

Nash Stream Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

June 27, 2018 Lancaster Town Hall 6:08 P.M. - 7:15 P.M.

Nash Stream Citizens Advisory Committee (**NSFCC**)

NSFCC members present:

Albert Cloutier, Mike Lynch, Kevin Evans, Rita Goumillout, Jim Herbert, Dave Govatski

NSFCC members not present:

Norman Cloutier, David Scanlan, Jeff Lougee, Mike Waddell, John Lanier

Staff members present:

Maggie Machinist, Todd Caron, Brad Simpkins, Sarah Stewart, Tracey Boisvert, Will Guinn

Agenda Items:

- 1. Introductions** – Chairman Dave Govatski welcomed the public. Director Brad Simpkins introduced and welcomed the new Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Commissioner Sarah Stewart.
- 2. Update on timber sales and road activities** - Maggie Machinist gave a brief update on timber harvests in Nash Stream Forest. No timber harvests were scheduled for this past winter (2018) or in the upcoming winter (2019) until the control areas have been established, but two timber harvests are planned for the following winter (2020). Gravel was crushed in late spring for use on the 14 ½ Road (Trio Ponds Road). Upgrades to the road will start this summer but won't get completed. The West Side ATV trail has been closed due to a large washout that occurred during the spring. Dave Govatski asked what caused it. Maggie explained that she had checked it out and was unsure of the exact cause. Water appeared to have run down the road during the spring possibly causing it. Kelley Butler asked if it was going to be fixed during this summer. As of right now it is unclear what will be done and if it will reopen this summer. Jamie Sayen asked if any of the runoff had entered Nash Stream. It has not gone as far as Nash Stream.

3. Update on forest resources inventory activities - There are two summer forest technicians that have been hired to do forest inventory work in Nash Stream. Also the forest technician that is shared with the forest service is also working on a forest inventory project. Natural Heritage Bureau has also been doing field work. They have done work for one week in June and they will also do one week in July and August. Brad said they will focus on certain areas now to determine where they will go during the next growing season. Continuous forest inventory (CFI) plots have been established to get growth estimates as well as other information. Currently 24 of 50 plots have been completed with 26 more to be done later this summer. 50 additional plots in the control areas and unmanaged areas will also be established. Kevin Evans emphasized the expense of establishing CFI plots and in the past money needed to be spent elsewhere. He also said that growth estimates may take some time to see. Will Guinn said that as of now preliminary information from the CFI plots show approximately 500,000 cords in the area suitable for timber management. Kevin added that tree removal from harvesting and tree mortality could also be tracked with the plots. Will said that currently we average 1,200 cords/year during harvests, which is about a ¼ of growth in areas suitable for harvesting.

4. Update on control areas - Maggie explained that we are beginning to establish control areas that are based on current stand types, soil conditions, and the wildlife action plan. There is one softwood control area and one hardwood area.

Jamie Sayen explained how past cutting transformed softwood stands into hardwood stands. There are probably sites that currently have hardwood growing on them that have potential to be or were once softwood stands. He wanted to know if that was being considered. That is being considered and some of the softwood sites are mixed wood now. The management plan recommended that approximately 1,500 acres of softwood and 100-200 acres in hardwood be put into control areas. Currently the preliminary softwood control area is 2,000 acres but some of the area is already protected because of the easement around the ponds.

Dave asked what level of inventory will be used. The softwood area is mostly in compartment 15 which has already been inventoried. CFI plots will be put in these areas as well.

The preliminary hardwood control area is located on the West Side Road near the Bordeaux Trail. It is mostly hardwood but also contains mixed wood on hardwood soils. Nearly all is suitable for timber management and it is approximately 200 acres.

Larry Gomes asked if that area had recently been harvested. It has been and would be a great area to see the difference between unmanaged and managed forests.

Dave asked what level of wildlife inventory will occur and Jamie thought it would be great if some research with a university could be done to judge the difference between managed and unmanaged forests. Brad also thought that would be a great idea and hopes to team up with someone to do research.

Kevin wanted to know what other information has been taken. Will has the official proposal from the contractor and will send it around to the Citizens Committee and anyone else who would like it.

Jamie thought all the information was very valuable for climate change.

