Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering, 6/22/01

Tape 1

Rick: Well, I want to welcome you all to the Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering. My name is Rick Paradise, and I'm with the Environmental Program at the University of Vermont. And I think we've got a pretty interesting program in store for you all over the next couple of days. Maybe just by way of a few quick announcements, while I have your attention…. [refreshments, bathrooms, lunches, field trips, other logistics]… I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce Ben Rose. Ben is the Executive Director of the Green Mountain Club, and he wanted to take a few minutes and welcome you all here this morning. Ben?"

Ben: Good morning. Welcome, and thanks for coming. We're honored to be hosting such an esteemed gathering of people who are doing such good, important work. I think this is a good setting, aside from the road traffic noise, to do this, because obviously the Green Mountain Club has been in this game since 1910, and we've been in the summit caretaker stewardship game -- and partnership with the state and UVM -- since 1968 or '69, and we've learned by doing.

I don't want to say too much this morning, because I'm talking to a group of people who, almost to a person, know more about what you're going to be talking about than I do. But I would be remiss if I didn't use the bully pulpit to rant at you for a few minutes, so here's what I want to tell you. I got off a plane in Manchester, New Hampshire at about eleven o'clock last night, so I got home about 2:30 last night, which makes what I'm about to say somewhat unpredictable; but being an extrovert, I'm looking forward to hearing what I have to say, so that I'll know what I really think. But I was down in Washington with a group of ten other Vermonters, representing the sixteen organizations of the Vermont Wilderness Association. And the Vermont Wilderness Association moved forward with an agenda in the 1980's which led to the Vermont Wilderness Bill in 1984. And at that time now-Senator Jeffords was Representative Jeffords, and Senator Stafford and Senator Leahy were a unified delegation and wildernesses were created out of the Green Mountain National Forest. At that time, the Green Mountain Club was neutral. It was just too hot, and the Green Mountain Club was a hiking club and not a political organization. And members have different opinions about public land versus private land, and property rights, and gun control and every other thing, you know? Vermonters are diverse in their opinions, and the Green Mountain Club is a big tent. So the Green Mountain Club stayed out of it.

Three years ago, the Green Mountain Club volunteer Board of Directors voted 19-0-1 to have the Green Mountain Club out front participating in the Vermont Wilderness Association. And I don't think that the Green Mountain Club has really changed that much. I think that what has changed is the pressure on our public lands. And I think that people recognize that there are so many competing demands on the public land that we have, that the best and highest values that can be derived from our public land, in this age, are the values that can't be obtained anywhere else: values of solitude; of serenity; of the opportunity to get away into the backcountry and away from technology; big blocks of habitat -- big blocks of roadless habitat, the blocks of habitat that some creatures need if they're going to survive and remain viable populations through natural disturbance.

Now, I can't apply that to the x acres of alpine habitat we have left on four or five summits in Vermont. (I think Jay Peak should be on the list, by the way. I think even though they blew the summit off Jay Peak in 1969, I think there's still some alpine stuff up there and we should go look

at it.) But anyway, so…. I can't really talk to you about the alpine communities as they relate to the wilderness proposal… But we were down there to talk to the members of the delegation face-to-face, and we did -- to make the case that it's time for a new discussion about setting aside some additional places in the Green Mountain National Forest. And we believe that it's going to serve the Green Mountain National Forest very well to do that, as it did in the 1980's, when the Wilderness Bill came forward, before a planning process opened up. And we hope that we're going to have leadership from the delegation in Vermont to go forward with the Wilderness Bill based on some public forums. We hope that there will be some public forums this Fall, and we think that Vermonters are going to turn out, to say what they've said consistently: in the 1980's, Vermonters were three- or four-to-one in support of additional protection for roadless areas. In the roadless hearings in Rutland a year-and-a-half ago, or whatever, it was about two-and-a-half to one; the written comments were nine-to-one. We polled GMC members, and 85% of them want more wilderness now.

So, here's my impression from being in Washington (and this is really what I wanted to bring back to you). First of all, being in those halls and seeing what's going on… It's interesting right now because there's a lot of stuff out in the corridors being moved. Anyway, there are dozens and dozens of people walking around in very expensive suits. And they are lobbying for things that will impact on habitat and on alpine communities. There are a lot of people down there talking about energy policy and other issues that will affect what comes to Vermont by air. I came away feeling that we had gotten terrific hospitality from the delegation and also that we're hopelessly outgunned. Just hopelessly outgunned. And I guess what I wanted to say to you all to kick off your discussions over the next couple of days is that there are two things I sometimes hear, and I never believe either of them: one is, "I'm a scientist, I don't do politics"; and the other is, "I'm a professional land manager, I don't do politics." In this day and age, I don't think you can get away with saying either of those things. I think we're all involved in politics, and if you want to protect these areas that we're all hear to talk about, it is necessary to engage in the issues of the day. And it's necessary to acknowledge the elephants on the table – the elephants that maybe we're not going to do anything about in the next two days, but the elephants of coal plants, the elephant of mercury deposition, the elephant on the table of global climate change. And it's great that we're going to talk about how to keep people off the sedge, but those things are there, and let's think, too, what *our* role is in talking about them.

Anyway, that's what I wanted to do with my bully pulpit time. Thank you for humoring me, and I hope we have a great conference. I'm sorry that I'm not going to be able to join you for more of it, because I'd probably learn more than anybody. But have a great time, and I hope that our hospitality here is worthy. Good luck!

Rick: Thanks a lot, Ben. Before we get started with our morning's program, I thought maybe it would be helpful to place today's meeting – or, the meeting this weekend – into perspective by looking back a bit, maybe looking at the Past as Prologue, as one of my colleagues is fond of saying. A "Why gathering?", "How did these gatherings come to be?" – a little bit about the history. The history doesn't go very far back, in regards to bringing people together to talk about alpine stewardship and research under the same rooftop. It was in the early '90's, 1991 I believe, when there were a couple of folks, myself included, who started to talk about our challenges, respective to our states, and maybe mountain ranges, and how we could learn and share with one another, across the geographic region of the northeast, different approaches, tools and techniques for stewardship and management of alpine resources. And I remember – I think it was probably in

the fall of 1991 -- that we thought, "Well, maybe we should extend the invitation to gather to some of our colleagues in our respective states and others within the region." And so it was actually in this very barn, in 1992, that the first northeastern alpine gathering was hosted by GMC.

A couple of years later -- I think it was in 1994 -- Dartmouth Outing Club hosted a similar gathering down at Ravine Lodge at the base of Mt. Moosilauke. (I remember that particular weekend, because we had a wonderful slog up Mt. Moosilauke in pretty serious rain conditions, if I remember, Charlie – probably very similar to what we're likely to experience tomorrow. I hope you brought some good rain gear.) And then we tried again, I think a little bit later – a couple years after that -- to get another gathering off the ground, but perhaps because it was a little too soon, or maybe folks were just busy doing other things, it didn't quite work as planned. And so we let it sit dormant for a bit, and I guess it was last fall when I started to wonder, "Well, it's been five or six years – maybe folks will be itching to come together again. Maybe there's enough of a turnover, and new folks involved, who would find such a gathering to be informational, instructive, useful. And so we sent some notices out this spring, and lo and behold, we've got sixty people who responded and registered for -- I guess we'll call this the third (or third-and-a-half) Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering.

So what we have planned over the next couple of days hopefully will give you an opportunity to learn a little bit from those folks who are speaking [and] to participate in discussion. We're going to leave a lot of time for participation, so I hope you brought your speaking voice with you today and tomorrow. Please use the informal times to network with folks. We are represented here in this room by people from all four northeastern states that have alpine habitat: New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. We have NGO folks from the Nature Conservancy, [and] from, I think, every single major hiking organization in the northeast. We have academics and scholars who have joined us as well, agency folks at the state and federal level, even a few international people. So it's indeed quite a gathering of folks who have come together with a shared interest – a love, if you will – of alpine ecosystems. So please use that time to get to know one another. We're a small enough group; hopefully by the end of the weekend you'll have made new friends and contacts. So use the time to do just that.

