

**Mount Washington Commission
January 16, 2009 Meeting Minutes
Mount Washington Observatory, Weather Discovery Center**

Members in attendance:

Paul Fitzgerald, Public (Chairman)

Chris Thayer for Graff, AMC

Randy Cooper for Middleton, MW Observatory

Keith Lannom for Wagner, WMNF

Howard Wemyss, MW Auto Road

Members absent:

Wayne Presby, MW Cog Railway (Vice Chair)

Senator John Gallus, Senate

Guy Gosselin, Public

House representative

Paul Ingersoll, Public

Others present:

Scot Henley, MW Observatory

Ken Rancourt, MW Observatory

Tim Moore, WHOM/Citadel

Bob Perry, Citadel Broadcasting

Edith Tucker, Coos County Democrat

Peter Crane, MW Observatory

Director Ted Austin, Div Parks and Rec

Tom Mansfield, DRED Architect

Paul Leary, DRED Communications Admin

Mike Pelchat, MW State Park Manager

Torene Tango-Lowy, Commission Clerk

I. Welcome. Chairman Paul Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and introduced new Parks Director Ted Austin. Director Austin provided a brief background of his career, including having 23 years in the ski industry and local ties to Mount Washington Valley. He recognized the pressures all parties are facing and is market-driven while balancing the stewardship responsibilities with user and revenue needs. He looks forward to working with the Commission.

II. Minutes. Mr. Wemyss MOVED to approve the September 10, 2008 minutes as written. Mr. Thayer SECONDED; motion CARRIES. Mr. Henley provided a brief presentation of the 12-page article Mount Washington Observatory is receiving in National Geographic magazine's February issue. The Union Leader also picked up the coverage in their January 15 edition.

III. Summit power update. Mr. Mansfield provided an update on Phase III of the electrification project to enclose the backup generators and electrical distribution equipment within a portion of the entrance canopy. DRED and the Bureau of Public Works found Cianbro's revised costs to be uncompetitive and are in negotiation with Cianbro to close out the contract; then rebid the work. The negotiations and rebid could delay Phase III, but the State is hopeful for completion this season. There is ~\$400K remaining. The State visited the summit with subcontractor White Mountain Communications and determined that the existing conduit and cables could be used. Mr. Mansfield and Mr. Pelchat responded to questions: DRED will upgrade the fuel lines this summer; redistribution of the power lines should address the power fluctuations; the switch to backup generators total ~400 hours; DRED is looking to redeploy the concrete building within the state system.

IV. Septic system rebuild. Mr. Mansfield reported that DRED project lead Seth Prescott conducted an onsite visit with Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) and White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) staff. The discharge component was redesigned to discharge uphill of the tank farm; the water runoff is expected to be absorbed into the ground before disturbing the alpine

plant communities or reaching WMNF land. DRED applied for its DES permit; DES required no substantive changes to the plans submitted. The engineers will submit the final design within two months. Installation is scheduled for summer. The project is within budget.

V. Summit Master Plan. The following persons have been appointed by Chairman Fitzgerald to serve on the Master Plan subcommittee: Walter Graff for AMC; Scot Henley for MWO; Tim Moore/Citadel for communications interests; Dave Neely for WMNF; Mike Pelchat for the State; Wayne Presby for Cog Railway; and Howie Wemyss for Auto Road. Pertinent historical documents were distributed: a) Report of the Governor's Mount Washington Study Committee, October, 1958; b) The Rationale and Conceptual Plan for Mount Washington Summit Development, August 25, 1969; and c) Mount Washington Survey, December, 1956. These documents will be made available on the Parks website. The Mount Washington: A ten year master plan, January 1, 1971 document is already on the Parks website. The Master Plan subcommittee will complete an updated master plan by the end of the year.

VI. Other business. Paul Leary presented DRED's annual power rate. The State held the rate last year, but experienced a loss of \$103K for FY 2008. The 2009 power rate of \$0.71/kWh captures expenses, maintenance of the backup generators including fuel, and depreciation. Mr. Cooper questioned having the summit partners pay for a State capital project. Mr. Leary provided more details on the expenses captured, which includes a proportion of staff time. DRED also pays for its own usage. The summit power does not fall under the PUC. Discussion ensued: perhaps the State should include summit power maintenance in its budget; depreciation costs would fund the replacement line in 20 years; Parks is not funded by the General Fund; should Parks be underwritten by summit partners when the State is not doing what it should for Parks; what are reasonable expenses; potential legislative action regarding funding; legislative action items will be considered by the master plan subcommittee. Members requested a copy of the calculations. Mr. Leary will followup with the Commissioner to release the spreadsheets. Mr. Fitzgerald asked Director Austin to carry the discussion to the Commissioner.

VI. Partner's comments. MW State Park Mr. Pelchat stated that he has kept members informed through his weekly reports. Mr. Moore thanked Mr. Pelchat for his hard work, as is reflected in the weekly reports. He stated that Citadel is willing to share the proportionate cost for power. AMC Mr. Thayer reports that the current economy will be challenging for 2009; MW Observatory Mr. Henley agreed that the economy has affected fundraising; two full-time positions have been eliminated; pay was cut 10%; they are hopeful for the exposure from National Geographic; WMNF Mr. Lannom reports that the Campton Visitors Center is expected to be complete in early October; they hope to host a MWC meeting at the Center; Auto Road Mr. Wemyss had nothing new to report, as it is the off season; WHOM Chairman Fitzgerald recognized Mr. Moore as an informal summit partner, although statute provides a seat for a communications entity through the now defunct WMTW. Statutory changes will be addressed through the Master Plan subcommittee.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2009 at 10 a.m. Location TDB. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy.