

2nd Draft
Minutes of the MA-RPC Meeting
Boiling Springs, PA
March 10, 2007

Attendees

MARPC Delegates and Alternates: PATC: Kerry Snow, John Hedrick; CVATC: Frank Bohn, Dallas Owen; MCM: Paul Ives, Michael O'Connor; YHC: Jim Hooper; SATC: Phillip Day; BMECC: Scott Birchman; AHC: Barbara Wiemann; PTC: Paul Schubert; DVAMC: Dan Schwartz, Bill Steinmetz; Batona: Al Britton, Susan Charke; WTC: Mike Kintner, Bill Tinney; NYNJTC: Ron Rosen, Walt Daniels

ATC Staff: Karen Lutz, Michelle Miller, Sally Naser, Steve Paradis, Bob Proudman, Jim Ross, Jeanne Mahoney, Caroline Dufour

NPS Staff: Pam Underhill

Other: Kim Van Fleet (Audubon), Jeff Buehler (SATC)

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Birchman called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. Everyone introduced himself or herself.

Approval of Minutes

Rosen moved, Britton seconded, to approve the minutes of the November 2006 meeting. Passed unanimously.

Review of Club Delegation Agreement

Lutz stated that she wants volunteer leadership to emerge for the RPC and is concerned that not all lines of discussion on the MARPC email list have been productive. She is confident that the RPC members have the talent to move forward. She stated her hope that the RPC will soon become self-determining with regard to its destination, with everyone working together. The MARPC has the talent and cannot wait and expect ATC to tell it what to do and how to do it. That's the MARPC's job. The MARPC should be viewed as a real leader in the management of the AT.

Since no member of the MARPC signed the Delegation Agreement between their club and ATC, Lutz presented a power point slide show describing the co-operative partnership between the organizations and agencies responsible for the administering, managing and maintaining the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The Club Delegation Agreement that each club has signed defines the agreement between ATC and the Club. ATC is the guarantor of the agreement and insures that the Clubs do their job. ATC disseminates information about laws, regulations, and policy to the Clubs and provides technical and financial support. The Clubs are required to maintain the footpath, manage facilities and lands, write and revise Local Management Plans, conduct trail assessments, monitor and report on corridor lands, and cooperate and communicate with ATC and other partners.

Under the cooperative management plan, Clubs should attempt to resolve issues locally. If needed, issues can be sent up the chain to the RPC Chair and the Regional Director, Stewardship Council, ATC staff and the Board.

Britton asked how the RPC relates to the state AT Committees. Lutz stated that state agencies, such as PennDOT, have provided funds for items such as bridges and road crossings.

Day moved, seconded by Britton, to include in the Delegation Agreement a requirement that each Club provide a representative at each RPC meeting. Passed unanimously.

Job Description for RPC Delegates

Birchman - the job description, written by Daniels, is intended to provide to new representatives to the Committee an idea of what they are signing up for.

Snow - the document should define what the RPC is and what its tasks are.

Owen – this is not a job; the document should be titled Delegate and Alternate Guidelines.

Schwartz - agencies are not reflected in this document.

Bohn – this RPC is not a Board of Directors, but an advisory committee.

Birchman directed Daniels, Rosen, Bohn, and Day to wordsmith the document at lunch and present a revision later in the day.

Communication Between RPC delegates and their Clubs

Batona, WTC, YHC, and SATC delegates report to their Clubs' Boards, Councils, or Executive Committees, which meet bimonthly, quarterly, or semiannually. AHC delegates report monthly to the general membership. NYNJTC organizational structure duplicates ATC, with club and individual members and 3 AT management committees, items are brought to each committee independently.

Birchman – the point is that there is a time lag in getting RPC news to the clubs and having the clubs responding.

Nominating Committee and Bylaws

Nominating Committee

Snow and Rosen volunteered to serve on the Committee. Election of new officers is scheduled for March 2008.

Bylaws changes

1. Rosen moved, Daniels seconded, that officers serve two-year terms and that delegates and alternates be eligible to hold any office.

Daniels – the purpose is for a larger pool of people for officers.

Schubert – two years is too short for officers; it should be three years.

Snow – make the term of office shorter, so that more people will volunteer.

The vote was 11-1 in favor (BMECC opposed).

2. Schwartz moved, Rosen seconded, that officers may serve no more than three consecutive terms in any officer position. The vote was unanimous.