- 5. Other business** – Peter Riviere expressed concern over rapid ATV growth and the extra traffic on route 3. He had many questions about if they ride for free at Jericho Mountain State Park, what the economic benefits are, and impacts. He also stated that they certainly are not for Nash Stream Forest because ATV riders don't care about solitude.

Larry Gomes explained how many North Country folks were travelling long distances to find work and many lost their homes. He has helped develop ATV trail systems and several business owners thank him because of his efforts. More people are now coming to Coos County to recreate. Coos County population has been decreasing for 25 years and it's still decreasing. He would like to try to help the area so people can stay here. A trail economic study shows the numbers for rooms and meals have increased since ATV's have come to the area. ATV use is a big draw and they continue to try to build trails in the woods away from homes.

Mike Lynch stated that areas that used to be known for peace and quiet are now loud. He also suggested that they should take care of the trails they have by fixing troubled areas before building new trails. The washout on the West Side Trail was started by ATV use.

Jamie was struck by the thoughtful reasons and comments in the plan to not have more trails. The past plan didn't have as much planning. Fish and Game doesn't have enough conservation officers to police ATV use as it is and thought that they should be a recreation component but not the only one. He suggested more policing and monitoring. He asked why the Kelsey Notch Trail monitoring trip in August of 2017 showed that everything was ok and then 105 loads of gravel at \$22,000 was spent on fixing it. He was curious who pays for that type of work.

Larry explained that the trails are completely self-funded by registration and a portion of the money goes to enforcement.

Peter explained how hikers now park on both sides of the highway in the notches and the visitation to the White Mountains has drastically increased.

Rita Goumillout asked if we were able to install a sign at the beginning of Nash Stream Road stating that the road has not outlet. More and more traffic has been following their GPS which shows the road going through.

- 6. Next meeting date** – The next meeting will potentially be in the fall. Preliminary 3rd party certification information may also be ready in the fall as well.

Jamie expressed his concern and said he was troubled by 3rd party certification. It allows landowners to get away with "scandalous practices". He suggested using the money for inventory and monitoring instead.

Meeting adjourned 7:15

Wink Lees questioned how the conservation easement is overseen by the U.S. Forest Service and if ATV's should be allowed by what's written in it. Maggie explained that the Forest Service is not very involved.

Steve Sabre mentioned that the appendix should have a copy of the conservation easement.

Bill Noons said the plan should say OHRV instead of ATV and UTV. The Tech Team has discussed this numerous times and decided OHRV is too broad a term. ATV and UTV are used to limit what's allowed.

A brief discussion on weight limits occurred.

Ted Burns started a discussion about gates and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Other Uses

Brad Simpkins mentioned including canoeing and kayaking in the other uses section.

Hiking

Mike Waddell showed concern over a sentence explaining that no new hiking trails will be constructed. He wanted to know why. Maggie said in the next ten years there won't be any new trails. Mike said the door should be kept open just in case.

Kim Neilson of the Cohos trail would like to have the option to move trails so there is no conflict between hikers and motorized vehicles.

Ted Burns is concerned about saying no new trails. He doesn't want to be "painted into a corner". Ten years is too long to wait.

Ken Desmarais said there will be a process to amend, but we haven't come up with anything yet. There has to be a real exception to the rule.

Wink Lees said discretionary consent in conservation easements will help with the amendment process.

Steve Sabre explained that less well maintained trails are better than many trails not maintained.

John Lanier mentioned checking old trails to see if they are still in use.

Snowmobiling

Maintain current trails. No new trails are desired at this time.

ATV

Wink Lees asked about the condition of the Kelsey Notch trail. Ted Burns asked if it would still be a pilot trail. Maggie said it would become a trail with an MOA.

There was a discussion about an east-west connector trail.

Many expressed interest in snowmobile trail corridor 5 being used as an ATV trail and the possibility of adding it to the new plan.

Camp Licenses

Tom Bushey says he wanted to add new camps to historic campsites. Maggie explained that there were no plans to add new leases.

Ted Burns asked if camp owners would be allowed access to ATV trails. It's not planned.

Tom Bushey liked the explanations of points of interests and mileage describing them in the old plan.

John Lanier wants one document before the final draft. Ken Desmarais says it should be edited first and then reviewed by the NSFCC.

3. **Next Meeting Date** – A new meeting date will be set once an edited version of the draft has been completed.
4. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 P.M.