

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL)

**MEETING NOTES**

Seboomook Unit Advisory Committee Meeting  
Greenville High School Library  
February 25, 2009

**ATTENDEES:**

Advisory Committee Members

Kevin Bernier, Brookfield Power  
Bob Guethlen, Rockwood  
Diano Circo, Natural Resources Council of Maine  
Albro Cowperthwaite, North Maine Woods  
Jake Metzler, Forest Society of Maine  
Patrick Dorian, Maine Warden Service  
Russ Landry, Maine Forest Service  
Jennifer Mills, Historic Pittston Farm  
Will Harris, Director, BPL  
Kathy Eickenberg, Chief of Planning, BPL  
Peter Smith, Western Region Lands Manager, BPL  
Scott Ramsay, Director, Off-Road Vehicle Program, BPL  
Matt LaRoche, Manager, Penobscot River Corridor, BPL

Other Attendees

Wayne MacArthur, Greenville  
Ken Snowdon, Greenville Jct.  
Jonathan Pratt, Greenville Jct.  
Tom Wood, Greenville  
Diane Guethlen, Rockwood  
Stephen Coleman, Dennistown (NMW)  
Bruce Reed, Greenville  
Garfield Mills, Historic Pittston Farm  
Keven Cavanaugh, Jackman  
Sara Medina, Seven Islands (NMW)

**MEETING AGENDA**

- 5:30 Welcome, Introductions, Purpose of Meeting  
*Will Harris, Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands*
- 5:45 Review and Discussion of Proposed ATV Connector Alternatives  
and Bureau Recommendation *Kathy Eickenberg, Chief of Planning*
- 6:30 Trail Implementation Plans - *Brian Bronson, ATV Coordinator ORV*

- 6:45 Moving the 20- Mile gate – Impact on the Seboomook Unit,  
how it will work, and transition plans - *Kathy Eickenberg, BPL*  
*Albro Cowperthwaite, NMW*
- 7:00 Status of other Management Recommendations for the Seboomook Plan  
*Pete Smith – BPL Western Region Reserved Lands Manager*  
*Matt LaRoche – PRC Manager*
- 7:15 Questions, Discussion
- 7:30 Next Steps - *Kathy Eickenberg, BPL*

## MEETING NOTES:

**Purpose of the Meeting:** *Will Harris's remarks are summarized as follows:* The purpose of the meeting is to discuss with the Seboomook Unit Management Plan Advisory Committee how best to link the existing regional ATV Trail system into the Seboomook Unit and to Pittston Farm, as recommended in the Seboomook Unit Management Plan adopted in March of 2007.

The Management Plan recognized that opportunities for extended ATV touring in this region of Maine would be significantly enhanced by this connection. The opportunity for this extension comes as a result of a negotiated agreement between the Department and North Maine Woods to move the 20-Mile gate to the west side of the bridge over the South Branch River, just beyond the Bureau of Forestry station. The relocation is planned to be accomplished for the coming 2009 season.

Moving the 20-Mile gate will allow the Bureau of Parks and Lands to manage the Seboomook Unit for a number of uses that are not allowed within the NMW system, including horseback riding, bicycling, and ATV riding. In considering how best to accommodate an ATV connection to Pittston Farm, it is the intention of the Bureau to make this connection as directly as possible, and for the connection to serve as a multi-use trail. The trail should also be suitable for bicycling and horseback riding, and should co-locate with any existing snowmobile trails when possible.

This meeting will not be addressing planning for uses on the roads east of the Cut-Off Road at this time; we intend to have a separate meeting to consider that larger set of internal roads, after we have collected adequate data on the condition of these roads.

The Meeting Agenda does allocate some time to briefly explain how the NMW gate relocation will affect the Seboomook Unit, and how it will work.

We also will provide a brief update on the status of our efforts to address other management recommendations in the Plan, and to answer questions from the committee and other interested persons that are here tonight.

## **Review and Discussion of Proposed ATV Connector Alternatives, and the Bureau's Recommendation:**

Kathy Eickenberg began by noting various sections of the Seboomook Unit Management Plan that support having an ATV trail that would link Pittston Farm to a regional trail network through the Seboomook Unit. Also noted was that this trail connection would be designed as a multi-use trail so that bicycles, horses and ATV's could all use it.

Options that had been proposed by the Mills at Pittston Farm for locating an ATV trail through the Seboomook Unit to their establishment were reviewed with the Committee (see attached figures).

Kathy Eickenberg described the Bureau's analysis as follows:

- Option 2 was presented as the preferred trail since it follows existing roads and trails as much as possible and is the shortest route possible;
- Option 1, which would create a trail that paralleled the 20-Mile road on Bureau lands, would require more new trail than Option 2; and would not be an attractive option for ATVer's. The Plan specifically calls for providing a high quality back woods trail experience for all trails, both motorized and non-motorized.
- Option 3 was eliminated from consideration after discussion with Plum Creek – this route was not acceptable to them. In addition, it was viewed as problematic environmentally due proximity to and multiple crossings of streams;
- Option 4 was eliminated since it would pass within LURC remote pond protection zone prohibiting motorized uses except for snowmobiles.

Discussion of these options raised the following concerns related to the Bureau's preliminary choice of Option 2:

- Kevin Bernier expressed that Brookfield would have to review the route relative to their project lands in the vicinity of the Boat Launch near Pittston Farm. Use of the access road to that facility might present conflicts. He also expressed concern that the route would cross the causeway right before the boat access road, which is within Brookfield's project ownership, and requested we assess whether there was an alternate route that could avoid this causeway.
- Jennifer Mills noted that the boat launch is also used for swimming and picnicking.
- Bob Guethlen encourage the Bureau to look closely at the relative environmental issues of Options 1 and Option 2 before deciding on any option, and suggested there might be a route that combined sections of these two options into a better option.
- The issue of avoiding potential archaeological sites in siting and constructing the trail was raised.
- A suggestion was made to have a trail head for mountain bikers to access this trail somewhere on the Unit.

## **Trail Implementation Plans**

Brian Bronson explained that before any trail could be constructed, the Bureau will need to assess the possible routes on the ground, after the snow is gone, and while there are early spring wet conditions – so we can see potential problems areas and find the best route. He also stated that the trail will be constructed as soon as ground conditions permit, but that in any case the trail would not be open until the 20-Mile gate was relocated. The earliest time for that was expected to be mid-June. It was explained that the trail would be considered as a trial – that if the AYV community did not keep to the designated trail, it would be re-evaluated and possibly discontinued. The Bureau recognizes that there will be a learning curve as this new use is introduced to the Unit.

### **Moving the 20- Mile Gate**

#### **Impact on the Seboomook Unit, how it will work, and transition plans**

Albro Cowperthwaite of NMW explained the plan for relocating the 20-Mile gate. The current gate will be moved to the west side of the bridge over the South Branch, just past Pittston Farm. The DOC has agreed to convert the existing Maine Forest Service (MFS) station to serve as the residence of the new NMW 20-Mile Checkpoint. The Bureau will build a new MFS station on the Seboomook Unit near the Golden Road, off the Seboomook Dam road. Electronic gates will be installed at the Seboomook Dam Road, south of the Golden Road, and on the Burbank Road, just past the junction of the camp road that branches from the Burbank Road into the Little W portion of the Seboomook Unit (see Figure attached).

