



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Spring 2006, V. 20, No. 2

September 16, 2006 – Annual Picnic at the Visitor Center — Remember the Date

From the President

Dear Friends,

If you have a copy of the Spring 2004 Update, you will be able to refer to the concerns that were voiced to the state at that time about the transfer of Pisgah State Park to the Trails Bureau. In the spring of 2004 hundreds of local persons with interests in retaining the character of Pisgah were mobilized and the Keene Sentinel had several stories (including one on the front page) about the turn of events. Many of us felt that the future of the Park was in jeopardy. A meeting was held with then Parks Director Rich McLeod (now retired) who addressed many of the issues. As a result of that meeting, weekend coverage was re-instituted with the hiring of Diane Steeves to provide coverage no longer able to be provided by the Park Manager owing to the manner in which the Trails Bureau operates. A seasonal person was hired to assist Norma in the weekday operation of the Park. This situation provided a tolerable management process for the balance of 2004 and almost all of 2005. However, at the end of November 2005, an unexpected development occurred for Pisgah Park. Owing to the reported shortage in funds for New Hampshire Parks, Norma Reppucci's weekend assistant (Diane) and her weekday assistant were both terminated on very short notice.

Owing to the above actions, the Friends of Pisgah Executive Council requested a meeting with the Commissioner of the Department of Recreation and Economic Development (DRED) and the Parks Director. As mentioned in the last issue of the Update, the Council members and Park Manager were to attend that meeting which was set for early February. The meeting was held with then Commissioner of DRED R. Sean O'Kane and Parks Director Allison McLean. The subjects of: lack of staff, lack of adequate radio communication equipment, old and failing park truck, etc. were discussed in a lively 2-hour meeting. While the meeting seemed to be reassuring for the Friends and projected more attention would be given to the needs of Pisgah Park, that feeling was short-lived. In the Keene Sentinel that afternoon, it was reported that Commissioner O'Kane was leaving his position in less than 2 months.

If you folks are wondering about the eventual results of the meeting that the Council members and Park Manager had with the Commissioner and the Parks Director, you are in the same boat as is the FOP Council. At that time we requested week day help for Norma, someone to oversee the Park on weekends and for law enforcement to spend some time there. Nothing has happened to date. It is not a good thing to have Norma out in the Park working alone. The Park is wide open on weekends and chances are there is no law enforcement to be seen. Vandalism has been increasing. This is the largest state park in the New Hampshire Park System and deserves more than a single person to cover the nearly 13,500 acres with almost a 50 mile periphery adequately. There is the usual natural damage to repair and there are roads to maintain plus attempting to limit illegal and destructive activities in the Park.

We know that the state parks have financial woes and the FOP Council thought of a way to help the state offset the expenses of Pisgah (a no-fee park). The letter on the following page contains a suggestion that might help make up for the shortage and help Pisgah Park cover the expenses of its operation. This letter was sent February 15, 2006, and as I write this, there has been no response.

If you feel as we Council Members do that the Park is being short changed in its day to day operation (remember that prior to its transfer to the Trails Bureau, Pisgah State Park had 2 full time rangers – Park Manager and Assistant) assigned to it, perhaps you might contact your state legislators and the Parks Director to express your concern over the present state of affairs.

If you have ideas or questions about Pisgah State Park or the Friends of Pisgah, please call me at 603-336-5462 (preferably after 5 p.m.) or e-mail me at mdrwer2@verizon.net.

Bill Roberts

Senator Bob Odell
State House
Concord, New Hampshire

February 15, 2006

Dear Senator O'Dell:

I am the President of the Friends of Pisgah and am writing concerning finances at Pisgah State Park, the largest park in the state parks system. As you may know, Pisgah is a free park (no user fees). The Park has one Manager who has been working five days a week but no weekends since the spring of 2004. At present, there are no weekend employees at all, although weekends are the busiest time for the Park. Until the spring of 2004, the Park had a Manager and Assistant Manager and the Park was staffed weekends on a rotating basis. When the Park was transferred from Parks to the Trails Bureau in 2004, weekend coverage by full time employees was eliminated. However, a part time ranger was employed continuously through this past November to provide weekend coverage. A seasonal ranger also was employed to help the Manager provide necessary services in the Park during the week.

