

BAXTER STATE PARK AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES
RM 600 CROSS BLDG, AUGUSTA
February 10, 2015
10:00 A.M.

ATTENDEES:

BSPA MEMBERS: Janet Mills, Chandler Woodcock, Doug Denico (by phone)

BSP STAFF: Jensen Bissell, Jean Hoekwater,

BSP ADVISORY MEMBERS: Anne Huntington

GUESTS: Aaron Megquire, Jill Ippoliti, Paul Stern, Lauren Parker

Denico called into the meeting from Old Town and requested Mills take the chair for the meeting. Mills called the meeting to order at 10:13 am. Mills introduced Lauren Parker as the assistant AG that would be working with the Park from time to time for occasional legal questions and explained her background in conservation and environmental issues. Mills also explained that Paul Stern is semi-retired but has come back to work with the AG's office, assigned to a couple of specific projects.

Introductions were made around the table.

DECEMBER 10, 2014 MEETING MINUTES

Woodcock moved to approve the minutes as submitted, Doug Denico seconded.
Passed unanimously.

PROPOSED RULES AND REGULATIONS CHANGES

First Proposed Rule Revision: Opening roads in SFMA and Dwelly Pond to bicycle use. Bissell explained history of prohibiting bike use on SFMA roads due to safety concerns which have turned out to be minimal compared to our original understanding

Bissell explained that opening the Dwelley Pond Trail makes a loop people can use to get away from the Park Tote Road. He acknowledged that we may have to re-assess as times goes on if unanticipated and/or unacceptable impacts or conflicts develop.

Bissell explained the APA process. First we get the Authority approval to initiate the process, then we move into APA, once that process is complete, a new version of the regulations shows up at the AG's office for signatures.

Second Proposed rule revision: has to do with aircraft in the Park. Bissell explained we are trying to be very clear on drones and unmanned aircraft in BSP. We have already had several requests to use UAV's drones and we expect more requests in the future. Mills asked for clarification on planes landing in the Park. Bissell replied they are required to register when entering the Park and prohibited from landing anywhere except on the three (3) boundary waters specified in regulations: Webster, Matagamon and Nesowadnehunk Lakes. Further discussion on current practice/regulation. The question was raised about drones coming from outside Park boundaries. Bissell noted that currently the range is fairly limited but also, we do not have any ability to address drones originating from outside the Park with a Park regulation. The FAA is looking at this and the National Park Service is also considering regulation options.

Woodcock moved to accept wording as proposed for both regulations. Denico seconded. Passed unanimously.

Denico thanked Bissell for coming up with an opportunity for the Park to say "yes" on the use of bikes in the Park when so often we need to say "no" in our day-to-day considerations.

Operational Updates

Bissell reviewed winter conditions, snow depth at Chimney Pond, KLWC operating in February and March.

Personnel updates including filling the opening in reservations due to retirement of Jeannie Tibbetts, retirement plans of Jeannie Howes and a discussion of her long career with BSP.

Discussion of Facebook being very helpful for us in advertising for a computer tech and getting applicants.

Discussion of Law Enforcement position Isaac Needell held being an opportunity to begin transitioning to a smaller LE force with the remainder of supervising field rangers being empowered only for writing summons for Park regulations, no firearm or continuum of force.

Mills inquired how close the nearest LE office is and Bissell explained that the most likely scenario for outside LE assistance is game wardens, possibly sheriffs. Currently rangers juggle employee supervision, operating heavy equipment and maintenance patrols with their LE work. Bissell looks forward to the day we have 1 or 2 rangers dedicated to LE work fulltime for the Park. These 2 positions would be able to get out on the trail without other schedule and duty conflicts.

Woodcock noted that other full time LE officers (game wardens) will appreciate being able to work with full time LE officers rather than part time or partially certified on critical incidents. So he supports the Park retaining a couple of fully certified LE officers.

Bissell gave a quick overview of finances, including the BSP Trust and Wilderness Trust. He also mentioned a long-term plan to relocate critical sections of several trails in the Park which will cost up to \$800,000 and is projected to occur each field season through 2025.

Other

Denico mentioned he didn't realize we were losing Paul Stern. He said he will miss his counsel. Doug expressed thanks for the time he was able to spend with Paul.

Bissell reminded attendees the **next meeting is May 22, 2015, at Kidney Pond Camps**. Woodcock moved and Mills confirmed the meeting adjourned at 10:51 am.

Doug Denico
Director MFS

Chandler Woodcock
Commissioner IF&W

Janet T. Mills
Attorney General