



ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

Adirondack Park Agency

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES
State Land Committee
October 11, 2019
Agency Meeting
JE:REW:mp

State Land Committee October 11, 2019

The State Land Committee convened at 9:00 am.

State Land Committee Members Present:

John Ernst – Committee Chair, Dr. Chad Dawson, Arthur Lussi, William Thomas and Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present:

Bradley Austin (ESD) Presiding Member, Daniel Wilt and Lynne Mahoney (DOS)

Local Government Review Board

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, Christopher Cooper, Richard Weber, Matt McNamara, Kevin Prickett and Mary Palmer

Approval of September Draft Minutes

Mr. Ernst had two ministerial changes on pages two and seven. With those changes, by motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Dr. Dawson, the September minutes were unanimously approved.

Planning Division Report

Mr. Weber said he hoped the site visit to Little Green Pond was helpful to the Board in visualizing what was recently approved in the Primitive Tent Site Guidance. The visit should also be helpful when staff begins to talk to the Board about Visitor Use Management and Wildlands Monitoring. Mr. Weber said he would like to commend APA and DEC staff for all work that was done planning for site visit.

Mr. Weber said he has been involved with the Governor's Upstate Cellular Task Force. He said the group has been established to look for solutions to provide cell coverage for unserved and underserved rural areas in upstate New York, with a focus on the Catskill and Adirondack Parks. It is evaluating various technologies that may be applied as well

as the potential costs associated with those technologies. Mr. Weber said the study also involves informing the task force of regulatory requirements of local governments and the Park Agency. A team of agency staff recently compiled responses to the task force along with GIS data showing the permitted sites in the Park and locations of pending applications. The task force is scheduled to have preliminary findings in November.

Mr. Weber said planning is underway for the 2020 Local Government Day which has been scheduled for April 29th and 30th. Staff have been working with a new online tool and queried past participants to seek potential topics for planning the 2020 conference.

Mr. Weber said the comment period for the Sentinel Range Wilderness closes on October 10 and could possibly come back to the Board for action in November.

Mr. Weber said that Agency staff are asking for Board approval to proceed to public comment for the amendment to the Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP. Staff believe the permanent operation of a boat wash station is considered an essential administrative purpose for resource protection for the management of aquatic invasive species in waters of the Park. The NYS DOT pull off area is appropriate for a permanent boat wash station. Mr. Weber said the UMP amendment is also considered appropriate for a joint public comment period for review of DEC's UMP and APA's review for compliance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP). The DEC comment period has already begun and APA comment period could begin immediately upon Board approval. Mr. Weber said both comment periods would be scheduled to end on October 30th with the possibility of bringing the UMP back to the Board in November.

Mr. Lussi asked what issues were holding up the Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor UMP. Mr. Weber said the UMP involves multiple agencies such as the Office of Parks and Historic Preservation which has their review for historic resources, DOT has more detailed comments and is taking the lead in the overall writing of the plan.

Mr. Stegemann said that it is being worked on.

Dr. Dawson said yesterday's field trip was very successful and instructive for people who have not seen this before. He suggested doing other site visits while the monitoring wildlands work continues, noting that the next big push is trail monitoring. He said once we see the monitoring of one type of use, the monitoring of others will be more obvious.

Mr. Thomas said he also enjoyed the site visit, noting that actually seeing it made a big difference in knowing what is allowed in Wild Forest and in Wilderness areas. He said he agreed that having more site visits would be helpful.

Mr. Stegemann said from DEC's standpoint it was very helpful for the Board to see the practical side of land management. It showed how staff have to look at all factors, and the coordination between the APA and DEC. He encouraged doing site visits in more areas.

Mr. Delaney noted the confusion that happens when people have their own idea of primitive camping and what it actually is. He said he feels that there is not clear and useful support for Forest Rangers that will help them with their jobs. He suggested having markers around the area that could make the Ranger's jobs much easier and the responsibility would fall on the camper. He added that the site visit was very helpful.

Mr. Ernst said he agreed that the trip was very helpful. He said the examples were brilliantly chosen because it showed different sides of the problems, for example, overuse and crowding. Mr. Ernst said he would like to see a newly designed trail.

Mr. Stegemann said the Wild Forest site visit had access by vehicles, but many sites in Wild Forest do not.

