

MARPC Meeting
Nov. 11-12, 2006
Taconic Outdoor Education Center, New York

RPC representatives (representative first, alternate second): Kerry Snow, John Hedrick, PATC; Frank Bohn, Dallas Owens, CVATC; Paul Ives, Mike O'Connor, MCM; Jim Hooper, YHC; Philip Day, SATC; Hal Wright, Barb Wiemann, AHC; Scott Birchman, Martyann Gutierrez, BMECC; Paul Schubert, PTC; Dan Schwartz, AMC-DV; Al Britton, Batona; Ron Rosen, Walt Daniels, NYNJTC

ATC: Brian Fitzgerald, Royce Gibson, Karen Lutz, Bob Sickley

NPS: Rita Hennessy

Others: Jeff Buehler, SATC; Jim Haggett, NYNJ; Ollie Simpson, NYNJ; Jane Geisler, NYNJ; Jane Daniels, NYNJ; Larry Wheelock, NYNJTC; Gail Neffinger, NYNJTC; Ken Lutters, NY OPRHP

Opening and Introductions

Snow opened the meeting at 8:30 AM and everyone introduced himself or herself.

J. Daniels welcomed everyone to the Taconic Outdoor Education Center and discussed plans for the ATC Biennial at Ramapo next year.

Lutters, NY partner from the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, was introduced.

ATC Membership

Gibson, ATC's new Director of Membership and Development, presented plans for increasing ATC membership from maintaining clubs by exchanging membership lists with clubs and offering non-members a free one year membership in ATC. Each club would offer ATC members in their area a free club membership.

Hooper - YHC policy forbids giving out membership information. [AHC, MCM, BMECC, and Batona representatives also stated that their clubs have the same policy]. However, the club would insert an ATC membership flyer in their newsletter.

Ives - ATC should provide an article for use in club newsletters.

Rosen - clubs could include an opt-in box on membership forms so that interested club members could allow their name to be exchanged.

Snow – clubs could provide a check box on club membership forms so that people could opt for ATC membership if not a member. We need to show people the bigger picture of ATC and make the case that there is more to do than local club work.

ATC Publications

Fitzgerald discussed the role of ATC's member magazine, AT Journeys, which is designed to serve the current membership and attract new members. The previous magazine ATN, was designed to speak to the then-current membership. Feedback to ATC indicates that the magazine has not struck the correct balance, so ATC is putting together a committee of "stalwart trail folks" to work with the editor to achieve a better balance. We should see the results in January.

Ives - how do nonmembers obtain a copy of the new magazine?

Britton - how many copies are printed and how many copies are sent to places where the public would see it? Could the publication be offered online?

Schwartz – do new ATC members have new and/or different interests?

Gibson - the focus is on what attracts new members, which appeals work, what message generates a response.

Lutz – money makes it possible for ATC to support our goals and fulfill our mission

Wright - does ATC stand on the volunteer's side?

Hooper - the clubs have no input.

Fitzgerald – the changes implemented arose out of the Strategic Planning Summit, which provided a clear message about the need for resources, money, staff to accomplish ATC's mission. Changes made are the result of views expressed at the Summit.

Wright – is the shelter policy decided?

Fitzgerald – we all share our interest in ATC and must pull together

Schubert – many club members are not interested in ATC

Snow – MARPCs were created and structured to get club input

Hooper - development is the most important priority

Rosen – what resources should we have? A land office in ATC would need \$10-15 million each year to protect trail lands.

Britton – what issues are we trying to address since the strategic plan? Perhaps an article in AT Journeys could explain

WDaniels – we need to get involved in zoning, land use on a local level, we need people to step up

Hooper – ATC members who live in trail municipalities are needed to address problems in those municipalities

Wright – many hikers have an aversion to bureaucracy and government involvement

Birchman – can we protect every vista? People want development to provide jobs and want to live on the mountain

Wright – we need to shape development to help people and still protect the trail

Hennessy – we are trying to reach out to communities

Lutz – we will lose most fights, so we must pick our battles carefully

Lutz surveyed attendees about the electronic Register (if they received it, if they read it, if they printed it, what format they preferred, etc.) The polling results will be sent to Susan Daniels at ATC.