As you are aware, financial difficulties in the Park System have caused considerable cutbacks to park operations in general, starting in late 2005. These cutbacks have been a severe blow to Pisgah Park which is already understaffed. Pisgah is a year-round park and consists of over 13,500 acres. Year round work is needed to maintain the trails, roads and parking lots. The park has five trail heads and a perimeter of about 50 miles by local roads. It does not lend itself to a customary fee for use structure but does provide recreation for many area people and folks from other parts of the state.

The Friends of Pisgah is concerned about the status of Pisgah Park -- it needs help. FOP has a suggestion that may provide funding for some of the additional staff required to properly manage the Park. This suggestion will require legislation to implement it. Only the Legislature can make changes so the Parks Division can afford the manpower, vehicles and whatever else it takes to make and keep Pisgah a quality park.

Hopefully you will consider the following while working on SB-5. Currently under Title XIX-A Forestry, Chapter 227-G; 5 Forest Funds, as timber is cut on State owned lands and sold, the funds go to the Forest and Lands Division. We would like to see that provision changed so that the Parks Division could obtain some or all of the funds that will be generated with our suggestion. In the case of Pisgah, 100,000 to 150,000 board feet of timber (select cut) made over one or two years would greatly assist in covering expenses for Pisgah for a year. Such a cutting would be very beneficial to the forest and improve wildlife habitat. Since Pisgah was purchased in the 1970s, no significant logging has been done in the Park. Conservative timber harvesting in Pisgah could help Parks to achieve a balanced year round management for Pisgah, this important link in the New Hampshire Park System.

The Friends of Pisgah is a group formed and incorporated in 1987. We are registered with the State of New Hampshire and are a non-profit charitable organization. One of our major achievements was to build a post and beam building in the park -- a replica of an 1850's farmhouse. This building was presented to the State in 1997 and is now the Visitors' Center and Park Headquarters, located on Old Chesterfield Road in Winchester, New Hampshire.

Our next project is nearly complete. It is a large post and beam barn that was located in Westmoreland, New Hampshire and donated to FOP by Cheshire County. We are fortunate that the Cheshire Delegation felt this was a worthy cause and arranged for the donation. FOP had the barn dismantled, repaired and installed across the road from the Visitors' Center. The barn installation is nearly complete and when done the barn will be used as a museum and education center to display logging and farm equipment used in the early years before all this land became Pisgah State Park. Sometime in early 2006, this building also will be donated to the State of New Hampshire Park System.

FOP has demonstrated remarkable attention to the needs of Pisgah State Park; we hope that the state of New Hampshire also will work with us to ensure the continued management and improvement of the Park, something which can only be done by providing additional funds for operation. Our suggestion would provide an opportunity for the state to do this. We think that a trial 2 - 4 year program under strict supervision so as to minimize any damage to the environment and the aesthetic nature of the Park would be sufficient to give an indication of the capability of the Park to become more self supporting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

cc Senator Thomas Eaton
Senator John Gallus
Allison McLean, Director of Parks

William E. Roberts, President
Friends of Pisgah

From the Park Manager

Hello Friends

General

I hope you all had a good winter. Due to the lack of snow I did not get to see too many of you out recreating as usual in the Park. Like many of you, I did not mind not having to plow and shovel lots of snow.

Unfortunately, as with many state agencies, our Parks Department and Trails Bureau are suffering from the lack of revenues. The rainy weather last summer and heavy rains last fall during the Park foliage season along with very little snow this winter brought overall Parks registration numbers down. This resulted in lower revenues for the 2005 year and for the winter season just past. Poor weather combined with rising fuel costs and general costs of all things makes operating parks almost impossible right now. There is no funding for many seasonal positions which means I will probably not have anyone here working with me this summer. I'm still waiting to hear for sure on that.

Thankfully there are some very dedicated people who are making this Park stay functionable. Cliff Struthers has been volunteering many hours using his own tractor to fix washouts and grade the roads so we can open them on May 23rd. We started our Wednesday Volunteer Work Days on Wednesday, April 12th and meet **every Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. and travel to various trailheads to clear and work on trails.**

John Herrick has also held monthly volunteer workdays on second Saturdays throughout the Winter clearing the Dort Property, and plans to help with the Park trails now that the nicer weather is here.

Anyone interested in joining either of our volunteer teams (Wednesday Volunteer Work Days or the projects with John Herrick) is welcome. This year more than ever we need your help to keep the Park trails open. Please give me a call at the Park Office (603) 239-8153.