Before we begin with our first panel discussion, I do want to mention something about the field trips tomorrow. They will go on rain or shine, and obviously we'll take precautions if there's lightening and thunder. But we've got a sign-up board here to my left. We've got five trips planned (one through five, easily numbered for your convenience). And each of them are going to be tackling some different issues, if you will, although we'll certainly keep them flexible enough that if there are issues that aren't focused on in your field trip that you want to bring up, please feel free to do so. There are two trips that are going to use the accessibility of the toll road to get us up to the summit quite conveniently and then to spend the bulk of our time along the ridgeline. There's also going to be a field trip that will use the convenience of the gondola to get folks up to a different area near the ridgeline, and there will be two trips that will involve hiking from the base to the summit. I think they're fairly well explained on those sheets. Take a look during the breaks and lunch, or you can wait until this evening to sign up for your trip. But do take note of which trip you've signed up for [and] where it's to leave, to begin (we're not coming back here tomorrow morning; you're actually going to convene at the location of where your field trip will begin). Attached to the program schedule is a very cursory map with some information as to where to meet, as well. If you have any questions about, "Gee, this is my first time to central Vermont; where is the toll road base facility?", "Where does the Long Trail intersect Rt. 108?", please don't hesitate to ask me or any of the other folks. Many of the folks in this room know these trailheads and other

facilities quite well. So the plan would be to meet tomorrow morning at your designated location, do the field trip, and then we're all going to convene back here. Any questions in regards to field trips, please don't hesitate to ask. And we'll probably review some of this information a little bit later on today, as well, just so everybody understands the logistics of tomorrow's field trip.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank our main sponsors. I think by listing them here this morning, you'll get a sense of the true cooperation across the geography of this region where this sponsorship and support has come from. I want to thank Baxter State Park; the Green Mountain Club, certainly, for hosting the facility here; Stowe Mountain Resort; the Randolph Mountain Club; the Appalachian Mountain Club; the Appalachian Trail Conference; the Adirondack Nature Conservancy; the Guy Waterman Stewardship Fund; the University of Vermont Natural Areas Center; the New Hampshire Field Office of the Nature Conservancy; and the mountain theme of the World Commission on Protected Areas. So, from the local to the national, we have a variety of different organizations that have helped support our efforts in pulling this gathering together.

Well, that's about all I have to say here this morning, at least for now. I'd like to turn things over to Lars Botzojorns. Lars is the Executive Director of Keeping Track, and he's going to be the facilitator for this morning's panel discussion that deals with "Developing Successful Alpine Stewardship Programs." Lars?

Lars: Thanks, Rick. It's good to be back here in The Barn. I spent a lot of time here over the years, when I worked with GMC up until a couple years ago and then went over to Keeping Track. There were some – well, I'll say with my new role running Keeping Track, there's a lot of interrelationship between these two organizations -- hikers and people wandering through the woods looking for wildlife. I know that quite a few members of the Club are also trackers with Keeping Track, and I'd be happy to talk to anybody about our program of monitoring wildlife habitat. But I think it's especially important, when you get those rogue moose up on Mt. Mansfield, to know where exactly they come from and where they're going. (We could set up two trans_?_ up on Mt. Mansfield, and that might be a good thing.) Mainly we deal with habitat down lower, but my interest, personally, has always been with alpine areas. When I came to GMC in '92, and participated as a volunteer in that first conference that Rick mentioned, I immediately knew that this was an important issue, because the areas are so beautiful, they're so heavily visited, and they're so fragile. So, bring all that together, and you've got issues. So I'm glad to still be here – back here again, this time to help facilitate the discussion this morning, especially.

We've got four folks who are going to be presenting their perspective and their experiences on alpine areas throughout the northeast. And we have quite a mix of people, in fact, both in terms of geographic mix and institutional mix, if you will, coming from different perspectives in the alpine stewardship zone. So I'll describe who they are quickly and then list out for you the questions that I put to them as the moderator, and then we'll get going. Charlie Jacobi is a Resource Specialist and works in Visitor Use Management at Acadia National Park. He's been doing that particular role since 1992 and has been at the park since '84 in various other capacities. So he brings some perspective from Maine and from a national park. Kathy Reagan is Science and Stewardship Staff with the Adirondack Nature Conservancy. She's been with TNC for fifteen years and in the Adirondacks for twelve and a half of those years. Rebecca Orestes is the Wilderness and Recreation Program Leader for the White Mountain National Forest, and has been working in the Whites since '79, in the hut system, starting out where I also started way back, and has been with the Forest Service since '86. And then Dave Hardy, with Green Mountain Club here, has been

Director of Field Programs (which was my role when I left in '99), has taken that on since then and has been with the Club since '92 and has also been involved with the AMC Trail Program as a committee chair in the past, as well. So, as I mentioned, Charlie bringing the Maine experience, Kathy with New York, Rebecca with New Hampshire, Dave with Vermont – that's one way to look at it (certainly, everyone's experience, on this panel, is very much broader than that). And I think it's important to keep in mind that we're not so parochial in our thinking that we're just thinking about Vermont. Because I think a lot of us have been thinking about these issues for a long time on a broad scale. So I think it will be interesting to hear, though, each of their presentations to start things off.

I did throw out some questions to them, and I think these questions and these issues will play into each of their presentations, although they're certainly going to bring in a lot of their own information as well. I was curious, when I thought about this panel, in terms of what has really changed in how we view the issues over the last six years, since we last met as a group like this. Have things really changed? Are we still struggling with the very same issues, or have we evolved a little bit? Have the issues evolved? And have our approaches evolved, as well? Are we becoming more creative over time, as funding continues to be limited? I'm interested in that: how things are funded. A key point: is there sufficient knowledge of what we're aiming for, in terms of a fully functioning assemblage of natural communities where human impact is maintained at a sustainable level? Do we know where that end point is, and will we know, when we've reached it, that we've achieved… Nirvana -- I don't know – in alpine areas. I know we haven't yet, but I'm curious if we know what our goal is and how can we address that. On the other hand, does the specter of user fees and/or user restrictions loom even larger now, if we're still dealing with the issues we always have?

So specifically, I did throw out some specific questions to the four panelists:

- If you were to design an optimal program for your jurisdiction, what would it look like? (And I'm curious to see if there are a lot of variations in those, across the four states.)
- Following from that: Do you see the balance of staffers to volunteer efforts in providing a successful management program?
- Taking that a step further: Do you see the value of asking the public as a whole to participate actively in a stewardship program, or should it be done by the professionals?
- Then, going back to issue of knowing what our goal is: What information do you need from scientists to make your job as managers more effective?
- Another area which I've always been interested in, effectively, if this makes sense: Does it make sense to designate "sacrifice areas" within your area, or, alternatively, areas of intensive management focus, and send as many people to those areas, saving other areas in your region for a more remote, or less heavily-managed, experience? Can this work over the long term, and does this work across state boundaries? (In other words, if we look at a particular area in Vermont, can that serve as a focal point versus an area in New York? I'm just wondering how we can really interrelate across state lines across the region. Does that really work? Does it make sense?)
- And finally: What are we hearing from the public about our management of alpine areas and about the condition of the research itself? What's the feedback we're getting?

So that's a lot of stuff. I threw that out to the panelists, and I know they're going to integrate as much of that as they can into their presentations. We'll see what they've got. Each panelist will have about 20 minutes to speak, and I'd like to have all four panelists just rifle right through it so we'll leave a good amount of time for discussion (as Rick said, that's an important

part of this). And, in fact, we're going to turn the whole thing back into – not quite a circle, 'cause we're all facing this way -- but have the panelists blend back into the audience, and make sure that all of you, who are all experts in this, have a chance to go back and forth on this. And my job, of course, will be to facilitate that and make sure that not everybody's stepping on each other's toes, and you're raising your hands, and I'm picking on you. And I'll be good at keeping track of that… Keeping Track… (I'll keep referring to that, a subliminal message.) But I will try to keep things well in line and everybody will have a chance to speak. I really want it to be more of an exchange, [rather than] a few people talking to you. Because it's really the wealth of experience in this room that's important.

And what I'll try to do, maybe toward the end, is try to pull out some of the common themes, if any – if we find some common themes in how we're dealing with this and what the issues are -- and throw them back at you as a final thing before we're done. So, we've got two and a half hours. Again, the presentations will go a little over an hour, an hour and ten minutes max, and then we really want to save some time for talking it out. And actually, I have to apologize to my speakers, I didn't really throw out which order we were going to speak in. I did mention Charlie first; Charlie, if you're ready to go? (Good moderators throw curve balls every so often.) If you don't mind, I'll have you go first, and we'll sweep across the region from east to west, which means Rebecca you're next, Dave, and then Kathy. We'll do it that way. Charlie?

Charlie: Thanks, Lars. Good morning. How many people here have visited Acadia? Quite a few. How many have climbed up Cadillac Mountain? Probably the same amount, right? Anybody here that went and didn't climb up Cadillac Mountain, or drive up? [someone raised hand] … [laughing:] Why not?

I thought I'd better give you some Acadia facts here, to start with, just in case some of you weren't familiar with the park. But it seems like many of you probably are. Maybe some of this will be new. Then I'll try to rip through some things that I see as major problems (I'll talk about Cadillac Mountain specifically -- I think it relates to something that Lars just mentioned: whether it's a sacrifice area or not); some of our recent activities related to trying to protect our sub-alpine areas; and then maybe a little bit about, optimally, what I'd like to see if we were running a good stewardship program there.

A few Acadia facts. We're about 38,000 acres. Three million visitors a year. We have a dozen sub-alpine summits, and a lot of those are pretty bare of trees. Some of the summits are forested. We have a dozen or so sub-alpine summits that are similar in appearance, if not in vegetation, to the alpine summits of more-northern New England. But we also have headlands and islands with similar environments, as well. And, of course, the shoreline is where people tend to gravitate towards at Acadia. Of those three million visitors a year, my best guess -- and this is based on some visitor survey data that says that two-thirds to three-quarters of everybody that comes to the park goes up Cadillac. You do the math – how much does that come out to? About two million? That's at two-thirds. So, two million people driving up, walking up, some biking up – that's a lot of folks.

