



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Fall 2006, V. 20, No. 3

Annual Meeting – Please Join Us

Tuesday, November 21, 2006 at the Hinsdale Community Center

From the President

Dear Friends,

Some of you may be aware that there have been hearings on Senate Bill-5 (SB-5) which deals with management of the state parks in New Hampshire. In February of this year we sent a detailed letter to Senator Bob O'Dell, the chair of the commission involved with this bill. Work on SB-5 continues and hearings were held this fall. In connection with those hearings, the Executive Council (Board) of the FOP sent the following letter to Senator O'Dell.

“ We, the Board of The Friends of Pisgah State Park, request that the commission seriously look at the funding of state parks. Pisgah is the largest of New Hampshire's parks and we are concerned with the inequitable distribution of monies. It has been shown that registration fees do not cover the costs of supporting the Park's infrastructure.

The FOP has spent a substantial amount of their money to upgrade and provide structures for the good of the Park. We have built a Visitor Center and barn at no cost to the state. We've also added 300 acres to the Park. In-kind volunteer work is critical to the efficient management of the Park. Several thousands dollars have been charitably donated to the Park by individuals ... friends of the Park. Volunteers have given innumerable hours to the Park and have constructed buildings, maintained trails, created vistas, and repaired roads, trails and bridges devastated by the floods of 2005. These (efforts) were all done in the spirit of improving the Park and enticing people to use it. The most substantial (recent) effort involved the salvaging, transporting, repairing, and restoring of a barn. We have done this in hopes of creating a historical museum representing the farm life that once thrived in Pisgah during the 1800s.

Please reassess all the Park needs. Just because there is no income to this Park doesn't mean that it should be overlooked. As a reminder, on the 29th of September, the Park Manager is the sole state employee overseeing the largest park in the state. This park official is only employed during the weekdays not on the weekend when the Park's use is at it highest.

Please proceed cautiously on any decision regarding privatization. We're hoping that no action would be taken that would impact the Park and its uniquely unfragmented greenspace and its surrounding protected natural areas. There is a growing body of interested wildlife scientists gathering data that should be essential to any decision made on the Park's behalf.

Special designation of Pisgah State Park as a natural park should be recognized. It is of great value as is and should be held in high esteem. We invite all members of the Commission to come to this gem and see for yourself!

Thank you for this opportunity to make comments.

Sincerely,
Friends of Pisgah, Inc”

Well Friends, as you can see we have to be vigilant and proactive if we are to protect Pisgah State Park as a premier natural park in the state park system. Please help us to raise awareness among legislators and state entities such as Forests and Lands concerning the need to preserve and enhance this great park. To that end, we invite you all to come to the Annual Meeting in Hinsdale (see above) in a few weeks. Also, please take time to renew your membership in the Friends and invite others to join. Additional contributions above membership dues are greatly appreciated. See you at the Annual Meeting.

Bill Roberts

From the Park Manager

General

We had another very busy summer season, one which kept us hopping.

As most of you know the Parks Division is facing some major financial problems with many cutbacks in parks staffing and maintenance. Although we started the summer with concern for staff capability being very limited at Pisgah, thanks to Chris Gamach, the Chief of the Trails Bureau, funding was arranged so that our summer helper, Danny Ford, could come back to assist me for the bulk of the summer. With the promise of some help, I agreed to take over the maintenance of Chesterfield Gorge State Park (again) and to try to cover some part of the weekends here at Pisgah. (Ed. Note: The Park, during the first 2 years after Norma's appointment as Manager, had a second weekday Ranger plus a weekend Ranger – Diane Steeves — available to provide Pisgah Park management at the most busy visitor time of each week.)

Unfortunately, as of this moment, we have been informed that there will be no funding for Danny's position next year should another slow winter with limited snow fall fail to bring in funds that help support us.

Trails and Roads

We have done quite a bit of trails and road work this year, with the Midweek Work Crew and the Americorps Crew. We were able to re-deck the Broad Brook bridge on the Doolittle Trail, install box culverts and water bars, brush back trails, and put up new trail markers on some trails in Pisgah Park. In addition, we were able to complete a major "spruce-up" at the Gorge and re-deck the lower bridge there.