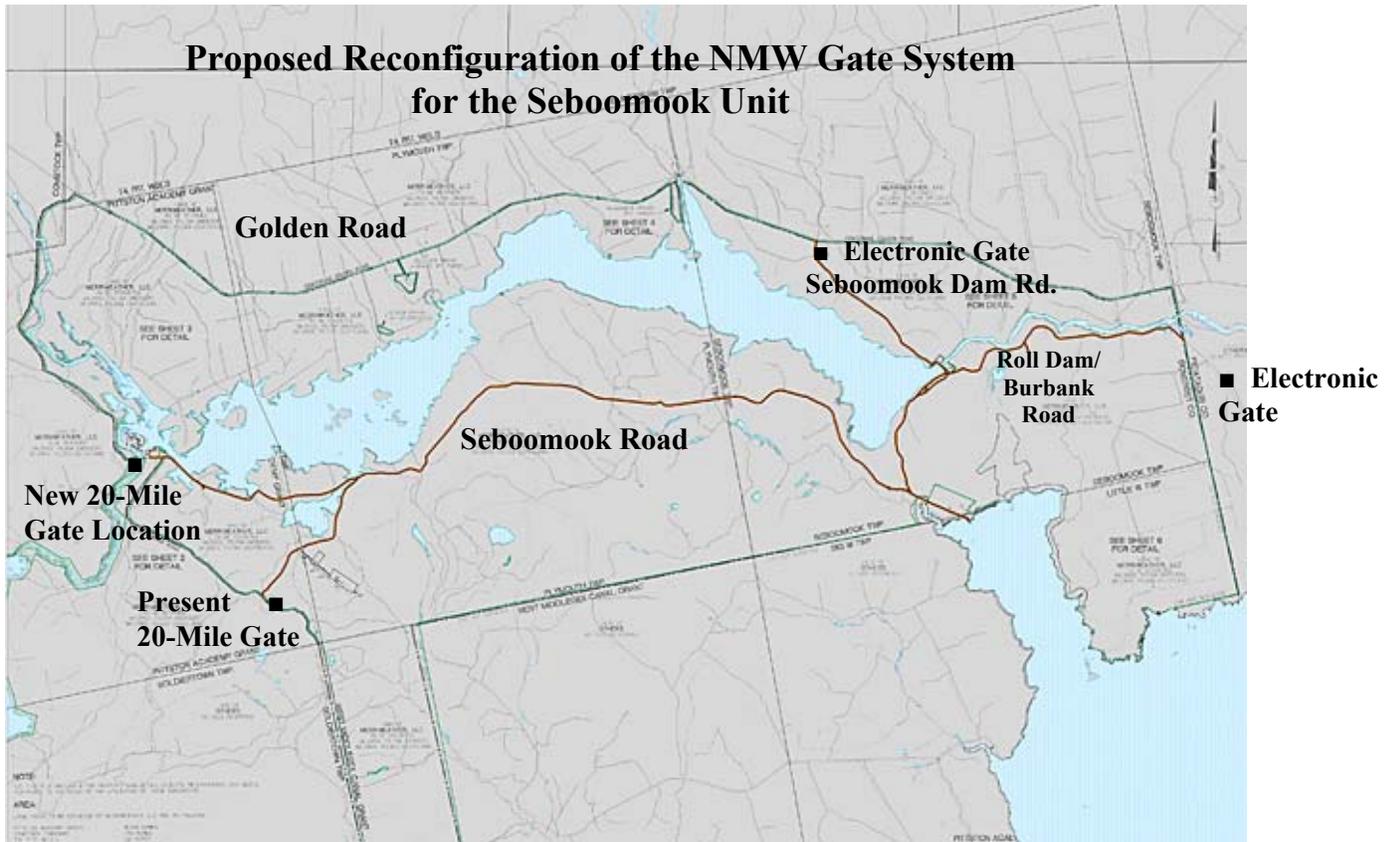
Albro Cowperthwaite explained that the electronic gates will be operated remotely from the 20-Mile and Caribou NMW Checkpoints. Visitors will need to obtain passes or pay fees at either of these gates before they can be given access through the electronic gates. If visitors come to the Seboomook Unit from Rockwood via the 20-Mile Road, there will be no gate or fee unless they intend to travel through the Unit and into the NMW system. The location of the relocated gate will require that day use fees continue to be paid for access to the State-owned Canada Falls lands and the South Branch whitewater boating put-in accessed from the Canada Falls Road.

In answer to a question about costs, the Bureau stated it would cost roughly \$250,000 to relocate the NMW gate and install two electronic gates; and build the ATV/multi-use spur trail.

