

Pittsfield State Forest Planning Unit 5-4-11 Public Meeting Comment Notes

Will the RMP address the different planning unit properties separately?

DCR: Yes

Will Existing Conditions section of the RMP describe existing uses?

DCR: Yes

Want plan to acknowledge and recognize current snowmobile network and hope that plan provides opportunities to identify linkages for snowmobile network.

Will a single forest or park be separated into different Landscape Designations?

DCR: Mention upcoming meetings, and noted that some properties will have more than one Landscape Designation

Planning Units: Concerned about term units, want to make sure that the same attention to detail will be given to each property.

DCR: Yes the plan will address each satellite with adequate detail.

Central Berkshire Mgt Plan is planning for major increase in logging.

Reserve Status (Forest Futures Visioning Process), trails on reserves can't be altered or new trails built without red tape process. If an area is designated as a Reserve, need to be able to fix trail system without bureaucracy.

PSF user, 5 days week, care about it deeply, care about sustainability, want to replace bad trails, want to create great opportunities, want to make a mountain biking destination, many fall line trails that are unusable. Berkshire NEMBA Trial Plan. Hope to work with them. Stakeholders should be involved in assessment. Need a group of users to contribute to trail plan.

- Like to see easier process to create new trails.

- Like to see motorized use stay on motorized use trails, needs to be made sustainable.

Echo concerns about trail degradation on Skyline trail. Support the PSF. There are ways that different groups can coexist with right plan. Need to see more sustainable non-motorized single track trails.

President of Berkshire NEMBA. Large group of volunteers. Recently started an adopt a trail program, half-dozen people signed up to adopt. Large number of mountain bikers in the room "can we raise our hands?" Many trails, such as Skyline, have been degraded by motorized use. Desire to fix up many trails. Many of us have gone to trail school. Have Berkshire NEMBA draft trail master plan to share. Looking forward to working with trail planning process.

User of PSF. Represent the non-PC, motorized users. Want to point out that that motorized use has been squeezed into fewer miles. Need more motorized trails not fewer. Motorized groups have helped maintain trails. Still willing to help.

Is the mandate for planning new? Is there an existing plan? So this has been 8 years and we don't have a plan yet? But money does not exist? So you are developing a plan, but can't implement.

DCR: It will be a challenge, but we need to have a plan to move forward.

You are spending \$50K to maintain Ashuwillticook, and you are not spending that on entire West Region trail system.

Berkshire NEMBA, built Turner Trail and cost state nothing. No offense, but ATV use is not sustainable and ATV community should pay for sustainable trails. I don't think my tax dollars should pay.

Uses you might not know about, hockey game on pond, yoga class in amphitheater, married there, run, dog-walking, snow seekers grooming, skiing.
Straighten out situation with CT. Balance Rock SP parking lot has NJ, CT, NY license plates. Looks like Mad Max parking lot – very rough shape.

Draft volunteer policy - I hope you have all commented on it. It has some real problems because it will affect the way you do business. There is now a dedicated fund for OHV fund. 75% of fines go into fund. A portion of funds are guaranteed to be used on trails. DCR conducted a permitting survey to track who comes in. Suggestion to charge out-of-staters a higher fee.

Could you use Forestry – logging roads - to build sustainable ATV trails.

What discretion does DCR have to set fees or fine?

DCR: We have a process with MA Admin and Finance.

Encourage you to talk to neighbors and conservation groups. Work with other groups - plans for trail connections and identify where people don't want connections.

Think about seasonal closures for all users to protect trails.

Groups should look into partnership grants.

Will anyone talk about forestry?

Enforcement is my concern. Like to see some way for concerned users and neighbors to be involved in enforcement in some way, volunteer, park watch, trail watch, someone to call to work on enforcement. Citizen eyes, etc.

DCR: If you get registration number or photo we can follow up

Make up brochure or signs.

Recently called to ask about West St gate, was told it would remain locked. I do not agree with that. Let people drive into the field. The gate is keeping the public out of the park. What is the reason? Give us a place to park. What happens during deer season? Not fair to punish legal users. Just want parking access.

Opposing opinions:

Why have the gates not been closed? Trucks and trash have entered.

Support expressed for maintaining gate closure at West St.

Concerns about West St gate blocking town road access. The road has not been abandoned.

DCR: We have letters from the City and Town giving the OK for gates.

ATV community spent \$16K on gates in Balance Rock SP, Combination of Recreational Trails Program and club money. We have also paid for dumpsters at Balance Rock.

DCR: Ditches were dug by local property owners.

I agree with everything that is said. Emotional ties to trails. Heartstrings are pulled if I think that we might not be able to use some trails for what we want to. NEMBA started weekly non-skilled mountain bike program. Many have an emotional ties.

Abutter and non-motorized user. Nurse. Wellness. Running team to run in woods. I would like to see Balance Rock addressed. Mad Max syndrome. I don't bring runners to Balance Rock any more. It is scary. Need to teach kids respect for land and themselves. Plan needs to address environmental education.

I visit Balance Rock daily. It is pathetic. Should close gate. It's embarrassing.

DCR team should do a walk through with stakeholders of trail system and conduct cooperative trails assessment.

I have never carried a couch on my bike (dirt bike riders are not guilty of illegal dumping). I don't ride here because there are laws against us. I've never see a hiker maintaining trails. Motorized users clear trails. We don't have anywhere lawful to ride in MA. We pay registration fee. Need to spread out trails and use.

We need to work together. We can't sit in the same room and argue. We will volunteer our time.

People are afraid of what we might be told that we can or cannot do on these trails. Enforcement has to happen at some level. What will happen while we are involved in the planning process?

Coexisting logging and ATV trails is possible, but logging can also damage or close trails.