

Winter Quarterly Meeting, NorthWoods Steward Center

Charlestown, Vermont & Zoom, January 23, 2022

Called to Order – NEKGMC President John Predom called the meeting to order. He thanked Maria Young and the NorthWoods Stewardship Center for hosting. John also thanked all the volunteers who have been working on trails.

Secretary's Report - NEKGMC Secretary Michael Chernick reviewed the minutes of the October 24, 2021, quarterly meeting.

MOTION [Brooks/Barnes] Approve the secretary's minutes as presented

Approved unanimously

Treasurer's Report – In the absence of NEK Treasurer Angela Smith, Cathi Brooks reviewed the highlights of the Treasurer's Report, which Angela submitted as follows:

Northeast Kingdom Section ~ Green Mountain Club

Quarterly Financial Statement

As of January 21, 2022

Operating Account

Beginning Balance (as of 10/21/2021) \$5,114.21

Income

Dues Sharing

September \$148.75

October \$120.00

November \$60.00

Expenses

Train NEK \$240.00

NWSC- Yearly Donation \$500.00

Burke Mountain Clubhouse- Yearly Donation \$100.00

Local Doughnuts \$68.00

Ending Balance \$4,664.94

Certificate of Deposit

CD#1 ...4489/Matures 01/12/2023 @.40% \$1,589.99

CD#2 ...3785/Matures 06/27/2022 @.40% \$1,750.79

Grand Total All Monies \$8,005.72

Angela Smith ~ Treasurer

Main Club Director's Report – NEKGM Main Club Director Cathi Brooks updated the section on various economic aspects of the Main Club's finances, which are in good condition. Expenses are higher than last year in all categories, as more activities are now occurring. The Main Club's January 2022 Treasurer's Report noted that contributions and memberships, while solid, were slightly lower than the previous year. Personnel and field costs rose significantly (with the return of a busy field season in 2021), including helicopter use for construction projects. A \$48,500 bill still needed to be invoiced. Despite these developments, the GMC's line of credit was not required as the cash flow remains strong.

For the first six months of FY 22 (May-November 2021), the revenue highlights included direct contributions (\$238,564), total membership dues -at large & section- (\$142,096), grants and agreements (\$563,155), sales- GMC Publications (\$77,251) & Visitor Center (\$36,226)-total sales (\$113,476), all other revenue (\$46,712), and all revenue equaled (\$1,104,004).

As for expenses, personnel (\$914,294), office (\$218,817), program (\$216,496), property and facilities (\$87,015) for an expenses total of (\$1,436,622). In addition, the endowment distribution equaled (\$150,442) and the restricted funds distribution was (\$81,000), resulting in a total distribution of (\$231,442) and a six- month point FY22 surplus of (\$101,176).

With respect to the Capital Campaign, of the projected goal (\$4,000,000), the amount received is (\$2,377,4536), with expenses of (\$642,242), Restricted and Transferred allocations (\$262,164) and funds available (\$1,473,047).

The Main Club Board reviewed a motion to distribute \$350,00 of Long Trail Legacy funds, raised in the Capital Campaign to the following endowments: Caretaker (\$100,000), General (\$100,000), Headquarters (\$925,000) Northern Trail Work (\$60,000), and Land Conservation (\$100,000).

Other items of note are that the rebuilding of the Herrick Building, Beaver Dam, and the Bromley Tower. All three are proceeding forward as is a proposed busy 2022 field season, which includes work on the northern segment of the LT. Following the recommendation of the Appalachian Trail Conference, the GMC is developing a Volunteer Code of Conduct, specifically addressing issues of harassment and discrimination.

On another bright note, the federal government has relieved the GMC from any payback obligation on the Paycheck Protection loan. There is a desire to increase the staff's (including seasonal) minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour to account for an increasing competitive job market. With new recruiting need on field staff this is an important topic to attract applicants.

Membership stands club-wide at approximately 9,800. There is a plan to reorganize the membership committee and more actively engage business members.

For the most recent data period, Hadsel Mares had 96 percent occupancy, including 61 percent of the renters being GMC members. The occupancy rates for Bryan Camp and Bolton Lodge were 82 percent and 58 percent, respectively.

Taylor series programming for the coming season is being finalized, and various workshops, including on chainsaw certification, are planned. There are currently 65 corridor monitors with all LT sections covered, and only one AT section requiring a monitor assignment. A new AmeriCorps volunteer is arriving at Main Club. Efforts to promote diversity, relationships with the indigenous community, and indigenous use of land for traditional purposes are all continuing.

