

NEKGMC Annual Meeting, Burke Mountain Club, East Burke Vermont, April 7, 2024

NEKGMC President's Welcome – NEKGMC President John Predom welcomed the primarily in-person gathering at the Burke Mountain Club in East Burke. He spoke of the nice hike that had occurred in the morning prior to the meeting.

NEKGMC Award Presentation – As a special event at the start of the 2024 NEKGMC Annual Meeting, John Predom spoke of Cathi Brooks extraordinary service to and support of the NEKGMC and the Main Club, through her official roles as the NEKGMC's Treasurer, President, and since 2020 Section Director on the Main Club's Board of Directors. She has also served the NEKGMC as a Trail Adopter on Burke Mountain and as a Main Club committee member, serving on the Camps and Trails Management Committees. In recognition of her two decades as an essential NEKGMC member and leader, John, on behalf of the section, presented Cathi with an NEKGMC Volunteer Award, in the form of a beautiful 3D trail illustrated art work. Cathi was surprised and especially appreciative of this well-deserved honor. Her memorable comment was "so cool." Kevin Williamson asked Cathi if she had worked on the Monadnock Tower project in 2004. She responded that although she had hiked Monadnock early on that her first NEKGMC work experience was at Moose Mountain. John also mentioned Cathi's pivotal leadership in organizing the Main Club's Annual Meeting at the now Vermont State University's Lyndon campus in the mid 20 teens.

Secretary's Report – NEKGMC Secretary Michael Chernick reviewed highlights from the January 2024 meeting, held at NorthWoods Stewardship Center in East Charleston, Vermont.

MOTION to Approve the Secretary's Minutes as presented [Brooks/Caamano]
Approved unanimously

Treasurer's Report – In the absence of NEKGMC Treasurer Angela Smith, John Predom summarized highlights of the report. The submitted report is as follows:

Northeast Kingdom Section ~ Green Mountain Club Quarterly Financial Statement – As of April 4, 2024

Operating Account

Beginning Balance (as of 1/17/24) \$4,663.29

Income

Dues Sharing

Dec (posted 01/22/24) \$407.50

Jan (posted 03/14/24) \$156.25

Feb (posted 03/18/24) \$78.75

Cash Deposit (Sweatshirts) \$180.00

Expenses

Treeline Terrain \$284.08

Kingdom Embroidery \$216.30

GMC Donation (in memory of Karen Guest) \$250.00

Ending Balance \$4,735.41

Certificate of Deposit

CD#1....4489/Matures 01/12/2025 @.40% \$1,605.69

Grand Total All Monies \$6,666.48

Angela Smith ~ Treasurer

The membership discussed the extremely low rate of return on the two CDs and the need to find better returning alternatives when each is due for renewal.

Main Club Director's Report – NEKGMC Director Cathi Brooks reported on recent Main Club activities.:

As of the February 2024 Main Club Financial Report, revenue totaled \$1.93 million, 116 percent of the last fiscal year's budget (Note: GMC's fiscal year runs from May 1-April 30). Membership revenue stood at \$207,000.00, 69 percent of the budgeted amount, membership is in decline and the Main Club is examining ways to retain more renewals, on the other hand, non-membership contributions stood at \$793,000.00 or 123 percent of the prior fiscal year. Non-membership revenue has been a more reliable resource than renewals. The important fee for service income was \$458,000.00 or 118 percent of last year's. At 84 percent of the budgeted amount, this lower figure reflects the inclement weather of summer 2023, including the ramifications of the July 2023 flood. Total expenditures of \$2.26 million were 89 percent of the annual budget and 98 percent compared to last year. The endowment's value was \$7.4 million. The fiscal year's line of credit, which the Main Club enters-into, in order to meet immediate expenses, was paid back in December 2023.

The other primary financial development is the disbursement of the \$910,000 Wissman Bequest. \$500,000 was deposited into the Endowment. \$310,000.00 was temporarily set aside for a high priority purpose, and \$90,000 was allocated to operating expenses per GMC policy. At the March Main Club Board meeting, the Board voted to allocate the \$310,000 to construction costs for the new Herrick Building (Visitor's Center). Originally budgeted at \$1 million, the construction cost has now risen to \$1.4-\$1.5 million due to inflation, design changes (adding an insulated panel system for exterior walls and the roof), and the extended timeframe attributed to 2023 flood related delays, causing the contractor's availability to be limited. Despite these temporary setbacks, the project is now moving forward. The old structure was demolished in 2023, and construction on the new building began in March 2024. The Main Club is hoping for major forward progress in the coming months.

Other Main Club developments of importance include progress on developing a Mt Mansfield – MT Worcester Trail, the rolling out of a new code of conduct covering staff and volunteers, updating the chainsaw use policy, and for the NEKGMC's immediate concern examining the Kingdom Trail's management prior to the next renewal of the hiking corridor manager agreement with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

Also, the work proceeds on constructing the new Bromley Tower. Since December 2023, 13 new trail adopters have started volunteering for the GMC.

