

INCREASING SAFETY CONCERNS AT THE WEST RARRLESNAKE MT. TRAILHEAD

There seems to be a three-pronged state responsibility here: We are talking a state-owned attraction (UNH conservation land the public is encouraged to use), a state maintained highway (Route 113*) and prolific state promotion Mt. Rattlesnake (tourism literature, posters, articles, mountain guidebooks, PSU student billboard, websites, etc.)

What is at stake? When two existing privately maintained off-highway lots become filled, hikers taking the nine-tenths mile hike to the 1243-ft high lookout ledge park vehicles up and down the highway shoulders outside the white "fog line" when possible but too often intruding out into the traveled way. This has the effect, when occurring along both sides of the highway, of squeezing 113 into to a single travel lane. This is especially a problem on fair weather weekends and special holidays like Memorial, July Fourth and Labor Day weekends as well as the Sandwich Fair time. (see census figures)

Traffic approaching, especially from Sandwich, due to a sharp curve and hilltop just before, has little warning of what may be in the road ahead; baby carriers, back packs, hikers lacing boots or exiting vehicles, dogs, etc. Only a small sign warns them. It is interesting to note (*) that Route 113 now has a new name -- *the Meredith ByPass*: To avoid the long and often badly backed-up Meredith hill to the lights there at Rtes. 25&3, truckers take instead 113 when coming south from Rtes. 16 to 25 to 109 in Moultonboro, then to I-93 Exit 24 (in Ashland) via Holderness bringing them past W. Rattlesnake -- at those very same busy times! This info is from conversations with truckers.

During summer of 2016 Rte. 113 was repaved to from Holderness to Tamworth. But the shoulders were not improved save some crushed stone here and there. Roadside brush was cut.

So what needs to be done before we have a serious accident at the trailhead?