

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 three volunteer-managed full-service camps belonging to the AMC, Three Mile is operated by a committee of volunteers. These 14 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, marketing and environmental education.

Led by current Committee Chair Neil Burns, 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. With the exception of the Chair and the Treasurer, all committee members are assigned to one of three sub-committees (management, maintenance, or outreach & education).

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, in 2002 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. All of these problems have been addressed, with the electrical piece taking place over several years. Over all, this work amounted to a significant capital outlay in repairs as well as many, many hours of work for the 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 boat and motor replacement schedule, cabin roofs and tennis court repairs.

These are some of the duties of the maintenance sub-committee, whose members sometimes specialize in specific areas—like batproofing or, in the case of former committee member Bob Armstrong (King of the Clivus), learning the fussy ins and outs of waste decomposition.

The management sub-committee concentrates on personnel, operations and governance, while the outreach & education sub-committee deals with the island's educational programs, volunteerism,

conservation issues, and monitors Lake Winnepesaukee's environmental concerns. The treasurer oversees the camp's finances, and provides expert planning to ensure future fiscal soundness.

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