Moosilauke Ravine Lodge
Frequently Asked Questions

**In addressing Lodge needs, what is our goal?**
We need a facility that will:

- continue to be student run;
- maintain the special atmosphere, feel and history of the current Lodge;
- include sufficient space and systems needed to support the current Lodge program, which has outgrown the current building;
- address significant structural deterioration (including in logs and foundation) of the current facility;
- reflect the College's commitment to environmental sustainability;
- meet current safety, accessibility and other code requirements; and
- stand on its own as a 100-year building that will continue to be a special place Dartmouth will be proud of for generations to come.

**Why replace and not renovate the Ravine Lodge?**
* For many years the College has been monitoring and attending to the declining conditions of the Lodge, replacing deteriorated logs as needed, shoring up the building in the winter, reinforcing the floor during trips and maintaining old building systems that are at the end of their expected lifespan and should be replaced or upgraded. The bottom line is that a recent feasibility study concluded that the renovation of the existing building, which would need to meet current safety, accessibility and building codes, would result in a structure that would be radically different than the existing Lodge. The usable space would have shrunk by more than 30%. The existing programmatic needs cannot be met with 30% less usable space.

* In early 2014 Maclay Architects was hired to thoroughly assess the building conditions and to also conduct a feasibility study to determine how the existing program could best be accommodated in either a renovated Lodge or a newly constructed Lodge. The condition assessment highlighted known safety issues and additional areas of structural and operational concern.

* The feasibility study assessed a renovation option that would meet current codes (life safety, accessibility and energy code) and maintain the existing program. The cost of renovation was comparable to the cost of building a new structure. However, the study determined that renovation of the existing building, which would need to meet the codes as previously noted, would result in a structure that would be radically different than the existing Lodge. As noted above, the usable space would have shrunk by more than 30%.
When was the replacement decision made?
The decision to replace the Lodge was made by senior college officials in the Winter of 2015, on the basis of the feasibility study, feedback from program and facilities staff, and feedback from the Moosilauke Advisory Committee, which has been advocating for the College to address Lodge needs for more than ten years.

What has been the planning process so far?
* The Moosilauke Advisory Committee (which includes alumni, College administrative and faculty representatives, the DOC president, the Lodge manager, and former Lodge managers) has been advocating for the importance of investing in the Ravine Lodge for well over a decade. Ongoing concerns have included space limitations for accommodating large groups (DOC Trips, for example) and existing programs and the deteriorating condition of the aging building.

* Over the past few years, the strong alumni and student support for the timber framing workshops to build the Class of '84 Crew Cabin and to replace aging bunkhouses, and the master-planning and site-planning done in connection with those projects, reconfirmed the needs for attending to the Lodge structure and the high level of interest in preserving the Lodge experience at Moosilauke.

* In 2014, the College hired Maclay Architects to conduct a feasibility study that reviewed how the existing program could best be accommodated in either a renovated Lodge or a newly constructed Lodge.

* Last year, the Moosilauke Advisory Committee and the College’s Ravine Lodge Steering Committee endorsed the recommendation for replacing the Lodge with a new structure appropriate to the site, the Lodge’s history and the program.

* The Steering Committee considered carefully a range of feedback from Advisory Committee members and others. The Committee concluded that heavy-timber structure, with lots of round-log elements (including elements from the current Lodge) would best meet programmatic and institutional needs, for reasons of energy-efficiency and sustainability, long-term durability, maintenance, and construction scheduling. Although there are no current plans for year round/winter operation, the structure will be "super-insulated" to protect it and the systems within it from the impact of freezing and thawing—thus lowering maintenance and operational costs and extending its useful life.

* In March 2015, the Board of Trustees approved proceeding with schematic design and cost estimates, also conducted by Maclay Architects.
What is schematic design?
The schematic design phase involves advancing the conceptual architectural design for interior and exterior spaces including building massing and floor plans that are reflective of program needs, outline specification of mechanical and other building systems, evaluation of the water systems for domestic use and fire protection, preliminary site plan and utilities and preparing updated cost estimates. The construction manager could be brought in at this stage to help with cost estimating and logistics.

How has input been solicited?
* Concern about the condition of the Ravine Lodge, and the need for more adequate space, has been on the agenda for the Moosilauke Advisory Committee for over a decade, with regular communication with College officials about the facility needs. Once the College approved the feasibility study and then the subsequent schematic design phase, there have been information gathering meetings in person with the Moosilauke Advisory Committee, the DOC Advisory Committee, the DOC leadership, Lodge crews, students, faculty and staff.

* In both the feasibility-study and schematic design processes, the architects and Steering Committee met with the Moosilauke Advisory Committee, the DOC Advisory Committee, the DOC leadership, Lodge crews, faculty, staff, and students. They also reviewed considerable written correspondence and suggestions. The design reflects lots of careful listening and close attention to the common desire to have a building that supports the program, that evokes the Lodge’s warm atmosphere and history, that can continue to be operated by a student staff, that is environmentally sustainable, that is appropriate to the site, and that will stand on its own as a special place Dartmouth will be proud of for many generations to come.

What will be the process going forward?
* The schematic design and cost estimate will be reviewed and must be approved by College officers. Board approval is required to proceed with the design development phase and hire a construction management firm to further refine the cost estimate and logistics planning.

