

**Statewide Trails Advisory Committee (RSA 216-F:5)**  
 November 15, 2022  
 DNCR Conference Room (172 Pembroke Rd, Concord, NH 03301)

**Attendance**

STAC Committee Members: need at least 9 for a quorum.

|    | <b>Name</b>                      | <b>Organization</b>                              | <b>Attended?</b> |
|----|----------------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1  | Craig Rennie                     | Chief of NH Trails Bureau (BOT)                  | Yes              |
| 2  | Captain Mike Eastman             | NH Fish & Game Department                        | No               |
|    | VACANT                           | NH Office of Strategic Initiatives               | N/A              |
|    | VACANT                           | NH Department of Transportation                  | N/A              |
|    | Director Charles Saia (VACANT)   | NH Gov. Commission on Disability                 | N/A              |
| 3  | Terry Callum                     | NH Snowmobile Association (NHSA)                 | No               |
| 4  | Tom Levesque                     | NH Off Highway Vehicle Association (NHOHVA)      | No               |
| 5  | Amanda Peterson                  | Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)                  | Yes              |
| 6  | Dennis Pavlicek                  | NH Municipal Association                         | Yes              |
| 7  | Matt Scaccia                     | Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF) | Yes              |
| 8  | Jason Soukup                     | NH Heritage Trail                                | Yes              |
|    | Director Robert Johnson (VACANT) | NH Farm Bureau Federation                        | N/A              |
| 9  | Debbie Briscoe                   | NH Horse Council (NHHC)                          | Yes              |
| 10 | Tom DiMaggio                     | NH Mushers Association (Chairman)                | Yes              |
| 11 | Tom Thomson                      | Landowner Representative                         | No               |
| 12 | Nicholas Sanders                 | NH Department of Transportation-Bike/Ped         | Yes              |
| 13 | Tim Blagden                      | Human-Powered Winter Sports                      | Yes              |
| 14 | Peter DeSantis                   | New England Mountain Bike Association            | No               |
| 15 | Abby Evankow                     | NH Bike-Walk Alliance (NHBWA)                    | Yes              |
| 16 | Stanley Carte                    | White Mountain National Forest                   | No               |

**Guests:**

| Name | Organization |
|------|--------------|
| None |              |

**DNCR Staff in attendance:**

| Name            | Organization                      |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Alexis Rudko    | Bureau of Trails, Deputy Chief    |
| Jay Scarborough | Bureau of Trails, RTP Coordinator |

**Open Meeting**

6:34pm, meeting called to order.

**Introductions and Review Minutes**

Introduction of members and guests made. Reflect on Ray and Sandy who passed this year. Matt S. from SPNHF introduced himself. Minutes from the 6/28/22 meeting reviewed/corrected. Minutes approved.