COVID Protocol – Michael Chernick, who had attended COVID related meeting in the fall, presented a brief summary on current recommendations, which among other points advised against indoor

meetings.

Heritage Land Partners Hike – NEKGMC Vice President and Main Club Camps Committee Chair Paul Trojano participated in the annual Kingdom Heritage Trails Partners' Hike on December 3, 2021. The hike focused on potential camp sites. Different options were documented. Representatives of the GMC, NorthWoods Stewardship Center, and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) participated. Although none of the representatives of the private landowners attended, Paul thought the hike was a positive experience. If the project is implemented, camping sites would be available for through hikers. Near the Gore Mountain parking site there was seen the body of an old vehicle (thought to be from the bootlegging era).

Maria Young NorthWoods Stewardship Center (NWSC) Executive Director - She welcomed the NEKGMC section and stated it was her pleasure to get out on the trails with the attending section members. Maria commented that an amount of collaboration is required to keep trails open. It is "pretty neat" in our little area how many people are engaged in trail maintenance activities. She has not always appreciated the volunteers' role. NWSC is connecting with GMC on Camel's Hump work this summer.

She listed the four key areas for NWS activities, including the conservation corps, conservation stewardship, forest stewardship and environmental education. Maria mentioned the new ways that NWSC is investing. Its conservation crew program starts now at age 15. In 2021, NWSC launched a collaborative training program with other organizations, including forest crews, camps, and riparian collectors.

The Mission of these collaborations is to connect people in place. The key effort is how we (NWSC) train the next generation of conservation stewards. A new NWSC conservation barn is being completed. The organization is trying to focus on its land base (own site). NWSC has been drawn off campus a lot. It gets paid when leaving the home campus. This site can be a burden financially. There is lots of deferred maintenance to address. Last summer, there were 120 plus NWSC staff (including seasonal crews). Half were stationed on site, and the balance worked throughout New England.

At the young professional level, NWSC operates a conservation internship program, which offers unique opportunities throughout New England. There is a new push for pro (adult) crews. But NWSC must fight to keep the youth crews active. The youth crew program can have an enormous impact on kids. NWSC is thinking of inclusion and diversity, including low-income demographics for its youth crews. Services such as transportation of crew from home to work sites can facilitate this desired diversity.

Maria listed the NWSC field projects planned for 2022. Quite a few projects are planned in collaboration with FPR, including the Willoughby Shore Trail Restoration, Unknown Pond Middle Mountain, and Mount Pisgah accessible trail maintenance. Hopefully, there will be a week of shelter maintenance at Burke, for the NWSC northern roving crew. [Note: According to Luke O'Brien at FPR, this list is dependent on available funding and yet to be finalized]

NWSC will connect with FPR to work on the Bald Mountain summit cabin (with the Westmore Trails Association financial support), at the Westmore Town Forest, Highland Lodge, Jay Recreation Trails, and on the Kingdom Trails. NWSC has established a new partnership with the U.S. Forest Service in New Hampshire and Vermont

Work is planned on the Cohos Trail, Bluff Mountain Community Trail, at Cow Mountain Pond, and possibly on the historic Hinman Road (from Greensboro to Glover).

The Westmore Challenge is scheduled for Sept 24, 2022. Maria thanked the NEKGMC for its volunteer efforts on this event. It is now NWSC's signature fundraiser. NWSC worked to avoid a date conflict with the local marathon (running race).

NWSC is looking to start a KHT Ramble 20-mile hike (Lewis Pond to Island Pond). Jesse Holden/Chris Gagnon have been asked to assist. The idea is not firm but possible. Various legal permissions will be needed. NWS may coordinate with Brighton Trails Day on an KHT ramble. NWS needs to decide which events to support.