NPS Report

Hennessy presented the NPS report.

Bob Gray is retiring at the end of December and his position will be lapsed until October.

Todd Remaley will serve as acting chief ranger.

The producers of a planned motion picture based on Bill Bryson's A Walk in the Woods have been working with the office. ATPO wants the AT to benefit from this. Filming will start in February or March.

ATPO is involved in service learning for students and professional development for teachers. Lutz is working with Boiling Springs and Harpers Ferry schools on service learning projects. Children who are involved in volunteer projects are twice as likely to be involved when they are adults, who volunteer in areas to which they have been exposed. ATPO held a summer institute for 25 classroom teachers at NCTC last summer, addressing educational standards and the needs of schools. Ten teachers used the curriculum this fall with 600 students. Next year, 10-12 teachers from the Mid Atlantic region will participate. The year-long cost of this program is \$300,000.

Bear Mountain Relocation

Neffinger presented a power point program about the NYNJTC effort to relocate the AT on Bear Mountain. As part of the five-year project, the club is conducting trail work training. ATC contributed \$186,000 this year.

Gateway Community Forum

Lutz explained the Gateway Community Forum project, which seeks communities near blocks of public land, attempting to connect local businesses and land use planners to the resource. Boiling Springs was the site of the Mid Atlantic pilot project. About 150 community members attended a public meeting at which Ed McMahon spoke.

Formal AT Trail Town designation is one suggestion to raise the status of towns. What are the important considerations for designation? Banners, signs? Lutz asked for suggestions of other towns in the MARPC region. Suggestions were Waynesboro, VA; Duncannon, Port Clinton, Palmerton, Delaware Water Gap, PA; Unionville, Vernon, NJ; Greenwood Lake, Peekskill, Pawling, NY.

At 12:10, the MARPC took a break for lunch, a field trip to the Appalachian Trail relocation project on Bear Mountain, and dinner, reconvening at 7:05 PM.

Stewardship Council

Snow reported on the last Stewardship Council meeting. SC committees are examining areas of concern:

- Primitive Ethics – shelters and trail magic

- Volunteer Development

- Land Protection – insure that ATC adheres Land Trust Alliance standards and policies. ATC has a moratorium on the acquisition of new properties until the currently owned tracts are in compliance

- Wind Power – developing siting criteria. ATC is opposed to Redington, not all sites

- Community Outreach – Trail Towns

- Resource Conservation – ATC is holding a Mega Transect environmental monitoring conference this weekend. Michael Fey walked the width of Africa to create indicators of the environmental health of the continent. Fey is considering a hike of the AT to perform a mega transect of the trail corridor. The committee is also concerned with monitoring standards and citizen science programs.

Birchman - how are SC members are selected and what is the term of office.

Fitzgerald – each RPC has one representative, there is a two-year term of office, with a 6 year limit. A selection committee (8 members, including one from each RPC) will be formed to accept recommendations for new members and select members. The committee has 15 members and we expect to turn over 4-6 members. The selection committee is looking for people with skills in the various committee areas.

Walk in the Woods Motion Picture

Hennessy discussed the upcoming production of a motion picture based on the Bryson book A Walk in the Woods. The movie will address the environmental concerns of many ATC members and catch the attention of the American public. The draft script has been read by ATC and NPS. Some filming will be on the AT, but most will be done on sound

stages. Filming will begin next spring, with release about a year later. In the MA Region, possible filming sites are Lehigh Gap, Delaware Water Gap and Bear Mountain. Wright – I am concerned with the mean spirited relationship between the hikers and the impression this will give viewers.

Fitzgerald – ATC wants good exposure for the AT. We want the film to show that volunteers maintain and manage the trail. We hope that there will be public service announcements on DVDs, free publicity and name recognition for ATC, increased trail usage. The movie will be made with or without the consent of ATC, so we will work with the film company to maximize the benefit to us.

Hennessy – this will not be a sensational motion picture.