The Americorps crew came for four days at the end of August to help replace a bridge on the Habitat Trail so we could open it. We much appreciate the assistance they have given us each summer for years. Our principal Park volunteer, Cliff Struthers, worked many hours with his own equipment grading, ditching, raking roads and helping us replace old culverts to keep the Park roads passable. I am not sure if you readers recognize that we still had lots of damage and clean up work to do from last fall's floods.

Significant additional damage was sustained in the form of fallen trees over the Halloween weekend when we were hit with high winds and excessive rain. Work on the cleanup from that storm is underway.

Special Thanks

Without, the help from Danny, volunteer Cliff Struthers, and Wednesday volunteers Gil Cameron, Kim Nilson, Jerry Gosslant, Jack Kondos and Bob Miller, it would be impossible for me to keep up with the maintenance of the Park, not to mention the Gorge, as well. If it were not for help from these many volunteers, the Park would not be functional at this time.

Personal Note

As you may realize, without a second Ranger during the week and a weekend Ranger, the Visitor Center is frequently not staffed during the day. We must use our limited resources to keep the Park in usable condition. I apologize to anyone who has tried to come to visit the Visitor Center and found no one around.

Norma Reppucci

Some Comments from the Editor

The Friends of Pisgah is greatly concerned about the operation of the Park with a minimal state presence. Park maintenance and thus safety is being compromised. Moreover, attention to the continued damage to trails and signs, etc. which is occurring throughout the Park, particularly in areas frequented by ATVs, is cutting into the available staff time for normal grooming and maintenance. The Park Manager, as the only Park employee, must re-create every burned or trashed sign.

We think it incumbent on state officials to recognize the penny wise but pound foolish potential of stripping this largest park of adequate staff. The first person who is injured, lost, etc. because of trail damage, missing signs, uncut trees on trails, etc. will most probably take the state to task for dereliction of duty. Lawsuits cost a lot more than paying for adequate staff and maintenance in the first place. You might wish to write your legislators and encourage them to provide more staff and, incidentally, to consider removing or better policing the instigators of the trail and sign damage.

Matt Donachie

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 over the past several years. We will mail this issue to about 150 households or groups. 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 are very pleased with the generous donations, in addition to membership renewals, received from many of you for the 2006 year. We hope that renewals and new memberships for 2007 will push our totals even higher.

Matt Donachie

HISTORY / EDUCATION

As most of you know, Pisgah State Park was created from existing private land procured by the state during the 1970s and 1980s. The Park area contains many old cellar holes and has a rich history of use dating back to before 1800. Our Visitor Center is a very historically accurate reproduction of an early 1800s home common to the local Hinsdale, Winchester, Chesterfield, Swanzey, Keene, etc. area. The barn, recently moved to the Park from Westmoreland and reconstructed on a site opposite the Visitor Center, also is an old structure, dating from over 100 years ago. One of the objectives of the Friends, in addition to the protection and enhancement of the Park, is the acquisition of historical artifacts and information, along with the education of school children (and others) on the natural and cultural history of the Park.

Owing to the historical as well as natural significance of the Pisgah area, the Friends of Pisgah participates in Historical activities with other groups when they may enhance the knowledge base of FOP and contribute to our interests. The Monadnock Forum of Historical Societies is one such organization. The Forum had its recent Roundtable Meeting at the Visitor Center in Pisgah State Park on Thursday, October 19th from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Friends of Pisgah hosted the event. (Ed. Note: This event was originally scheduled for October 2005 but was cancelled after the devastating floods which did so much damage to southwestern New Hampshire and caused the Park to be closed.) During the morning each representative (from town historical societies and similar groups) had an opportunity to describe special events, work or projects being done by each individual group. The sharing of information, resources and advice was encouraged and much appreciated. After a lunch at the picnic tables, the group toured the barn and looked at the farm tool and equipment exhibit. Later in the afternoon, part of the group drove to the John Hill site to have a tour of the property and talk to Cliff Struthers. Cliff described the process he uses to locate and map the property and building lines using existing cellar holes and a surveying transit.