We've done a few hiker censuses over the last few years – the last two years – at Acadia. Even though it's just a snapshot in early August, our busiest time period, I think we have somewhere around 5,000 hikers a day on a busy sunny day in August in our park. That includes some front-country kinds of trails. It doesn't include the ocean path that runs right along the Park Loop Road there by Thunder Hole (didn't see how the heck I could count all those people milling around). But it includes almost all the park trails that we could count at for seven hours of the day.

Of that – I just, before I came over here, took a quick stab and said, "Well, how many of those might be going up to these sub-alpine summits that we have?" and my best guess at that is 1,500-2,000. Maybe I'm a little high, maybe I'm a little low, but it's a lot of folks going up to Acadia's sub-alpine summits by foot.

What are the major problems? I think Acadia's summits are a little different than some of the other summits of northern New England in that there are no physical obstacles to wandering around. It's not like a jumbled rock pile atop Mt. Washington. Maybe there are some other summits that are pretty-smooth, granite domes like ours, but when you get up on Acadia's ridges, there are no obstacles to moving left or right, and if the trail's not well defined – and sometimes it is hard to define in those areas – people can go anywhere and not get lost, and wander up the ridge along a swath twenty yards wide, thirty yards wide, and still feel like they're on the trail. So, again, there's little impediment to getting out of your car on Cadillac and going almost anywhere. Even though there's a paved trail around the summit and a few hiking trails that lead down from it. And I think that causes us some problems.

The second problem that I've been dealing with in earnest for the last four years – and I'm beginning to wonder whether I should have taken it up -- [is] that our visitors refuse to leave rocks alone. Has anybody else experienced that? Really, it's unbelievable. We can't keep a cairn built on our mountain trails. Literally, we cannot keep a cairn built. I've had people rebuilding cairns over the last three years, and they're rebuilding the same stuff. We've tried a number of education things, and it may be beginning to work, but boy, it sure seems like it's a long road. The fact that visitors want to leave something behind does three things, on our summits, to me. It's a visual intrusion, because they build stuff other than cairns -- we get all kinds of rock objects: hearts, peace signs, you name it. So it's an aesthetic thing. And when you get extra cairns, that leads hikers astray and causes more damage to soils and vegetation -- maybe even gets some hikers into trouble. Even in the wintertime, you can get into trouble in Acadia if you try hard enough. And a third thing is, a lot of those rocks are coming right out of the darn soil. So when you get a two-inch or a three-inch rainstorm that pounds down, there's more soil washing down the mountain and a little less habitat for Mountain Sandwort and any number of other plants and small animals that aren't warm and fuzzy. So again, we've got tons of people just refusing to leave things as you find them (principle number four, I think, 'Leave No Trace' -- a very important one for us). And then thirdly, the usual kinds of trail __ and widening kinds of things that all of us, I think, are pretty well familiar with. That's no big surprise.

I thought, while I was talking, I'd share with you some things that we have done over the last few years. These posterboard things are a little faded. I'll pass them around. These were used as exhibits in downtown shops -- Cadillac Mountain Sports and, actually, a local sub shop that has a very cooperative owner – right in the windows. We had those up all of last year. (I'll start those around on this side.) Just an example of some education kinds of things that we've tried to do. And this is a series of three signs that we started using on Cadillac Mountain last year. I should wait on Cadillac Mountain – we really haven't done anything to manage visitor use on Cadillac. I mean nothing, until last year. Again, just a few examples. And finally, there's an article in our *Friends of Acadia* journal that I wrote a few years ago – I also wrote it in to the local paper as an editorial around the Fourth of July maybe three years ago, now – it's called "No Stone Turned." And that's my goal.

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… education tool that several of us in Maine worked on over the last couple of years, and that's creating a "Leave No Trace in Maine" video. While it doesn't focus specifically on sub-

alpine areas, obviously, all those Leave No Trace principles apply to visitors to the sub-alpine summits. This was a cooperative effort of Baxter State Park, Acadia National Park, even the North Maine Woods, the four U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refuges in Maine, the Maine Appalachian Trail Club – let's see, am I forgetting anybody here? -- ATC (thank you, Bob!), ATC as well (through the MATC). We distributed 300 copies of this through the mail and in person to a lot of folks around Maine. We're hoping that it will begin to help. It's that broad brushstroke of at least making people aware of what Leave No Trace is and a few simple things they can do to help protect our natural areas. If anyone is interested in a copy of this, see me. We still have a few left, and we're considering ordering some more, since we have sortof 'sold out,' if you will (even though we didn't charge for them). If there's an opportunity, I'd be happy to show this to anyone who's interested later on during the workshop. So anyway, again, a few education tools that we've been working on over the last several years.

Cadillac Mountain: is it a sacrifice area? Boy, that's a good question. It has been, up to this point. And up to this point, as I said, we really haven't tried anything. Before last year, we never fenced off an area to keep visitors out of it. We finally started doing that and posting some of those plastic signs that are circulating. What I found when we were working on those signs was that, as some of you are probably aware, it's very difficult to craft a simple, articulate message to get across to these visitors. These visitors are not your AT thruhiker, or even your weekend hiker; they're just getting out of the car after a drive from somewhere. And they're going to wander around, and they're probably not going to hike again – to them, that wander around the summit trail, maybe that's a hike, and that's fine. But how do we educate? I think that's the greatest challenge of Leave No Trace. Things have done pretty well in the back country, but when you talk about front country, for a place like Acadia, how do you educate all those windshield tourists, if you will, to do the right thing when they get out of their car and start wandering around on Cadillac, or along the shoreline, or somewhere else?

We did have a couple of people up on the summit of Cadillac last year: park naturalists. I think they found it quite a challenge to try to educate visitors, because they might end up starting a talk with someone about appropriate behavior, and where to put your feet on the summit, and easily become distracted by somebody over here trampling through the grass, and somebody over here doing something else, and a person over behind their shoulder feeding the gulls. And it's like, "Okay, which way do I go? What do I do first?" because there are so many folks up there at once. We're doing that again this summer, and we'll see how it continues to work out. But it certainly is a challenge. We haven't had, up on Cadillac, any signs like those little ones that are circulating here, now. Not that I think signs are the Be-All and End-All, but again, we've had nothing.

Last year we did try a little unobtrusive observation of visitors up on the summit through a University of Maine graduate student. We got some pretty good information out of that. It wasn't a cure-all, but it's very instructive, as I'm sure many of you know, to just sit in your area and watch what people do, whether it's hiking along the trail – I think the Watermans probably pioneered that on Franconia ridge – or wandering around a summit area like Cadillac, where there are no restrictions, currently. Anyway, we did try that unobtrusive observation. It told us that we needed better orientation of visitors on the summit. It told us that visitors weren't necessarily making the connection between the areas we had fenced off and other areas, similar, that were not fenced off, that just had bare gravel on it. That's a tough message to sell to people, I think. It's one thing to say, "Step on the rock," but we were trying to say, "Stay off even the bare gravel and soil," because that's where, if you give it half a chance, Mountain Sandwort will grow up in those areas; it does almost everywhere else. It's tough for them to make that transition between the barricaded area and

these other areas over here where they were free to wander. So anyway, we did try that unobtrusive observation, and it gave us some good new information.

We have been considering a massive rehabilitation effort up there, which would involve lots and lots of reveg. It would probably involve lots and lots of education as well, and a steady presence of ranger staff, or volunteers or others, to educate folks. I honestly don't know if we'll ever be ready to contain traffic up there to a single path, or a few paths. It's a major, major destination. Thousands and thousands of people want to go there, and they are free to wander across those granite ledges unobstructed and uncurtailed by us, at least at this point. Short of a draconian reduction in visitation, I'm not sure what else we could do up there – or, [short of] fencing off more and more areas. We talked about fencing off the areas that are still intact, instead of fencing off the areas that are impacted, to try to save some of those. I guess the bottom line for me is that I would rather not see Cadillac be a sacrifice area. I think it's very important for us, in terms of education. What we do with education on Cadillac is going to help protect those other summits that we have that are, at least, a little more remote and harder to get to. And I hope that there would be some transference of those educational messages to hikers on the other summits.

For the last three or four years, I've run a RidgeRunner program, thanks to our local Friends group that supports it and funds it. Four people who combine Leave No Trace education with trail maintenance – almost exclusively cairns, knocking down stuff that people want to build and building stuff in the right place. It's been very much an uphill battle, as I've said. We have installed new trailhead signs at most major trailheads throughout the park – that was four years ago, I guess. There's some reluctance on the part of park staff to put signs out on the trails and on the summit approaches. I think that's understandable, but for my part, I'd rather pepper the landscape with a few signs than have the landscape trammeled and trampled to pieces. So we're trying some of those signs up on the summits, a little experimentally, this coming year.