Fitzgerald – the production must show that the film will benefit the AT & Forest Service

Birchman – this is a good opportunity for ATC, despite some concerns

ATC Reorganization

Fitzgerald – ATC will have a balanced budget of \$6.3 million for 2007. There have been changes in the senior management, with Rich Hayes in Finance and Administration and Mari Omland in Conservation departing. Royce Gibson will replace Karen Kinney in Membership and Development. Steve Paradis has been hired as interim COO for 9 months to concentrate on project management. Dave Startzell will focus on external relationships and donors. ATC will be hiring a major gift officer to build the major donor program.

Lutz – the MA trail crew program will need \$2500 to complete its funding for next year

Fitzgerald – today on our field trip, I observed that many people who we saw on the trail were not white. We need to reach out to diverse groups. As an example, GATC is working to engage Afro-Americans in trail work.

Rosen – many young people suffer from nature deficit

At 8:15 the MARPC recessed until 8:30 on Sunday morning.

MARPC Organization

Snow transferred the Chair of the RPC to Birchman. A discussion of selecting a vice chair followed. Britton moved to change the term of officer of the Chair and Vice Chair to a 2 year term with one reelection and that the Chair and Vice Chair may be either a Representative or Alternate.

Snow – since Bylaws changes require advance written notice, we will hold a vote at the March meeting

Volunteer/Partner Awards

There were two nominees for the Volunteer Award (Dick Redfield from NYNJTC and Richard L. Barrick of CVATC) and one for the Partner Award (Larry Wheelock of NYNJTC). Snow proposed selecting two volunteers and one partner and all were in agreement.

Mid Atlantic Regional Office Report

Sickley – the MA Crew worked 2 weeks each at Yellow Springs, Eckville, Bear Mountain and Harpers Ferry. Next year's projects include Bear Mountain, Michaux Forest, south of Boiling Springs, a CVATC bridge, and a PATC boardwalk near the Smithsonian property. Crews were 80% filled this year.

Lutz – the capital planning and 5-year plans, which take us through 2013, are due.

Projects for each club are:

PTC – develop a parking lot at the west side of Lehigh Gap to hold 20 cars; the driveway access to the east side needs to be improved

NYNJTC – Bear Mountain; AT Train Station boardwalk; Walkill bridge; parking at Pochuck; privies; Palisades Parkway crossing

CVATC – bridge project listed for MA Crew next year; 944 crossing; PA Turnpike bridge

AMCDV – Transco Gas Pipeline plans to add a new line where three others already exist, and we need to keep the AT open during construction

SATC – rehab former Brandywine section, especially erosion in Rausch Gap area; additional campsites on Stony Mt between Rausch Gap and Peters Mt; upgrade privy at Peters Mt.; 225 parking lot

AHC – define Ft. Franklin parking lot; Outerbridge Shelter upgrade not urgent, we will see what develops with the Wildlife Information Center and the National Heritage Corridor

BMECC – rehab trail on the north side of Eckville; Port Clinton railroad crossing; update Hamburg & NPS agreement

PATC – project for MA Crew next year; shelter work at various places; Pogo Campground; upgrade fireplaces in Shenandoah NP with LLBean grant

MCM – 4 PA projects at Darlington, Cove Mountain, 2 bridge abutments; wet area at stream near Millers Gap & Horse Trough

YHC – trains block AT crossing occasionally

Batona – parking lot at Wind Gap; unauthorized campsites; erosion

There followed a discussion of the problems of development near the trail and law enforcement issues

Lutz – we must start thinking beyond the treadway and consider viewshed issues,

Owens – each club should create a strategic planner position in the club to deal with long-range issues

Britton – education is so important for the future

Lutz – items submitted now will be considered for funding in 2013

Rosen - how will the MARPC prioritize projects and when?

Wright – our meeting schedule should dovetail with the projects prioritization deadline

Snow – we could have club information compiled by October, report on projects in

November, and have a teleconference to prioritize items in December

Hooper – safety issues have highest priority

Lutz – think about issues beyond treadway

Daniels, W. – we need to see all projects to make informed decisions

Wright – we need an online password protected database that everyone can use

Lutz – think about what your club needs and then we will see how we can make it happen region-wide

Schwartz – the Pennsylvania AT Committee is investigating a state license plate for people who would like to support and promote the AT. Pennsylvania charges \$600 for logo work

Hennessy – the North Carolina plate brought in \$60,000

Schwartz – ATC would get \$20 for each plate sold. We need someone to do the artwork.

