

MAINE DIVISION PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS (DPPL)

Department of Conservation

22 State House Station - Augusta, Maine 04333-0022

MEETING NOTES

**CENTRAL PENOBCOT REGION (CPR) MANAGEMENT PLAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AC) MEETING**

Dover-Foxcroft, Maine

June 19, 2013

1:00 – 3:00 PM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND THE INTERESTED PUBLIC PRESENT

Don Hibbs, Nahmakanta Lake Camps Wayne Dillon, Gunsmoke Lodge Eliza Donoghue, Nat. Resource Council of Maine	Brett Gerrish, Prentiss and Carlisle Rich Smith, Pleasant River Jack Hofbauer, Black Pond camp owner
--	--

DPPL STAFF PRESENT

Jim Vogel, Management Plan Coordinator Kathy Eickenberg, Chief of Planning Chuck Simpson, Lands Manager Eastern Region	Jay Hall, Forester - Nahmakanta Unit Scott Ramsey, ORV Program Supervisor
--	--

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made by members of the Committee and DPPL staff, followed by a brief statement of the meeting's objectives and goals (i.e., to learn about and discuss a DPPL Eastern Region proposal to modify the road system at Nahmakanta to facilitate timber management) by the Plan Coordinator. Attendees were asked to hold questions and comments until Chuck Simpson had completed his presentation of the proposal. A map depicting the proposed road system changes was distributed.

ROADS PROPOSAL

Chuck Simpson spent about 30 minutes providing an overview of the roads proposal. Chuck described how, with this proposal, the Black Pond Road would be linked to the Prentiss and Carlisle managed lands to the north (work planned for this season) and would also be linked to Wadleigh Pond Road by extending the existing management road eastward and upgrading the remaining ~ 0.5 mile of ATV/snowmobile trail to a management road. The existing bridge at the Wadleigh Pond outlet would be replaced by one designed to handle loaded trucks, and the existing 2/3 mile of road between the outlet and Wadleigh Pond Road would also be upgraded. The upgraded road would continue to be used as an ATV and snowmobile trail. The road across Prentiss and Carlisle managed lands to the north would be maintained as a public access road, providing a new means for the public to access the unit from the north.

Chuck provided background information related to the proposal, highlighting the timber management dominant resource allocation that has historically been applied to the majority of the Nahmakanta Unit outside the Ecological Reserve and that will apply in the new management plan. Also described was the amount of wood trucked out of the unit over the past decade and the haul routes within the unit used over those years, leading out to the Jo Mary Road, which extends south to Route 11. Future timber harvest

traffic would be about level: the allowable cut will be reduced from about 12,000 cords per year (cpy) to 8-9,000 cpy, but would be offset by Prentiss and Carlisle traffic passing through the unit.

Chuck outlined the primary potential benefits of the proposal. Savings in tolls paid to haul timber on Ki-Jo Mary Road, combined with higher stumpage fees made possible by the road changes would result in a \$35,000 net gain per year to the Division. However, this could be offset by tolls on the Golden Road. There would be a reduction in the number of trucks traveling on roads within the unit, and on both private and public roads outside the unit, including about 400 trucks per year diverted from the Ki-Jo Mary Road. These benefits would come from the ability to haul timber north, to the Golden Road, rather than to Route 11, and the ability to increase the size of haul loads that would be diverted from Route 11. Road safety benefits that may result from these new timber hauling arrangements were also mentioned. Chuck stated that the distance of roads that would need to be plowed for winter harvests would be greatly reduced, although 90% of cordage harvested in the unit has occurred during summer. (Timber work in the soft and wet ground of the two large winter deer yards within the unit would need to occur during winter.)

Several other potential benefits and adverse impacts of the proposal were also acknowledged by Chuck in his presentation. Regarding recreation benefits, replacement of the Wadleigh Pond outlet bridge would correct the problem of frequent flows across the road in front of the bridge, and better vehicle access could be provided to the northwest side of Wadleigh Pond, where a group camp is planned at the site of a former commercial camp. Regarding adverse impacts on recreation, the ATV and snowmobile trail would now be completely on management roads and shared with truck traffic. However, this shared road/trail situation was described as common on other Public Lands, and it was pointed out that alternative East/West routes across the unit are available (e.g., the Farrar Brook Road and Farrar Mountain trail). A drive-to campsite and hand-carry launch site along the Wadleigh Pond outlet road would also be affected by the widening and upgrading of that road, and could need to be relocated. Hikers using the in-development Great Circle Trail would cross the widened road when crossing between Pollywog Pond and Wadleigh Pond and could be adversely affected. Lastly, a private camp at the north end of Wadleigh Pond would be adversely affected by the widened road to be used to haul timber as the road passes quite close to the camp.

Regarding wildlife, it was explained that adverse impact on the area surrounding Black Pond Road that is allocated to Wildlife and to be managed for enhanced winter deer habitat could be minimized by narrowing the expanded road in areas where deer are likely to cross due to proximate suitable cover.

Regarding visual resources, road construction would need to take into account sight lines from distant elevated viewpoints, such as Wadleigh Mountain. However, the fact that the road runs across the line of sight from likely viewpoints, and is a couple of miles distant would reduce the potential visual impact.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

A committee member asked if the proposed road system changes would provide clear passage to and from the Golden Road. Chuck responded that the Prentiss and Carlisle road would be open to the public and would thus provide this passage, generally beginning on May 15 of each year, or earlier if conditions allow.