The other thing that we're trying this year that will be an interesting experiment – it's sortof related to the topic of this gathering, I guess, since it deals with cairns – is that we're actually trying a new style of cairn on a couple of our trails. It's a historic style of cairn pioneered by an early pathmaker named Waldron Bates in a park back in the early part of this century. We call it a Bates Cairn or a Pagoda-Style Cairn. It's just simply two blocks with a mantlepiece – large blocks – and a pointer rock in the middle. We're trying these for a couple of reasons. One is the more historic style. We just completed a Hiking Trails Plan for the park. Acadia's trail system is an historic hiking trails system; it's remarkable in terms of its craftmanship and its origins and the VIA's of the local communities. So we're trying this, again, because it's a more historical style. I also think it might be easier to maintain. I know right now it's a real struggle to maintain the traditional type of cairn, because people just refuse to leave them alone. So I'm hoping that once we build these Bates-style cairns – I know people are going to tamper with them, but I think they'll be easier to rebuild and easier to maintain. Again, we'll see what happens. They certainly give a different appearance on the hiking landscape than a traditional cairn.

Optimally, if I were to design a bigger or better program, I'd want to have more people out there (surprise, surprise). I'd like to have better trail maintenance. Our new initiative with our Friends group raised nine million dollars privately to help rehabilitate and endow the trail system (the federal contribution is four million dollars); if it weren't for that, we'd still be falling behind. On those sub-alpine summits: better trail maintenance and definition – not just with cairns, but to some extent with tread, too – would probably help contain hiker traffic some. Hopefully that better trail maintenance is coming. I personally would like to see more widespread Leave No Trace education throughout the northeast. I'm happy to see, in the things I've read just in browsing

around this morning, that it seems like everyone's getting involved in that. I think that's great; we all stand to benefit. I've been actively involved in that for the last four years at Acadia. I'd like to infiltrate the guidebooks more than we have at Acadia. I've talked with some guidebook authors and gotten some Leave No Trace information in there, even stuff about cairns, and all of that's going to help. More of these exhibits in the retail shops with the park concessioner that runs the ___ Gift Shop and the gift shop up on Cadillac Mountain; those kinds of things. And I'd like to see us get into monitoring trails more than we do. We haven't been able to really monitor the physical condition of trails in the park. Trail maintenance activities tend to be, "If something's broke, go fix it," but I'd like to know when things are deteriorating, to let us know whether or not we should begin to think about controlling use instead of just going in and fixing the problem that we have.

Lars mentioned active public involvement. That is great, volunteers are great. I have some volunteers working with me -- I have three of them actually this summer, essentially doing the same thing that my Ridge Runners do: getting out and hiking and talking to folks about Leave No Trace. But to some extent, I think that's preaching to the converted. It's a good thing, and we should do it, but to me, active public involvement should be through appropriate, informed behavior of everyone that's coming to Acadia and whatever natural area you're involved in. It's practice, practice, practice. Those people need to practice those things every time they go for a hike or whatever it is they're doing. That's where I'd like to see the active public involvement. I'd like to see it reflected in the people that are coming to my park. I actually saw a little bit of that on Cadillac Mountain the other day: some family was up there, and they were wandering around off the trail, and I watched this little girl actually walk on the rocks around a patch of vegetation. Her father said something to her about it. All I could think was, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. Somebody read the sign and understood it. Bless you, my child."

More research. The research that I'd like to see more of is the effectiveness of various educational techniques, [such as] signs and personal contact. I know there's been a lot done, but I think sometimes it needs to be a little more specific for specific areas. The big question for me, though, is – Lars asked -- I forget what the exact term he used was, but he wanted me to throw something out to challenge you, if you will, or stimulate discussion. I'm not convinced that education, in the long run, is going to solve all our problems. I'd like to think it is, and I continue to push hard with it, but I see more of a losing battle there. It seems to me that we're going to need to do other kinds of management more aggressively, particularly in areas that get lots of use, whether it's physical barriers, use limits, enforcement… I'd like to think that's not the case, but my tendency is to think that we're headed that way, or we should be headed that way more, maybe, than we are. Again, I'd love to think that education's going to solve all our problems, but at some point, we may need to think more about capacity. There's only so many people that Mount Mansfield can accommodate on an annual basis without falling apart. If we want to harden the trail more, and put railings up, that's fine; but if you want to have a more free and open, wilderness-type experience, then maybe those use limits and other types of activities are more appropriate.

I think I'll end there. I don't know how I've done with the time limit. Again, if anybody's interested in a copy of the video, check in with me some time over the next couple of days and I'd be glad to share it with you.

Lars: Thanks, Charlie. For the speakers who are time-challenged, Rick will be waving at you vigorously. Charlie was perfect; I sensed it was right at the twenty-minute mark. I don't wear a watch either, so I tend to be time-challenged, but I have a sense. So that was great. But Rick, you know you can wave and throw something at somebody.

Rick: I'll give you a two-minute warning.

Lars: Rebecca, we'll turn to you, now.

Rebecca: Thanks. If you can't hear me, just signal or let me know in some way. I'll just give you a quick overview of the White Mountain National Forest (I'm sure most of you have been there or at least know something about it). Then I'm going to talk briefly about what that End Point might involve that Lars was referring to; then talk about different techniques and pro's and con's; a little bit about research and add to some of the things Charlie said about things that I would like to see; also talk about some things going on in the Whites; and then end with some kind of a conclusion about where we might end up in the future. I'm going to have a couple of provocative statements, I think -- we'll see.

The White Mountain National Forest, in its entirety, is just under 800,000 acres. We have the largest alpine area in the northeastern United States. We have about six and a half million visitors a year. We don't have a handle on how many of those visitors actually go into the alpine zone. That's something that worries a lot of people – that we can't get exact numbers for everything. I happen to be one of those people who – I can't say, who 'cares,' because that's not an okay thing to say about a subject like that, but, in a sense, who *cares*, because the real issue is not the numbers, but the impacts. What we really need to look at is what the impact of people going in the alpine zone is, and if that's a million, two million, or fifty is probably not – to me, at least – that relevant. But it's hard to say that when people want to always put in their pocket a certain number.

We are considered an urban forest (which always upsets some people, particularly in the Forest Service, because nobody in the Forest Service likes to think they're somehow part of this urban system). But the point of that is that we're within a day's drive of very significant urban populations. That creates many opportunities and many challenges in how we communicate with people and what people's value systems are.

I was thinking a little bit about this issue of what the End Point is. The way I could think about it was to think, What are the values of the alpine zone? Clearly, the one Lars mentioned is a very significant one, which is: a community and a sustainable ecosystem. We always have to keep that goal in mind with everything we do, whatever that means – which is another problem, because I think a lot of times we don't really know what that always means. I think another point to think about is, obviously, the human side. Particularly in a place like the White Mountains, people have been going there for hundreds of years, and they're going to be going there for hundreds of years, and that is not a bad thing. I think that's a very positive thing. In the beginning of *Moby Dick*, Melville has this beautiful passage saying we're all drawn to water. I think you could write the same passage that we are all drawn to summits. In fact, there's been a lot of social science research that says that: people want views, and they want to be on summits. Which creates all kinds of challenges if you're thinking about dispersing people. Because they're not going to get that experience somewhere else, necessarily. They might be able to go to smaller peaks, but the reality is many people who come to the White Mountains come there specifically – not to be in the alpine zone, but -- to be up high and to have views. And we're not going to change that; that is a deep-seated human value for people who go to the mountains. And it's just a beautiful place. I think that sense of beauty, and connecting people to

beauty, is an incredibly valuable thing that we can all be a part of and can be a positive influence, then, on stewardship and how people care for the land.

Let me just talk a little bit about – (I brought a watch, but I forgot to look at what time I started. That's classic. But anyway) -- let me just talk about several things that can be tools -- and in fact *are* tools -- that we use in the White Mountains. Well, some of them are and some of them aren't. The first one I'm going to mention is one that we are not using right now, although we have heard from people who say we should do this, and that's Use Restrictions. (I'm going to come back to each of these and talk about pro's and con's.) So, Use Restrictions is one, and that's one Charlie mentioned. Lars had asked this: the issue of concentrating versus dispersing use. That is definitely something we in some sense are doing in the White Mountains. Information and education (and I'm including in 'information and education' passive education, like signs; active education, as in stewards; I'm also including law enforcement in that, so just know that I am, although law enforcement is potentially its own thing). I'm also including in that, and I shouldn't have included this, so I'll give it its own category: trail work and guiding people where we want them to go. Then there's a combination of any of these. And finally, one I call 'Anything Goes' (which I guess would be the same as, 'Do Nothing'). And there was another one I thought of from what Ben said, which in a sense could be a tool, which is Wilderness Designation. I haven't heard that mentioned recently in the White Mountains when I've read comments for forest planning, but I have heard that recommendation in the past, that we should make the alpine zone a designated wilderness. So I'm going to talk briefly about that.

In fact, let me talk about that one first. I personally don't think – and I'm someone who's very active in wilderness issues within the forest service – I don't think wilderness designation would make our management any easier. If anything, I think it would probably make our management, in many ways, more difficult. The only advantage I can see to wilderness designation is that if you look at wilderness as a system, across the country, and the idea that we should have all community types represented in that system, then I think there would be a value to wilderness designation. But in terms of managing public use, I don't see that as an answer.

