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Mount Washington State Park honored on 50th anniversary

By DAN SEUFERT Union Leader Correspondent Oct 17, 2014



From left, Phil Bryce, director of the New Hampshire's Division of Parks and Recreation, Catherine Amidon, director, Plymouth State University's Museum of the White Mountains and Mike Pelchat, the park manager at Mount Washington State Park, pose next to historic summit signs and rock cairns taken from Mount Washington and erected at the Museum of the White Mountains for the park's 50th anniversary celebration.

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PLYMOUTH — Local and state officials were joined by residents and Plymouth State University faculty and students in honoring “The Jewel of New Hampshire,” Mount Washington State Park, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

The event was held at Plymouth State University's Museum of the White Mountains, paying tribute to the 6,288-foot peak, which is the highest in the Northeast and is famous for dangerously erratic weather. It is also one of the state's most popular tourist attractions.

Jeff Rose, commissioner of the Department of Resources and Economic Development, said the 59-acre Mount Washington State Park was inaugurated in 1964, and is considered one of the Granite State's premier state parks.

"It's really like a magnet that attracts people and memories, Rose said. "Not only is it the tallest mountain in the Northeast, but it's also one of the most distinguished. I think everyone in the Granite State has a real affinity for it, and it's great to recognize the state park's 50th anniversary."

Phil Bryce, director of the Division of Parks and Recreation, noted the state's iconic "highest mountain."

"Mount Washington is one of the defining features of the state of New Hampshire," Bryce said.

Catherine Amidon, director of the Museum of the White Mountains, noted Mount Washington is New Hampshire's most impressive natural resource.

"When you think of the White Mountains, the first thing you think about is Mount Washington," Amidon said. "It is the largest, it is the only 6,000-footer and, symbolically, for this state, it is our rockpile."

"The Old Man of the Mountain may be gone, but Mount Washington is still here, it will always be here, and will always be the center of attention, not just because of its history in terms of meteorology and geology, but also in terms of cultural history."

Mount Washington is located in the Presidential Range of the White Mountains, in the township of Sargent's Purchase. More than 300,000 people from around the world visit the park each year, by train, car, and on foot. The Sherman Adams building, a modern summit building, houses a visitor's center, a cafeteria, restrooms, gift shops, the Mount Washington Observatory and its museum. The historic Tip-Top House is located adjacent to the summit building.

Steve Barba, PSU's executive director of university relations, said the institution has many close ties with the mountain, including ongoing scientific and historical research.

“Plymouth State is very proud to be the host site for this wonderful celebration,” he said.

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