3. Rosen moved, Snow seconded, that the bylaws be amended to provide each club one representative and vote to the RPC for each 60 miles or fraction of AT maintained. The effect of this change would be to give BMECC 2 reps, NYNJTC 3 reps, PATC 4 reps, and all other clubs 1 rep; each club would have one designated alternate.

Ives – moved to table the motion. The vote was 5 in favor, 7 opposed, and the tabling motion failed.

Steinmetz – trail mileage is a good surrogate for the responsibility each club has

Hooper – a larger RPC will be more unwieldy.

Snow – members of a large club do not have unanimous opinions.

Underhill – a compromise solution might be to allow more representatives for larger clubs with larger AT mileage, but limit each club to one vote.

Owen – every club has all of the same responsibilities, large or small club.

Ives – Pam’s split of representation and votes has merit.

Bohn – if we were a legislature, multiple votes would be good; but we are an advisory group; we can add more members but not more votes.

Charkes – how would this new arrangement benefit the trail?

Rosen – there would be more people to take an active role.

Day – I like a compromise like Pam suggested.

Snow – the PATC Council objects to having only one vote in the MAPRC.

Rosen requested a straw vote to gauge the sentiment of the RPC. The results showed that the motion would be defeated.

Rosen moved, Daniels seconded, to amend the motion to authorize one representative for each 60 miles of AT responsibility, but only one vote per club.

The vote was 10 for, 2 opposed (BMECC, PATC). Motion passed

Stewardship Council

Rosen, who is serving on the Stewardship Council nominating committee, asked for nominations from the MARPC (each RPC has one member on the Council). The deadline for nominees is April 30. Britton recommended Susan Charkes.

Wind Turbines, Ridge Top Habitat, and Wildlife

Van Fleet, Important Birding Area Coordinator for Audubon, presented a power point slide show.

National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors

Miller presented a power point slide show about the proposed new corridors. Proudman pointed out that the MARPC should take the lead in this issue since all three lines are proposed for the MA region (Northern VA, WV, northern PA).

Prioritizing High Priority Protection Areas

Dufour - The land trust movement is changing, and is upgrading standards. ATC has been auditing its program to see where we do not meet standards. The areas of deficit include stewardship. We need more documentation of the monitoring work done. ATC has limited capacity to handle conservation deals, so we work with conservancies and land trusts. We do not have a list of tracts to go after, but we do have priority areas. In the MA, they are Connecticut to Bear Mt., Delaware Water Gap, Pinnacle, and South Mt to Maryland. The cost of an easement is 50-80% of the value of the land.

Lutz – The easement fee can buy various rights (mineral, utility, scenic, timber). The problem is that you cannot envision every potential use in an easement. You can write in allowed uses in an easement or you can give the owner rights to do everything except x, y, and z. But new uses in the future can surprise you. We should put our efforts in local

municipal land use planning. In Pennsylvania, this is done by county or township, each autonomous, each different. We need to get involved here, and also visit legislators who have trail in their district.

Dufour – We have draft ordinances to share.

Miller - We have an intern researching good land zoning ordinance language, which has to be defensible in court.

Lutz – How can we prioritize areas to preserve?

Daniels – We need a set of criteria to evaluate.

Lutz – We need to identify tracts to protect. Every club is asked to compile a list of tracts that would be advantageous to own, and why. RPC reps are encouraged to think regionally about what is important and not restrict themselves to just their club's section.

Dufour – The priorities are tracts contiguous to the corridor, adjacent to other protected lands, tracts in the viewshed, tracts threatened by development, tracts adjacent to remote areas, ecological sites (springs, etc.), cultural sites, wooded lands, and larger size tracts.

Corridor Monitoring

Naser reported that some clubs have never submitted any monitoring reports in all the time that she has worked for ATC. ATC has scanned the maps and witness marks; the deeds have also been scanned from microfilm but 25% are illegible. Some clubs have requested resurveys, but this will not happen. Missing lines can be remarked. The cost to replace a monument is \$1000. The land acquisition process is basically over. NPS owned ATC lands cost \$143,000,000 to buy and \$9,000,000 to survey. It is essential to preserve any and all monuments. In the future, ATC will require a higher level of detail to properly manage acquired tracts. Per the delegation agreement, monitoring is obligatory, maintenance is optional.

ATC and NPS Reports

ATC - Lutz

-- reported that SATC, MCM, WTC, and NYNJTC are providing financial support for the ATC Mid Atlantic Trail Crew.

