

**Meeting Summary**  
**High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group (HPAG)**  
Main Conference Room, DEC Region 5 Warrensburg  
11:00, Monday December 16, 2019

Attendees:

1. Joe Pete Wilson, Supervisor, Town of Keene
2. James McKenna, Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism
3. Rocci Acquire, Adirondack Council
4. Pete Nelson, Adirondack Wilderness Advocates
5. Dr. Jill Weiss, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
6. Charlie Wise, The Mountaineer
7. Seth Jones, Adirondack Mountain Club
8. Theresa Cheetham-Palen, Rock and River Guide Company
9. Sandi Allen, Retired DEC Counsel
10. Rick Weber, APA Deputy Director
11. Pat Barnes, DOT Region 1 Director
12. Chris Morris, OPHRP Statewide Trails Program Planner
13. Rob Davies, DEC Director of Division of Lands and Forests
14. Bob Stegemann, DEC Region 5 Director
15. Karyn Richards, DEC Special Assistant to the Commissioner (staff)
16. David Winchell, DEC Public Participation Specialist (staff)
17. Mary Roy, DEC Strategic Planning/Performance Management Office Director (facilitator)
18. Laura DiBetta, DEC, Director of Recreation
19. Peter Frank, DEC, Forest Preserve Bureau Chief

Absent:

1. Shaun Gilliland, Chair, Essex County Board of Supervisors
2. Mike Pratt, ORDA President and CEO

Goals for Managing Public Use in the High Peaks Region

- *Ensure public safety within communities, along roadways, at trailheads, and in interior areas*
- *Protect natural resources and recreation infrastructure*
- *Provide a quality recreation experience*
- *Supporting local economic vitality*
- *Make decisions based on science using the best available data*

Charge for the HPAG

*Undertake a collaborative process to provide a strategic framework to address public use in the High Peaks Region of the Adirondack Park which will:*

- *Include short, medium and long-term recommendations (strategies, actions and tactics) to achieve the goals of the initiative*
- *Incorporate, expand, and/or modify recommendations made to date*
- *Identify additional data necessary to inform the HPAG recommendations*
- *Identify priorities for the implementation of recommendations*

I. Goals for HPAG Meeting (#2)

- a. Identify efforts underway which are addressing public use in the High Peaks region:
  - DEC exploring options for establishing dedicated Trail Crews
  - Pilot shuttle program being explored
  - Route 73 Transit Study is being developed
  - DEC and APA interagency staff team is drafting Wildlands Monitoring Guidance, based on VUM framework
  - DEC is working with partner organizations to develop consistent messaging for the Adirondacks for all communication media.
- b. Review materials summarizing discussions on this topic that have been held to date.
  - DEC Recommendations: 18 Strategies and Associated Actions for Managing Public Use in the High Peaks Region of the Adirondack Park
  - 2019 High Peaks – Route 73 Stakeholder Meeting Summary
- c. Identify Data Needs
- d. Identify HPAG members initial priority actions needed to address goals

I. Data Needs: Initial Discussion

- a. Some Existing Data Sources
  - i. Trailhead Registries
  - ii. Summit Stewards Report
  - iii. Adirondack Council Survey Results
- b. Potential Data Needs
  - i. Number of users
  - ii. Motivation of users
  - iii. Where and how users are getting information
  - iv. What is the expected experience
  - v. Where users stay

II. INITIAL Ideas for Priority Actions to Address Goals

- a. Improve partnerships and capacity for sustainable trail work
- b. Improve education and dissemination of information, including reaching users before they arrive
- c. Take steps to maintain wilderness and wilderness experience and diversify hiker experience
- d. Improve parking and public safety
- e. Pilot a shuttle system

- f. Consider differences in users and user groups
- g. Address needs based on short-term (triage) and long-term as well as seasonality of visitor volume, with iterative process for the future
- h. Consider community quality, character and economics

III. 2020 Interim Target Dates for Preliminary and Draft Products

Jan-Feb: generate action ideas to address goals and identify data available and needed

March-April: Develop and refine draft recommendations for strategic framework

May-June: Draft and finalize strategic framework and provide to NYSDEC

IV. Shared Documents

- a. High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group 12/17/19 Meeting Agenda
- b. High Peaks Strategic Planning Advisory Group Contact Information
- c. Jill Weiss "One Sheet on VUM"
- d. DEC RECOMMENDATIONS: Managing Public Use in the High Peaks Region of the Adirondack Park
- e. High Peaks Route 73 Stakeholder Meeting Summary
- f. Town of Keene Planning Principles
- g. ADK 2019 Summit Steward End of Season Report
- h. Summary of Data Needs Expressed During Previous Forums
- i. Meeting schedule and product target dates

V. Assignments for Next Meeting

- a. Members
  - i. Review documents shared in lead up to the 12/16/19 meeting
  - ii. Provide information on relevant available datasets
- b. DEC
  - i. Provide table of management actions from High Peaks Wilderness UMP and UMP Amendment
  - ii. Provide list of initial actions Board raised during 12/16/19 meeting
  - iii. Provide revised target date list
  - iv. Develop summary of meeting

VI. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- a. Discuss how ideas in previously provided documents and in the High Peaks UMP mesh and fit with the goals
- b. Define problems occurring in the High Peaks area
- c. Discuss what is meant by "overuse"
- d. Identify existing data