

Nash Stream Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

June 25, 2019 North Country Resource Center 6:00 P.M. – 9:03 P.M.

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

NSFCC members present:

Albert Cloutier, Mike Lynch, Kevin Evans, Rita Goumillout, Dave Govatski, Mike Waddell, Jeff Lougee, David Scanlan, Norman Cloutier, Glenn Normandeau

NSFCC members not present:

Bill Noons

Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) staff members present:

Maggie Machinist, Todd Caron, Brad Simpkins, Tracey Boisvert, Will Guinn, Brad Simpkins, Clint Savage, John Accardi, Sabrina Stanwood

Agenda Items:

- 1. Introductions** –Chairman Dave Govatski called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. He welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda.
Brad Simpkins welcomed the public and introductions from the Committee and Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) staff.
Chairman Govatski requested a moment of silence for John Lanier and Jim Herbert.
- 2. Update on timber sales and road activities** - Maggie Machinist gave an explanation
 - 14 ½ Road (Trio Ponds Road) was re-surfaced with crushed gravel as well as ditching and new culvert installation
 - Nash Stream Bridge was recently re-decked
 - There are two timber sales scheduled for this winter and one in the summer.
 - Compartment 3 is approximately 251 acres sale and was thinned in the early 2000's. It will be accessed off the Amos Emery Road. The winter unit will use uneven-aged management through group selection. It will also have a summer unit using a first stage shelterwood to encourage softwood regeneration.
 - Compartment 22 is located behind Nash Bog and is approximately 275 acres and was last harvested 2001-2003. Uneven-aged management through group selection will be used. The truck road will need to be shared with snowmobiles. Alternate trail routes have been identified. The winter road will need to be brushed out and a portable bridge will need to be installed. The winter road is also part of the Cohos Trail.
Dave Govatski asked if logging will be restricted during the weekends.
Mike Waddell was curious about volume and value of the timber sales.
 - Two summer technicians worked last summer and completed inventory on a compartment and this year there are two working again and are taking over a compartment that was started last year.

3. Ken Desmaris – CFI Points Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) wants to determine growth rate in Nash Stream Forest.

-Average annual growth in cords is the primary research question and points were put in areas suitable for forest management. Current timber volume data was collected on 48 permanent sample points.

-Distance variable estimator uses angle count sampling as platform

-Best suited for volume change over time estimates

-Compatible for forest change

-Point volume in 5-7 years will be compared to current volume estimate

-Current volume confidence limit +/- 18.5%

-Volume growth is less variable

-Hardwood tree height is measured to a 4 inch top and softwood tree height is total height

-Current volume per acre 29.4 cords

-Mean basal area per acre is 104.7 square feet

-Mean diameter breast height 9.2 inches

-Mean trees per acre 222.4

-Mean stocking percent is 76% (approaching overstocked)

Glenn Normandeau asked what is considered to be a tree? A tree is anything over 5.0 inches in diameter.

-There is a surplus in pole size timber, a deficit in young size classes, and mature timber is tracking as it should

-Simulated future conditions using forest vegetation simulator shows 556,313 cords currently. In 2023 it's estimated to grow 6,853 cords

-31 trees were cored and the last 1 inch of rings were evaluated shows 3.3% growth

-Unless a forest is balanced and is maintained in a balanced condition, forest growth will change.

A member of the public asked if the information was based on leaving the forest alone or with timber harvesting? Ken said it was based on leaving alone. If harvesting is increased growth will go up.

Kevin Evans mentioned that mortality etc. need to be calculated as well.

Jamie Sayen asked if the data collected was separated by species and if the control areas were included? The data is not separated by species, but can be and the control areas are not included.

4. NHB Update - Sabrina Stanwood

-An inventory was conducted in Nash Stream Forest last summer by Pete Bowman. He spent 12 days and had 331 sample points.

-Plant species, vegetative structure and landform information was collected

-Two new rare plants were found. Heart leaved twayblade and mountain firmoss.

5. Update on renewal of five year camp licenses – Tracey Boisvert

-Terminology in the license agreement has been updated as well as firewood BMP's.

-License fees went up 8%

A member of the public asked if the fee is the same for every camp? There are 3 classifications for fee values.

NSFCC member Rita Goumillout asked if camp owners are being fined for making alterations to their camps? Tracey said there is new language in the license agreement about 1 ½ stories. There have been no fines, we are just making them compliant.

6. Southern Connector OHRV trail proposal review– Larry Gomes

Proposal to use existing Nash Stream Road from the Westside Road down through the main gate and down towards a gravel pit off property with gas pumps.

- Install a 16 foot wide gate on Westside with an OHRV pass through.
- Signs will be posted on the main road for no OHRV access
- There was concern about the Amos Emery intersection. It will be signed as well.
- V-shaped water diverters will be installed on the hill opposite the bridge as well as a way to slow the OHRV's down. They need to be cleaned once a year.
- NSFCC member David Scanlan asked how a grader fixes the road where the v-shaped have been installed. The grader lifts the blade through that section.
- A pass through gate will also be installed near the Amos Emery intersection.

Maggie gave a summary of the Nash Stream Forest Tech Team comments about the new proposed trail.

- The new trail was reviewed on June 6, 2019
- Trail would more easily connect Stratford to Milan and points east and would allow access to gas pumps.

Tech Team Concerns:

-Increased use, potential erosion concerns, increased illegal riding north, law enforcement, increased maintenance, safety concerns from shared use, negative angler use experience, is it necessary, could it change the "feel" of Nash Stream Forest which is one of the most remote state properties, is it in line with the management plan, found an uncommon northern hardwood black ash conifer swamp not in national wetlands inventory along the Nash stream road.