Subcommittee structure

Snow – we should suspend the subcommittees until we better identify tasks and priorities

Rosen – we need to prioritize regional response to incursions and incidents

Wright – we should have a designated RPC person for each area of concern

Schubert – I'm willing to continue with the Outreach & Education Subcommittee

Snow – everyone needs to go back to their club with issues of regional concern - incursions, viewsheds, shelter plan, trail magic, trail to every classroom, trail towns - and find out where their clubs stand on these issues.

1. Trail magic

Hooper – putting out water or shuttles are OK, but angels should coordinate with the clubs

Wright – does the angel have to be there?

Snow – the SC paper was meant to offer guidelines, not policy

Daniels, W – spontaneity versus planned events?

2. Incursions (major events, not litter)

Hooper – we need people in each township where incursions are happening

Snow – how will committee address this issue, do we need a person as point of contact?

Daniels, W – let's post incursions to web site in special area

Birchman – the maintaining club and Boiling Springs should know about incursions.

Ridgerunners have no enforcement powers, and should report incidents.

3. Viewshed Issues

Daniels, W – let's prioritize regional viewshed issues in Basecamp. We need to identify and find partners. Take pictures of viewsheds.

Lutz – having defensible zoning language on the books before the fact is vital; we deal with 55 townships in Pennsylvania alone

4. Trail Towns

Lutz – criteria are being developed and we are looking for input. Criteria to rate towns could include businesses of importance to hikers, attitude to hikers, legislation to protect the trail

5. Trail For Every Classroom

Hennessy – in 2008 we will have a team from each region, including a lead instructor.

Teachers will have 2 ½ days of training in February, hold workshops, and attend the summer institute

6. Shelter Plan

Lutz – we need feedback from clubs. This is a philosophical discussion, how do we want to manage the trail and accommodate users.

Daniels, W – would like to ban open fire rings, air pollution, and stripping woods

Chainsaw Certification

Britton – is it possible for NPS to recognize persons who hold chain saw certification from other agencies or government bodies? I will draft a document for NPS and serve as the point person for this issue.

MARPC Purpose

Snow - what is the responsibility of representatives and alternates? To communicate to the club and the RPC, and attend meetings. If representatives don't attend meetings, what is the consequence?

Schwartz – we meet with other clubs, staff, NPS at the RPC meeting

Hennessy – NPS hears what people say at these meetings
Wright – we need to meet and hike
Birchman – our focus is as a conduit back and forth to clubs and ATC, to report on what clubs think
Daniels, W – what are the future issues that we should be thinking about. It is our responsibility to offer up issues.
Fitzgerald – that was idea, that RPCs would address regional issues
Lutz – the fundamental nature of our partnership is shared leadership. This is a tough sell for some issues. What are we doing to advance three-legged stool (ATC, NPS, clubs), to get past the “them” to the “us”
Wright – we need to advocate for consensus
Rosen - conformity versus individuality
Snow – the AT is a national park and we only have so much wiggle room
Lutz – what do you want the AT experience to be like in 50 years?
Wright – what kind of animal is the RPC?
Lutz – the RPC tells ATC what the regional priorities are
Snow – we should have a consensus opinion and then representatives should advocate to their clubs
Wright – clubs should have a say in what we do, in how to do things
Britton – we would have anarchy if each club does what they want
Snow – it would be bad if each club does its own thing
Wright – we don’t want to alienate club members

Future Meetings

March 10, 2007 – Saturday in Boiling Springs
November 10-11, 2007 – Northern Virginia at Skyland, Blackburn, or Bears Den
Agenda items should be submitted early to encourage partners to attend.

Closing Thoughts

Birchman – thanks to Kerry for his leadership. Think about the vice chair position. We need to educate clubs on issues. We have lots of opinions, and need to reach consensus to report to SC.

Snow – lets keep Basecamp for internal committee use and use the MARPC email list to reach a wider audience. We might need a more elaborate web site.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

Barbara L. Wiemann
MARPC Secretary
Nov. 30, 2006