Eagle Scout Project

In March I had the opportunity of working with Andrew McQuay who needed to complete his Eagle Scout Service Project. Andrew lives in Peterborough and is a member of Boy Scout Troop 346 of the Daniel Webster Council. The Friends of Pisgah helped sponsor and pay for the supplies. Andrew was able to get a discount from Belletete's True Value in Peterborough and Sira's Press. Andrew organized a work crew consisting of Boy Scouts from his troop and friends from his church.

Andrew and his volunteer friends constructed six framed boxes with laminated park maps highlighted "you are here." Each box was covered with Plexiglas and sealed. He labeled names and routed signs for each one and they were installed at the vistas throughout the Park. One large board also was constructed and installed up at Pisgah Reservoir with maps and postings (covered with Plexiglas and sealed).

I'm sure Andrew's project will be appreciated by many who recreate throughout the Park.

Norma Reppucci

Trail Work

Now is a great time to get work done on the park trails! Any and all help is greatly appreciated. Please see page 5 for the Trails Chair's message about Saturday hikes/workdays and above for mid-week workdays with Norma Reppucci. We have more opportunities for work in the Park. If anyone is available and willing to work on a weekday, please give me a call at 603-363-4482. I live in Chesterfield and focus on the northwestern access points.

Anyone out there who has a talent for creating benches or seats from "found objects" (downed trees!)? Various vista spots in the Park lend themselves to such enhancements. We would also like to get a program going using Trail Stewards who can regularly report on the condition/needs of particular trails. If you are someone who regularly (once a week or at least once a month) travels on particular trails and would be interested, give me a call. Some tools of the trade are available, thanks in part to the generosity of Brown and Roberts in Brattleboro, VT.

Happy hiking to all!

Kathy Thatcher

History, Archaeology and Education Report

Over the winter months, I had the opportunity to attend some interesting meetings and workshops that introduced me to fellow history enthusiasts. Their experience and expertise will certainly assist me while serving as historian on the Friends of Pisgah Council. Using information gained from a workshop called "An Introduction to Material Culture" held at the Mariposa Museum in Peterborough, I have come to appreciate the value of having historical artifacts and relevant information readily available. An item has a story to tell which brings history to life.

This workshop led me to the development of plans for some projects that will be the focus of work by interested Friends of Pisgah members and other volunteers. Tools and farm equipment owned by the FOP have been displayed in the barn by Norma and her mid-week work crew. These items were largely previously displayed at the Chesterfield Gorge but were removed by the Friends in 2004 in anticipation of the completion of the barn now erected at the Visitor Center site on Old Chesterfield Rd. Some of the artifacts have been labeled but information about each item will be researched at the upcoming **Weekend Workday on Saturday May 13th** (see page 5 for more details). This work will take some time and help would be appreciated on Saturday the 13th and in the future.

Recently, the elementary and middle schools in Hinsdale, Chesterfield, and Winchester joined together to explore Pisgah Park for some Earth Day Activities. From 4 to 6pm, on April 10, 11 and 12, about 50 to 60 children gathered at the trailheads of Horseshoe Road and Kilburn Pond and at the Visitor Center to get to know our neighbors and their part of Pisgah. We hiked and identified some of the blooming spring wildflowers and important trees in New Hampshire. While in Winchester, the students enjoyed a variety of activities such as a nature scavenger hunt, an arts and crafts project, cooperative games, a hike, a tour of the Visitor Center and an opportunity to view the new display of tools and farm equipment mentioned above. It was a rousing success and will be repeated next year. Many thanks to Kim Severance and Sharon Comerford of Hinsdale School and Denise Prescott from the Winchester School for their efforts.

In February, at the Monadnock Historical Societies Forum meeting the group made plans to jointly create an exhibit showcasing historic meeting houses of the area. I would love to include any information about the formal or informal "meeting places" in the little towns within the Pisgah's boundaries like Baker City and Hardscrabble. Does anyone have memories or information about the places villagers conducted town business or held church services or special functions? Exhibit design and organization will take place over the summer with a November 2006 opening date planned.

Also, the Monadnock Historical Societies Forum will meet at the Pisgah State Park Visitor Center in October. This is a rescheduling of the meeting originally set for October 2005 but postponed owing to the flood damage of the week preceding that scheduled meeting.

Please feel free to call, write or email me at 587 Chesterfield Road, Hinsdale, 03451 – Telephone 603-336-7479. Email at cpowellbks@cheshire.net. Thank you in advance for your assistance and interest!

