

Who makes Decisions at Three Mile?

Making Committee Work Transparent

Three Mile's greatest expression of volunteer philosophy might be in how it is governed. As one of only three volunteer-managed facilities belonging to the AMC, Three Mile is operated by a committee of volunteers. These 13 volunteers are drawn from the island's camper population and commit to serving four-year (staggered) terms. Each new recruit brings to the committee a variety of professional and personal skills, such as in finance, law, construction, management, literary and environmental education.

Led by Committee Chair Rick Tjader, the group makes policy decisions, hires the managers, decides on salaries and rates, manages maintenance concerns, and develops the island's environmental, conservation and volunteer programs. All committee members are assigned to one of three sub-committees (management, maintenance or programs).

With a tight annual operating budget, on-going maintenance for the island's sizeable capital assets in buildings and boats, and a complicated island-based infrastructure, the running of Three Mile is not simple. TMI is fortunate in the long memories, professionalism and devotion of these stewards.

To illustrate some of the work involved in managing the island, three years ago the island underwent a life/safety audit which resulted in about 100 small and large items that needed addressing to bring the century-old camp up to code. When broken down, these code citations basically amounted to TMI needing a new electrical system (including new cable laid down from the main land), a new stove hood and carpentry work to make the kitchen code compliant, the removal of lofts from the croo cabins, and smoke detectors for all cabins as well as a host of other carpentry details. Many of these problems have been addressed, with the electrical piece on-going over the next couple years. Over all, this work amounts to a significant capital outlay in repairs as well as many, many hours of work for maintenance committee and other volunteers.

To manage these large capital expenses, TMI's annual budget goal is to set aside a fixed amount for a cash reserve account created to address the island's capital improvement needs. To ensure this amount is adequate, a 25-year forecast of the island's anticipated capital expenses has been created. This spreadsheet includes such items as a new Appie anticipated for the year 2010 or tennis court repairs for next summer. The BlueBird may be replaced this summer, work on the leach field in 2012 and a dedicated TMI parking lot in the next 15 years.

These are some of the duties of the maintenance sub-committee, whose members sometimes specialize in specific areas—like bat proofing or, in the case of Bob

Armstrong, (King of the Clivus), in learning the fussy ins and outs of waste decomposition.

The management sub-committee benefits from Sally Steele's professional bookkeeping and Neil Burns legal advice. While the programs sub-committee, which oversees the island's educational programs, volunteerism, conservation issues, and monitors Lake Winnepesaukee's environmental concerns, is fortunate to have members with backgrounds in environmental education.

The 2005 committee:

Committee Chair

Rick Tjader

Management

Kai Bicknell (chair)

Neil Burns

Colleen Gillard

Sally Steele

Maintenance

Bob Armstrong (chair)

Matt Cartmel

Rick Dumont

Jim Wilson

Programs

Heidi Barker

Tersh Palmer (chair)

Carrie Sinish

David Sobel

Non-voting members of the committee include summer managers, David Grant and Joy Bloomfield, off-season manager Frank Woods, registrar Sally Defoe Wilson and sometimes AMC liaison Pete Madeira. These three annual day-long meetings also occasionally receive reports from volunteers such as maintenance czar Stroker Rogovin or electricity maven Jack Trickey.

Three Mile campers interested in serving on the committee should pass their names on to summer management or current committee members.