NWSC is updating the NEK Mountain Trail Guide. Groton State Forest trails will be included as well as Stannard Lookout, and Sentinel Rock. The publication will include a slightly updated NEK Mountain Challenge list. She still needs a new update on the Belvidere Forester' Trail/Frank Post Trail, both located on Mount Belvidere. John Predom inquired on a Brousseau location that might be a falcon nesting site. Maria explained this specific site is not monitored every year. Brousseau not on the list of falcons protected locations. NWSC is planning to remove Mount Mondnock from the book, due to its current closure to hiking. There will be an online version of the publication. It will be possible to update the book prior to a future third edition The volume will contain new maps. An Abenaki perspective, which Bea Nelson wrote prior to her death, is a new feature. The volume will not include a GMC logo but will credit GMC's contribution. Publication of the print and digital versions is expected in March or April. On July 9, a release party is planned for the at Dirt Church Brewery in East Haven. The Vermont Community Foundation is contributing to the printing cost. Lastly, the "NEK Mountain Trail Guide" volume is to be read and not serve as a replacement for GMC maps.

Maria commented that the next couple of years are going to be filled with opportunities for trail funding. NWSC is trying to work on this collaboratively and in a sustainable manner. The task of NWS is to build capacity and manage the environmental aspect.

The NWS summer camps are open to children aged 6 and older. School groups participate in NWSC programs throughout the year.

Main Club Trail Management Committee - Cathi Brooks reported that Hadsel Mares will be closed from the middle of September till January 2023, as the Beaver Dam construction crew will be residing in the existing cabin. Rehabilitation of the Burroughs and Monroe trails on Camel's Hump is a partnership with FPR and the U.S. Forest Service. There is \$100 million nationally in federal infrastructure money for trails. Unauthorized construction of ski glades and the reoccurrence of ATV use have emerged as problems on both the LT and the AT. The Main Club is working on various shelter issues. There will be four NEKGMC participants in the chain saw certification class. Mari Young noted that NWS is engaged in authorized ski glade construction. It is possible that financial subsidization may be available for the chain saw class. A North Country Scenic Trail representative recently visited Vermont. This trail is a major project, extending from North Dakota to Vermont. It is a hiking only trail. The Vermont extension would run from Lake Champlain to Breadloaf. The Main Club is coordinating with affected organizations. It is not intended to put any additional regulatory burden on the state. To date, only 16 persons have through hiked the length of this trail.

Membership – NEKGMC Membership Coordinator Beth Barnes thanked Maria Young for her hospitality and presentation. Membership is now at 167 membership units. This number will rise as several noteworthy names' membership had lapsed. Main Club was a little behind on sending out renewals. There are 235 voting members. A little more than half are couples. Beth was disappointed with the last Meet & Greet. Paul Trojano complimented Beth on doing a great job. Beth stated that the quality of persons in attendance has been off the charts. She is trying to promote locale cafes/restaurants in areas where we hike. The event will return to Parker Pie. The newsletter will be sent the first week of February. Beth will continue in her newsletter editorial role until someone else is found. She noted articles she is waiting on. No names were cited. John also commented that Beth is doing an excellent job in increasing GMC awareness in the NEK

Sucker Brook Bridge - Luke asked if NEKGMC is interested in contributing financially to the

construction of this new bridge across this brook along the Gore Mountain Trail. John committed the NEKGMC to a 50 percent contribution.

Mt Monadnock – Kevin Williamson e-mailed a Lemington Selectboard member on the Monadnock access problem. He has also contacted three of the primary landowners. To date, the effort has not produced results. One response would require extensive trail work and parking lot development.

Response has been discouraging. There are at least three landowners (maybe 4) who could provide access, including Clark Jeffers (owner of the gravel pit) and Peter Quayle. One landowner is willing, but trail building would be considerable for this option.

Taylor Series Event – March 12 via Zoom (National Parks)

NEK History Project – Andrea Kane reported the process is coming along well. She hopes for a first draft by late March.

GMC President Howard VanBenthuyzen – He thanked Cathi for her report. He informed the section that not only has the line of credit not been accessed but also that GMC is operating under is 7th consecutive balanced budget. GMC envisions funding 22 or 23 field projects this summer. The Main Club needs to hire 50 seasonal employees. He is looking forward to GMC's partnering with NWS on Camel Hump's Burroughs Trail. Howard awaits, with interest, the state engineering report on the structural condition of the tower on Mount Belvidere. He enjoyed his trip to the NEK meeting last October and recognizes the great activities of the NEKGMC.

Future Hikes:

Feb 5 - Perry Holbrook

Feb 7th – Wheeler Andrea

Feb 9th- Moose Paul

Gore John first Sunday in March

Gordon – Map and compass hike at date to be determined at NWS

Next Meeting – April 3 NWSC in Charlestown or the Burke Clubhouse in East Burke.

Submitted by Michael Jay Chernick, NEKGMC Secretary