Use Restrictions. Several points on that. I think it's absolutely critical to always keep separate *why* you're restricting use if you're going to restrict use. There are two broad categories to think about. One are social issues. Are we looking to restrict use because we want to control a certain kind of experience for people? I don't say that negatively; that may be trying to do a so-called 'wilderness experience,' or letting people have solitude, whatever that might be. The other is, Are we controlling use to control environmental degradation or to protect the environment? I think it's absolutely critical that we always are clear which one we're going for. I think we very rarely *are* clear when we talk about it, and we muddle the issue. I think potentially we could make some really bad decisions based on that, and the Forest Service has made some bad decisions in other parts of the country based on that when they, as land managers, tried to decide what kind of social experience you or I should have, and the public came back, in force, and said, 'Do not tell us what kind of social experience we're going to have.' So if we are going to be doing use restrictions for social reasons, that absolutely has to be done only after lots of public involvement -- that should go without saying for anything that we do, but – with tremendous thought about what is that experience we want to have (and I say 'we' as in the people using it, not the managers who are sitting in an office or looking at the theory of recreation management and recreation opportunity spectrum that says, 'Well, only ten people should be on this trail to give you the experience you want to have'). I'm going to come back to

that, because we've done a study in the White Mountains recently that also talks about this a little bit.

The other thing that I think is potentially and often used in a very flawed way is the issue of carrying capacity. Some of you might want to shoot me; this is a very controversial issue right now. I think people want the comfort of saying there is a carrying capacity. If there is, I think in most cases we are nowhere near to the point of knowing what that is. And again, whether that's a carrying capacity for social concerns or for environmental concerns. I find it very hard to believe that we're going to come up with magic numbers, so you could say, "Well, 50 people would be okay and 51 people would not be okay." Which is not to say that Use Restrictions are always inappropriate; I don't believe that by any means. But I've just heard people talk very cavalierly, in my opinion, about carrying capacity: "Oh - you should come up with a carrying capacity for the alpine zone." Yeah, you know, in my spare time, I'll come up with a number. It's just not that simple. I think we have to be very honest, when we come up with things like that, what the limitations are. In fact, it's not a carrying capacity; it's our judgment, at a given point of time, based on a variety of conditions, of what we think is appropriate or not appropriate. But it is not a magic number, in my humble opinion.

One other comment on Use Restrictions for a place like the White Mountains. We have enormous logistical issues in terms of implementing something like that. So even if we decide that's a really great thing to do, I honestly don't know how we'll do it, given the number – and Charlie is only slightly in a better position for this, in Acadia, than we are, because they also have many access points. But we literally have hundreds of access points, and to have a mandatory system that we could control… that's a daunting thing to even begin to contemplate. Which doesn't mean that someday we won't figure out how to do it, but I think you have to be realistic about capability in those cases.

Concentrating versus dispersing use. The White Mountain National Forest has a policy in our Forest Plan to concentrate use. That's based on research that's been done in Recreation Management to basically contain the impacts. I think another really critical thing -- why I do believe concentrating use is a good thing – is, I think, part of my job as a manager is not to tell you what kind of experience to have, but to provide a range so that you can get the kind of experience you want. If you don't want to be on the Franconia Ridge in August (and I have to tell you that I don't usually do that unless I'm working these days, because I prefer to go to quieter places in my off time), that you have that choice – that there's a place you can go in the White Mountains where you can have absolute quiet, or you can go up on the high peaks and have lots of people, and that's a fine experience for you. So again, I think that's another reason why I think, in a place like the White Mountains, to disperse use is actually one of my worst nightmares. It's something I've been working on pretty hard, lately, as we go into Forest Planning, because I – sometimes (probably all of you have this, too) we have management by whoever answers the phone, and there are people who think we should disperse use. The reality is, we're never going to disperse use out of the Presidential Range and the Franconia Range -- not voluntarily: that's where people want to go. So all we're going to do, if we have an active campaign to do that, is raise use everywhere so the experience level is the same everywhere. And I think the day that happens, even in a place like the Whites where there's lots of people, will be a really sad day. So I'm hoping to fend that off.

There's another phrase, sortof like "carrying capacity," that I would personally like us to not use anymore (and this is going to get some of you excited, too), and that's "sacrifice zone." There's a couple of reasons for that. I don't think we're in the business of sacrificing things.

But what I do think we're in the business of – and it's very painful some days – is tradeoffs. We make hard decisions about uses on a given piece of land at a given point in time. So when we talk about, let's say, the Franconia Ridge, I don't think of the Franconia Ridge as a sacrifice zone. I do think of the Franconia Ridge – let's be particular here: in August, or the summer – as a place that has high human use and really meets that need that people have to get to the high peaks. But I don't think that's the same as sacrificing. We can allow it to become a sacrifice zone by having no system of monitoring, by having no system to contain impacts. I, for one, absolutely don't want to ever get to that point. So that's why we do have, now, summit stewards, alpine stewards; we do have intensive trail work -- we've had that intensive trail work for a long time -- to try to say we're going to contain the impacts. There are always going to be impacts in these places. But we're making a choice to do a tradeoff of which impact is acceptable in that place at that time. But I guess I do not accept that that's a sacrifice zone. I think when we have sacrifice zones, it's because we have all walked away, and because we have all given up our responsibility to the land and the people who use that land. There are times when we have done that, but I believe that when we do that, it's our fault, and it's not a good thing.

Information, education and trail work. Talk about preaching to the converted. I don't think I need to say a lot about trail work; that was more of a discussion at our first conference. I think we all know that trail work has a tremendous impact on where people go and how they use that land. We've learned, over time, different techniques, and we just have to keep doing that. We're lucky in the Whites: people don't, as a rule, wreck our cairns, and I think when we have good, well-defined trails, it does work. Which doesn't mean that we don't have places where we don't have well-defined trails, and we have trouble with trail-widening, because we do have that problem. Those are places we need to be working on.

Information and education. I think on-the-ground presence is absolutely critical. It's taken us a long time. We, I think, are the last major agency and place to have an active steward program of people on the ground. I'm not proud that it took us that long, but I am glad we finally have it and thank those people, many of whom I'm looking at right now, for making that happen. I just -- a real quick thing -- I think all of us who've been in this business, we know people don't read signs. Right? I've always wondered, "Is it because our signs aren't colorful enough?" Then you get the people who think we just don't have enough out there. You know, if we did the "Wall Drug" technique – is that what it is? -- they're going to start reading our signs.

Well, I read an article the other day – have any of you read the last issue of the *New Yorker*? (Very different context.) They had an article about highway traffic safety. I was reading this, and I was absolutely fascinated – it was all about car crashes and people blowing up. And they were talking about why people have accidents. It was basically, "People are going to have accidents, and it doesn't matter what you do." They're going to have accidents, so you better plan for the accident. Then they did this experiment to see what people *see*: they had these two basketball teams -- white shirts, blue shirts (Doug's back there laughing: he's read the article) -- and they said, "We want you to watch this video – watch this game – and tell me, at the end, how many passes the white-shirt team made." So the people are watching, and then they have a person come out in a gorilla suit and walk off. At the end of it, they say, "How many passes did the white team make?" And they say, "Thirty-six passes." The guy says, "Great - you got that right. Did you notice anything else?" "No." He says, "You didn't notice the gorilla that walked out and stood in front of the camera?" And they all said, "The what?"

So the point is, that's the way we all are. We don't see things. So we have to find ways to break through that. And one way to break through that is to have people on the ground. This is the hardest thing to fight for, working for the Forest Service: the need for a presence on the ground, whether that's a uniformed presence or a volunteer presence. I mean, every year we have to fight for that. And it has basically been proven that is the most effective way to communicate with people and to get an end result. The obvious potential pitfalls are that we become too heavy-handed, that we ruin people's experience by being in their face all the time (and I know I'm kindof curmudgeonly, especially when I'm not working, and I don't like people talking to me when I'm hiking). So those are things we have to be hyper-sensitive to. And then issues of training and quality-control, both for paid people and for volunteers; but I think those are obviously things we can all get around.

Another thing on that: when you have volunteer programs, I think it's absolutely critical that the land management agency not abdicate its responsibility; that these programs always be cooperative programs. I guess I would say that to you, that you should fight to make sure that the land management agencies don't abdicate. Because, for lots of obvious reasons (I hope they're obvious to you; they're certainly obvious to me), it's tempting, in a time of budget cuts, for the agencies to, in effect, walk away. And say, [tape interrupted: end of side B]

<u>Tape 2</u>

…information that I would like. I would like more social science research on the types of things people – the types of tradeoffs people are willing to accept in management actions that we do. I don't want to decide that for the public. I don't want to decide if permit systems or use restrictions are where we want to go. We did do a study in the Whites where our original intent was to get at that – the reality is, we didn't have enough money – to get at that piece of the research. So we just basically doing satisfaction surveys across broad geographic areas of the White Mountains. The thing that really frightened us is how happy people are out there. We were all prepared to be told that there's eighty billion too many people. And we got the research, and we're working with [?], and he said, "People are really happy. They're not registering any problems." We just looked at him really suspiciously and we were like, "Okay, Chad, something's wrong here." I think it does show that people are happy out there. That doesn't mean we can sit back, because there a couple of things, like displacement, that can still be an issue. And clearly it doesn't get at environmental issues. But from a social standpoint, in the Whites, the people who are going to these places are happy. And to some extent they self-selected, but they're happy there. There's some potential for use issues in the Franconia Ridge and the Pemigewasset Wilderness. Those are the only things that began to register, potentially, as a problem.

