

Mt A Steering Committee Minutes

November 15, 2023

Location: York Land Trust, 1 Long Neck Marsh Road, York, ME

Time: 9:30am

Members Present:

Great Works Regional Land Trust, Jill Crosbie

Kittery Water District, Bob Gray

Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, -----

Town of South Berwick, John Branagan

Town of York, Pete Murray

York Land Trust, Amelia Nadilo

York Water District, Zach Mein

Other Attendees:

Mt. A Natural Resource Manager, Robin Kerr

Mt. A Stewardship and Conservation Coordinator, Ben Jankowski

YLT Stewardship Director, Liz Walworth

YWD/YPD Resource Officer, Gary Stevens

Chair: Jill Crosbie

Minutes: taken by Amelia Nadilo, transcribed by Robin Kerr

Review and Approve Minutes: Approved; all in favor

Public Forum: side conversation on concerns about target shooting

Correspondence/Presentations/Requests: N/A

Discussion Items:

- **Parking/restroom update:** Top and bottom restrooms are open until Friday. Feedback: people happy and huge improvement. Clean, accessible. Porter Potties in the winter, maintained once a week. 2 tanks at each location (2 seats per tank). Rotating open stalls during slow season. No issues with parking. Added iron rangers – shifted mood of the parking areas (not as many complaints). Time consuming for counting envelopes. More revenue coming through the app than envelopes. Running at 50% from initial projection of revenue from parking (many factors contributing to it). Question on who isn't paying for parking (5-6 tickets per day; ticket is \$35)
- **FY 25 Budget; Partner Pledges:** Follow up from last meeting. Mt A is currently in FY 2024 and working on FY 2025. Shared invoices with everyone for our current fiscal year. KWD payment from March went into last fiscal year. Mt A sends invoices in the Fall, when in middle of their fiscal year to be better timed with partners operating with calendar year budget process. Mt A in budget process now for FY 25. Robin offered making a presentation to various Boards. Amelia shared that increase was declined for FY 2025 (payment in 2024). She also asked if there was a resource available to provide to Land Trusts or make a presentation. YWD will be staying level

for next few years because of Conservation Officer position. Great Works: Put request in but Board votes on Budget in December. South Berwick: likely all set to increase for FY 2025.

- **Rules & Regulations; uniformity across partner lands:** Winter good time to work on it and have ready for Spring. Have some of the rules for use posted in different locations. Complete set of rules are on Mt A website. Guideline for Use are just guidelines. Parks Ordinance has legal standing so it is enforceable. Locations:
 - **Mt A Map:** select rules called out
 - **Mt A Website:** complete set of guidelines
 - **Trail Access:** Mt A Cooperative Management list of landowners and select rules
 - **Town Websites:** York Municipal Parks Ordinance- newly revised
- Issue #1 - Hours of Operation: Road is 6 or 7am to Twilight. Variations between “Park” (summit, Big A Trail, Parking Lots) and Trails. Signage says sunrise to sunset. Night-time activity that Mt A doesn’t enforce. State allows for traditional uses (hunting and trapping). Likely won’t be able to make it uniform because LT’s land is dawn to dusk and WD allows night-time use. Consider including facility or gate hours? Keeping these hours give power to say “not supposed to be there”
- Issue #2 – Animal Use and Standards: Domestic animals must be on leash and clean up after pets. Directs to town’s website for rules. Joint sign with partners. Horses allowed on Mt A Multi Use Trails. YLT rule for pets on leash. GWRT agrees to joining Mt A land but off leash allowed on rest of preserves.
- Issue #3 – Alcohol and drugs: not allowed. Questions: weed, tobacco, vaping? Leave as is unless it is an issue.
- Issue #4 – Camping and campfires: Campfires prohibited unless authorized by director (special use permit). Change to fires?
- Issue #5 – Commercial use: Town does not allow commercial use on town property, state does. GWRLT doesn’t have a blanket policy. Questions: actively soliciting on property. Schools submit proposals. Mt A has a group use permit but it isn’t commercial (school groups, events, camps). Ex. dog-walking businesses, naturalist guides, yoga class, photo shoots. WD no commercial use.
- General Q’s: e-bikes vs e-dirt bikes, drones.
- Robin will consolidate and come back in January. Will try to marry the Park Ordinance

Reports:

- **Conservation Program**
 - **Stewardship Update:** In middle of “leave the leaves” campaign. Somewhat successful. Have had issues with mountain bikers reopening closed trails. Suggestion to do a workshop with bikers to see if there are compromises. Monitoring closed trails on 3 hill (MDIFW & YLT property). Things have been staying closed past few months, but uptick overall of people trying to build trails. Boundary survey work is ongoing. Surveyor met with Dan Perkins, his surveyor standing ground. Going to town level with attorney. Finished shrubland cut for the year (4.8 acres). Cut, drag, chip.
 - **Outreach/Education Update:** Naomi not present, but has holiday pop ups scheduled for the gift shop. Started a new winter solstice program. Nighttime programs doing better for registration than midday ones. Completed mayor’s monarch pledge report. Ongoing seed-bomb making. Will have stewardship, outreach, and invasives annual report forthcoming.

- **York Water District Report:** Wrapped up timber harvest, going back in to fix anything on trails that was damaged. Fixed road work (ended last week). Stone dust used on flat parts of road. Found mt biking trail network that connects to one across from Cedar (Hobo trail – popular on Strava). Tree cut w/chainsaw. Robin asked Josh what to do about this area in the past: he put up a no ATV sign and wants to monitor it. More trails and boardwalk has popped up.
- **Kittery Water District Report:** KWD timber harvest is all done.
- **MDIFW Report:** Josh not here (hunting season).
- **Land Conservation Efforts:** Zetterberg: has other buyers, not entertaining YLT offer. code gave permit to build new roof, but legal document says you can't. Met with Code and got them up to speed. SB passing new ruling on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) – worried about development pressures in the future. YLT sent in permit to MIF&W – got lost, sent again then approved. Sent in permit to DEP, 3 months later got back with questions, we have been following up and it is ongoing – going to be a wait. Timber Harvest is ongoing, but delay because of Thanksgiving holiday and planning for a weather event. Seeing a lot of hollow trees in that area.

New Business/Future Meeting: January 10th at 9:30 AM. Location YLT.

Public Forum: N/A

Adjourn