Jan Carpenter has completed transcribing the eight audio tapes which were made under the auspices of Rodney and Dot Doolittle. We will soon have these formally compiled and available on loan from the Visitor Center or local libraries.

I am working on the sub-committee for a collaborative exhibit of historic meetinghouses and churches. About 25 towns are participating by sharing histories and artifacts. The organization and preparation leading up to the exhibit and publication are gearing up. The exhibit will open at the Historical Society of Cheshire County on Friday, November 10 with a formal opening reception and speaker on Monday, November 27. The publication will be available for sale. We hope you will visit the HSCC to see this exhibit. Their new hours are Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday evenings to 9 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to noon.

Monthly work sessions will be held for anyone interested in working with FOP on historical projects. Meetings will be at the Visitor Center on the third Wednesday of each month from 4 to 6:30 p.m. and the fourth Sunday of the month from 3 to 5:30 p.m.. Some of the proposed projects include:

- Researching and documenting information about the tools and farm equipment on display in the barn. Signs will be created and posted nearby.
- Helping Cliff Struthers restore and rebuild farm equipment.
- Helping Cliff to continue to survey the cellar holes as weather permits — he needs an extra pair of hands to work the transit. Once the site map is created, he needs help designing and constructing waterproof frames to put the map on display at the site.
- Revision and updating of brochures of the Historic Sites in Pisgah and the Wildlife Habitat Trail Guide before publication.
- Exploring the development of “Pisgah Discovery Backpacks” to be used as guides to areas of historical, cultural or ecological interest within the park.
- Interviewing local “experts” to edit and provide missing information from the audiotapes.

Dates for the sessions tentatively are: Nov. 15 & 26; Dec. 20 (12/24 No mtg.); Jan. 17 & 28; Feb. 21 & 25; Mar. 21 & 25; Apr. 18 & 2; May 16 & 27; June 20 & 24.

For more information call Cliff Struthers 239- 4288 or Laurel Powell at 336-7479 or email cpowellbks@cheshire.net.

*Laurel M. Powel
FOP History and Education*

FOP Collaborates with Local Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commissions of Hinsdale and Chesterfield had an official opening of the Bear Mt. Connector Trail up Daniel's Mt. On November 4th. A group met at the Plain Road Trailhead, hiked and enjoyed a great view of Moon Ledge over Hinsdale and Brattleboro. The Bear Mt. Connector Trail is a section of the continuing Wantastiquet- Monadnock Greenway Project.

Laurel Powell

Seeking Historical Artifacts

The Friends of Pisgah still is interested in creating a "museum" depicting life in New Hampshire in the early 1800's. We would like additional pieces for the farmhouse and barn. The following items would enhance the growing collection of period items: bed, chest, bureau, lights or lamps, chairs, books, tables, commodes, wash stand, mirrors, bed warmers, jugs, sleds, tool of all kinds, farm equipment, kitchen tools and utensils, old linens, 19th century clothing and anything pertaining to the industry carried on in the area.

If you have some items to contribute, please call me, Laurel Powell, at 336-7479 or email me at cpowellbks@cheshire.net. All contributions are tax deductible.

Friends of Pisgah and NH Natural Heritage Bureau to Cooperate on Project

The New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) will collaborate with FOP and other local partners to collect and assess existing biodiversity information for Pisgah State Park and conduct targeted field inventory. Lionel Chute, Administrator of the Natural History Bureau, spoke to the FOP Executive Council at their October Meeting. The mission of his Bureau is to gather information on rare and endangered species in the state.

At this time, NHB has virtually no ecological information about Pisgah Park in its database. This project will compliment a multi-year effort to fully inventory Pisgah for rare species, exemplary natural communities, and significant wildlife habitats. Final decisions relative to the management of Pisgah State Park are, by statute, made by the Commissioner of the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). The data collected during this project will contribute critical information to land managers, as well as identify future inventory needs. Field work will be completed in the April – June time period of 2007.