Dr. Dawson said if the Board is surprised by looking at the conditions of the sites, imagine what the public thinks. He said enforcement needs to be backed up, and there needs to be education for the public to make these things work. The only way it will be successfully managed as primitive campsites is if people understand what we are trying to do. Dr. Dawson said monitoring is a critical piece of good management and it should be a priority.

Mr. Ernst asked how the opening and closing of sites will happen. Mr. Stegemann said it will be staggered.

Mr. Lussi said we need to create a template that can be passed down from Ranger to Ranger. It is important to have something physical and objective to pass down to the next person that is monitoring so that it is not subjective. Mr. Ernst added that you cannot do monitoring without doing an assessment, and developing a database so staff have a starting point. Mr. Stegemann said everything is being recognized and being acted upon, and it is good to keep the discussion going. He said staff from both the DEC and APA are working together and it is just a matter of having it be routine.

Mr. Lussi suggested having pictures be part of the UMP so the Board would have a visual of what it looked like before and what it looks like now because sometimes it is years between projects. Dr. Dawson agreed. He said when the Board is presented with a UMP they read it as if it is new, but there is a history there that we do not see. Dr. Dawson suggested a check list that states, "on the previous UMP we did these management actions that were started, completed or not started." Mr. Stegemann said staff are doing the work internally and using it as a management tool is a good idea.

Ms. Martino said we will certainly consider conducting more tours.

Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP Amendment

Josh Clague, DEC, introduced Cathy McGlynn, Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator (DEC) to give a presentation on Watercraft Inspection Stewards in New York State as context for the boat steward program.

Mr. Stegemann asked if the data has been collected for more than one year. Ms. McGlynn said there was a pilot study done with sixteen organizations in 2017. In 2018 a full program was done with fourteen organizations so there is data for that year.

Mr. Lussi noted that there have been reports of the stewards being harassed and asked how this was being addressed. Ms. McGlynn said it is unfortunate and is happening across the state not only with the stewards but also with campground and trail workers. She said there is training they offer through the Adirondack Watershed Institute, as they have the most experience. Mr. Stegemann added that he received an email from the DEC Commissioner on this subject to make sure we have training in place. He said DEC has placed radios in areas that have no cell service and alerted the ECOs and Rangers that this is a potential issue in the area.

Mr. Ernst asked if staff were surprised at the levels of invasive species that were found at the inspection stations. Ms. McGlynn said it is telling staff to educate people more on the protocols of clean, drain and drying their boats. She added that staff are not able to monitor remote locations, so people using small crafts are potentially bringing invasive species to those waters. Ms. McGlynn said that we are trying to build a culture where boaters realize that they are also stewards for these waterbodies.

Ms. Mahoney said there is a greater public awareness of invasive species, but until it is mandatory those not stopping at a boat wash station are more likely to be transporting the invasive species. She asked what can be done for more public awareness. Ms. McGlynn said according to the language in Part 576 Clean, Drain and Dry is already mandatory. The issue that seems to be arising is who will be doing the cleaning, draining and drying. Ms. McGlynn said we expect the boaters to be responsible. Mr. Stegmann said the Transport Law is in effect. That makes it the responsibility of the boater to be diligent, and if they are not they are subject to a fine.

Mr. Delaney said there are models out there on how to do this, and the issue is that it takes resources to do it.

Mr. Clague gave an overview of the public draft for the Blue Mountain Wild Forest UMP.

Mr. Weber said this station was proposed by DEC early this year as a pilot, and installed as a temporary facility to see if this would be a good location for this site. He said this would be a minor improvement to a well-developed, existing pull-off area maintained by the DOT. Mr. Weber said we are seeking Agency review that acknowledges this structure as being compliant with the Adirondack Park State Master Plan and be allowed to stay at this location.

Mr. Weber said DEC's public comment period for the substance of the plan already started. He said we would like to make this a joint review and ask for Board approval to go to public comment starting today and ending at the same time as DEC's period on October 30th. Staff will bring this back for Agency action once we have reviewed the comments.

Mr. Weber said staff do believe the project is an essential administrative purpose for resource protection and will be compliant with the Master Plan.

By motion of Dr. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Stegemann, the Public Comment period was unanimously approved.

Mr. Austin asked if the agencies will be taking separate comments, and if the information to be able to submit a comment will be on the Agency website. Mr. Weber said when we have a joint comment period the agencies share comments that they have received with each other, and the information will be posted to our website.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Mr. Ernst, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 10:00 am.