**DRAFT MINUTES (cp)**

**Adirondack Mountain Club—Conservation Committee Meeting**

**May 11, 2019**

**Present:** Neil Woodworth, Cathy Pedler, Ben Mastaitis, Jeff Levitt, Martha Waldman, Cliff Prewnecki, Mike Prescott, Mary Coffin, Mal Provost, John Gansfuss, Sally Dewes, June Fait, Jim Coward, Chris Veksey, Mark Janey, Paul Sirtoli, Paul Dietershagen, Ralph Keating, Liza Mundy, Donald Mundy, Lynn Rehfeld – Kenney

Call To Order; Acceptance of Minutes of 3/9/19 (Mastaitis)

Called order by Mastaitis at 10:10am. Motion to accept minutes made by Levitt; seconded by Fait,

Changes & Additions to Agenda (Mastaitis)

Coffin – NCNST

Woodworth - Minnewaska State Park ; Article 14 implications.

Chair's Comments & Report (Mastaitis)

Mastaitis – Conservation Day prior Saturday at Colonie Town Park. Nice turn out

Meeting dates for 2020 (All Saturdays) March 7 ; May 9; November 7

Reports and Concerns from Chapter Conservation Representatives

Provost – Plotter Kill Preserve project involved DEC treatment for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid.

Kenney – Project in Allegheny State Park. Niagara chapter maintains a trail to verify no incursions from Penn for fracking. None found. It’s a 12 mile stretch of trail.

Pisaneschi – Albany chapter working on getting repair work done on deteriorating sections of the Mohawk Hudson Hike Bike Trail. A meeting will scheduled among the responsible state / local govt. stakeholders.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

State Budget ( Woodworth/Pedler) ;

 **EPF** - Drop in open space funding; compensated for by increased federal funding; DEC hampered in land acquisition by staff shortage. Federal funding from Forest Legacy and LWCF; unsure about funding for 2019-20 in federal budget. If so, DEC will request additional funding to make up for federal short fall. Regarding Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Cornell bio control an important item; Stewardship line remains unchanged; pays for ADK stewardship staff.

**Rangers** – State now oversees 5M acres of state land. Increased search and rescue. DEC no longer sending rangers out of state to fight forest fires. ADK will continue to advocate for increased ranger staff next year.

**Ticks** – Are becoming more wide spread. Funding is needed to address this issue. Legislature failed to provide funding. Due to climate change winters are no longer severe enough to kill off the ticks. University of RI website has a video on how to tick proof clothing. Dick’s sells Sawyers, which is liquid permethrin. Woodworth – next fall ADK will try to secure the $1M in state budget to address this issue.

Legislative Update (Woodworth/Pedler)

See table below for bill numbers and follow this link for memos

<https://www.adk.org/protect/conservation-resources/>

**Protection from Fracking Waste** – ADK supports; keeps out of state fracking waste from entering NY.

**ATV Bills** – ADK opposes weight increases for UTVs and access to state land.

**UTV registration** – ADK opposes.

**ATV** **Study**- ADK opposes; only looks at economic impact; does not address environmental impacts

**ATV age limit** – ADK supports; no children riding ATVs

**Tick Bills** – ADK supports

**Environmental Bill of Rights** – ADK supports; passed both houses; due again in 2021; must be passed again by separately elected legislature. Will address issues such as Hoosick Falls; Similar legislation in 13 other states. Does not limit citizen’s suit to existing legislation, but to an issue where there is a strong scientific basis.

**Land Bank** – ADK supports. 250 acres to come out of the FP; 1,200 to be added. Legislature would have to approve projects

**Camp Gabriels** – nothing happening. Not sure if it’s part of the FP.

**Historic Structures** – ADK opposes; must be legitimate historic structures; Can’t be hunting camps.

**Float planes for Vets** – ADK opposes, bill is too broad.

**Hike Rating Bill** – ADK opposes; requires DEC to rate hikes; leaves DEC open to lawsuit.

**Climate and Community Protection** – ADK supports ; Sets up greenhouse gas emissions cap.

**Wetlands** – ADK supports; amends conservation law; provides greater protection for wetlands.

**Better Bottle Bill** – ADK supports; expands current bottle bill.

**Modernizing FOIL** – ADK supports; requires agency to post information on website if there is a public interest.

**Renewal of boat washing requirement** – ADK supports; expecting it to be renewed; no assembly bill;

**Minimum Maintenance Roads** (Low Volume Roads) - ADK opposes; allows localities to determine which local roads can receive minimum maintenance. It will limit access to remote trail heads. Sportsmen are also opposed. State has leverage by withholding CHIP funds.