Mr. Chute requested names of potential contacts in southwest NH who could have information of value to the inventory process. He will report to President Bill Roberts periodically by email.

Trails Report 2006

Last winter we had some fun each second Saturday of the month when we would meet at Kilburn trail head, hike till noon and then work clearing the newly acquired FOP property adjacent to the northwest corner of the Park. This is about half done now. The view is just great.

This summer the kids were on vacation so I had no help but continued to work on the FOP property turning the top section into lawn and cutting more trees and fixing the road into it.

Now that school has started back up we have a group of kids and adults available again and we are proceeding as we did previously. Oct. 14th the work day was pine tree thinning across from Cheese Rock on Old Chesterfield Rd in the Park. We plan to do that again on Nov. 11th if the weather is good. The kids are excited about burning the brush piles on the FOP property and that may occur in Dec. or Jan. if we have some snow. Everyone enjoys the hiking so we should be able to do that starting in December whether or not there is snow.

McKim Mitchell has said we could have some wood from his portable saw mill and we were thinking of making some picnic tables that would be used at the mountain top vista on Davis Hill. If some people would like to help with this, let me now as I do have a generator that could be used to make these on site, maybe this spring.

Another big project is the need for a couple loads of gravel for the drive way. It was real bad last spring and now there are a lot of roots that make it so rough you need a truck to drive up there.

We plan to keep this same schedule every 2nd Saturday as long as it works for the kids. We may even do some sledding this winter if anyone is interested. So come join us at the Kilburn parking lot for a hike at 10:00 a.m. the second Saturday of each month.

John Herrick, FOP Trails Chair

State Officials Visit Park

The Executive Council has been busy trying to make state officials aware of the value and needs of Pisgah State Park. Earlier in the year we met with the Commissioner of DRED and the Director of Parks but that meeting, which seemed fruitful at the time, came to naught with the transition to a new DRED management within the month after our meeting. Over the summer and early fall, we have been successful in attracting DRED Commissioner, George Bald, as well as Senator Tom Eaton and Representatives Deb Hogencamp and Bill Butynski to meet with us. Lionel Chute and Pete Bowman of DRED came to our October meeting. We also met with Phil Bryce and Ken Desmarais. Hopefully our meetings with these various state officials will enable them to recognize the important role that Pisgah Park plays in the New Hampshire state park system.



Cathy Jenness Having a Great Time – Tom Sintros & John Herrick in the Background



Some of the Crowd at the Annual FOP Picnic



Laurel Powell, John Larson & Kathy Thatcher



Mary & Steve Johnson, Ruth Fairburn and Other FOP Members



Barry Labombard, John Summers & Other FOP Members



See if You Can Find the Landrys, the Daughertys and Elena Heiden in this Photo

Here are a few shots of the FOP Annual Picnic held in September. The weather was great and we had a good crowd. Photos are by Park Manager Norma Reppucci. Thanks Norma!

Advice for a (Trails) Volunteer

As most of you know, trails work can be very demanding. We are fortunate most years in Pisgah Park to benefit from the presence of Americorps volunteers. We also are the recipients of much work from our Midweek Work Crew and from the various Trails projects run by John Herrick, our Trails Committee Chair. With this background in mind, and aware that many of you may appreciate a little dissertation on the joys of trail work, especially in rainy, buggy and strenuous conditions, your editor is providing these comments on doing volunteer trail work in Alaska. They were excerpted by me from an article by Nancy Ellis, Alice Smith and Moira Rouse, in American Hiker, Winter 1990 for use in the AMC in Connecticut newsletter in the early 90s. I have reworked them a bit and they are provided again for your enjoyment.