I think some biological research on thresholds would be really helpful. It's not that helpful to know that there's an impact, but getting at thresholds, and at what point impacts are going to be too much, is what really would be helpful.

So, to summarize. To quote Ben, Are we hopelessly outgunned? I don't know. I have days I feel hopelessly outgunned. I have days sitting by my desk with enough paper to make a federal bureaucrat proud, and ten phone messages and a hundred emails, where I feel like this is so hopeless – I'm like the dwarf in front of the mountain. And then I go for a hike. I just know, at that point, I have to remove myself from the office and go out and mind myself while I do this. And then I don't feel that hopeless. But there's no end point, I guess, is the other point I want to make. This is a process. When I talk to Laura, I feel there's lots of hope. We have made enormous progress in the last thirty years, even in the White Mountains. We have many examples where

impacts have actually decreased. We have some examples of that around the huts, we have some examples of that on trails, we have examples of that from where we've instituted fairly mild law enforcement restrictions, such as no camping above treeline. We've seen tremendous results from that. So, I think, we always have to keep in mind where we're going, and we have to realize – not to be trite, but that it is a process. Our knowledge is always going to change; we're always going to learn more. I'm not going to wake up one day and say, "My job is done." No one in this room is going to do that. We're going to just try to keep it going, to pass it along, and to keep things in place. But our knowledge will always change, and we have to be flexible and adapt. So, I guess in sum, I think in reality, as long as we stick together, we're not hopelessly outgunned.

Lars: Okay, David where are you? Lurking in the back. Sweeping ever westward.

David: I've got a small slideshow to clue me in as to what I'm supposed to tell you. So, those of you who didn't get enough sleep last night can take a short nap. Basically, I'm going to show you some slides so that you can see things that you may not see tomorrow.

[I've learned from experience to look under the table before I try sitting on it.]

This is Mt. Mansfield, part of Vermont's alpine zone. They tell me we have a hundred and fifty acres of alpine zone in Vermont, in three to six places, depending on who you talk to. Mansfield, obviously, is the large one. This is a view from the forehead looking at the chin. You can see some towers in it. Camel's Hump is our second largest alpine zone. I think that the third one is probably the cliff-tops and Smuggler's Notch, followed by, in my opinion, Jay Peak, Killington and Abraham. You can move those around a little bit, but Jay Peak and Killington frequently are not considered alpine zones. They are the ski areas that probably have more detrimental impact than even on Mt. Mansfield, as Stowe Mountain Resort is always seen as an impacter, but they're below the ridgeline. There are some skiers going to the top, but for the most part, Mansfield's ridgeline, with the exception of the summit station and a few towers, and the complex behind the nose, is fairly free of development, outside of the Long Trail.

D… Crowd [?]. It's a popular place. The alpine zones are the highest points, which makes them natural destinations for everybody, whether you're skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, cramponing around. There's a lot of people out there. The Green Mountain Club has been involved for thirty years with Alpine Steward programs: Summit Caretakers, Ranger Naturalists, whatever you want to call them. And there's good reason for it, because everybody likes to come up here. We have very accessible alpine zones. Our mountains are shorter. If you've looked at all those lists that hiking guides print, we've got the little mountains in northern New England and New York. But we have good alpine zones, because we've got some good exposure to northern and southwestern elements, I guess. So even though Mansfield only tops out at 4,393 or 4,395 (depending on whose yardstick you're using), we have some good places to go visit, and they get heavily used.

This is one of the past issues with Mt. Mansfield: this is the summit house, which was based below the nose in approximately the same location as the summit station is today, at the top of the toll road. Take a good look at that picture, because I'll probably at some point ramble back into the impacts and the recovery of Vermont's alpine zone. New England is blessed with lots of rain most summers, and things grow back. That'll be something I hope to return to. You can see there's a lot of impact there. My understanding is that the summit house burned in the mid-'60's – '63 or '64, give or take.

Here's some of the modern issues with Mt. Mansfield. The TV towers. The gondola station just provides more access. But the gondola station is the high point of Stowe Mountain Resort's ski

area on the mountain, along with the Octagon, which is a couple hundred feet below the summit house, here. So you can see, the ski area's below the ridgeline. Some of these issues, like ski areas and towers, though, are sources of financial wherewithal, I hate to say it – no, 'hate to say it' is the wrong word. There's cooperative management that includes the major users of the mountain. UVM owns the mountain, they lease to the towers (so that's a source of income), the ski area does fairly well most winters – I suspect they did very well this winter. Those are viable and useful sources of cooperative partnerships and funding. The state of Vermont and the U.S. Forest Service also help us manage alpine zones in Vermont, and they both recognize the importance of providing funding for steward programs, as well. But the agency money's getting tighter; there are more priorities. Ben's comment about the politics is very true: that there are a lot of other places clamoring for some of that funding, and that will be a constant issue for us and for everybody in this room, to help take care of the places we hold dear.

More people on the chin. We have summer use issue like this. It's become much more popular to go out in the winter. There's a lot more good equipment out there, so in Vermont, we have a lot of people bagging their winter 4,000-footers and the like, because the snowshoes and the crampons are much more readily available than they were twenty years ago, thirty years ago. In the wintertime, trails are harder to follow, so they go pretty much everywhere. They follow the path of least resistance, which is basically how the hiking trails found their way in these mountains, as well.

And yes, one of the things we do besides the summit program – the Summit Caretaker Program – is signs. I have a college education; I like to read; I'm tired of all the signs we see. And I'm not sure how many people read them. The messages usually aren't too bad -- this one's pretty minor – and I think that we do see some incremental adherence to the message. I see more and more people whose dogs are already leashed, which is a great thing. But Vermont, and probably other places -- I like to refer to Vermont as a dog state: we probably have a dog for every two hikers in the busy season. Dogs are a big issue, primarily because most people don't think they're a big issue. They think their dog is a wonderful dog, and most of the time they're right. But dogs tend not to follow trails, kindof like children -- they tend not to follow trails either – and some adults. So, I think dealing with trail wandering is definitely an issue, particularly on Mansfield, where the terrain, except in places where the trees have grown in pretty tight, is very forgiving and very accessible. It's kindof like Cadillac in that degree, in that it's a very ledgy mountain – there aren't a lot of jumbles of boulders that would discourage people from spreading around the summit tops. It's ledgy, it's more like Monadnock. You can pretty much go wherever you want. Cairns are an issue. We do use cairns and blazes and summit caretakers, but people still leave the trails. Sometimes the trails aren't marked as well as they should be, and sometimes people just ignore the blazes and want to go find somewhere else. Frequently, the people that wander off-trail do the most damage, because that's where the real lush alpine vegetation exists.

That's Frenchman's Pile, something else that you may not see tomorrow. We do use scree walls to some degree, but I don't know, I'm not sure scree walls are really effective. In this case, it might be, because you can see the sedge is growing pretty well to the outside of the wall. But I find that on Mansfield, a lot of people like to pick things up and throw them around, so they can undo a lot of good hard work in an awful short time period.

Sometimes I go out and rub elbows with the hiking public and test the heavy-duty punchion. This kind of punchion is not real natural, but it's very sturdy, and I've found that people are using it. The previous boards that were up there, which was advantageous at the time – because there was nothing at one point, apparently – they were very rickety, and people tended to avoid them. So

we've come in and put in the three-inch-thick, rough-cut hemlock. It's not treated, but up in that environment, it should last quite awhile. We're finding that people are really using this punchion and that the sedge is coming back in around it.

Primarily, the effort that we make is the face-to-face contact between caretakers and visitors. We've found that the people coming up the toll road are probably more receptive to the caretakers' message. They didn't hike up; they're actually looking for more information. The hikers frequently would have the attitude that Rebecca talked about, not really looking for people to come up to them and talk to them. It's a constant effort to figure out, for the summit caretakers, which people really need to be talked to. We try to impress upon them to lay back a little bit. I think that our caretakers are developing a sense of who needs the shpiel and who doesn't. The nice thing about Mansfield being a short, little mountain that's easily accessible is we have a lot of repeat visitors. They already know what's going on. And generally the people that are goofers, dressed like I was on the punchion there, you know they probably need to be talked to for a minute or two. So it's a balancing act between who needs to hear the message, how much of the message they need to hear, and whether or not they need to hear it at all.