The new Jean Haigh Cabin is receiving rave reviews. The most recent rental capacity figure for both Wheeler cabins was 89 percent. Dedication of the Jean Haigh Cabin is scheduled for Saturday June 1 (National Trails Day). Major repairs to the Hadsel Mares Cabin are now scheduled for 2025. GMC has been continuing work on land conservation around the Long Trail Johnson. Land in Duxbury, which is not needed for the Long Trail, is being sold to the State of Vermont. GMC is also working on a Camel's Hump State Park parcel transfer to the State.

Nominations & Elections 2024-25

The following slate of officers was proposed for election to serve during the 2024-2025 year.

President – John Predom
Vice President – Paul Trojano
Treasurer – Angela Smith
Secretary- Michael Chernick
Director – Cathi Brooks*

MOTION Approved Slate Sec [Caamano/Winsor]

*New Director – NEKGMC Director Cathi Brooks was elected with the understanding that she may possibly move out of state later in the year. A motion was adopted authorizing the Executive Committee to appoint an interim successor (if necessary) and providing that the membership ratify that appointment at the subsequent quarterly meeting.

Approved unanimously.

KHT Ramble – The KHT Ramble is scheduled for Aug 10. Jesse Holden is in charge. The course of this running race extends from the foot of Gore Mountain at Lewis Pond to Bluff Ridge in Island Pond. Participation is capped at 100 runners. The race organizers are responsible for any damage and liability coverage.

Forests, Parks and Recreation 2024 Trail Work Projects – In the absence of Luke O'Brien, (the Department's regional recreation specialist) John Predom presented Luke's report on planned 2024 department trail activities. Note, no work on the Kingdom Heritage Trail is planned for this year. The highlights include Bald Mountain Fire Tower (volunteers needed) and moldering toilets at Golden Road Shelter and Burke Shelter. The crew from Northwoods will spend 3 weeks on the Burke Mountain Red Trail and one week on either the Long Pond Trail at Bald Mountain or at Black Mountain on the Approach Trail. NEKGMC will participate on the Bald Mountain Fire Tower project.

NEKGMC Annual Financial Donations – The membership unanimously approved the donation of \$500.00 to NorthWoods Stewardship Center, for trail related work; \$100.00 to the Burke Mountain Club, as payment for use of its facilities for section meetings, and with one negative vote \$100.00 to Front Porch Forum, as the section has availed itself of this digital information service.

Upcoming Events –

April 28 – (9:00 A.M.) Trail Work on Cow Mountain (meet at the Burke Mountain Club)

May 11 – Hike to the East Haven Mountain Cabin (the cabin has been reserved)

May 19 – Map and Compass Training – Gordon DuBois is leading this program, Although currently filled, openings may occur.

June 1 – Dedication of the Jean Haig Cabin at Wheeler Pond

June – Steve Farrow will lead a Mt Haystack trip

June 22 or June 29 – Possible dates for the Brighton Trail Days should NEKGMC decide to organize this event. It would involve multiple hikes. We would need to work with the Brighton Recreation Department, the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Silvio Conte Refuge. John Predom and Sue Winsor agreed to serve as the coordinators (should the event proceed forward).

August – Steve Farrow offered to lead a destination to be determined hike in Holland.

August – Long Trail Day (assuming the event is occurring) possibly Route 242 to Route 58

September – Westmore Challenge with the NEKGMC serving as a partnering organization with official duties staffing a break station

October 12-13 – Wood stacking weekend at Wheeler Pond.

Suggested ideas for other trips – Mooseway in Pondicherry NH (winter trail), Pisgah East, Brighton State Park, Turtle Pond, Gore Summit.Owl’s Head (Quebec)

Trail Adopters – NEKGMC Trail Adoption Coordinator Kevin Williamson reported that only the Moose Bog and Accessible Trail at Victory’s Crossing are available for a new adopter.

NEKGMC Membership Update – NEKGMC Membership Coordinator Linda Caamano reported a total section membership of approximately 180. Linda hopes to be more effective at staging promotional events. There was discussion of scheduling another Meet & Greet gathering. The NEKGMC still has a credit with Parker Pie in West Glover. The possibility of a Perry Holbrook membership event in early June or at Greensboro’s Barr Hill was mentioned.

Volunteer Appreciation Day – Conducting an NEKGMC Volunteer Appreciation Day has previously been proposed but has not actually happened. Scheduling a joint event for this purpose in conjunction with the Northern Frontier Section was a suggested option. No final decision was made on this score.

History Project – In Andrea Kane’s absence, no updated report was submitted on this endeavor, which remains a work in progress.

Wilderness First Aid Training – There are several NEKGMC members ready for Recertification. The options of either teaming with NorthWoods or continuing with TrainNEK were both discussed.

NEKGMC Sweatshirts-Tee Shirt Sales – Cathi Brooks is overseeing this project.

GMC 114th Annual Meeting – This vent will be held onSaturday June 15 at Main Club headquarters in Waterbury.

Next Meeting – The next NEKGMC meeting was tentatively scheduled for Sunday July 14, 2024 at Lenny’s camp in Holland. Cathi will be in touch with Lenny to confirm his and the camp’s availability.

Adjournment– The NEKGMC Annual Meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:25 P.M.