- Stay in bed until someone says breakfast is ready.
- Look outside to see if it is raining (optional: it is raining!).
- Put on dirty clothes and cover with wet muddy raingear.
- Hike to worksite in mud.
- For tree removal, begin cutting tree, then stop and spend the rest of the day fixing the chain saw.
- Begin to wash up for dinner. Step into creek to clean boots and lower area of rain pants. If boots fill with creek water, bend knee to lift boot behind you, allowing water to run down your leg, dripping off your knee back into the creek.
- Place boots and gloves near fire until smell of burning occurs. This may cause holes in the tips of your leather gloves but they will still be wet.
- Before bedding down, fold wet dirty rain gear on top of wet shoes in tent. Neatly fold your muddy clothes as these will become your clean clothes tomorrow morning. Climb into your damp sleeping bag and fall asleep listening carefully for the adjacent stream to rise.

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.

One of the most striking features of this spot of heaven we call 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 seeing it as children and as my wife and I see it on our trips to northern BC, the Yukon and Alaska or in the western plains and mountain states.

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.

The Night Sky

As noted, the glare of the lights and haze of the cities can dim even the brightest stars. On the trail, on a clear night in the country, we can see the beauties of the heavens more clearly. Groups of stars (constellations) were given definitive names by the ancients who saw strange, mythical beings in the stars. Take binoculars with you and study the night sky from the trail some evening.

Here are a few facts about stars:

- the most distant object the unaided eye can see is the great spiral nebula in Andromeda. Light from the great spiral nebula in Andromeda takes over 2.1 million years to reach Earth.
- the light that you see from the North Star, Polaris, is 50 yrs old.
- the brightest planet is Venus. The brightest star is Sirius.
- moon viewing is best when the moon is not full, for at these times, shadows give depth to craters.
- star gazers sometimes see Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). These are common above 55° N. latitude.

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

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Friends of Pisgah Annual Meeting

**Tuesday November 21, 2006
Community Center, Hinsdale
7:00 PM**

Agenda

President's Report (Bill Roberts)

News from the Park (Norma Reppucci)

Committee Reports

Report of the Nominating Committee (Barry Labombard)

(All nominees have agreed to serve if elected.)

Officers

President	William Roberts (Hinsdale)
Vice President	To be provided
Treasurer	Nancy Miller (Chesterfield)
Secretary	Robert Smith (Keene)

Council Members - To serve a Three Year Term, expiring in November 2009

Laura Powell (Hinsdale)
To be provided
John Summers (Keene)

Election of Officers

Nominations from the floor

Close nominations

Cast ballots

Speaker: Ken Demarais

Topic: Challenges to Managing New Hampshire's Public Lands

Ken is Administrator, Forest Management Bureau of the New Hampshire Division of Forests & Lands. The Division of Forests & Lands is part of the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED).

After receiving an Associate's Degree from the University of New Hampshire, Ken continued on to receive a Bachelor of Science degree at the University where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. At the University, Ken majored in Forest Technology and Forest Science with a minor in Soil Science. Ken has worked for Forests and Lands since 1984. Prior to joining the state government, Ken worked for a major consulting forestry company, various logging contractors and the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service. He is a member of the Society of American Foresters and the Northeast Mensurationists Organization.

Managing the state's public lands is becoming ever more complex as the state's landscape becomes more complex. Ken's presentation will help citizens to understand the decisions that are made by DRED foresters to provide benefits from forests to the public and to receive feedback about the job we are doing.

Friends of Pisgah, Inc.
PO Box 134
Chesterfield, NH 03443-0134

First Class Mail

Time to Renew Your Membership in FOP for 2007

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 being to encourage 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): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (Home)

Phone: _____ (Work)

E-mail: _____

Category

(Check applicable boxes)

- New
- Renewal
- Single Address (\$10.00)
- Group (\$20.00)
- Donation \$ _____

Willing to Assist On Committee for:

- Annual Picnic
- Educational Programs
- History/Archaeology
- Membership
- Newsletter Articles
- Planning & Strategy
- Public Relations/Park Info
- Rails to Trails Advisory
- Trails/Maintenance
- Wantastiquet-Monadnock Greenway
- Other _____

*Questions? Call Bill Roberts (603- 336-5462)
or Matt Donachie (603-239-6590)*

Send form and check to:

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