

Untitled document

At Clark's Trading Post: Rep. Charlie Bass said his periodic tours of the 2nd Congressional District help him set priorities for his work in Washington

By Sara Young-Knox

The New Hampshire Union Leader, July 4, 2011

LINCOLN – U.S. Rep. Charlie Bass, R-N.H., swung through the northern reaches of his district late last week, spending the night at the Mountain View Grand, meeting with tourism officials at Cannon Mountain, and driving a Model T at Clark's Trading Post.

Bass said his periodic tours of the 2nd Congressional District help him set priorities for his work in Washington.

"I'm very resolution-oriented right now," said Bass, who served as the district's representative for 12 years, losing in 2006 to Democrat Paul Hodes. After several years in private business, he ran and won the seat again in 2010.

Clark's was opened as a roadside attraction by Edward and Florence Clark in 1928, known then as Ed Clark's Eskimo Sled Dog Ranch. Though they purchased their first black bear in 1931, it wasn't until 1949 that the couple's sons, Edward Clark and W. Murray Clark, starting training bears. The attraction has grown over the years, but is still family-owned, with the sons, daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren of the two brothers maintaining the old time charm of the attraction.

The development of the attraction has sometimes been hampered by the state's shoreline protection regulations, and this was brought to the attention of Bass as he met with the extended family a stone's throw from the bears. Clark's is bordered by the Pemigewasset River in the back, and by Route 3 in the front.

"Those affect every inch of the property," Fred Englert said. "We have a new partner in the state of New Hampshire."

Clark's would like to create more habitat for the bears, but is confined to a very narrow area of the attraction – the bears have to be 250 from the river and 100 feet from the center of the highway.

While Bass does not have a vote in state regulations, his representative, state Rep. Gene Chandler, R-Bartlett, said the Legislature had made some modifications this session that could make it easier for Clark's.

Chandler said that during the North Country tourism and agriculture tour, Bass met with state officials at Cannon Mountain, where a federal bill was brought to Bass' attention. The bill would allow ski areas to expand on National Forest land for accessory uses that are activity- based. According to Chandler, Bass said he would sign on as a co-sponsor.

While touring Clark's, Bass met longtime Clark employee Chris Englert, son of Anne Clark Englert. The 23-year-old Colby College graduate is starting graduate school at the University of New Hampshire in August. He will be working on a project to map the ocean floor, with the aim of finding areas to site alternative energy facilities that could capture the energy of waves and tides, among other sources. He asked Bass to keep an eye out for legislation that would promote such green initiatives.