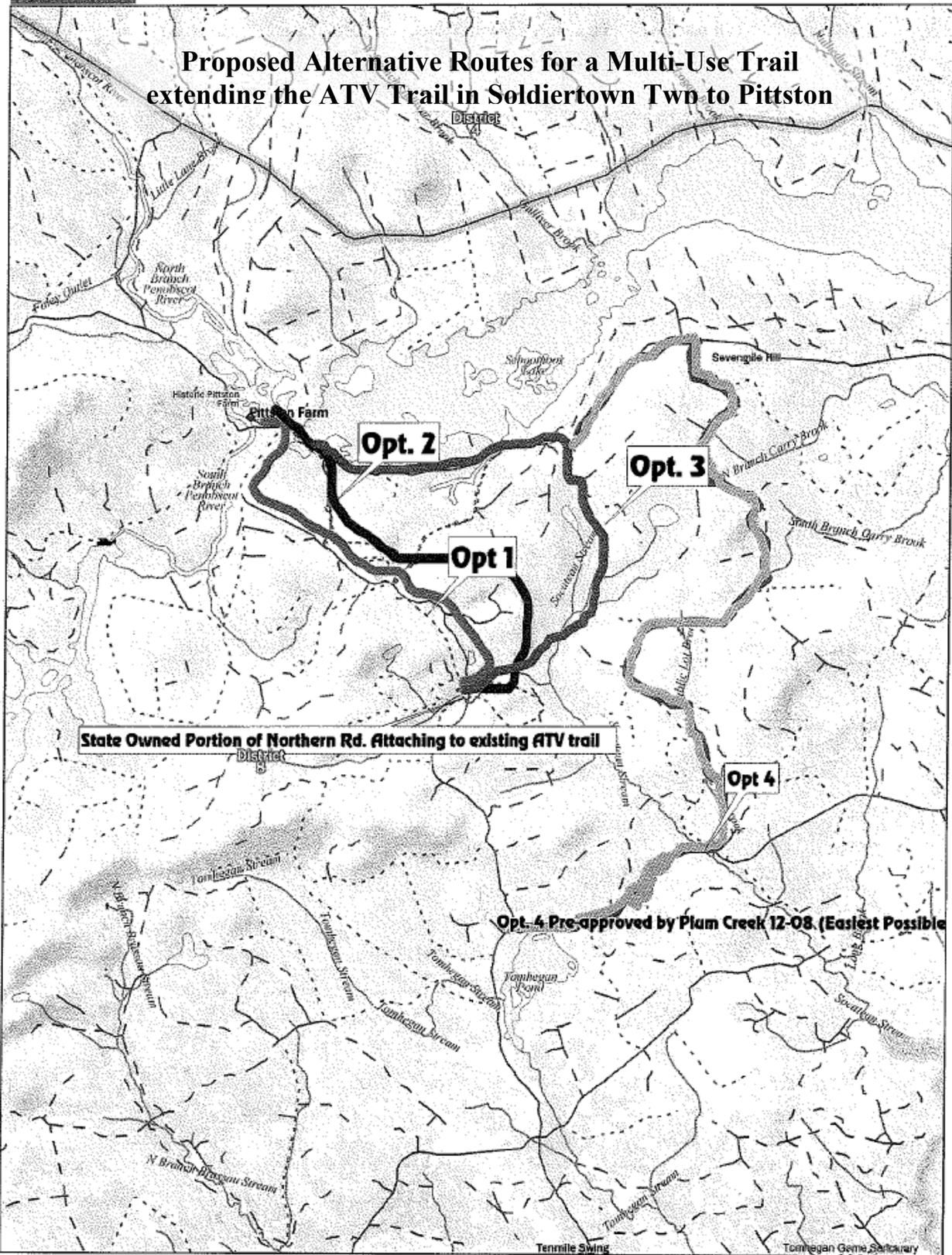
#### **Status of other Management Recommendations for the Seboomook Plan**

Pete Smith updated the group on actions taken to implement recommendations in the Seboomook Plan, including recommendations for relocating the snowmobile trail on Big Spencer Mountain. He reported that BPL Public Reserved Lands signage had been installed at the Seboomook Unit and at Big Spencer Mountain, and directional signs were installed on the access road from Kokadjo to Big Spencer Mountain. Also, on the Big Spencer Mountain parcel, there has been some work on the hiking trail and plans are to address the trail repairs or relocation of the trail as needed in the next year through work with the Maine Conservation Corps. The fire warden's cabin is scheduled to be removed this summer. On the Seboomook Unit, a walking trail was cut along the West Branch and the South Branch; and agreement was reached with

NMW to extend the Penobscot River Corridor (PRC) into the Unit with the PRC maintaining the campsites and PRC fees charged instead of NMW camping fees. The Bureau entered into an agreement with Brookfield Power to maintain Brookfield's sites at Canada Falls and Seboomook Dams; and with Merriweather LLC to maintain their campsites at Canada Falls, all as part of the PRC system. Finally, the Bureau approved a horse trail loop proposed by Pittston Farm at the west end of the Unit.



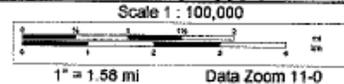
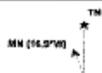
**Proposed Alternative Routes for a Multi-Use Trail  
extending the ATV Trail in Soldiertown Twp to Pittston**



**State Owned Portion of Northern Rd. Attaching to existing ATV trail**

**Opt. 4 Pre-approved by Plum Creek 12-08. (Easiest Possible)**

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**Location of Existing ATV Trail  
in relation to the Seboomook  
Unit**

