

Corrected Draft Minutes
Mid Atlantic Regional Partnership Committee Meeting
Boiling Springs, PA
March 11, 2006

RPC representatives (representative first, alternate second): Kerry Snow, John Hedrick, PATC; Frank Bohn, Dallas Owens, CVATC; Tede Fleming, MCM; Jim Hooper, YHC; Hal Wright, Barb Wiemann, AHC; Scott Birchman, Martyann Gutierrez, BMECC; Paul Schubert, PTC; Dan Schwartz, Bill Steinmetz, AMC-DV; Mike Kintner, WTC; Walt Daniels, NYNJTC
ATC: Karen Lutz, Michele Miller, Bob Sickley, Sally Naser, Lauren McWhorter, Carolyn Dufour
NPS: Kent Scharzkopf, Todd Remaley,

Opening and introductions -- Chair Snow convened the meeting at 9:35 AM and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

Approval of Minutes – Upon a motion by Daniels, seconded by Birchman, the minutes of the October 2005 meeting were approved.

Regional Updates

A. ATC Staff

1. Training – Sickley announced that the next chain saw training would be in April in Shenandoah NP and in the fall at Delaware Water Gap NRA. Wilderness First Aid training will be held in May at the Scott Farm. Ongoing workshops are planned in conjunction with the Bear Mountain relocation.

2. Mather Side Trail – Lutz announced that a West Virginia State Recreation Grant (RTG) application to reconstruct the side trail to the Mather Trail Center in Harpers Ferry had been submitted.

3. Bear Mountain Project – Daniels reported on the multi-year effort to redesign, reconstruct, and relocate the AT on Bear Mountain using a more sustainable construction technique and trail route to keep people contained to the trail. Sickley showed slides of current problems and of the new route that has been selected.

4. Port Clinton – Lutz reported that on the only unprotected tract in Pennsylvania at the railroad tracks in Port Clinton, the owner allows hikers to cross the working tracks, but the crossing is hazardous. The Bartram Rail Trail also passes through the area and a pedestrian bridge (at a possible cost of \$1 million) is needed to take both trails over the tracks. The two groups can work together for a possible DCNR grant, but matching funds will be needed.

5. Pennsylvania MOU – Lutz reported that the signatures of four maintaining club presidents (AMC-DV, Batona, SATC, and WTC) must be obtained before the governor can sign the document.

6. AT guidebook Promotion -- Barnes and Noble will be featuring the AT guide in its stores in June. This will provide an opportunity to set up tables and promote ATC and local clubs.

7. 5 Year Plan – Lutz stated that half of the clubs have not submitted the 5-year plans that were due by January 1, and that we need a different way of handling this next year. Snow suggested using the fall RPC meeting to start the process with the clubs.

8. Gateway Communities Initiative – Lutz attended a workshop on gateway communities and how to work with them. ATC has a workshop planned for each region; in the Mid Atlantic region, possible candidates are Front Royal, Boiling Springs, Duncannon, Palmerton, and Vernon. The program seeks to integrate the trail into the towns.

9. Trail to Every Classroom Program – Lutz reported that teams of teachers from heritage areas will be trained to use the AT as a teaching resource, with the hope that this will help to involve children with the AT. A teacher training session will be held in July at NCTC. The session is for curriculum building that will match state education standards.

10. Junior Ranger Program – Lutz reported that an online program for the AT is under development.

11. Grant Applications – Lutz reported that grant applications have been submitted for upgrading the PA 512 parking lot at Wind Gap and for designing a crossing (bridge or tunnel) of PA 944 north of the Cumberland Valley.

B. ATPO

1. ATPO Written Report -- Schwarzkopf called attention to items in the written report and Remaley related some of the types of law enforcement cases he has handled. He cited the need for cooperation with local fire fighting organizations, since more damage resulted from getting personnel and equipment to a recent fire site than was caused by the fire itself. Remaley also discussed hikers who were resource abusers, and what was done to help them/protect them/protect others.

2. Satellite Imagery Applications for the AT – Wright presented a power point discussion of the Google Maps, Google Earth, and Terraserver computer resources that are available to map the AT. He illustrated differences by presenting images that showed the route of the AT. He demonstrated how club provided GPS data could be added to the maps to locate campsites, boundaries, entry points for first responders, and assist in maintenance.

C. Stewardship Council -- Snow reported that the SC will meet next weekend and that ATC Chair Fitzgerald has announced that an 8 member SC nominating committee, with at least one person from each region, will be formed to select nominees for the SC that will be elected in 2007. Hooper asked about the status of the MARPC proposal that each region have two representatives to the SC. Snow said that the issue was not under consideration, since ATC wanted to avoid regional agendas on the SC and Lutz stated that a lot of time and effort went into the composition of the SC. Wiemann requested that SC minutes be sent electronically to all RPC members to keep them informed about SC discussions and activities.

