

**Schoodic Shuttle Service Meeting
Acadia National Park Headquarters
November 25, 2003
Notes**

Attending: John Kelly, Len Bobinchock, Peter Drinkwater, Barbara Shanahan, Paul Murphy, Tom Mayer, Bill ..., Bill Stone, Jim Fisher, Steve Pagels, Tom Crikelair

Agenda

- What worked, what didn't
- What to do next year

Tom Crikelair – Summary of 2003 Operation - Just the facts

- most boarding occurred at the ferry terminal, village, and Schoodic Point
- averaged 27 riders per day
- (norm would be 100 riders per day, usually takes 3 years to reach stable ridership)
- ridership grew over the summer
- the fog played a role in reducing ridership

Prospect Harbor - exclusive access to light house on Lobster Festival accounts for a big part of the entire season's riders

- no businesses were operating in Prospect Harbor this summer
- downeast deli and a new bed and breakfast are opening now
- the service would be easier to operate if the turn-around happened in Birch Harbor

Use of the bus was primarily people from the ferry and a small number of people who sailed into Winter Harbor.

Riders tended to arrive late in the morning, make one lunch stop at Schoodic Point and return to the village or the ferry.

Local feedback on the bus

- Bill Stone - rode the bus a few times and was alone or few riders
- Tom Mayer - rode a bike and put the bike on the bus for the section on Route 186. The bus was well received. Too bad there were not more riders. People commented that there were no riders. The cost of riding the Ferry reduced use of the bus.
- Peter - the bus wasn't very good looking. There weren't any complaints. There were concerns before it ran, but the small size of the bus helped.
- Barbara - Sullivan has quite a few businesses on Route 1. People called her business asking about a bus to the Park. Didn't have enough information about the service at her business. Would like to consider a morning run that picks up people in Sullivan.
- Paul -probably need to have more publicity. The bus never actually left Schoodic Point, so there is no run that goes through Sullivan.
- Tom Crikelair - not promoting the bus off Island because of the lack of parking for day users.

The on-board survey showed pretty high satisfaction. The bus was a "junker" and probably hurt. The Jax commuter buses were also less than desired.

"Multiple-uses fills a bus." Can't rely on just one type of user.

What would it take to put an Island Explorer bus in Winter Harbor? Might use one of the original buses.

Steve Pagels-

- Someone came over from Schoodic with an RV, couldn't park, drove back to Schoodic and rode the ferry.
- Fog was a major impediment to ridership
- Ridership went both ways. The number coming from Schoodic has been building. Had some regular commuters from Schoodic to Bar Harbor.
- During the peak - ran two boats.
- Other uses were quite interesting - people going to parties
- Ridership continued after the bus service ended. Bicycling use increased.
- The docking facility in Winter Harbor is undergoing some changes. They are moving more to fishing and away from being a marina.
- Need to have about double the ridership to make this a viable operation. Better weather would have brought in nearly double.
- Numbers would have been worse were there no bus.

Len and John

- shuttle did not create negative impacts on the park
- the byway may be causing problems????

Paul

- the bus cost about \$12 per ride
- funds were contributed by multiple sources
- Brad Vassey thinks that the Town of Gouldsboro will consider contributing \$650 next year.
- Town of Winter Harbor can be approached during the regular budgetary process.

John Kelly

- need to have a parking area for people visiting the park
- this promotion may have generated more cars than it displaced

Len

- would like to have a parking facility in Winter Harbor.
- if a bus were coming from Ellsworth, it would be good to pick up people on the route (Paul noted that a Trenton/Ellsworth run would add about \$6,000 in cost for the season).

Jim

- What is the fate of the South Gouldsboro ferry concept?
- Byway has funds
- No one knows of any activity.

Paul - the sense of the group that we should run it again if funds are available

- Steve - willing to contribute again
- Len - park will contribute again, but wants a broad partnership
- Ken - FOA will contribute again
- Peter - local businesses are likely to contribute again

- Bill - SAF doesn't have money, but will help as possible. Gouldsboro support may depend on Prospect Harbor.

Tom

- Prospect Harbor
- Parking facility in Winter Harbor - affect on the schedule
- Do we start later in the morning - reduce costs. Might permit pushing the lunch break off-of peak.

Steve - hate to remove the Prospect Harbor section. It is very scenic and will have more businesses. Also, Steve enjoyed having park rangers on the ferry.

More discussion ensued about the particulars of where the bus can turn around, where we can put a park and ride lot or find park and ride spaces.

Type of equipment

- Paul - expecting additional busses to be delivered. Might use a Blue Bird Tran shuttle with appropriate paint. Three buses will be leased from a ski resort. They will have snowboarding wraps on the back.
- Hoping for another five propane buses, but those are not likely to be available in June.
- Would employ ITS technology in the Schoodic Area
- May be able to use the Sunday River buses for the Jax commuter run.

Marketing

- Steve will update his ferry brochure
- Peter is working on the Schoodic Chamber brochure and will include bus route and stops. Steve noted that the Schoodic Brochure was popular on the Bar Harbor end.
- Tom Crikelair - will run the Island Explorer Schedule again and will include the Schoodic promotion.
- Jim - the byway has funds for a brochure. Need to figure out how to promote the byway without pushing more cars into the park. Will run this by the Park.
- Friends of Schoodic - participation with the ferry

Ken - bus is fare free. The park entrance fees pay most of the cost. Entrance fee is going up \$10. Need to promote the park passes on the Schoodic side. Need to think long range about mandatory buses in some parts of the park, possibly Schoodic. Might work with some exceptions for SERC.

John - ANP has received another round of transportation research funding.

Assignments

Funding - All

Equipment - Paul

Parking

- Peter for the IGA
- Peter, Barbara for the School
- Steve, Jim and Warren - harbor parking

Marketing

- various - ANP would like to review
- Tom and Paul - suggest that Steve look at promotional rates for repeat use, family use.
Steve noted that some of the block ticket rates were misused by riders. This run is one of the least cost boat rides in the area.

Time line

- Chamber brochure - goes to press in January
- Need to communicate
- Meet again in January
- April - printing the Island Explorer Schedule
- possible next meeting late January as needed.