

MINUTES OF A DELEGATES' MEETING
of the
NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE

June 14, 2009

1. Bob Boysen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. at Teatown Lake Reservation in Ossining, New York. He thanked Teatown Lake Reservation and its Executive Director, Fred Koontz, for making the Carriage House at Teatown available to the Trail Conference for this meeting.
2. Minutes. The minutes of the February 24, 2009 Delegates' meeting were approved as submitted.
3. Financial Report. In the absence of Mac Hight, Treasurer, Ed Goodell presented a report that Mac Hight had prepared, as follows:

May was a slow month, with total income of \$77,000 and negative cash flow of \$35,000. However, this was better than we had forecast, thanks to a generous donation from a Board member and high levels of income from membership and publications.

Expenses were higher than usual, due to the payment of approximately \$24,000 for our Strategic Consultant. However, overall expenses continue to be well-controlled and are running below budgeted levels. We recorded a \$17,000 gain on our investments, reversing a portion of our losses in earlier months.

For the eight months of the fiscal year to date (October to May), we showed a negative cash flow of \$242,000 (which would have been shown as a \$187,000 loss on the accrual basis). Our total cash and investments stand at \$359,000, which is \$18,000 lower than last month, but higher than had been previously forecast.

The Administrative Committee met on June 9th and reviewed a cash flow forecast for the remaining four months of the fiscal year. The forecast is that we will be "cash flow neutral" for the remaining four months, which means that we will not have to liquidate any of our investments. This forecast is heavily dependent on our completing various contracts, which are projected to bring in \$240,000 in income over these four months. The Administrative Committee also agreed to various actions regarding staffing, including eliminating the furloughs that had previously been implemented.

Several delegates requested copies of Mac Highet's written report, and Fred Koontz agreed to make copies of the report for them.

4. Report of Executive Director. Ed Goodell reported that individual contributions to the Trail Conference are down 60% from a year ago. He explained that we have the same number of donors, but the average contribution has declined from \$80 to \$40 (he stated that, during the previous year, the average contribution was \$130). Ed Goodell commented that this indicates that our members are sticking with us during the economic downturn and that we can hope that, as the economy recovers, our donors will be able to increase their contributions to their previous levels. He noted that these figures represent unrestricted contributions that are used to pay for the staff which supports the volunteers, and he stated that only in the East Hudson area have we been able to obtain support for a regional representative who directly supports volunteers.

Ed Goodell commented that we are also experiencing problems with our cash flow, which can be attributed largely to the fact that the State of New York has not yet acquired from us certain trail lands which we had anticipated they would purchase for \$2 million over a year ago. He explained that money has been appropriated to purchase these lands, but it appears that the State will not be able to come up with the funds to acquire the land until next spring. Thus, he stated, the only option for us to realize funds from these lands at the present time is to find a conservation buyer who would take the properties off of our hands, and that we have been unable to find such a buyer to date.

Ed Goodell stated that we have been making every effort to cut costs, and to do so, we eliminated as of March 1st five of 15 staff positions and put the remaining staff on a 10% furlough. He stated that we now believe that we can eliminate this furlough, but in order to obtain reimbursement for projects funded through grants, we need the staff to focus on completing these projects, which will result in cuts in volunteer support.

Notwithstanding all of the above, Ed Goodell commented, volunteers and volunteer interest have increased, and the number of miles of trails maintained by the Trail Conference has increased. He also pointed out that we run monthly volunteer orientations and that we have recently launched a new website, which is set up to provide information to people who want to go on hikes, and incorporates the Hikes of the Week prepared by Daniel Chazin.

Ed Goodell reported that the Bear Mountain project is moving forward. He stated that we have received a \$150,000 grant from the New York State Recreational

Trails program, as well as an additional \$120,000 grant for an accessible trail at the summit of Bear Mountain. He stated that Gail Neffinger is the chair of the volunteer committee that supervises this project. Ed Goodell stated that we intend to open the first section of the new trail up Bear Mountain this fall, and he stated that this trail section is an incredible piece of engineering. He also noted that several thousand volunteer hours have already been booked this year on the Bear Mountain project.

Ed Goodell also reported that we are moving ahead on digitizing all of our maps, which speeds up the revision process tremendously. He announced that copies of the new digital Kittatinny Trails map set arrived in the office this past Friday, and he pointed out that this new map set includes trails in Pennsylvania and several features of interest to canoeists along the Delaware River. In addition, he pointed out, a new edition of the North Jersey Trails map set is now available. He stated that we are now working on revisions to the Hudson Palisades Trails and West Hudson Trails map sets, and he requested that anyone who knows of any changes to these map sets should notify Daniel Chazin. Finally, Ed Goodell noted that the *Walkable Westchester* book by Jane and Walt Daniels has gotten rave reviews, and he thanked Jane and Walt for their extensive work on the book.

5. Strategy Development Report. Bob Boysen reported that the Trail Conference has received a restricted anonymous grant designated for strategy development, and he noted that we engaged Conservation Impact, an experienced consultant, to guide us in this process. He explained that a steering committee, with Mac Hightet as chair, was formed, and that the consultant conducted a situation/positioning analysis, which included interviews and other data gathering. This was followed by a two-day Board retreat at Black Rock Forest, with resulted in a basic strategic direction outline, including a greater focus on trails, which is what we do best, ongoing organization changes, and improved integration of paid and unpaid staff.