D. MARPC -- Snow asked if and how information about the RPC is reaching the clubs, and many representatives indicated that they regularly provide reports at club meetings. Birchman said that BMECC has a link to the MARPC web site on the club's web site. Daniels asked if each RPC could have space on the ATC web site. Snow stated that he owns the domain name atmarpc.org and that MARPC could use it. Snow indicated that the MARPC forum has not worked as hoped, but that it will be kept active for future use. Snow would like to try a once a month teleconference so that everyone could talk to each other more frequently.

E. Kittatinny Ridge Presentation – While everyone ate lunch, Paul Zeph, Chair of the Kittatinny Ridge Coalition, discussed the initiative to focus attention on and protect the Kittatinny Ridge in Pennsylvania (125 miles of the AT and 60 miles of the Tuscarora Trail are located on the Ridge). Using a power point program, he illustrated threats to the ridge and discussed the ways - establishing local Environmental Advisory Councils, educational activities, research and monitoring, and assistance and grants to local governments to write ordinances – that might be implemented to provide protection. The group's web site address is www.kittatinnyridge.org.

Subcommittee Updates and Discussions

A. Education, Outreach, and Volunteer Development – Schubert distributed two reports and outlined PTC efforts to publicize the AT and reach out to and partner with groups in the Lehigh Gap area. He related efforts to improve police department cooperation and the letter of appreciation PTC presented to the Lehigh Township (Northampton County) police. Other suggestions were to build bonds to hunter organizations, Scouts, schools, and media, and to develop a power point presentation that clubs could use to “sell” the AT to local groups. Wright volunteered to facilitate the development of a show. Lutz suggested that ATC and clubs must look for people with different interests in order to recruit new volunteers for the AT.

B. Budget and Grants – Schwartz stated that the committee has not yet met.

C. Handbook – Snow stated that the RPC needs tools to tell new members of the RPC how we have conducted our affairs, decisions reached, activities undertaken, addresses, etc. These tools should be on the web site for easy revision and access.

D. Land Use and Corridor Management – Daniels stated that subcommittee chair Rosen sent out a report in advance. The subcommittee is compiling a list of threats to the trail; what are needed are strategies to combat threats and be proactive. Lutz reported that the Blue Mountain Preservation group will be going to court one more time to oppose the Alpine Rose development in Eldred Township, Monroe

County, and that a proposed Harrisburg Authority wind farm with 15-20 towers and transmission lines could have an impact on the trail near St. Anthony's wilderness. Penn Future expects 2000 more turbines in the Mid Atlantic region by 2010. Population pressure is pushing more housing developments, and trail groups need to learn how to influence local land use groups, and even get sympathetic people on those boards. Two enormous power lines that will cross the trail corridor have been proposed in Maryland. One question to be resolved is whether the subcommittee is an information transfer committee (from and to ATC staff) or an action subcommittee to identify and implement solutions.

E. Cultural and Natural Resources – Fleming reported that clubs currently know little about cultural resources along the trail and in the corridor.

F. Trail Management – Wright distributed a handout about pressures facing the trail. The subcommittee goal is to address what we want the trail, shelters, etc., to look like in the future. How do we decide where to put in a boardwalk, how much to improve shelters, etc? Lutz stated that clubs that wish to build a shelter must complete a form to insure that proper approvals were obtained. Wright envisions that the subcommittee will gather information from clubs to develop guidelines that clubs could follow to balance competing pressures and allow for local conditions. Birchman said that the subcommittee could focus on signage. Two things to always ask are “who are we building this trail for.” and “what is the experience we are trying to provide (resource protection vs. user expectation)?”

G. Meetings – Snow stated that we should hold a 2-day fall meeting and invite agency partners. He suggested holding it in the northern end of the region and rotating the meeting to other areas in future years. Spring meetings would be one-day committee meetings. Representatives agreed to hold the fall meeting in New York, possibly at Graymoor, on Nov. 11-12, 2006 and to hold the spring meeting in Boiling Springs on March 10, 2007.

Other Announcements – Miller announced that MARO is pursuing a grant application that would enable a graduate student to interview long time maintainers for an oral history project. Naser announced that corridor monitoring reports would be due January 31 next year. She is also willing to arrange monitoring workshops if any clubs want training in this area. Miller offered to lead an after meeting hike to White Rocks, where a housing development proposal could have a significant impact.

Snow adjourned the meeting at 3:10 PM.

Barbara Wiemann
March 16, 2006