



Adirondack Park Agency

SHERMAN CRAIG
Chairman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES
State Land Committee
May 10, 2018
Agency Meeting
KF:KDR:mp

State Land Committee May 10, 2018

The State Land Committee convened at 9:35 am.

State Land Committee Members Present:

Karen Feldman, Committee Chair, Chad Dawson, Arthur Lussi, William Thomas and Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present:

Sherman Craig, Chairman, Daniel Wilt, John Ernst, Bradley Austin (DED), and Matt Tebo (DOS)

Local Government Review Board

Frederick Monroe, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, Executive Director, Sarah Reynolds, Acting Counsel, Kathy Regan, Walt Linck, Elizabeth Phillips and Mary Palmer

Approval of April 2018 Draft Minutes

By motion of Mr. Stegemann, seconded by Dr. Dawson, the March minutes were unanimously approved.

Deputy Director Report

Ms. Regan noted that this year's Local Government Day had more people registered than previous years. She thanked Robyn Burgess and Kate-Lyn Knight for their hard work in making it a successful meeting, and the LGD Steering Committee and APA and Crowne Plaza staff for their help.

Ms. Regan said three public hearings were held in April on the proposed APSLMP amendment involving clarification of the Travel Corridors classification category definition and guidelines for management and use, and amendment of related provisions. There were a total of 109 people registered and 32 people spoke. The public comment period closed May 7th and 586 comments have been received. Staff are currently reviewing these comments to determine changes which may need to be made to the DSEIS.

Ms. Regan said the Public Comment periods also closed for the Black River WF amendment, the Lake George Park and Battlefield amendment, and the Cranberry Lake Boat Launch UMP. We anticipate being able to bring these items back to the board for Master Plan conformance in June.

Ms. Regan said there are four items on today's agenda: DEC Staff Rob Ripp and Tate Connor will present Vanderwhacker Wild Forest Unit Management Plan (UMP) and High Peaks Wilderness Unit Management Plan (UMP) Amendments. These two amendments are so closely aligned that they will be presented together. Agency staff will request authorization to proceed to Public Comment concurrently with the Department. Walt Linck will review the Gore Mountain UMP Amendment, and staff will ask the Board to adopt the Resolution for APSLMP conformance. Mike Pratt (ORDA) will present the Mount Van Hoevenberg UMP Amendment, which will be for information only.

Vanderwhacker Wild Forest and High Peaks Wilderness UMP Amendments

John Ernst is recused from High Peaks and Vanderwhacker Mountain amendments and left the room prior to the presentation.

Mr. Ripp and Mr. Connor presented an overview of the draft UMPs.

Chairman Craig noted that this was a very aggressive plan and liked the broad sweep of looking at thousands of acres, access and protection at the same time. He was pleased that the Department has spoken on the issues of parking and overuse, how the public is using the area and staff resources for managing the area.

Dr. Dawson said that presenting the UMPs together is essential to recognize the connectivity between them. Dr. Dawson also expressed his support for the phased approach for planning and management introduced in the plans.

Mr. Lussi asked if staff had an inventory of the number of parking places in these areas because it would help when considering capacity and use. Mr. Connor said staff used numbers from the 2004 Dix Wilderness UMP as a basis for proposals for the Chapel Pond parking situation. DEC did engage with stakeholders in addressing High Peaks overuse issues.

Mr. Stegemann said there has been a lot of discussion on overuse issues and what tactics would be used to address them. These UMPs are just a portion of a larger plan. As the larger plan develops, staff will identify actions, some will require UMPs and others may involve cooperation with other agencies, municipalities and interest groups.

Mr. Monroe asked if there has been any discussion of back country skiing in these areas or parking issues on the East River Road. In reference to the back country skiing, Mr. Connor stated that staff are trying to address Wright Peak and the proposal

suggested does follow current guidance. In reference to East River Road, Mr. Ripp stated that parking is not proposed across the river from the bridge due to regular flooding events.

Chairman Craig asked if personnel will be in the Boreas on a regular basis, possibly staying at the log cabin. Mr. Ripp said there are alternatives discussed for the cabin which do include housing of staff, but at this point a decision has not been finalized.

Mr. Thomas noted that there is a fire tower on Mt. Adams and asked if it would need to be removed. Mr. Connor said the footprint of the fire tower and the observer cabin are owned by the Open Space Institute (OSI), so they do not need to be removed. The DEC is currently working on a conservation easement with OSI.

Mr. Stegemann said when the Boreas Classification was being done Dr. Dawson made good points about carrying capacity. Mr. Stegemann also noted that looking at these two UMPs together in a phased approach strengthens these plans. He commended staff for their work on such a complex project and added that we will learn a lot from this process. He commended the Board for listening to this approach.