Larry addresses the concerns:

- Put counters out
- OHRV use will definitely go up
- Trail has additional funding provided for maintenance
- Erosion concern install v-shaped diverters and if it doesn't work they are prepared to do more.
- Signs will be installed as well as game cameras if needed to stop illegal riding
- Two officers will be dedicated to OHRV enforcement.

Glenn Normandeau said there is no funding and they are actually down a couple officers

- Trail will not affect the remote "feel" because it is at the beginning of the road
- They have been granted permission to use the section of town road under current ordinance
- V-shaped diverters as well as other ways will mitigate erosion concerns
- There are no plans to make the trails corridor trails. They will remain club trails.
- Signs will be used to prevent accidents
- It will decrease distance to gas by about 10 miles

-The trail could impact anglers on the Westside trail but not the Bordeaux trail. Lowering speed limits near favorite fishing holes or planting evergreens could reduce impact. The trail would have less of an impact than vehicles on the Nash Stream Road.

NSFCC Questions or concerns:

Mike Waddell asked how many linear feet are impacted. Larry said 1.2 miles will be impacted. Mike Lynch asked how the big washout on the Westside Road was taken care of? The Road has been re-routed and the old section will be removed. It was a shared cost. Forest Management paid for the re-route and the Trails Bureau will pay for the removal of the old section. Mike also asked what the speed limit was. Clint said 25 MPH. Mike asked if they could set a lower speed limit (10 MPH) to keep dust and noise down. Enforcement has been addressed in areas that have issues.

Dave Govatski asked Glenn if it's possible to hire state police to enforce. He has never seen a situation where state police would do Fish and Game work.

Rita Goumillout wanted to know that if a three year trial period was accepted if there were problems could it be lowered. CORD would have to establish that.

Jeff Lougee asked if there is a recommendation from the Tech Team to move forward on a three year trial. Maggie says it didn't make a unanimous decision. Will Guinn said that it's NSFCC that advises before going to the commissioner.

Albert Cloutier asked if it had already been approved. Page 161 of the Nash Stream Management Plan references it.

Mike Lynch wondered if the trail could be used only to get gas.

Mike Waddell asked what the financial issues are as proposed.

The new bridge is \$80,000 and the new trail project on Nash Stream Road would cost \$15,000-\$20,000.

Glenn Normandeau asked if the trail could stay on the far side of Nash Stream. The course and fine filter criteria would not allow it. The existing gravel road is within 600 feet of Nash Stream but can be used.

David Scanlan asked about the long range planning in Nash Stream Forest. Larry Gomes still wants to get an east west connector trail after the Nash Stream Management Plan is up for re-write.

Public Comments:

Jamie Sayen said before any more OHRV trails are approved, that there is a need for OHRV monitoring data because there is no baseline ecological data. Concerned about the ecological integrity of Nash Stream. Invasive species will come in if more OHRV's. V-shaped diverters won't stop gravity, need qualified experts assuring us, there will be way more traffic that can't be addressed now. He recommends the next management plan eliminate OHRV's.

Larry Gomes 95% of trails are on private land and the owners are very concerned about impacts.

Doug Fogg expressed overwhelming opposition to OHRV's in management plan.

Pete Grappone president of the newly formed OHRV club in Stark thought it would be good for the economy and the club is willing to enforce.

Clayton McDonald thought we needed to establish specific criteria on what the maintenance level should be kept at. What will be satisfactory and what will be unsatisfactory. Suggested looking at a performance bond.

Larry Gomes said that there are guidelines for the Kelsey Notch Trail.

A new resident of Stark said OHRV's are what brought him to Stark from Connecticut and it would be nice to complete a loop.

Rodney Monihan is a landowner in Stark where the trail goes through. Snowmobilers tend to leave more trash than OHRV riders do.

Dave Govatski asked NSFCC members about a recommendation.

Rita Goumillout thought we needed to look at the probationary period.

Jeff Lougee would like to hear from the Tech Team again about issues and if concerns were addressed.

Glenn Normandeau said Fish and Game staff were opposed to the new trail and once the door is open and OHRV trail is approved even for probationary period, it's nearly impossible to close it and a proposal would need definitive numbers.

Dave Scanlan agreed with Glenn and thought that the Tech Team needs to set a baseline

Kevin Evans agreed with Jeff that baseline data is needed

Mike Waddell agreed that OHRV's can't be everywhere but they need to be away from roads and into the woods. The Nash Stream Management Plan has put stuff off for an entire decade and conflicts like OHRV trails take time. He thought that parameters need to be set but give it a trial. He also thought that hardening the snowmobile trail would work as the trail.

Larry Gomes noted that they don't want an OHRV trail to go all the way up Nash Stream Road.

Jaimie Sayen said that if Fish and Game staff is against the trail that we should pay attention because they are on the front lines. Without monitoring data, accepting the proposal is absolutely outrageous. The state should not be exacerbating the problem.

Mike Waddell made a motion to have the Tech Team create parameters e.g. (speed limit, probationary triggers, law enforcement issues, erosion).

Albert Cloutier seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Kevin Evans thought a threshold is needed to be established from fisheries. They need very specific data for monitoring.

Glenn Normandeau said we need a baseline now so it can be compared to the future. The Tech Team should set the parameters for the baseline.

7. Other Business

Tracey Boisvert mentioned there will be 7 NSFCC positions up for re-election in the near future.

Doug Fogg asked about replacing the dam at Little Bog Pond. He was referred to Jim Gallagher from DES.