Laurel Powell

A Note on Membership

As Membership Chair, I along with our Treasurer, Nancy Miller, track the membership records through the year. Our yearly membership totals have stayed fairly constant having crept up about 5 % over the past several years. We have about 130 households or groups to which we will mail this issue and hope to reach our 2005 annual total of 170 soon. This total includes our complimentary memberships, principally to local libraries and newspapers. If you know someone who you think should join the Friends or who has not renewed, why not give them the membership application on the address page of this newsletter. We welcome memberships, new or renewed, and your donations as well. We have been very pleased with the generous donations already received from many of you for the 2006 year.

Matt Donachie

Share This Newsletter with a Friend or Leave It Where Others May Read It

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. Maybe you have a reading area at work where you could leave it for others to read. If you have a spot but don't want to part with your copy of Update, give Matt Donachie (603/239-6590) or Norma Reppucci (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.

Friends of Pisgah, the Hinsdale Prevention Coalition and Northfield - Mount Hermon Upward Bound Invite you to a Day of Historical Discovery and Community Service

Each month since December of 2005, The Friends of Pisgah have hosted community service exploratory hikes and trail work throughout Pisgah State Park and surrounding environments. Well, May is here and that means black flies, so we are going indoors. Our regular second Saturday of the month meeting will be held at the Pisgah State Park Visitor Center.

We have lots of fun projects for volunteers:

Creating Signage for:

Furniture & Household items from the 1800s
Farm Machinery
Historic Tools

Historic Research:

Identifying tools & household items from historic reference material

Trail Clearing (For the black fly hardy.)

Construct trail markers (prepare wood, paint)

Donations or Loans Needed:

- Reference books cataloging historic artifacts such as furniture, farm equipment and tools. (For those books too precious to lend - all owners of such books are enthusiastically invited to join us and help with identification and sharing of your general expertise.)
- Suggestions for research materials.
- Your time and expertise –if you have familiarity with historic farm equipment or creating signs
- Time as a volunteer: You must be at least 12 and capable of a strenuous hike to assist with trail clearing. For research work, you must be capable of conducting reference book and internet research and of handling precious books and artifacts without damaging them.

When: Saturday, May 13. 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Where: Pisgah State Park, Visitor Center, Old Chesterfield Rd. Winchester (off Rt. 119) about 3.5 miles up the road.

What to bring: Water and snacks

Optional: Work gloves and hand tools for those wishing to do trail work

Optional: Research reference materials for those who can provide them.

Contact: Laurel Powell at (603) 336-7479 or Rhonda Winegarner at (603) 336-5458 for more information and directions.

A Note from the Trails Chair

In conjunction with help from the project referenced above, we have been having a trails work day on the Dort Property (just off the northwest corner of the Park) owned by FOP as well as in the Park. We have been clearing trails and brushing out viewpoints on the property and in various locations within Pisgah. Each session has started with a moderate to strenuous hike in the Park environs and then the group gets down to work. Instead of designated FOP hikes this summer, our plan is to continue with the workday and hike the second Saturday of each month in conjunction with the assistance of the group organized by Laurel Powell and Rhonda Winegarner (see Winter 2006 Update). If the weather is bad we will try again the following Saturday. We would appreciate any assistance which members and friends of the FOP would care to give. You'll get a good hike and some fine exercise during the trail/view work; I'm looking forward to seeing you. The trails work crew gather each month at 10:00 a.m. at the Kilburn parking lot off Rte 63 in Chesterfield. On the following page are some pictures of the folks working on the trails in the past few months. We have been grateful to have: Jack Kondos, Laurel Powell, Kathy Thatcher, Rhonda Winegarner, Rick Guhse, Jason Clark, Bob Lance, Jeri Walton and son, among others to help me. Sorry all names are not here for this issue but we promise to mention all who help on the trails in the next issue of the Update.

John Herrick



Looking at the View – Trail Workers at the Dort Property



Helpers and Eagle Scout Andrew McQuay (right of Little's Lookout sign as you look at it) at the Visitor Center Barn



Trail Workers at Hinsdale, Chesterfield, Winchester Corner



Sign from Andrew McQuay's Eagle Scout Project

What Grows There?