But the summit caretaker program, which has been staffed by Green Mountain Club for thirty years, is working, I think. It's probably the best thing – the Watermans' book, I'm flattered to say, regards it as the best way to contact the public and let them know what's going on. We do meld some volunteers into the program. I'm not sure how a strictly volunteer program works; I would think that there might be some consistency issues and even some dependability issues. Even with paid staff, sometimes they're not there when they're supposed to be, and I found out about it later. But generally, staff people provide a consistent presence, consistent message, a good sense of who needs to hear what we have to say. We try to have the volunteers shadow the staff to learn a little more about who to talk to and when to talk to them. We find that that works best.

We generally get fifty or sixty volunteer days on Mt. Mansfield to augment our caretaker presence. Our summit caretaker presence is four caretakers across a two-mile ridgeline over the course of a seven-day week, each having two days off. (The math gets fun to do, and pretty soon you get bored with it.) You need to maintain a pretty consistent presence on weekends, and then you still need a couple people up there every day of the week, because you never know when the visitation's going to be highest. Obviously, weekends are busy. Foliage season is usually our peak time – three-day holiday weekends (Columbus Day is our nightmare). But even mid-week, if you've got a nice day, you're going to get people up there, particularly during vacation season. But if it rains in mid-August, you could have a real quiet day. So, it varies.

We practice Leave No Trace, but we do worry about sunburned feet with our barefoot caretakers.

The toll road is the place where a lot of people are looking for the message, and they want to know what's going on.

Signs. We've adopted the White Mountain National Forest sign, which seems to be as pleasant a sign as you can get (of course, then we put the 'Please Keep Out' signs right next to it, so it's a balancing act in terms of the message). Camel's Hump is a little tougher, because it's a very small alpine zone, with half a dozen trails coming up to it, and it tends to get hammered on the nice days. The caretaker's really doing triage up there. The other issue with signs is vandalism. We haven't found a good way to keep signs up. They're constantly moving, getting tossed, being ignored. In the wintertime, we even pull them off, and that's beginning to create enough of a safety issue that I think we're going to have to come up with some vandal-proof sign designs. If anybody's found a way to put signs up that withstands the test of the public, I'd love to hear about

it. For the most part, with some of these signs, we've been fighting the weather, but I think the human element is probably more of an issue than the weather is.

This is a good example of Mansfield's ridgeline and the Long Trail across it. It's very ledgy, the vegetation is fairly lush, even on the edges of the trail. It's not a bad hiking experience. This shot is taken Annual Meeting Day, June 10th. June's nice – the black flies are out, that keeps a number of people away. It's also when mostly locals are hiking, so they're very good about leashing their dogs. It's a good time to be up there.

We've got two miles of ridgeline, so you can spread the public out. I'm against the carrying capacity thing, in terms of alpine zone management. I think it's useful in campsite management, perhaps, but I'm not sure I want to tell people, "You can't go up Mt. Mansfield." I don't think we're there yet, thankfully; we don't have Cadillac Mountain's issues, at this point.

You can see the punchion – people are walking along this ledge, but then when they leave the ledge, they're right on the trail, so I think the punchion has actually worked fairly well.

But we still have issues. You can see the blaze route to the left of the picture and that people are walking to the right of the picture. We still have things like that going on. I don't know what the answer is. I'm not a big fan of cairns on Mt. Mansfield. We don't have a lot of loose rock, and loose rock, I find, is anchor points for alpine vegetation, so I almost feel like building cairns is defeating the purpose of protecting the alpine vegetation. In my opinion, a few extra blazes is not such a bad tradeoff, if you will. Geologically, the blazes will go away. It's a matter of what sort of experiential impact you want to have on the hiking public. But cairns don't last up here. People take them apart. People rebuild them in places where they shouldn't be, which can lead people to wander away from the trail. I think a few extra white blazes isn't such a bad thing. In this kind of landscape, you wouldn't see too many white blazes for any great length of time on your walk along the ridge.

Remember the picture of the summit house? The summit house used to be right in this area. This is my point: the alpine zone on Mt. Mansfield seems to have some pretty exceptional resilience. People say that the top of Mansfield is greener than it's ever been. I agree with the idea that scientists can provide us with information about threshold abuse and even some winter impacts; I'd like to hear more about that. But I think we also have to consider some philosophy, and that is, "What is going on up here? Is the alpine zone receding through nature? Is global warming actually - and the evolution of the New England forests – basically dealing a death blow to the alpine zone?" On Mt. Washington, it could be many thousands of years still, but Mansfield's a little closer to returning to the boreal forest. It's not a significantly large alpine zone, and the forest has already encroached across the ridgeline at 3,800 feet; the summit's only 500 feet higher. I'm not sure. I think that the top will always be open for as long as we'll ever know it, and as long as our grandchildren will ever know it. But I think that we do have forests coming back, and I wonder if that's something that could be measurable over time or not. Is it worth investing a lot of effort into restoring alpines? I'm not sure about restoration, myself. There may be places where it's useful, but…

Most of Mansfield's alpine zone, or alpine vegetation, is in different clumps, generally off-trail, in crevices, in places where most people aren't going. Most of the hiking trail is open ledge and enjoyed by many people. I think that the hiking trail and the alpine community can coexist, and that the forest is moving back in. I think that we're doing a good job with the caretaker presence we have, in making people understand the alpine zone and respect it. I'd like to see dogs leashed, and more and more people are leashing them. (I'm not sure that three dogs on a leash is such a good idea.)

Volunteer involvement. We do use them in the caretaker program. We also involve them in some of the trail efforts. Building the punchion is back-breaking work, and having a lot of UVM volunteers -- and St. Mike's College and other hikers -- involved is a good thing. So, anytime we can do that, that's a bonus. If there's better ways to use volunteers, I'd love to hear about it. Integrating them with the caretaker program and doing some serious trail work, to reduce the impact, is a positive thing.

Some people talk about, "Let's do guided walks." This isn't a guided walk – I'm kindof double-crossing Rick, here, doing one of his caretaker talks at the beginning of the season. But this would maybe be an example of what a guided walk would look like on Mansfield. I don't think it's such a bad thing. It would reach more people than a sign would. It would reach more people than a caretaker would. And it might give people something else to do in the Stowe area before they walked up and took an unguided walk on Mansfield themselves. There are concerns that guided tours would bring more people to the alpine zone. But I think that anything that builds the visitor's appreciation for alpine zones – particularly visitors that are going to visit a lot of other alpine zones in their mountain travels – would be a positive thing, and I'd like to see that happen in different places through the northeast.

That's Drett [?] Rock, another thing that you'll see up close. You may not get the context of the ledge type that it's on. There is a dwarf bearberry willow in that rock – in the crevice of the rock. It's the only one that I'm aware of on the mountain. So, the plants can be very singular up there, so it's important to take care of them.

Some thriving alpine vegetation off-trail, between different rocks. I think Vermont's alpine zone is in good shape. I'd like to see it get better. I think that with the partnerships we've forged with UVM, Stowe Mountain Resort, U.S. Forest Service, and Forest Parks & Recreation, we're continuing toward that goal. Thanks.

Lars: Alright, we've got one more. Kathy? [Someone asks, "Can we stretch first?"] Let's not stretch yet, let's stretch after Kathy's done, briefly, and then back into the discussion after that.

Kathy: That's the danger with going last. If you guys are starting to get tired, I'll try to be fast, but everybody's triggered so many thoughts in my head that I might be time-challenged.

Lars: Your talk has totally changed.

Kathy: My talk has totally changed, now. My thoughts *were* ordered, so… yeah, give me ten minutes.

First, I'd like to say that there's a lot of people here from the Adirondacks that can help me out when we get into the discussion. There's three stewards here with us, one a current steward and two – no, three – people who have stewarded before. Lars, who was an intern at one point for the Adirondack Nature Conservancy and did a fair amount of work in the alpine. And there's a whole slew of other people that can help us out. Tim Tierney [?] who's in the back, is with the Adirondack Mountain Club too, and can talk a lot more about trail work that they've been doing.

I'm going to focus mostly on the Summit Stewardship Program, which is what we call our educational program in the Adirondacks. How many here have been to the Adirondacks? More than I thought. Okay, that pond gets in the way a lot of times with people coming across. Oh, and Dave -- I'm sorry -- Dave Gillespie with the Canadian Alpine Club.

We have, apparently, 46 peaks that are over 4,000 feet. Not all of those have alpine vegetation on them. We have about twenty mountains that have alpine vegetation on them, and of those twenty, thirteen have less than an acre. So we don't have a whole lot of healthy alpine vegetation, and it's scattered about. Almost all of our alpine vegetation is within an area called the High Peaks, which most of you are familiar with; they're the nice, pretty, high peaks in the area. It's a management area for the DEC. New York State owns all the land within the High Peaks and owns Mt. Marcy, Algonquin, all of those high peaks. Because they own all that, they have a Unit Management Plan that goes with it. So we have some rules and regulations that we have to abide by, and it's actually been helpful. We've helped them develop the Unit Management Plan and implement some rules that have been helpful for getting the alpine area protected. I'm happy to say that it is now a rule, a regulation, that your dog has to be leashed. It is, actually, punishable by fine. Contrary to Vermont, though, it's our locals that aren't abiding by it. Our locals don't like the fact that they can't just let their dog go out and run anymore, and it's out-of-towners who are actually paying attention to it.