Bob Boysen explained that the five goals to be achieved by 2012 include volunteers, trails, marketing, fundraising and organization. He stated that we have formed ad hoc task groups to develop objectives that will support the goals, and that we will be formulating three-year and one-year goals. Bob Boysen stated that the objectives include a greater focus by the Board on strategic issues, with all program activities reporting to the Executive Director, and with the Board Chair having an enhanced role in the management of the Executive Director. Finally, Bob Boysen stated that a temporary joint leadership team has been formed to assist the Executive Director in the transition to the new system.

6. New Member Clubs. Josh Howard reported that the following two groups have applied for membership in the Trail Conference:

a. Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee. Eileen Sassman, Secretary of Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee, explained that this group (which includes three municipalities and several non-profit groups) maintains a figure-eight trail around Wappinger Lake and Wappinger Creek in the village of Wappingers Falls, New York. She noted that the trail was a vision of Frances Reese and businessman Hank DeMarco, and that it includes both off-road sections and roadwalking and also passes a number of historic sites. She also noted that the committee has completed a trail section that passes by old textile mills adjacent to the village, and she pointed out that the Trail Conference, through Eddie Walsh, helped construct steps leading from the village to the main trail. She stated that the trail is about 10 miles long and is currently being maintained mainly by three or four volunteers.

Ed Goodell commented that he has known this group for a number of years, that they have dealt with a number of important issues, and we can learn a great deal from them.

b. Friends of Angle Fly Preserve. Christie Ferguson explained that Friends of Angle Fly Preserve has received a grant to build ten miles of trails in this 654-acre preserve, managed by the Somers Land Trust, and is looking for our assistance in creating these trails. She noted that the Town of Somers has plans to build a community center on one portion of the property. Christie Ferguson pointed out that over 50 people attended one of the Friends' outreach events, and she stated that she was not certain why a representative of this group was not present at the meeting today.

Jane Daniels moved that the application of both groups for Trail Conference membership be approved. This motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

7. New Board Member. Jane Daniels reported that a vacancy was created on the Board when Win Perry resigned to become the architect for the renovation of the Darlington Schoolhouse, and that Bill Gannett was nominated to fill this vacancy. She also noted that Bill's appointment was approved by the Board. She pointed out that Bill Gannett is a lawyer who lives in Hastings, New York, works in New York City, and is very interested in hiking. It was moved, seconded and unanimously carried that the appointment of Bill Gannett to the Trail Conference Board of Directors be ratified by the Delegates.

8. Insurance Program for Member Clubs. Don Pachner reported that the

insurance program for member clubs is running well and there is currently no requirement that hike leaders be trained in CPR or First Aid. He pointed out that the insurance has recently been switched from Lloyds of London to One Beacon, and he explained that all renewed or new policies will be with this company, which is a larger, mid-size company that should serve our interests well.

9. Presentation by Fred Koontz. Ed Goodell introduced Fred Koontz, Director of Teatown Reservation. Fred Koontz presented a slide show that discussed the importance of biodiversity for building healthy, sustainable communities, and the need to connect people to their environment at local levels.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel D. Chazin
Secretary

ATTENDANCE:

Ralph Balfoort	- Paddling Bares Canoe Club
Francis Barresi	- Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee
Dave Bertollo	- Delegate-at-Large
Bob Boysen	- Board Chair
Daniel D. Chazin	- Board Secretary
David Lee Chong	- New York Alpine Club
Joonah Lee Chong	- New York Alpine Club
Kathy Lee Chong	- New York Alpine Club
Hank Chung	- New York Alpine Club
Chris Connolly	- Board Member
Jane Daniels	- Board Member
Walt Daniels	- Chair, Technology Committee
Salley Decker	- ADK - Mid-Hudson Chapter
Christie Ferguson	- East Hudson Reg. Rep./Mountain Skills Climbing Guides
Bill Gannett	- Board Member
Catherine Gemmell - Volunteer Coordinator	
Dennis Gin	- New York Ramblers
Ed Goodell	- Executive Director
Josie Gray	- Board Member
Gary Haugland	- Chair, Highlands Trail - East of Hudson

Jill Hamell	- Delegate-at-Large
Jenny Hezel	- Development Associate
Dennis Hillend	- Sundance
Gaylord Holmes	- Individual Member
Josh Howard	- Deputy Executive Director
Fred Koontz	- Teatown Lake Reservation
Lou Leonidis	- Individual Member
John Mack	- West Hudson South Trails Chair
Bob Marshall	- Individual Member
Patricia O'Malley	- Urban Trail Conference
Gail Neffinger	- Chair, Orange-Rockland A.T. Management Committee
Donald Pachner	- Sierra Club, Lower Hudson Group
Fran Pesch	- ADK - Mohican Chapter
Eileen Sassman	- Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee
Victor Scelzo	- Urban Trail Conference
Trudy Schneider	- Delegate-at-Large
Louise Schwabe	- Thendara Mountain Club
Mary Smart	- Board Member
Dan Van Engel	- Board Member
Larry Wheelock	- West Hudson Regional Representative