It was asked what gates would be provided on the Black Pond Road with the proposal to control vehicle traffic, particularly near Black Pond. It was explained that existing gates would be operated or gates would be installed to control vehicle access to management roads in the vicinity of Black Pond and to the management road between Black Pond Road and Farrar Brook Road.

It was asked what would be the expected winter use of the roads under the proposal. Chuck responded that Wadleigh Pond Road would be plowed perhaps once every 10 years for DPPL purposes. Prentiss and Carlisle would generally not conduct harvests on adjacent lands to the north or south in winter such that they would need to cross the Unit to reach Route 11 or the Golden Road.

A committee member asked what length of ATV/snowmobile trail would be upgraded. Chuck responded that the upgraded length would be about half a mile, from the end of the Black Pond Road (which is gradually being extended east along the trail route) to the Wadleigh Pond outlet. Combined with the widening and upgrading of the east end of the Black Pond Road and of the Wadleigh Pond outlet road, the total length of upgraded road/ORV trail would be 2+ miles.

A staff member commented that the Maine Natural Areas Program should be notified and consulted regarding the proposal given that some of the affected area was once within the area considered for inclusion in the Nahmakanta Ecological Reserve. (Jim Vogel will consult MNAP.)

A staff member commented that the consideration of the proposal needs to pay attention to visual resources, and that timber harvesting is a secondary but allowed use in Class I Visual Resource areas. It was clarified by other staff that under the current IRP the visual consideration areas are intended to function mainly as an overlay on other allocations. (Much of the area north of Wadleigh Pond is allocated to Remote Recreation in the Draft CPR Plan, due to the presence of the Great Circle Trail; this area would be treated as a Visual Class I area with an emphasis during timber management on minimizing disturbance to foreground views that may directly affect enjoyment of the viewer.)

It was asked if nighttime timber hauling traffic would occur, particularly on the Wadleigh Pond Road near existing campsites. It was explained in response that hauling often begins in the very early morning hours (as early as 1 AM) so that trucks could get their first load to the mill early in the day, and therefore nighttime traffic was likely.

A staff member offered the opinion that the most significant impacts would be to the north Wadleigh Pond drive-in campsite and to the private camp on north Wadleigh Pond, both of which are very near to the existing road. (It was also stated that the owner of the private camp no longer lives in Maine and the camp is currently lightly used).

A committee member asked what the cost to implement the bridge replacement at Wadleigh Pond outlet would be. Chuck provided an estimate of \$50,000, based on the cost of similar bridge projects in the Unit, and the use of steel beams already in hand.

Scott Ramsay, ORV Program supervisor, commented that the impact on ATV use would not be particularly significant although the character of the experience would change, with the conversion of the trail segment to management road and additional truck traffic in the proposal area. He stated that he considers the effect on snowmobile use to be a larger issue, as the intent of providing an alternative route to and traffic relief for ITS 85/86 would be negated when the Black Pond Road was in use for hauling timber in the winter. Scott also expressed the need to replace the federal RTP grant and ORV Program funds spent in recent years on the Black Pond ORV trail construction, if that trail were to be upgraded to a management road. Scott estimates that approximately \$70,000 of funding that would need to be replaced or compensated for with other ORV trail projects if this proposal were to be implemented.

A staff member commented that the decision on whether to implement this proposal would impact the LUPC development permit that is in progress, in regards to how development of a group campsite on Wadleigh Pond and a new water-access campsite on Pollywog Pond would be proposed.

Lastly, several attendees expressed concern with public safety at the Wadleigh Pond outlet bridge if the proposal were implemented. It was pointed out that the bridge is an attractive stopping place for recreation visitors, and the presence of people and their vehicles on the bridge or the road nearby would create a conflict with truck traffic. Exacerbating this potential hazard is the fact that the road approaching the bridge from the west would curve down a hill, reducing visibility of the bridge for truck drivers. It was commented that the western and eastern approaches to the bridge need to be designed so that truck driver are able to see the bridge well in advance and the speed of trucks would need to be carefully controlled. It was also commented that the greatest hazard may not be log trucks but the timber workers driving recklessly to and from jobsites.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Jim Vogel provided a brief discussion of revisions to the draft plan relating to the Murphy Pond Road resulting from the May 1 AC meeting. It was explained that the proposed seasonally operated gate to be installed just north of Pollywog Stream bridge has been dropped, but that the plan would recommend that old roads and skid trails connected to Murphy Pond Road be blocked. Bear bait sites near these roads would be relocated elsewhere in the unit while sites near Murphy Pond Road would remain. Don Hibbs expressed concern about losing winter use of the former Bean Brook Road (connected to Murphy Pond Road) as part of his commercial operation. Staff suggested that a special use permit could be issued to meet that need.

OTHER COMMENTS

The Plan Coordinator mentioned that the Division would work to integrate a discussion of the roads proposal, including the potential benefits and concerns about impacts if the proposal were to be implemented, in the Draft CPR Plan, and this would be available for public review at a public meeting to be scheduled later this summer.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:50 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Jim Vogel*