* If approved to move to the design development phase, the Steering Committee and College staff will continue to engage with students, the Moosilauke Advisory Committee and other stakeholders, and will continue to provide updates to the community.

* Upon completion of the design development phase, College officers will review the plans, construction costs and fundraising to date. Another final Board vote will be necessary to proceed with construction documents and to build the new Lodge. As with all previous approvals, construction authorization will be dependent on fundraising. The College expects this project to be 100% funded through philanthropy.
What is design development?
Design development and pricing is generally a six-month process that further refines and develops the results of the conceptual and schematic design phases. The early part of the DD phase will confirm and lock-in floor plans, building systems, site utilities and site work. As the DD phase progresses, aesthetic and operational details will be reviewed such as the layout of the front desk area, refinement of the kitchen plan, materials for interior wall treatments and other finishes, highly visible lighting fixtures, stone for the fireplace, and flooring options within the footprint that has been established.

At the end of the DD phase a more detailed, accurate estimate and schedule will be prepared by the construction manager. This could result in a value-engineering exercise with the college, user groups and the design team.

Town permitting discussions related to the approval process is usually started by the DD phase.

What are construction documents?
Detailed working documents specific (drawings and specifications) to contractor needs that are used to bid the work and guide actual construction. Bidding the work determines its final price based on the construction documents before starting construction (such as a guaranteed maximum price contract).

What is the timeline for replacement?
That will be dependent on further College approvals and funding. The earliest possible start to construction would be the fall of 2016, immediately after the conclusion of First Year Trips, with the goal of reopening in time for Trips in late August of 2017. If that is not possible given the design process and available funding, we'll look to begin construction in September of 2017, after Trips end, and reopen for Trips in late August of 2018.

Why not replace the current Lodge with a log structure?
The College gave serious consideration to replacement with a log structure, which at first seemed to be the most obvious choice. The Steering Committee is deeply familiar with the current Lodge, and took a tour of some magnificent large log structures in the area with the builder who constructed them. The project architects and many committee members are also very familiar with other significant log structures in the U.S. and Canada. The committee also recognizes how iconic the log structure of the Ravine Lodge is and how deeply embedded it is in the life of the College. After reviewing lots of information and opinions, the committee recommended, and the College agreed, that the new Lodge should be a super-insulated timber-frame structure, with many log elements (including some from logs salvaged from the current Lodge). The reasons include energy-efficiency, ongoing costs of operation, yearly and ongoing maintenance needs, and building longevity.
What will the project cost?
The cost is not yet known and will be determined through the cost-estimating process conducted by construction experts.

Is solar, wind or hydro-power an option?
This has been investigated periodically over the years, most recently in connection with this project. The Lodge’s solar orientation and location in a deep valley isn’t conducive to solar power, and its location is also not suitable for nearby wind power (which would also face some formidable permitting and other challenges). The flow in the Baker River is too highly variable for a reasonably priced and permit-able hydro installation: too much water at some times (which moves car-sized boulders around), or too little water at other times. The best option for sustainability is locally sourced materials, lots of insulation, and minimal use of fossil fuels.

Why would the building need to “super insulated” and heated?
The current Ravine Lodge has been adversely affected by water infiltration and ice when left unheated in the winter and by mold. In order to protect the building, it needs to have a reliable sprinkler system that won’t freeze in the winter. We will be using air-source heat pump technology, which can provide the minimal amount of heat needed in the winter without use of fossil fuels (except electric for pumps) until the temperature reaches -15 for an exended period or the electricity goes out. In that case, a generator and a small propane heater kick in, using fuel already stored on sight for cooking and emergency generator use.

Are you planning for winter use?
The planning process has been asked to accommodate current kinds of use, and not to expand the program. However, there is nothing about the design of the building and its systems that would preclude winter use at some point in the future. We do hope to extend our current season, so we can operate from the beginning of spring term through the end of fall term, which should also be more attractive for hiring student staff. The new winterized bunkhouses will allow us to run winter ski and snowshoe clinics and programs on Moosilauke in the winter.

What opportunities are there for additional alumni and student input?
As we move from conceptual design to more detailed design-development, we welcome ideas and suggestions for features that will enhance the Lodge’s ability to continue its role in the experience of students, alumni and friends and will continue to convey the warm atmosphere and sense of tradition that is so important about the current Lodge. Input and suggestions can be shared via email to the Office of Planning, Design and Construction.
How can alumni and students get involved?
Right now, you can send your thoughts about what the Lodge has meant to you to the Office of Planning, Design and Construction. If you’re in a position to make a trip to Moosilauke, there are many opportunities for students, faculty, staff and alumni to volunteer to be involved in the ongoing bunkhouse replacement projects. The Class of ’66 bunkhouse project is underway, and the Class of ’67 bunkhouse project will begin next year. We also anticipate replacing the Lodge manager’s cabin, which will provide similar opportunities. Although it will not be possible for students, faculty, staff and alumni to be involved in the actual construction of the new Lodge given the scale of the project, the accelerated construction schedule and significant risk management considerations, there will be events and activities to honor the current Lodge, to preserve features that will be incorporated in the new Lodge, and to celebrate the new Lodge, as the project unfolds.

How will information about future developments and decisions be communicated?
We will continue to consult as described above, update this website as there is new information to share, and will continue to publish updates through other communication channels (see articles in Dartmouth Now and The Dartmouth.)