**Cathead Mountain** – constitutional amendment to be acted on in 2020.

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| **Legislation Description** | **Bill Numbers** |
| Fracking Waste Bills Support  | A101/S437 (m); A2295/S1858 (m); A2655/S3392 (m) |
| ATV Bills Opposition  | A1401 (m), A3744 (m), S1372 (m), S1428/A1587 (m) |
| ATV Bills Support | A6087/S5035 (m); A7537 |
| Tick Bills Support  | A3440, A4773/S4876 (m); A6146/S4571 (m) |
| Right to Clean Enviro Constitutional Amendment Support | A2064/S2072 (m, Letters 785, 1st Passage 4-30-19) |
| Land Bank Constitutional Amendment (Land) Support | A1625-A/S2026-A (m) |
| Camp Gabriels Constitutional Amendment | A1629/S1959 |
| Historic Structures in ADK Oppose | A1638/S2934 |
| Floatplanes for Vets Bill Oppose | A4663/S2527 |
| Hike Rating Bill  | A4698 |
| General Obligations Law Bill Support | A4774 |
| Outdoor Rx Program Bill Support | A6024 |

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| **Legislation Description** | **Bill Numbers** |
| Climate and Community Protection Support | A3876/S2992 (m) |
| Protects Freshwater Wetlands Support | A3658 (m) |
| Polluter Pays Support | A5477-A/S3337-A |
| Better Bottle Bill Support | S2129/A5028 (m) |
| Renewable Energy Retention Support | A4294/S23 |
| Modernizing Foil Support | A121-A/S1630-B (m) |
| Renewal of Boat Washing Legislation Support | S5622 (m) |
| Minimum Maintenance Roads Oppose | S2910/A3724 (m) |
| Cathead Mountain | ? |

Allegheny Reservoir (Pedler)

**Kinzua Dam and Allegheny Reservoir Master Plan Issues:**

* Address upstream water quality impacts
* Address cultural concerns of Seneca Nation
* Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) must work with Seneca Nation in completing shoreline cultural/archaeological surveys
* Army Corps must engage in formal consultation with Seneca nation
* Review Kinzua Dam operations in the context of watershed health.

Pedler met with Seneca Nation to discuss their concerns which are listed above. Seneca nation wants to be consulted beforehand and not be treated as another stakeholder.

ACE has determined that since project will not have a major impact, will not do a formal scoping process, and will only conduct an environmental assessment.

This will be an ongoing issue within the next year. Dam was built in violation of Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1794).

Another issue – Should lands along shoreline be (a) developed (b) preserved or (c) returned to the Seneca nation? ACE is claiming jurisdiction over current Seneca lands.

ADK is awaiting ACE documents. ACTION ALERT to follow.

Eastern High Peaks Leave No Trace Hot Spot August 7-14 (Pedler) - August 8th will be a service day when ADK and DEC will work on the new trail to Cascade from Mount Van Hoevenberg complex. Leave No Trace Hot Spot trainers will be there for the whole week conducting programming. Volunteers to man trail heads and educate hikers. Workshop to educate social media ambassadors. Public leave no trace workshop.

Leave No Trace Hot Spot Revisit at the Peekamoose Blue Hole August 24 -27.

MATS (Woodworth)

Mercury Air Toxic Standards (MATS). Power Plants in Tenn and Ohio River Valleys still burn soft cold. This produces SOx and NOx, in addition to mercury, which is created from pulverized coal. In 2012, standards were changed to reduce mercury emission. Great progress was made. Trump administration is attempting to redefine the definition of the MATS rule. When rule was proposed, utilities contacted administration requesting that rule not be revised, since utilities have implemented improvements; costs have already been passed on to customers. Pollution has been reduced. Fewer jobs in soft coal industry, which is mined by mountain top removal, which is very destructive. Only high level administrative officials support. Soft coal use decreased from 45 % (1968) to 18 % (1990) in utility production. Soft coal is only economical if pollution controls are not used.

VSA (Woodworth) - State changed VSA which still protects volunteers, but not volunteer organization from legal liability. While ADK has adequate insurance, other organizations (such as Lean 2 Rescue, Finger Lakes Trail Conference) cannot afford insurance. ADK in conjunction with other organizations have reached out to DEC. One attorney in the state administration is the hold out. ADK is working to establish an umbrella policy to include all the groups.

Sirtoli – Is the Iroquois Chapter’s work in the Ha-De-Ron-Dah wilderness covered?

Herb Coles – This is a Region 6 issue which is rewriting the VSA. The Iroquois Chapter must execute a separate VSA with DEC. Not covered under the ADK umbrella VSA.

North Country National Scenic Trail Update (Coffin)

1. Mary distributed a handout for ADK/NCT Volunteer Work Week in Hoffman Notch Aug 5-8.

It conflicts with the August Cons. Comm. event at Heart Lake unfortunately.

2. All participants will sign the ADK Med and Liability Form and DEC VSA forms. NPS has a similar insurance program for volunteer worker injuries occurring on the NCNST.

3. After 26 years of attempts, Congress finally passed a bill that includes Vermont in the NCNST route so the trail terminus will be at the AT in VT.

4. NYS is due to host the Annual NCTA event at one event (ADK Fall Outing or President’s Dinner) in the Adirondacks, perhaps in the Schroon Lake area and feature Adirondack and Vermont trail sections for hikes and Crown Point SHS.

5. North Creek (Johnsburg) is interested in becoming a NCTA Trail Town.

August Retreat at Heart Lake (Pedler)

Guest Check-in August 7, Hot Spot Activities August 8, check-out August 9. We have Lean-to #15 and Campsite #24.

Motion to adjourn made by Fait; seconded by Pisaneschi .

Meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm

**NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2019**