Group size is also an issue -- and we'll talk about carrying capacity a little bit later -- but group size is an issue in that we now have a limitation that a group can be no more than fifteen people (day hike use). We'll see how that works. I think most of our groups – there are groups that come, buses that come down with larger groups of people, and break up with one leader, fifteen people, and then separate and go fifteen minutes later with the next group of fifteen people, and so it's sortof pointless. The regulation is actually written so that they can't do that, but we're not sure if it's very enforceable.

Following some of the questions that Lars had asked me to address with an optimal program. I think we're getting really close to having the optimal program. Mostly in that we stay flexible and we keep letting it evolve as the program evolves, as the needs evolve. We are a little bit different in that we are a partnership with three organizations: it's the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Nature Conservancy and the state DEC. DEC owns the land. Mountain Club is on location and does land management, trail work; they're right there, they're right in the presence. The reason that Conservancy got involved with this in the first place is because there's rare species up there, and we realized that even though New York State owns the land, they weren't being protected, and we felt like we needed to get involved with an educational presence.

I'm inherently lazy, and I came from UVM and knew about the Ridge Runner program, and just mimicked it when I started up in the Adirondacks. The other person that was involved with starting the program up, another person that was involved also, was a Ridge Runner, so helped us design and mimic it and mold it according to what we needed in the Adirondacks. We set it up so that we have four stewards, and we concentrate on two peaks. We concentrate on Mt. Marcy, which is an eight-mile hike in, and Algonquin, which is a four-mile hike in. These are the two hikes that most everybody will go to if they're first-time hikers in the Adirondacks, and we figured if we get people on their first time out, they can learn the ethic, they can take it elsewhere. We try to rotate our stewards to other places, because they go a little stir crazy just being on Marcy and Algonquin all the time.

User numbers. Leslie was saying on an average, nice, hot August day we'd get, maybe, 80 people midweek. We've gotten as many as – one Labor Day weekend we got 400. That's probably our maximum. Two hundred on a good holiday weekend. For us, Columbus Day weekend is the killer too, because it's a Canadian holiday weekend as well as a U.S. holiday weekend.

We're not just doing education; our Mountain Club is also doing a whole lot of trail work. And the Stewards are also doing some trail work: they're doing cairn-building. We don't seem to have the same problem of people throwing stones and rebuilding cairns that other people have. A little bit… We've actually had someone carrying up rocks: unintentionally bringing them up for us, because he was training for some event and took them out, and was trying to discreetly drop them, and we were trying to thank him for bringing rocks up. We have a Rock Carry Program where we have a pile of rocks at the trailhead, and we ask people to bring them up and drop them at the summit. We'll talk about the success of that a little bit. We've also done scree walls [tape interrupted: end of side A]

…tend to back down and be a little less offended about it. We find it works easily because we can move it, it's easy to put up, it's easy to take down, the rocks don't get moved. We have a shortage of rocks on the summits, anyway. We have actually found it's been useful. And we don't put strings up high; we have strings that are the same height as our scree walls; they're down low.

The partnership is key for our program. It really wouldn't work without the partnership. At the same time, the partnership is the most challenging part of the program. Tim and I will attest to that, because we're two of the major partners. Working out all the coordination, and who's doing what and who's saying what, is just annoying at times, but it couldn't happen without the partnership. We are actually considering adding a fourth partner, which, considering how hard it is sometimes to deal with three partners, you'd be surprised that we'd even think about adding a fourth partner. But we have a fourth partner right now who's actually approached us – or, potential partner -- who's approached us with a huge financial contribution and may basically become our Sugar Daddy. They don't want to get involved with management, they just want to get involved with doing fundraising and endowing our Summit Stewardship Program. So we may actually get our program endowed before a two-year period, and we're really hopeful. That's a $400,000 endowment.

Staffing. We have four stewards regularly. We have interns sometimes; interns have to go through the same training program that other people go through. Volunteers: we have done different things with volunteers over the years. The most successful is to have a volunteer link up with an existing staff person in what we call 'team stewarding.' So that person is being trained by a steward, they're up there for a couple days, they know what's going on, and then if they want to go off on their own for another day -- or to a different peak -- they can. And they've gotten the training, and we make sure that they're saying the right thing. There's too many mistakes to be made. The difficulty we've had with volunteers is getting them the proper training. We go through an extensive training period for our staff people, and we don't take the same time with our volunteers. They don't know as much about the vegetation, they don't know as much about the organizations, they're more likely to offend somebody. We're careful with our volunteers.

One of the things that's been very successful with our program, one of the many things – we're lucky in that we have isolated peaks. The only mountain that we have with alpine vegetation is Whiteface -- with a road going up it -- and most of the hikers that are coming up to our mountains are vested already: have heard about it somehow, are involved or interested in protecting the resource that they're using. So we've got a different crowd of people. We've got people that are working pretty hard, usually dressed appropriately, or experienced to some degree. The public is becoming very involved with it. Now that we're twelve years into the program, we're finding that we do run into people who've heard the message already, and we just say,

"Thank you very much for walking on the rocks," and we leave them alone. We try not to be real offensive, in their face, or anything like that. If people want more information, they can get it.

One of the things we've done better at, in the last couple of years (and I think Dave will attest to it), is reaching French Canadian hikers. We now have a bilingual web page, we have bilingual signs, we have a bilingual brochure. We're really trying hard to reach out to the French Canadian user groups. Dave, with the Canadian Alpine Club, has been extremely helpful at getting us to meet up with the user groups – going up to Montreal and spending a day with the heads of these user groups, and the Canadian Alpine Club, to tell them what the rules and regulations are, to educate them about what we would like to see happen in the Adirondacks. We have a history, unfortunately, of badmouthing the French Canadians as they come down and trample the mountains of the Adirondacks. This has proven to be anything but true, in that the second you go up to Montreal and you're meeting with these groups, they're saying, "Please tell us what to do. We 're just looking for information. We don't know how to find it; we're having trouble." And as soon as we get the information out to them, we're finding drastic changes. Those of you who have been like us and have been badmouthing French Canadians, please take word from me that they're a good group, they want to do the right thing. And they have a better network of user groups, too, so it's easier to reach them than it is to reach the Americans. We get the New York City crowd and the Montreal crowd.

Having the Rock Carriers has really included the public also. We have rocks at the trailhead at Mt. Marcy and Algonquin. We have a sign saying, "If you'd like to carry a rock up, we sure would appreciate it. When you get to the top, there's a place for you to drop it. There's also a steward to talk to and to say why you've just bothered to carry a rock up." We need rocks on the summit. We don't have an abundance of rocks. We have a lot of stabilization work that we would like to do, and we just don't have a supply of rocks to do it with. We're contemplating, next year, flying in rocks and having them dropped so that we can do just rock stabilization work. And I think we're going to do it.

Huge information need, for me. Historically, there's been restoration work done in the alpine area with meadows. There's been a seed-lime fertilizer mixture that Dr. Ketchlidge [?] put together and put on the summits. It didn't have all native species. I need to know what native species are easy to propagate, easy to collect seed from, when to collect the seed, how to go about doing it so that we can do more restoration work with the native seeds. So that we can make sure that we're using the proper stuff and stuff that will start up and grow real quickly. Ketchlidge's [?] work did wonders; there's some photos over there that will show you areas that have recovered. And for the most part, his non-native stuff has disappeared. But if I could get information on how to do restoration work with all native species, I'd be ecstatic. I've also managed to get it into the Unit Management Plan that we have to do all restoration work, now, with native species. So I've managed to get the rule changed, and now we have to live up to it.

In a sense, we do have sacrificial mountains, in that we have Whiteface with our road up it. We tried having a steward up there, and that was very unsuccessful for us. The steward spent more time telling people what restaurant to go to, and how deep Lake Placid was, than anything else. So what we've done is, again – we're concentrating on two peaks that we know people are going to first, and we're just teaching people there. We're very careful when we approach people: we're saying that we don't think this is intuitive, we don't expect you to have known this kind of behavior before you got here, don't worry about what you're doing now, but next time, when you come out, will you be careful where you walk. So that they don't feel bad about what they're

doing this time, but next time… Really make sure you know what you're doing. Bring a leash if you didn't, next time, and do this. And also, just tell other people.

I'm trying to think about some of the other stuff that I wanted to talk about. It sounds like we're really blessed in that we are a little bit more isolated with some of the alpine areas here, and that it's harder for people to get to. And although we might not have as much, it looks like it's a little bit easier for us to manage. Again, management, for us, is not just the information and education; there is some stabilization and restoration work and there's a lot of trail work that is done, as well.

Anything else that anybody else would go for? I'd like to get people's discussions going and not spend as much time with us just talking to them. People are getting tired.

Lars: Okay, good. Thanks, Kathy. Okay, I heard a need to stretch, so we can do that, but I really want to have that contained within this space. I want to get the discussion going. I want to have our speakers, who did a great job throwing a lot of stuff at you, blend back into the crowd and have us all start to discuss this stuff for the next hour or so. We'll stretch for a couple minutes -- two minutes or so -- and then I'm going to start.