Ms. Feldman asked about the timeframe, knowing there may be questions about going to public comment simultaneously with the Department on something this complicated. She noted that separating the public comment periods would extend the timeframe for DEC and that the DEC would like to start work this season.

Dr. Dawson asked knowing people do sometimes wait until the last minute to submit their comments, how does the Agency work with changes the DEC makes. Ms. Regan said there will be two separate comment addresses in the hopes that the Agency will get the APSLMP conformance comments and DEC will get the UMP management comments. Staff will work closely with the DEC making sure both agencies see the appropriate comments in a timely fashion. Both staff will also need to work closely to determine if any major changes are being made or APSLMP conformance issues arise. Staff may request the Board consider a second public comment period if either of those scenarios presents itself.

Dr. Dawson asked how long the comment period would be and when the amendments would come back to the Board. Ms. Regan said the comment period would be forty-five days ending on June 27th. Ms. Feldman said if significant changes are made, the amendment(s) could possibly go back out for additional public comment.

Dr. Dawson said it is good to move items forward. He asked if a forty-five day concurrent comment period is practicable. Ms. Feldman said if the comment periods were done separately it would be a longer process.

Ms. Feldman said that reviewing UMPs in this manner is not a precedent and if it does not work it may not be done again.

Mr. Monroe said on behalf of the Local Government Review Board it is a good plan to move forward with a joint comment period. Many people do not see the distinctions between what is in the plan and whether it complies with the APSLMP. This gives them an opportunity to comment on both.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion for the Vanderwacker Wild Forest UMP. By motion of Mr. Lussi, seconded by Mr. Stegemann, the Board unanimously approved to proceed to public comment.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion for the High Peaks Wilderness UMP. By motion of Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Stegemann, the Board unanimously approved to proceed to public comment.

Mr. Ernst returned to the room and Mr. Lussi exited for the following two agenda items.

Gore Mountain UMP Amendment

Mr. Linck presented the proposed Final UMP Amendment.

Mr. Monroe asked if the Rabbit Pond Trails existed when the Gore Mountain Intensive Use area was classified. Mr. Linck said there is a historic Rabbit Pond Trail that was part of downhill skiing in the Gore Mountain system prior to all of the classification.

Mr. Thomas stated that he remembered that the Rabbit Pond trails were used in the 1930s and he does not believe those trails were used since the 1940s.

Dr. Dawson asked if the wording on the clarification slide adequately covers the first two Whereas paragraphs of the Resolution. Mr. Linck answered affirmatively.

Ms. Feldman asked for a motion for the Gore Mountain UMP Amendment. By motion of Mr. Stegemann, seconded by Dr. Dawson, the Board unanimously approved the Resolution on APSLMP Conformance.

Mount Van Hoevenberg UMP Amendment

Mr. Pratt presented the Draft UMP Amendment and the management actions that will occur on both Town of North Elba land and State lands.

Chairman Craig asked for clarification of the alpine coaster. Mr. Pratt said it is a cabin on tracks. There are different size features for going down the track in singles or doubles. It will be marketed as a recreational bobsled.

Mr. Pratt said there will be a public hearing on May 24th at 7:00 pm in the Lake Placid Conference Center, and the public comment period will end June 8, 2018.

Ms. Feldman asked when it would be brought back to the Board. Ms. Regan said possibly the July or August meeting.

Chairman Craig noted there has been a lot of ORDA discussion in the last few months, probably based on budgetary decisions in Albany. He asked with those solid monetary numbers if ORDA is able to move forward with these projects. Mr. Pratt said ORDA was appropriated with a large capital budget. He said ORDA has identified numerous projects at eight facilities. They will be able to move forward but work will not be undertaken for everything presently identified in the UMPs.

Ms. Feldman asked how the permit for the Town of Johnsbury and Gore Mountain UMP Amendment are connected. Ms. Phillips said the Board will see a presentation by Tom Saehrig (APA) regarding the 814 Notice of Intent and an Amendment to the Front Street – Town of Johnsbury – ORDA Permit 2006-123 which will cover all of the proposed activities in Ski Bowl Park on Town of Johnsbury land. Some of those activities are related to the Gore UMP because certain trails and one lift are both in the Intensive Use area and town lands. ORDA prepared a Cumulative Impacts analysis as part of their Gore EIS/UMP to address the combined impacts of those two actions. Staff brought them to the Board on the same day so they could be looked at as one package.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Ms. Feldman, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:55 am.