

## Mt A Steering Committee Minutes

9/27/23 – 9:30am

### Attendance:

- Great Works Regional Land Trust, Stewardship Director Jill Crosbie
- Kittery Water District, Board Chair, Bob Gray
- Maine Dept Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Biologist, Josh Matijas
- Town of South Berwick, GWRLT Board Member, John Branagan
- Town of York, Parks & Rec Director, -----
- York Land Trust, Executive Director, Amelia Nadilo
- York Land Trust, Stewardship Director, Liz Walworth
- York Water District, Assistant Superintendent, Gary Stevens
- York Water District, Resource Protection, Zach Mein
- Mount A- Conservation and Stewardship Coordinator, Ben Jankowski
- Mount A- Outreach and Education Coordinator, Naomi Densmore
- Mount A- Natural Resource Manager, Robin Kerr

### Public Forum:

- Motion to approve minutes: all in favor

**Correspondence/presentations/requests:** Gary acknowledgements

### Discuss Items:

- *Parking/restroom update:* civil engineering/parking is mostly done. Will need to assess, evaluate, and make changes come Spring. Heavy rains tested stormwater ponds and erosion control – functioning okay after tweaks. Problems with design and design changes. Public Works on the project – may up the paving schedule for road and fix shoulders. Restrooms are close – delay in base bathrooms. Hopefully ready in the next week or two. Will close them for a period in winter (Jan – March) and have a porta potty stationed.
- *Feedback:* people entering the base parking lot incorrectly. Lots of run off on road from heavy rains. Not much parking on the street. They don't know how long they are going to be here.
- *Fee:* feedback has been okay. Average on pay & go is \$4. Pushback is the app. Older crowd visiting. Need to update signs – don't need to download app, can just scan QR code and pay without creating an account. Can also go to website or call number. People want a drop box/pay kiosk that accepts coin, cash, credit, and app. Got the approval to purchase iron-rangers (donation tubes). Seasonal pass is May 15 – November 15. Seasonal Pass rate is very high – perhaps \$50 for next year. Don't charge for parking in the winter or after 4:30. Fine is \$35.
- *Public brochure & map:* updates to parking, restrooms, East of third hill is purposely left off. South east of second hill is blocked off – questionable ownership. Don't want to show connections. Keep legend and connecting trails (outside of mgt area) blocked. Bennet Lot parking lot getting done soon (2-3 weeks) – don't want to advertise that on the map. Put up signs for off-street parking. Discussion to show extension trails to Checkerberry, Norman Mill, Pave Street, and the fact that parking isn't available. Add websites to partner titles, keep printed map clean as possible.

- *FY25 Budget; Partner Pledges:* What can each group pledge for next year? Current Mt A enterprise budget does not include Robin, Ben, or Naomi's salaries. May combine trail crew/attendant positions as "Park Ranger". Other non-salary expenses include: trail supplies, repairs, office supplies, etc. – is \$68,000 funded by tower rentals and other sources. Income = Tower revenues, grants, donations, use fees. Budget does not include capital items (gator, building, cedar culvert – will need to find other sources of funding).
  - Partner contributions forecast shows 20% increase.
  - For RPO – water district paying for rest of calendar year. For 2024: KWD will contribute \$20k for next 2 years. YWD will do \$20k for next 2 years. YLT and GWRLT need to get formal request for contribution.
  - Mt A invoices partners in the Fall.
  - Partners have paid for FY23. MT A will be invoicing for current FY24 fiscal in Oct. (Town of York fiscal years are July-June).
  - Mt A is asking for pledges for FY25 and needs information to make their budget sooner than later.

#### **Reports:**

- *Conservation Program:*
  - *Stewardship Update:* In the throws of shrubland cutting (including on water district land). Recut 5 acres by hand every Fall. ID tree species, cut shrub species. Either haul out and wood chip or create brush piles. Get a lot of questions about it – people don't realize that it takes effort to keep summit this way. 3 out of 7 section done. Mature tree species on WD side. Another trail on 3<sup>rd</sup> Hill that has been reopened as a mountain bike trail. Person is being smart and opening it up on private land. Ben will get together with Liz to figure out property lines. Liz suggests speaking with son and he may be amenable to close it. E-bike reality is here to stay. Not doing as much damage but getting people out further quicker. Problem is electric dirt-bike. Phragmite in red maple swamp. WD – saw that YWD has Mark Richard's property and not about Danny Perkins. WD is posting many no trespassing signs. Planning on working on a trail through this property but away from Danny's land. Ideally have trail connection from old CFW parkway to Porcupine.
  - *Outreach/Education Update:* Lodge opened on weekends and a few Fridays in October. Last joint program is Oct 21<sup>st</sup> with CFW. Exciting things lined up for next year. Drop in hike series wraps up in October as well. Currently running milkweed pod and seed drive through October. November, Naomi will do distribution programs and seed bombs. School groups – 6 scheduled for October. Will be closing seasonal admission pass purchases on 10/16 since only month left. Wants to open sales April 1 and promote it, especially if we can lower the cost. Ski the Big A hat (refers to the ski area)
- *Water District Report:* York - Mark Richard property. Timber Harvest close to completion (off of Chase's Pond). Should be wrapped up beginning of October. Tim Hanson has been kicked off of YWD and KWD properties for 2 years. Worked with local warden and gave him notice. Kittery – Timber Harvest in Horse Hills area (using Brian R. as forester). Going in through Gary Mill road. Ponds are all full.

- *MDIFW Report:* Put concrete well cover on exposed well on Cedar trail near cedar bog. Officially sealed off. Bennet lot parking project underway – should be done within next month, 2 day project – gravel and boulders. Invasive phrag with herbicide applications. Phrag from last year came back, didn't go to seed, not as prolific. Doing direct application on cut stems with a sponge. Using a concentrated glycolate. Avoid broadcast. YWD (cutting back every 2 weeks – keeps it contained). LTs are considering getting Maine Master Applicator licenses (\$70 for 60 hrs). Land Acq – not looking at anything down here – have purchases in Scarborough and Hollis.
- *Land Conservation Efforts:* YLT in communication with Zetterberg communications. Zetterberg was telling people he can build a road, another homeowner called Mt A to get more information on lot. GWRLT worked with town of North Berwick on Bonnebaug Mt. Town will own land, and GWRLT will manage it. Hired a professional trail planner (Mike Cooper). Have trail plan, worked with civil consultants with parking lot. Hopefully town will pay for parking. Roadside parking on Ford Quint road for 9 spots. Does not connect to GWRLT Bonnebaug conservation area. Have funds for acquisition, some funds for stewardship, still running campaign to raise funds for stewardship of the property. Got parcel on Cox Pond that abuts other conservation land. Salmon Falls Tidal Water Project – on Salmon Falls River in South Berwick on Old Fields Road. Seeking funding for acquisition – 2.2 million. (Woods to Waters Campaign). Got funds from LMF for both projects. Easement on Old County Road that abuts YLT, GWRLT, and IF&W. Would like to do initiative along little river in Berwick.

**New Business/future meeting:**

- Rules & Regulations; uniformity across partner lands

Next meeting date: 11/8/23 – Location TBD