-- passed out charts detailing the areas of responsibility for each MA ATC employee, so that clubs will know who to contact with specific questions.

-- distributed sheets showing the date of Local Management Plan approvals and when revisions are needed.

-- reminded Clubs to check the chart of Environmental Assessments that was included in pre-meeting materials.

-- reported that PA Rep. Mike Carroll, District 118, will introduce legislation this summer to authorize a PA AT plate; ATC would get \$15 from each plate.

-- reported that the PA 944 underpass should be under construction next year; funding is from PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and PennDOT grants.

-- reported that the man convicted and sentenced to death in the murder of two hikers at the Thelma Marks Shelter in 1990 has negotiated an agreement to serve two consecutive life sentences in return for waiving his right to any future appeals of his sentence.

Miller – as part of the AT Mega Transect, this summer volunteers will be conducting a survey of predators along AT in MD, WV, and VA. Cameras will be installed at selected sites to photograph the animals attracted to scented bait stations.

Lutz – a pilot program to count users of the AT between the Scott Farm and Harpers Ferry will take place Memorial Day to the third week in August. People leaving the trail at randomly selected specific locations will be interviewed.

Lutz – Jeanne Mahoney has just been hired as the new ATC volunteer resource coordinator.

Lutz – a new Trail Town could be designated every couple of years (Hot Springs and Boiling Springs were the pilot towns). We are looking for input to develop designated A.T. Trail Town and Gateway Community programs.

NPS – Underhill reported that NPS will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2016. As part of a centennial challenge by the President, NPS will receive a budget increase of \$100,000,000 in matching fund. NPS will seek signature projects to feature in next 10 years (such as the Mega Transect and Trail to Every Classroom). NPS will be holding meetings in various locations to seek ideas. The Walk in the Woods film is going forward, with filming scheduled to begin soon. NPS has rejected a proposal to film a reality show about overweight adults walking the AT to lose weight on the AT.

Trail Magic

Birchman – my opinion is that anything left unattended on the trail is trash and should be removed. We need to distinguish between planned feeds and spontaneous acts.

Hooper – the proposal does not address shuttles to town.

Proudman – peer pressure should be used to control trail magic; the document is a tool to use for education.

Ives – thru hikers like trail magic, maintainers don't.

Birchman – which clubs would endorse the proposed guidelines? By a show of hands, most indicated support.

Shelter Creep

Proudman – Our shelter system is envy of the national trail system. We have 271 shelters and the proposal suggests that we cap at that number. We need to consider throttling back our construction by building consensus and exerting peer pressure. Perhaps we should zone the trail into front country with larger structures, cooking facilities, etc, and wilderness with more primitive structures. What is appropriate, what is acceptable? After the Stewardship Council meeting next week, we will send a survey to the clubs to get their views.

Britton - Shelters should be resource driven – what is need in an area?

Hooper – There should be a committee to look at shelter proposals and screen them.

Proudman – We need more tent sites; this is where we should be adding capacity.

Britton – An RPC committee could screen designs and approve new facilities based on SC guidelines.

Trails to Every Classroom

If you know anyone who is interested in this program, talk to Ritz Hennessey or Karen Lutz. A teacher-training program is scheduled at Blackburn Trail Center this summer with teachers from southern PA, MD, and northern VA filling the roster.

Old Business

Job Description – Daniels presented the revised document and Daniels moved, Britton seconded that it be accepted. Unanimously accepted.

Chainsaw Training Reciprocity – Britton talked with Pete Irwin of the Forest Service and reported that the Forest Service will not accept the idea.

Local Media & Law Enforcement – Schubert reported on PTC's outreach efforts with the Lehigh Gap Nature Center, Lehigh Township police and the State Police.

Ramapo '07– Daniels reported that online registration is open and NYNJTC is hoping for 1200-1500 attendees.

Vice Chair Position – Philip Day volunteered to fill the remainder of the term.

New Business

Skills Training

Chain saw training - May 5-6 at the Scott Farm

Exotic plant monitor training – June 3 at the BMECC Rentschler Arboretum

Wilderness First Aid training – May 19-20 at Scott Farm

Fall meeting – Nov. 10-11 at Blackburn Trail Center

Spring Meeting - March 8, 2008 in Boiling Springs – RPC elections will be held

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 PM.

Barbara L. Wiemann

MARPC Secretary

Rev. April 2, 2007