

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands

**Moosehead Region Management Plan
Advisory Committee Meeting**

February 4, 2021 6:00 – 7:30 PM
Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams

MEETING NOTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OTHERS PRESENT [*: non-Advisory Committee members]

Paul Stearns, State Representative, District 119	Jenny Ward *
Chuck Wagenheim, Moosehead Outdoor Alliance	Rodney Folsom *
Robert Frederick *	Jon Blackstone *
Henry Gilbert *	Suzannah (last name unrecorded) *
Doug Watt *	call-in participant (name not recorded) *
Whitney Folsom *	

BPL STAFF PRESENT

William Patterson, Deputy Director	Jeff Bartley, Forester
Tim Post, Western Region Lands Manager	Rex Turner, Recreation Planner
Sarah Spencer, IF&W Wildlife Biologist assigned to BPL	Jim Vogel, Sr. Planner/Management Plan Coordinator

Welcome/Introductions

Jim Vogel welcomed the attendees, and asked BPL Staff to introduce themselves. Introductions were followed by a statement of the meeting's purpose: to review the mountain bike trail development proposal for the Little Moose Unit -- which staff feels is generally appropriate for the Little Moose Unit and which was sent to the committee two weeks in advance -- and to receive committee input. The meeting agenda and trail development zone maps from the proposal were shared on the screen during the meeting.

Jim then asked Chuck Wagenheim, the president of the organization proposing the project and a new Advisory Committee member, to provide some background on the organization and its mission.

Moosehead Outdoor Alliance (MOA) Organization and Mission

Highlights of information provided by Chuck include:

- MOA is a new 501c3 non-profit organization
- Along with BPL, we are also working with Natural Resources Education Center (NREC) and Forest Society of Maine at the Moosehead Welcome Center.

- Little Moose is the “biggest and most important part” of the regional trail development plan. Trail designers that MOA has consulted have identified Little Moose as ideal for trail development due to location and terrain.
- Provided background rationale for economic development and mission to increase tourism in the community; cited development of “Kingdom Trails” in East Burke, VT, which has brought 100K visitors and \$13 million in economic activity and sparked the development of other tourism amenities.
- A new Piscataquis County Chapter of New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) has recently been founded, which brings a \$2 million insurance policy.
- MTB trails project has the unanimous support of the Greenville Board of Selectmen and the Piscataquis County Economic Development Board.
- The presence of substantial area of public lands near to town is a huge asset; development of a similar trail network mostly or solely on private lands would be tough to accomplish.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussing each of the 3 mountain bike trail development zones described in the proposal, with Chuck Wagenheim providing highlights on each zone.

Zone 1

Highlights

- Unique for being close to town
- Some infrastructure already present at Gravel Pit Pond (parking, privy)
- Perfect place for beginners and riding from town with potential for direct trail connection
- Most expensive due to need for gravel to be imported for trail tread
- Less suited for intermediate and advanced riders/trails

Discussion

- Jim asked about request proponents have made to add the two eskers on the west side of the Wiggins Brook bog complex to the zone. Proponents feel trails on the eskers would add a different sort of terrain, and could be reached from Gravel Pit Pond parking by existing roads.
- Jim pointed out that the Bureau does not own the Railroad Bed corridor which provides access to the eskers, and other staff noted that agreements are in place for the portions of the snowmobile/ATV trails on the road (within the Little Moose Unit most of the snowmobile trail is on the public land alongside the road).
- Jim highlighted that trails should be carefully laid out with a BPL Forester (applies to all zones) and that Zone 1 was recently harvested, and so there would be no harvesting in the near future.
- Sarah Spencer asked for clarification of the zone boundary and if it included the eskers. Jim replied that it does not currently include the eskers, zone would need to be revised to include them.

Zone 2

Highlights

- More slope on upper part of zone means no material would need to be imported to construct trails.
- Still close to town and Gravel Pit Pond area, but has better variety of slopes, soils, and area for greater distance rides, which provides more potential for intermediate and advanced trails. A different riding experience than Zone 1.

