

# NASH STREAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 31, 2001

## Minutes

ATTENDEES: George Bald, Phil Bryce, Tom Miner, Mary Sloat, Peter Benson, Dave Falkenham, Everett Frizzell, John Kauffmann, Dave Goulet, Phil Stearns, Bob MacGregor, Bill Simpson, Dayton Goudie, Wayne Millen, Susan Francher, Dave Tellman, Paul Doscher and Scott Mason.

Start 3:00

Introductions were made of Advisory Board Members, Tellman dispensed with reading of the minutes due to length of time between meetings.

Miner went over changes to the Charter, most involved how members were appointed and the sub-committee status of the Nash Stream Board to the State-wide Forest Advisory Board.

Bryce handed out copies of the recently published Economic Importance of New Hampshire's Forests by the Northeast State Foresters Association.

Bryce discussed the changes that have occurred in land ownership around the state. Francher talked about contract to classify state forestland using remote sensing.

Edith Tucker (Coos County Democrat) asked about the cost of the contract.

Kauffmann asked if it was for state lands or all ownerships. Francher answered all ownerships.

Bryce talked about Natural Heritage Project to inventory all state lands for rare and endangered elements. He also talked about the upgraded state website and gave kudos to Miner for it's ease of use.

Bald discussed funding for study of low-grade wood markets and the feasibility of a new low-grade mill in NH.

Bald talked about the Department's funding sources and how the Legislature was looking hard at the Management and Protection Fund, which is money, made by timber sales and leases of State property.

Bald mentioned House Bill 717, which creates a Study Committee on ATV use on State lands, he states that no new trail systems on State land will go forward until we find out the conclusions of this Study Committee.

## ABUTTING PROPERTIES

Bryce reviewed negotiations involving Forest Legacy funds on abutting Bunnell Mountain tract. Benson handed out Bunnell Mountain maps. Miner talked properties south of Nash Stream whose landowners had worked with the State to create a cooperative management plan. Miner also discussed the Visual Quality Analysis study by Kokx.

Kauffmann liked the Visual Quality Study.

Doscher further explained how the Visual Quality Study could be used.

Sloat asked if the Preserve portion of the Bunnell Tract would be unmanaged. Bryce answered yes. Benson further explained how the Bunnell tract will be split between Nature Conservancy ownership and an as yet unnamed timber company. They are surveying as we speak. They have hired a summer ecologist and will be doing two "Bio-Blitzes" this summer to gather information on what they have.

Goudie asked about status of Bean tract which forms a small rectangular out-lot between Bunnell tract and Nash Stream on Gore Mountain. Benson says they have looked at that piece but no transaction has occurred.

## WORK PLAN AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MacGregor talked about accomplishments that have happened since plan implementation in 1996.

Personnel – hired Forester Falkenham in 3/96 and have used summer technicians plus patrolmen Whiting and camp liaison Oakes.

Forest Inventory – 6,226 acres completed under State inventory system of 20,492 acres that are Suitable for Timber Management (30%). Stated the goal was to complete all 20,492 acres in 15 years.

Bryce asked if that was 15 more years. MacGregor answered that we were 5 years into a 15 year cycle so we hoped to be done in 10 more years.

Timber Sales – target or 3,000 cds./year, so far have cut about 9,000 cds. But there was a 2 year lag time between when the Management Plan was approved and when timber sales started so we are on target to date. 3,000 cds./yr. is a very conservative cutting target but the State hopes that the additional growth per year will increase overall size class of forest. Volumes removed to date total 1 million board feet of sawlogs and 7,000 cords of Pulp and Fuelwood.

Boundaries – Approximately 70% (39 miles) of the boundary has been located, brushed and blazed by Forests and Lands Personnel and contractors.

Camp Leases – there are 91 of the original 94 leases left paying approximately \$450.00/year each. Leases can be transferred until 6/30/04 and then all leases are scheduled to terminate in 2039.

Roads – there are 66.5 miles of roads, the Main Road and 14 ½ Road get yearly grading, drainage improvement and culvert replacement (14.4 miles), these roads are open to conventional traffic. Other road figures include 35 miles are mowed yearly.

Frizzell stated that he also mows old landings that are important to keep open for wildlife habitat.

Four bridges were built and three miles of roads were reconstructed. Last year 8,000 yards of gravel were crushed from a pit on the Main Road, this will be spread in the coming year.

Tellman asked what the plans were to rehabilitate the gravel pit. MacGregor said the plan was to bring the slope back to 2:1 as soon as gravel is spread and funds are available.

Trails – snowmobile trail relocations have been constructed extending the West Side Road (logging truck/snowmobile conflict minimizing) and in the Bungy area (landowner change). There are 40 miles of snowmobile trails and 34 miles of gated roads maintained for hiking, biking, etc.. There are also 24 miles of hiking trails in the Cohos, Percy Peaks and Sugarloaf Trails. There was a lot of ice storm cleanup on all roads and trails. There is also the Lions Lane Nature trail, which was constructed by Stratford School students.

Fisheries – stocking levels have changed to reflect management plan, only Brook Trout and Atlantic Salmon are stocked in Nash Stream. Discussion ensued over achieving goal of wild fishery, Millen stated that the Forest Service had had good results in stream productivity in Maine by building structures in streams. Consensus of board was for the State to investigate feasibility of building more habitat in Nash Stream.

Wildlife – deer kill figures suggest Nash Stream area has fewer deer taken per square mile than Statewide and Management Unit B averages. MacGregor thought this reflected the largely forested habitat, which is not conducive to big deer numbers. Staats added that roads are few and far between and it is a very rugged hunting experience and therefore more difficult. Hunting and trapping results on other game species were presented.

