

**Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Bureau of Parks and Lands
Advisory Committee Meeting (#3) – Tumbledown-Mount Blue Region Management Plan
July 20, 2021, 5:30 to 7:00 pm
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

Meeting Notes

Advisory Committee Members participating:

Erica Dubois	Forest Society of Maine
Sarah Boyden	IF&W
Michelle Wynn	Tumbledown Conservation Alliance

Members of the Public participating:

Eliza Townsend	AMC Maine Policy Director
Mike Morin	The Access Fund NE Regional Director
Melanie Sturm	NRCM Forest and Wildlife Director
Mark Loughran	unaffiliated (abutter to Tumbledown lands)
Mike Field	unaffiliated
1 call-in participant (name not provided)	

BPL Staff participating:

Bill Patterson	Deputy Director
Liz Petruska	Director of Acquisitions and Planning
Bruce Farnham	Mount Blue State Park Manager
Elena Gonzalez	Environmental Steward, Mt. Blue/Tumbledown
Tim Post	Western Region Manager
Jim Vogel	Sr. Planner, Management Plan Coordinator

Other State of Maine staff:

Justin Schlawin	Ecologist, Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP)
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Background

This meeting was convened to review the Draft Tumbledown/Mt. Blue Region Management Plan. Electronic copies of the draft Plan were distributed to the Advisory Committee by email on June 16 and printed copies were mailed the next day. The committee was notified by email on July 6 of the date and time of the meeting. The meeting agenda (attached) was provided by email a few hours before the meeting.

The draft Plan is the result of the collaboration of BPL staff, the Advisory Committee (AC) and the general public beginning with the public scoping meeting held in January 2020 in Farmington. The first AC meeting was held in February 2020 in Weld; the purpose was to explain the public planning process, to describe the resources to be addressed in the plan, and to discuss and obtain input on management issues to be addressed. The committee met again in September 2020, via videoconference, to discuss potential management responses to the issue of camping at Tumbledown Pond.

Discussion Notes

After a welcome and introductions by BPL and MNAP staff, AC members, and other participants who wished to do so, Jim Vogel reviewed the purpose of the meeting, and the public planning process. As outlined in the agenda, the review and discussion focused on the vision statements, dominant resource allocations and management recommendations contained in the draft Plan. Jim shared a PowerPoint slide presentation on the screen to assist with the review and discussion. Opportunities for comments and questions was provided for each management unit, and participants were encouraged to ask questions/make comments at other points if needed.

Tumbledown Public Land

- Elena Gonzalez – reported to the group on her interactions with visitors at Tumbledown since the start of the summer season; in particular, Elena reported that many people she encountered did not know about the permanent camping closure that has been implemented, but understood the need for it due to the resource impacts occurring. Only a handful of people she has encountered were backpackers or had plans to camp.
- Eric Dubois – asked a question regarding the specifics of the management recommendation to coordinate on monitoring of nesting peregrine falcons with IF&W and confer regarding potential nest disturbance.
 - *Jim noted that the recommendations related to technical rock climbing and peregrine monitoring were developed with IF&W input and outlined in general terms the annual monitoring conducted by IF&W. IF&W Biologist Sarah Boyden provided additional specific details on the monitoring, noting that any potential disturbance of nests due to climbing activity would be brought to the attention of BPL.*
- Michelle Wynn – asked whether the management recommendation for restoration efforts near Tumbledown Pond would include blocking off some areas, and whether the shore area would be included in the restoration.
 - *Jim responded that the restoration could include blocking off some areas, to aid in natural recovery of impacted areas, ideally in a manner that minimizes the aesthetic impacts, and that some means to do so have been discussed among BPL staff, but that the details of that work have not been worked out. Jim also noted that MNAP would be consulted in planning the restoration work, and that BPL staff have begun researching methods used in other high-elevation environments.*
- Sarah Boyden – reported that IF&W has observed snowmobile traffic on Jackson Mountain during aerial surveys, and the potential resource impacts associated with that use, and asked if the Bureau was aware of that activity.
 - *Jim responded that he has not heard other reports of that activity during the plan development, and would consult with the ORV program about it. He also noted that the lease for the telecommunication facility on the summit allows access by ATV and may also allow snowmobile access [as stated on p. 26 of the plan], which may explain the observed activity.*

- Michelle Wynn – asked a question about the meaning of Visual Class II standards as mentioned in the recommendations for Timber Management, and specifically whether they would apply to the south slopes of Tumbledown as viewed from Webb Lake.
 - *Jim responded that the Visual Class II standards, as described in the Integrated Resource Policy (IRP), do include background views as seen from below (such as Tumbledown viewed from Webb Lake) as well as background views as seen from above (e.g., lower ground viewed from summits and ridgelines). Jim also referenced the Visual Consideration Areas allocation descriptions on page 34 of the draft plan for a description of those standards as applied to the Tumbledown Unit.*
- Bruce Farnham – In relation to the management recommendations for increasing on-site management presence at Tumbledown, Bruce commented on potential future staffing of the Recreation Ranger position at Tumbledown: Both the Parks and Lands divisions are committed to the position, and are discussing making the position permanent (rather than an “Acting” position requested to be filled each year). This would make the position more desirable to potential candidates in terms of benefits and seniority, helping with recruitment and retention. Also, a permanent position would allow the ranger to be involved in law enforcement training which would make them more effective in their current role on the mountain. In the future they will probably be able to write summonses which would alleviate some of the need to contract out other agencies.

Mount Blue State Park

- Erica Dubois – commented on the statewide backlog deferred capital improvements and repairs for parks and asked a question about what funding for capital improvements at MBSP might be available through federal stimulus monies.
 - *Jim responded that Director of Parks Operations and Maintenance Ron Hunt provided the information on the draft Plan (pages 49-50), including on the potential for Federal CARES Act appropriation. Jim also stated that the intent was to not go into detail on specific needs in the draft Plan, but Ron could provide more details in response to any inquiries.*
 - *Bill Patterson reported that Gov. Mills has just signed into law legislation that includes investment of \$50 million of the federal funds into State Parks, and that BPL is working on steps to take advantage of the availability of those funds, including adding two time-limited (temporary) engineering staff positions to assist with design and planning for capital improvements.*

Bald Mountain Lot

- Erica Dubois – commented that this popular local hiking destination did not attract much attention during the planning process, though the summit provides beautiful views of the region, and supported the recommendation to consider formalizing the portion of the unofficial trail on the lot through an agreement with the trail builder/maintainer and abutting landowners whose lands the trail also crosses.

- *Jim responded that the issues expressed during the planning process centered on the parking area along the state highway (not on BPL property), and that the proposed agreement might provide an opportunity to address those concerns.*

Other comments

- Erica Dubois commented on the limited historical information provided in the draft plan, particularly on the period before European settlement, and offered to share information that would allow a longer period of history to be outlined in the document.
 - *Jim responded that he would welcome that information for inclusion in the plan.*

Next Steps

Jim outline the next steps in the planning process, including a three-week period following the meeting during which committee members were welcome to call with additional comments or to submit comments in writing. Contact information was provided on the final slide and on the agenda. Final steps to be completed over the next few months include revising the draft as needed based on comments received, presenting the Final Draft Plan at a public meeting, and routing the Final Plan through the Director of BPL and the DACF Commissioner for approval and adoption.

Adjourned: 6:40 PM

Attachments:

1. Agenda