Discussion

- Jim asked whether the zone could be a ride-from-town destination. Chuck felt this was the case, with potential to access zone from existing roads on south boundary and from existing parking areas there and on east side (variable options for access).
- In relation to town connection, Chuck noted that bike visitors tend to spend money and will be more likely to do so with trail connections to town.
- Chuck further noted that NEMBA offers free bike use and training to local youth.
- Jim noted possibility of parking on east side (Shadow Pond parking and possibly existing log yard downslope on same access road).
- It was also noted that there is the potential to link Zone 2 to Zone 3 with a trail over the east end of the ridge, possibly collated with the existing multiuse (ATV/snowmobile) trail.
- Henry noted the advantages of the multiple access points and connectivity.
- Jeff noted that the steeper the terrain the more challenging it is to intersect timber management access (skid trails) and bike trails.
- BPL staff noted that there is some experience with intersecting bike trails and logging at the Bureau's Carrabassett Valley Lot (part of the Flagstaff Unit, in the Flagstaff Plan area).
- Sarah Spencer noted that there are established bear bait sites (leased by BPL) in both Zones 1 and 2 and possibly Zone 3.
- Henry asked about bear bait sites – how do they work? Tim explained that they must be 50 yards off roads; Chuck suggests that trail development can buffer those areas.
- Jim pointed out that other types of hunting also occur in the zones; Chuck responded that they expect most trail use will be over by Oct. 1, before most hunting starts.

Zone 3

Highlights

- This zone presents the most opportunities for advanced trails – longer trails, steeper trails. Vision is for advanced but still smooth trails.
- Trail building will be less expensive in this zone.

Discussion

- Chuck stated that 25 miles (total for all three zones) “seems to be the magic number for people to travel to the region overnight.”
- Henry stated that he has done a lot of skiing and snowmobiling in the zone; notes that well-built can get you up steep mountains due to switchbacks.
- Also planning ski trails, especially closer to town trails.

- Jim noted that proposal describes a phased approach with Zone 3 development last.
- Jeff noted that the extensive old skid trails and slopes in this zone should be compatible for extensive trails. Roads in the area could play a role.
- Chuck noted that they have been talking with the potential buyers of Big Squaw/Big Moose Mtn Resort, who would like to see a connector trail through Zone 3 into town.
- Jim noted that the resort does not directly abut the Little Moose Unit along the North Road; another landowner is between North Road and the resort.

Next Steps and Concluding Comments

Attendees were reminded that written comments could be submitted during the three weeks following the meeting, and advised that the next steps would be for BPL to prepare a draft Plan Amendment, and to hold a virtual public meeting to take comment on the proposed Amendment. It was acknowledged that the proponents desire to break ground on trails in 2021.

The meeting was concluded with a thank you to all who attended and was adjourned at approximately 7:15 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Jim Vogel*

Summary of written comments submitted by AC members and others during the 2 week post-meeting comment period (all submitted by email, some with attached letter)

Date	Commenter	Summary
2/9/21	Cathy Sweetser	Supports proposal
2/9/21	Mike Roy, Town Manager, Greenville (letter attached) (AC member)	Supports proposal
2/9/21	Maynard Russell	Supports proposal
2/9/21	Perry Williams, Big Lake Development Company, LLC	Supports proposal
2/9/21	Sarah Spencer, IF&W	Concerns about high value habitat on eskers, recommends no trails; several other recommendations related to trail routing.
2/10/21	Doug Kane, IF&W (AC member)	Concurred with Sarah’s comments
2/11/21	Moosehead Region Econ. Dev. Council (letter attached)	Supports proposal
2/12/21	Doug Watt, local resident (MOA Board of Directors)	Support proposal
2/16/21	Adam Moskowitz, local resident and rider	Supports proposal