

**Mount Washington Commission  
Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2006  
Mount Washington Hotel**

**Members in attendance:**

Paul Fitzgerald, Public (Chairman)	Paul Ingersoll, Public
Wayne Presby, Cog Railway (Vice Chair)	Chris Thayer, AMC designee
Howard Wemyss, Auto Road	Tom Wagner, WMNF
Guy Gosselin, Public	Jack Middleton, Observatory

**Members absent:**

Senator J Gallus  
Rep G Chandler

**Other present:**

Allison McLean, Director, Div Parks & Rec	Harold Burns
Ken Rancourt, MW Observatory	Ken Jones, MW Observatory
Tom Mansfield, DRED Architect	Paul Leary, Forest Ranger IV
Bill Carpenter, DRED Land Agent	Gail Scott, Berlin Daily Sun
Edith Tucker, Coos County Democrat	Mike Pelchat, State Park Manager
Torene Tango-Lowy, Clerk, Div Parks & Rec	

---

Call to Order Chairman Paul Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

I. Approval of minutes Mr. Middleton motioned to accept the September 28, 2005 minutes, as written; Mr. Presby seconded. Motion carries.

II. Power line project Construction – Mr. Mansfield provided an update. Phase II and III construction is scheduled for 2006 with an operational system by October. DRED will site the summit electrical building next to the Sherman Adams building. It will measure approximately 18 x 36, comprised of three low profile modules camouflaged by the existing rock pile. The transmission line will be buried within the Cog Railway right-of-way. Mr. Mansfield provided a financial status report: Total project funds available \$2,540,000; Total committed to date \$1,227,905; Available balance \$1,312,095. State projects over \$250,000 are facilitated by the Bureau of Public Works through Administrative Services.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Commission serves as the steward of the state park and is very concerned about the aesthetics of the summit. Attendees discussed the location and visual impact of the summit electrical building. Director McLean expressed appreciation for the Commission's recommendations and that DRED selected the site based upon many factors, including cost, safety of the staff, and practicality. The Commission would like to see drawings of the proposed building when available.

Dartmouth property – Mr. Carpenter provided an update. Although no longer a pressing priority, DRED will investigate the potential acquisition. Appraisal documents will be made public only after negotiations are complete. The current lease with Dartmouth ends in 2010. Mr. Presby cautioned the state of the potential liability associated with the existing facilities on the Dartmouth property. Mr. Leary provided an update regarding the communications facilities. He has been updating the subleases to have the lessee responsible for removal of facilities at contract end.

*Cog Railway easement* – Director McLean reported that the AG’s office is drafting the right-of-way easement and is aware of the project schedule. Mr. Fitzgerald and Director McLean will keep in contact regarding this project.

III. Organization Reports AMC – Mr. Thayer is cautiously optimistic about the winter season. The Commission resolved: Offering their best wishes and hopes for a speedy recovery to Paul Cunha who was injured in an avalanche on Mt. Kilimanjaro.

*Auto Road* – Mr. Wemyss had nothing new to report.

*Cog Railway* – Mr. Presby reported on their second Ski Train season. With only a six-week turnaround, the Railway will convert another coal-fired engine to oil and will solicit summer visitor response to the new engines.

*Mount Washington Observatory* – Mr. Gravink is serving as interim Executive Director and provided a report. The Observatory is co-hosting with State Parks a visit by Governor Lynch on January 23. The Observatory is on schedule with its projects and recently met with DRED regarding their lease.

*State Park* – Mr. Pelchat reported that the October snowstorms closed the park early, caused some damage to communications facilities, and blocked the auto road. It prevented normal winterization of the summit septic system; instead, park staff set up a transfer system and completed septic winterization in November. Mr. Pelchat also reported on other maintenance projects, communications repairs, assistance provided to summit partners, and hiker rescue efforts. Financially, the park closed one-percent ahead of 2004 income with a net loss of \$141,000. However, once the bond on the TV-8 buildings is paid and with adjustments to the electric power rate to reflect increased costs, the park should break even. Director McLean provided an update on the Senate Bill 5 study commission of the state park system. Park operations, management, and finances are being reviewed as it impacts the State Park Fund. She anticipates a visit of Mount Washington by the study commission and will keep this Commission informed.

*WMNF* – Mr. Wagner hopes for more snow, and reported that the fall storms prompted early avalanche forecasting. The Forest Plan is being implemented and includes “alpine area” recommendations.

IV. Any other business None. Mr. Fitzgerald thanked Wayne Presby and the Mount Washington Hotel for hosting the meeting and providing lunch.

V. Adjourn The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m. The next meeting is at the call of the chairman.

*Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy.*