has done the most to make the world safe for beavers. After watching a family of beavers transform his parents' sterile pond into a lush haven for wildlife, Skip became a friend of beavers. In the 1980s, Skip headed to Maine for a graduate degree in wildlife biology. He studied beavers, naturally. When he finished school, the Penobscot Nation hired him to help solve their beaver problems. The Penobscots' lands are largely wet and flat, with clear-cuts growing up in poplar, a favorite beaver food. Beaver populations were robust, making it very difficult for the people to maintain roads. Shooting the culprits didn't seem to help, as young beavers filled vacancies quickly.

Skip worked with the Penobscot for six years, and over that time he developed and perfected the flow control devices he called "beaver deceivers," a name now used widely for all similar structures. The task was daunting, with the beavers only too happy to point out the flaws in his designs. He now builds "Castor Master" flow control devices that will last a minimum of 30 years and can be adapted to regulate pond levels in a variety of situations. On a visit to Skip's house, he showed me one of the beaver deceivers. The beavers had been busy making a dam right up against the fence that keeps them away from the culvert. The device that actually regulated the level of the water was the black pipe that ran through the fence and out to a cylindrical cage in the middle of the pond, a location the beavers would be unable to block with a dam. At the far side of this wetland, Skip showed how he protects trees and shrubs that he doesn't want the beavers to remove. Simple fences of eight-gauge ungalvanized wire mesh two feet high surrounded the trees and shrubs he wanted to keep. The wire had oxidized and blended with the colors of the forest.

My beaver family, and the beavers of Pisgah, are now in their snug lodges and sealed into their ponds until a thaw. In the spring, new kits will arrive, and the two-year-olds, will head out into the world to find mates and create and enhance wetland habitat. I will try to keep track of my two-year-old, Snowberry. Thanks to Skip, I may be able to intervene if her dam site interferes with the plans of the site's human owner. Perhaps the two-year-olds of Pisgah will also find friends among the Friends. Beaver deceivers can provide long-term protection for Pisgah's roads, and result in welcoming wetland habitat for a host of wildlife.

Patti Smith

Don't Forget Our Second Saturday Work/Hike Outings.

Information about each month's event should be on the Park Bulletin Boards or in the Sentinel. Meet at the Kilburn Trailhead on Route 63 in Hinsdale at 10AM on the second Saturday to participate in a work/ hike project. Bring lunch, water and tools or use ours. For more information call John Herrick (603) 256-6301.

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

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First Class Mail

Please use the form below and send to the address shown if you wish to join FOP, renew membership or give one as a gift. 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 student/single/family dues provides for printing and mailing the Update and the Annual Picnic notice, as well as for the fine food at the picnic. Dues are as follows: student - \$10, single - \$15, family - \$20, group (club) - \$30. Cut here -----

Date: _____ Name(s): _____ Address: _____ _____ Phone: _____ (Home) Phone: _____ (Work) E-mail: _____ Questions? Call Kathy Thatcher (603-363-4482) or John Hudachek (603-363-8897) Send form and check to: Friends of Pisgah, Inc. PO Box 134 Chesterfield, NH 03443-0134	<u>Category</u> (Check applicable boxes) <input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal <input type="checkbox"/> Gift <input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$10.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Single (\$15.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$20.00/address) <input type="checkbox"/> Group (\$30.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Donation \$ _____ Name/Address of gift giver _____ _____ _____	<u>Willing to Assist On Committee</u> <u>for:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Picnic <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Programs <input type="checkbox"/> History/Archaeology <input type="checkbox"/> Membership <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Articles <input type="checkbox"/> Planning & Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations/Park Info <input type="checkbox"/> Rails to Trails Advisory <input type="checkbox"/> Trails/Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> Wantastiquet-Monadnock Greenway <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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