

## Nash Stream Citizen Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2001

Present: Dave Tellman, Rita Goumillout, Everett Frizzell, Dave Goulet, Dave Publicover, Peter Benson, Philip Bryce, and Paul Doscher.

Staff: Tom Miner, Robert MacGregor, Dave Falkenham, Susan Francher, and John Lanier

### 1. Meeting Opening

Chairman Tellman welcomed members to the meeting and introduced Councilor Ray Burton and Director Bryce. Introductions of the board members were made for the benefit of guests. Chairman Tellman reviewed the meeting agenda.

### 2. Old Business

Minutes – Review and acceptance of the minutes was deferred until a quorum is present. Chairman Tellman also suggested the board again discuss meeting times to encourage attendance.

### 3. Councilor Ray Burton

Councilor Burton gave an overview of the responsibilities of his office as part of the executive branch of government. He stated that he was at the meeting to support the use of ATV's on public land. He added that he believes we have a constitutional responsibility to provide land to ATV's to operate. They are where snowmobile operators were a few years ago. ATV's are now a part of the culture of the North Country and the State. Councilor Burton also emphasized that when he voted to approve acquisition of Nash Stream it was with the expectation there would be multiple use management practiced on the property.

The Councilor continued, saying that the legislature is now looking at the issue of ATV use on State land and that often means that the executive branch is not doing it's job. Councilor Burton presented a petition supporting ATV use at Nash Stream, and asked that the petition become part of the permanent record of the meeting. He added that the petition is an indication of support for public use of Nash Stream. Councilor Burton commended the committee on their work and stated that he supports the plan proposed by the North Country ATV club.

Dave Tellman thanked the Councilor for his attendance at both this meeting and the Groveton Public Comment meeting.

Councilor Burton stated that nationally 800,000 new ATV's are manufactured each year while only 180,000 snowmobiles are manufactured. He also asked if any other properties are being considered. Director Bryce commented that Pine River and Roberts Road State Forests have been looked at.

Councilor Burton also stated his support for maintaining the camp leases at Nash Stream adding that he understands this issue impacts more than just Nash Stream.

#### 4. Director's Report

Director Bryce opened by saying that interest in ATV use on public land prompted the agency to look at a process for siting ATV's on state land, the Nash Stream plan revision process, and the Legislative ATV study committee. He stated he believes it is time now to take the next step by forming a study committee to help inform the legislative study committee. Phil emphasized that this is not a go-ahead to allow ATV use by an opportunity to understand what the potential impacts of ATV use would be. It could help to put into place a process for allowing ATV use and help speed the process of establishing ATV trails if they become an allowable use. The formation of this committee has the support of Commissioner Bald & Representative Alger. Phil stated that he is recommending that Fred King chair the committee and asked that Ted Burns and a representative from the camp owners associations also be on the committee.

Dave Publicover asked what the group would use to evaluate ATV use on Nash Stream. Phil suggested that the DRED draft ATV evaluation process, his letter to Representative Alger, and resources provided by the legislative study committee would all be helpful. Peter Benson questioned the appropriateness of establishing this committee in advance of the results from the legislative committee. Phil replied that it is important that this assessment inform the planning process. Peter was also concerned that this would be seen as a rubber-stamp approval for ATV use prior to determining the appropriateness of the use through the planning process. Dave suggested that establishing the subcommittee may help the CAC to focus on other issues that have taken a back-seat due to the intense interest in this issue.

Paul Doscher commented that he liked the double benefit (to the state and Nash Stream) of this process and added that he hoped this process would help to separate fact from opinion and inform the planning process.

Susan is asked whether this would impact the proposed planning timeline. She replied that it is OK to have ongoing information gathering while drafts are being developed. The sense of the group present was to move forward with this committee work. It is suggested that at least one more member of the Advisory Committee be on this subcommittee. Dave Publicover and Peter Benson both volunteer.

Bryce stated that this committee should build on existing work (trail proposals developed by NC ATV club) to review impacts and issues related to making this an allowable use.

#### 5. Results of the Public Sessions

Tim Miner gave a brief overview of the Plymouth and Groveton public meetings. In all 116 people attend and 227 comments were captured. All comments are contained in the packets provided to CAC members. The packets also included a 23-page comment summary separated by subject area.

ATV issue

There were 114 comments regarding ATVs. Eighty-eight yes or yes with reservations, 26 no's. Under yes with reservation the predominant concerns were enforcement and interference with camps and snowmobiles. Comments associated with "yes" responses include the enjoyment of responsible use, local economic benefits of ATV use, and the importance of cooperation. Those people not supporting ATV use on Nash Stream cited environmental and noise concerns, as well as the difficulty in enforcement.

#### Camp lease issue

There were a total of 74 comments associated with camp leases. Sixty-nine yes or yes with reservations and 5 no's. Under yes with reservation concerns included no additional camps should be added and camps should be kept rustic. Supporting comments cited the camps as part of the cultural heritage of the areas and camp owners as good advocates for the agency. Those people not supporting maintaining the camps on the property felt that public land shouldn't allow for privileges for a few private owners and that the camps complicate management of the property.

#### Plan Schedule

There were a total of 40 comments associated with setting a plan revision schedule. Thirty-five of the comments were yes or yes with reservations. There was general agreement among the supporters that a maximum planning cycle should be set but provisions should be made to allow for revision when needed. Some felt that a 10-year cycle was too long. Those not supporting a set revision schedule felt the plan should be revised as needed.

Tom gave an overview of other issues identified including allowing backcountry camping and rebuilding the dam.

#### 6. Next Steps

Susan and Tom gave an overview of the work to be accomplished over the next few months. The division will do an assessment of each issue within the context of the plan. Staff will also work on draft alternative language for review by the advisory committee. At the next meeting committee members will review the alternative language and make recommendations to the division regarding the need to change existing plan language and the extent to which the plan will be changed.

Dave stated that it would be important to have as many committee members in attendance as possible. Tom offered to email members with potential dates to get a quorum.

#### 7. Roundtable

- As camp leases are given up the division should consider leasing the camps to a camp rental operation for "transient" use.
- Backcountry camping was of interest to some of the people commenting on the plan. We should continue to consider it in our plan revision discussions.
- As the state acquires camps they should provide for both long-term and short-term public use.

- Leases should be set at fair market value to help maintain economic income to the state.
- Consider a deed process where the State would receive transfer tax

8. Public Input

- Perhaps a way to improve attendance is to allow member designee or alternatives
- Ted Burns: Wanted to address the comment regarding separating opinion from fact. He believes it is public opinion that should count. Why can't this board make a recommendation to the Commissioner based on public opinion?
- A seat should be created on the board to represent the handicapped.

Potential next meeting dates: January 23 or January 30.