As we transition from Winter (I think we had Winter) to Spring, the time is right to look more closely at your surroundings as you venture into the park. A wide variety of lovely plants will begin to turn the brown carpet around you to shades of green, accented by purple, white and yellow flowers. Heading down from the Horseshoe parking lot on the Old Chesterfield Road trail keep your eyes peeled for the green leaves of Bloodroot, a member of the poppy family, one of the first wood/and flowers to appear on the scene. The banking on your left, as you wander down the path, will be covered with its lovely white flowers sitting atop a single stalk surround by large slightly concave green leaves at the base. Not long after the Bloodroot have gone by, the same area will treat you to Purple Trillium of the Lily family easily identified by three large, ovate leaves topped by a flow with three purplish-maroon petals. Their flowing time is mid to late Spring. If you keep your eyes peeled when in a wetter habitat, such as the Kilburn Pond area you should be able to spot a Painted Trillium, an attractive three-petaled white flower splashed with pink in its center, balanced over three green leaves.

On the cultivated list, keep your eyes peeled when around old foundation sites for daffodils and forsythias that were planted by previous inhabitants.

The Kilburn Trail, alongside the pond, is a wonderful place to go exploring for a variety of wild flowers. A couple of lovely little flowers, that are members of the Lily Family, to look for, are the Canada Mayflower which bears clusters of small white flowers atop a stem with two or three bright green oval leaves, and the Blue Beard Lily Which boasts three to four delicate, yellow, lily shaped, drooping bell flowers on each stem. There are two to three shiny green leaves per stem.

Gold Thread (Buttercup Family) and Starflower (Primrose Family) are two lovely little white flowers easily distinguished by their leaves and flowering habit. The Gold Thread sits on top of a long stem that is surrounded by three shiny sharply toothed leaflets at its base. The Starflower has more pointed petals with striking yellow anthers at their center. There are five to ten lance shaped leaflets that form in a whorl at the upper part of the stem.

If you're lucky, you might come across a Pink Lady's Slipper, our most common orchids. The flower is pink to white with a slipper-shape that has a hollow pouch one to two inches long that sits on top of a long stem with two to three large oblong leaves around its base.

You're more likely to see the Jack-in-the-pulpit (Arum Family) come early Summer. The flower is composed of a green and purple hood (spathe) over a deep purple club-like spadix. Three lobed, sharply pointed leaves surround the sturdy stem.

A couple of larger plants that brighten the woods with their flowers are Zig-Zag Solomon's Seal and the Hobblebush (yeah, I know it's a bush not a flower). Solomon's Seal, another member of the Lily Family, hosts bunches of small white flowers at the end of the plant. Their leaves are oblong and parallel with hairy undersides. The Hobblebush (Honeysuckle Family) bears lovely white to pink flowers that cluster at the ends of their branches. The leaves are large oval to round shaped and saw-toothed. I find them reminiscent of Dogwood. Just a "note of interest": the bush apparently got its name for its ability to hobble your horse due to its low, branching habits. Watch it doesn't hobble you! One of the plants we need to trim back regularly.

And since I mentioned Dogwood, a lovely low growing flower you will encounter in the woods is the Bunchberry, member of the Dogwood Family. The white flowers balance on top of four, deeply veined, spade-shaped green leaves.

Two common ground covers sprinkle the floor of the woods with delicate white flowers come Summer. The Partridgeberry (Madder Family) sports white tubular flowers that grow in pairs at the ends of trailing branches. This pair of flowers is produced by one bright, red berry with two "eyes." The shiny, evergreen leaves are round to elliptical with a white stripe running along the vein. The other ground cover is Wintergreen, a member of the Heath Family. Its oval leaves are similarly colored but without the distinguishing white vein. They also tend to a thicker leaf which has a wonderful scent of wintergreen when crushed. Its flowers are many, nodding little bells. Wintergreen bears bright red berries as well, which are equally aromatic and make a wonderful tea!

These are just a few of the many plants you will find on your journey in the woods. Grab a handy pocket size guide next time you head out onto the trail. That's what I did! And another thing I do, as the weather grows warmer and the bugs come out to play! I hike in the rain! The trees provide a bit of a break and if you dress appropriately and the temperature is right, it's a wonderful way to venture into Pisgah during but season!

Kathy Thatcher

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First Class Mail

Membership Note

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 of encouraging 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): _____

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*Questions? Call Bill Roberts (603- 336-5462)
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*Send form and check made out to **Friends of Pisgah to:***

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