Research and Monitoring – MacGregor reviewed on-going research and monitoring activities including breeding bird study, salamander and amphibian health study, annual forest health flights, U.S.F.S. long-term effects of ice storm study plots, spruce budworm traps and new aerial photography. Examples of the new aerial photography were passed out.

Law Enforcement – there are frequent patrols of property by Forests and Lands, Fish and Game and local Police Departments. Timber trespass and bear baiting cases were successfully prosecuted. Investigations were performed on camp break-ins.

Tours and Press – numerous dignitaries and school groups have taken tours of property and various management activities have generated good press coverage.

### **COHOS TRAIL RELOCATION**

MacGregor outlined plan by Cohos Trail Association to relocate trail in area of Long Mountain Brook from the Main Road to a new trail constructed paralleling the road to the east. He said that trail is still pretty rough and he told the Association to focus on upgrading existing sections before any relocations are discussed. Tucker mentioned that the Association has hired a summer employee to coordinate trail work.

### **NASH STREAM MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Miner talked about the origin of the plan, he mentioned how long it took to finalize it. They held listening sessions at the time in Groveton and Concord and the message they got loud and clear was “to leave Nash Stream the way it is.” Miner discussed the limitations of the Conservation Easement owned by the U.S. Government. He then showed maps of the Ecological Land Types and outlined the complexity of the information. Miner then went into how the Vision was reached and the amount of time that it took to reach this consensus document. The whole first year of the management planning went into the Vision Statement. The second year focused on the 10 pages of goals, objectives and strategies. The third and fourth year were spent on the Ecological Land Types, Miner mentioned that 65% of the Area Suitable for Timber Harvesting is northern hardwoods, he also discussed Type II soil areas and the 149 management strategies (Pages 116 –130 in Plan). The final year of management planning was spent fine-tuning the document.

Miner then gave the Committee the following questions to answer as homework;

1. What questions do they have on the strategies (pages 65 –74 in Plan)?
2. Based on strategies what should be our focus for the next 5 years?
3. Are there any issues not addressed in the Plan that should be?
4. What information is needed to address these issues?

Bryce asked about implementation monitoring, are we validating if our strategies are still correct? Is plan revision necessary?

Sloat thinks we need to come up with a specific technique for how the Plan is changed. Miner said the Plan stated the process for change should be similar to the process for plan creation.

Tucker asked if it was possible that the plan would not be changed? Yes.

Commissioner Bald asked if there is a set procedure on how to change the Plan? No. Bryce referred to Page 135 of the Plan for guidance on how involved any change should be.

Sloat talked about the diversity of opinion that was on the original Plan construction.

Doscher talked about how involved the Plan was to create and he thinks this is because it took that long for all the interests to see each other's points. He thinks the strategies are the way to change things not through the Vision.

Bryce asks that one of the things he wants to come away with is a process for change without huge time consumption.

Tellman asks for help from the audience;

Benson says don't fix what ain't broke, go through strategies and identify ones that don't need to be fixed.

Bryce suggests mailing out list of strategies and having people check off what they feel is working and what isn't.

Tellman would like to have this done by the next meeting.

Commissioner Bald wants to see a definite structure to change the plan.

Francher and Miner need to come up with a draft plan change process.

Doscher says the State knows more about applicable statutes than the Advisory group.

Tellman asks Miner if he can come up with a draft process for change in 45 days? Miner says yes, Francher qualifies that answer saying we need to see what happens at the next meeting.

Mason asks if there are other groups who we might find a template from? Francher says yes.

Strategies will be mailed to all members and they are to check off ones that need change.

Tellman opens up the discussion for round-the-table comments from the Advisory Committee.

Benson asks if the State could set up a field tour of the Bungy Timber Sale. MacGregor says he will schedule one for August or September.

Stearns has concerns about open fires and camping, would like to see more public education about policies on these issues. MacGregor says that the State tries to keep daily fire patrols in Nash Stream during the summer months.

Tellman opened up floor to public comments.

Harlen McMann – Stratford – Learned a lot about hiking and timber cutting at today's meeting but nothing about ATV's. Asked everyone in audience who was in support of ATV's on Nash Stream to stand up. Majority of audience stood.

Ted Burns – Stratford – Mentioned he was here last time, then went to State Trails Advisory Group to get unanimous approval for ATV trail system at Nash Stream. Says he always get the answer that the State needs more study, he wants to know what studying has been done and who is doing it.

Commissioner Bald answered, says he looked at trails last time when he toured the property and saw illegal use, he feels it is a State-wide problem so he formed a group consisting of D.O.T., Forests and Lands, Fish and Game and D.E.S., they came up with a draft proposal, however when some members of the public read this draft they went to their legislators who passed a bill to form a Study Committee to review ATV issues. Commissioner Bald will not make a decision until the legislature has completed their study.

Bill Roy – Laconia – Asks why ATV's are allowed on some properties such as Pisgah State Park and not others. Wonders if Nash Stream is only for the young and healthy.

Bill Altenberg – Conway – Worried about the number of foresters working on the land, says he has people trailering in ATV's to his leased property at Phillips Brook and wondering where it is legal to ride.

Ted Burns – Thinks that having the Legislature, which in his opinion has screwed up the school-funding question, in charge of ATV issues is a bad idea. States that his ATV club has been working with private landowners for 4 years and they have never created a problem they couldn't fix. Wants to know if we are addressing the Americans with Disabilities Act. Miner explained handicapped policy at Nash Stream.

Harold Connary – Stratford – Worried about the local economy and the aging population of the north country, he feels more ATV trails would assist with both problems.

Rita Goumillout – Franklin – Introduces herself as the President of the Camp owners Association; she would like to take John Lane's place on the Advisory Committee. MacGregor will see this is done before the next meeting.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup>.

Adjourned 5:35