

Cold River Camp Land Management Forest Management July 2019

Cold River Camp owns about 86 acres of land, much of which is forested. It is the Camp's responsibility to manage this land. In keeping with AMC's mission, such management focuses on ecological stewardship. The land also serves the important purpose of being a base for Camp operations. Proper stewardship means balancing the needs of Camp and the ecology of the area.

Over Camp's 100-year history, there have been some forest land management activities around Camp, including a few timber harvests and thinning to maintain views. The committee sees the need now for updating land management with a view looking forward. To that end, in the winter of 2018-2019, with the help of a land management subcommittee consisting of Committee Member Tom Weinreich, Susan Dovell, and Ned Beecher, the Committee engaged ecology forester Dan Stepanauskas to evaluate the Cold River Camp property and develop a report with suggested management options. That report was provided to the Camp Committee in April 2019 and is available on the Camp's website. Steps are now being taken to plan and eventually implement recommendations from the report over the next decade. Most of the forested portions of the property will remain wild, of course, with possible minor improvements to enhance plant and wildlife health and diversity.

With regards to the developed portion of the Camp property, where Camp activities occur, land management involves ensuring access and safety for guests, along with maintaining aesthetically-pleasing natural surroundings that, whenever possible, require minimal upkeep. Different priorities and efforts are undertaken here, separate from the forest management plan: regular mowing, pruning, tree planting and removal, blueberry field maintenance, and maintenance of access ways. These activities are coordinated by Cheryl Poirier (blueberry maintenance), the garden subcommittee, and others (e.g. Bob and Emma Crane, who maintain the nature trail). The land management subcommittee coordinates with these ongoing efforts.

One area where forest management and the needs of Camp intersect is the maintenance of views to the mountains and the aesthetics of the edges of the forested areas. Thus, a priority for 2019 – 2020, stemming from feedback from Campers and the new forest management plan, is to thin some of the tallest pines at the west side of Camp, near Route 113, to maintain some view to the Baldface Range. As the old photo over the west windows of the Lodge shows, 100 years ago the Camp was mostly field, and even the base of the Baldface massif was visible from Camp.



In July 2019, forester Stepanauskas and Ned Beecher began to identify a harvest of White Pine that would happen in the winter of 2019 to 2020. Arrangements are needed well in advance, to ensure engagement of the right logger, in which Mr. Stepanauskas has confidence to do a good job. White Pine grows very well and abundantly on the sandy terrace land of the Camp property. They are the tallest trees blocking the views to the west. Below them is a stand of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees that provide a solid screen between Camp and the road, making it an ideal time to remove much of the highest growth and leave the middle and lower stories. The goal is to remove the remaining tall pines in the center of the view towards the Baldfaces and thin some at the edges of that view area. This selective timber harvest will be an initial step and will lead to opportunities to further evaluate and plan for future management of that and other viewsheds at Camp.

Meanwhile, during the next year, the land management subcommittee will further work with Mr. Stepanauskas and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Conway on plans for wildlife enhancement and forest improvement on other portions of the Camp property over the next decade. NRCS provides guidance and sometimes partial grant funding for conservation activities, and Cold River Camp will take advantage of that expertise and opportunity, where appropriate. However, the inclination of the Committee, as advised by Mr. Stepanauskas, is to continue to take minimal actions and allow natural processes to play out on the undeveloped parts of the property. The Committee and subcommittee on land management is sensitive to the diversity of perspectives in the Camp community and will proceed carefully and stepwise, allowing for feedback and discussion each step of the way. Feel free to contact any of the subcommittee members whose contact information is provided below:

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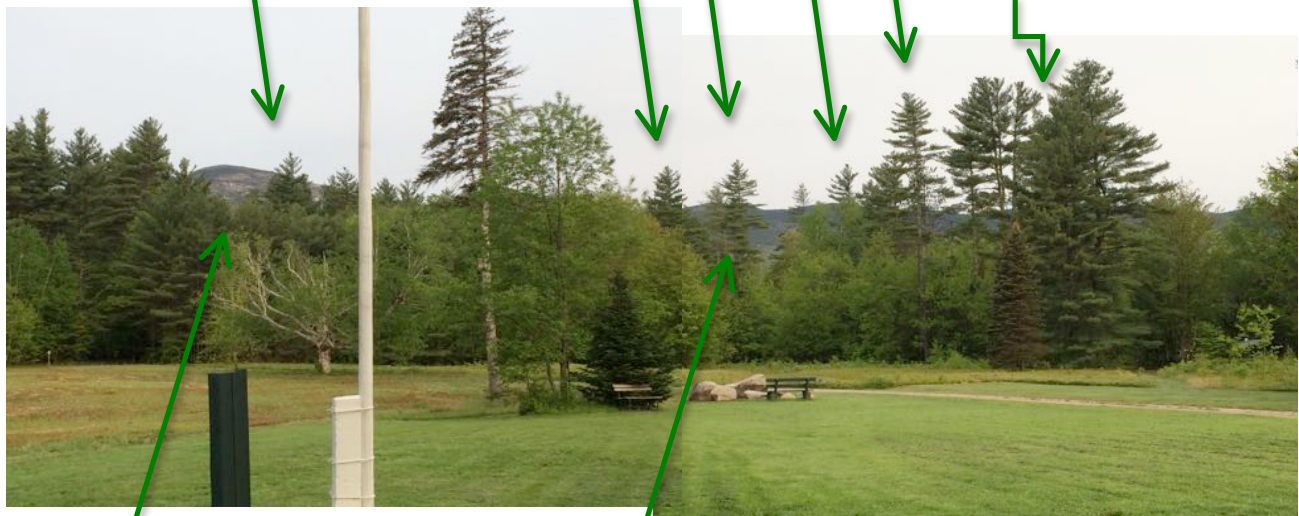
Ned Beecher: offseasonsignup@gmail.com

View west from the Cold River Camp south lawn, to the Baldface Range, June 1, 2019

Left side of view area, from which some of the tallest pines will be removed.

Middle of view area, from which all the remaining tallest pines will be removed.

Right side of view area, from which a few of the remaining tallest pines will be removed.



South Baldface

North Baldface