## Polls of User Groups

- Debbie (horses): trail etiquette – need to put this somehow on trails more (did some new ones at Rock Rec). Put the all season sign somewhere on front of various website as well as on trails. Horses have been going to Hop-Ev. Usually OHRVs have been good but sometimes it's tough to know where they are coming from. American Horse Council has updated trail directory website and points to NH State Parks. Went to NH Seacoast Greenway trail planning meeting. Advertising for “hikers and bikers” instead of non-motorized and she asked to change to “non-motorized” to include horses.
- Tom D (mushing): New England Sled dogs had a rainy race for fundraising. Speaking to park manger at Pisgah about gate. Sled dogs (and horses) can't get around it. Suggesting a magnetic card to use to open gate. No complaints from mushers for bad things. (Tim) Suggest sending some manufacturers to parks so they can consider the pricing options if feasible. (Debbie) This is a similar suggestion suggested previously for the rail trails.
- Tim (human powered winter sports): no issues. Waiting for snow.
- Nick (DOT): adding to trail etiquette – especially with speeding e-bikes on Northern Rail Trail. Also spoke with Bike Walk Alliance to help share info.
- Abby (Bike-Walk): when is E-bikes back on the agenda? Concern from Rail Trail community is connector tunnel in Derry exit 4A. Still working with DOT to get tunnel installed. SUPs are taking 6 weeks can we make this faster? Alexis: probably not – 30 days the minimum timeline on the SUP application for responses. Abby: can we add rail trail info to the state park welcome page? Alexis: rail trails are on our State Parks page under “activities”, not sure where you want it posted. Abby: Cross NH Adventure Trail is working with various groups to connect the old rail trail from NH to VT through Dalton. BoT has been decking various bridges on Rock Rec trails. The decking under culverts on Rock Rec Portsmouth branch needs new decking (exit 3 off 101 and another just before that).
- Matt S (SPNHF): deferred maintenance, capacity of staff etc. is always a problem. Uptick in use has remained high. People have found our back trails. Mt. Major is big focus for SPNHF. Created trail adopters at trailhead to engage people especially during busy times. Let people know who owns property they are enjoying. We have found people are changing their behavior with this program. Mt. Major will have re-route next fall with RTP grant. Mt. Monadnock ran trail week which is 5 days of intense focus on maintenance on mountain. Hired trail crew leaders for specific projects to lead crews of volunteers. Hired AMC and SCA for crews on Monadnock. Opened a new trail in Bethlehem at the Ammonoosuc River Forest to create a fishing access path off Rt. 302. Created the 5 hikes challenge to raise funds by sending people maps and guidelines to have them self-challenge.
- Amanda (AMC): worked at Mt. Monadnock with AmeriCorps crew. Had a busy summer with maintenance. Launched training program called Camp Dodge. Looking to help groups get trail skill certified. Worked at Cardigan State Forest for universal trail funded with RTP. Will be working on the ridge at Franconia Notch on Forest Service Property. User concerns: people are getting off trail because of the apps online. Craig: it's a big problem for us on the motorized side too where people are getting ticketed. We put together a proposal through ARPA funds to create a GIS tool. Debbie: is the trail finder website Parks' official platform? Craig: that was something were deciding to continue or not. Alexis: their MOA expired, and we counseled them to renew it before coming back seeking funds, which would be up to the division directors if they want to renew it. Debbie: horse people are looking on where to park and want to know which platform to use for trail users.
- Jason (heritage trail): Always user conflicts. There was a murder on the heritage trail in Manchester. There is a lot of homelessness that causes problems. Looking to put lights in tunnels.
- Dennis (municipal): annual conference tomorrow in Manchester.

### Trails Bureau/OHRV/Snowmobile Update

- **Grant in Aid (GIA) Program (SNOW & OHRV)**
  - o The **GIA Advisory Committee** awarded \$2,463,358.62 for winter grooming to the snowmobile clubs, which included a 10% increase in the hourly grooming reimbursement rate to help offset high fuel costs.
  - o **The GIA Program submitted the G&C letter** for the grant awards and we're hoping to have it on the G&C agenda for November 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting.
  
- **Legislative items:**
  - o On October 18th, BOT participated in the final **HB311 study committee** meeting which looked at Best Management Practices (BMP's) on rail trails with a final report expected in November.
  - o [HB 1188](#) – an act to establish a 5-year study committee to look at OHRV use in the state. BOT attended the first committee meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup> and Representative Suzanne Smith was elected the chair of the committee. Early discussions focused on OHRV safety training as a pressing need, particularly with rental machines.
  - o We are expecting another **busy legislative season** this winter as LSR's will soon be released.
  
- **Other Items:**
  - o This summer the **Rock Rec Freemont Branch** had significant upgrades including new **gates** installed to replace old, outdated ones.
  - o One of the bridges (Riverside Drive) on the **Northern Rail Trail (NRT)** in Lebanon was recently burned, causing significant damage which required closing the trail. This section of the trail is heavily used by local commuters. BOT District 3 staff repaired the bridge in just 2 days which allowed the trail to be reopened, and BOT received a note of appreciation by the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail (FNRT) for our efforts.
  - o BOT District 3 staff **finished paving 3 tunnels on the NRT** in Orange and Canaan which will allow for additional headroom for the groomers, as well as safer passage for all users. BOT worked closely with the FNRT to complete the project.
  - o BOT created a new **Non-motorized Coordinator position** to assist with managing our non-motorized trails, volunteer base and non-motorized trail users. We conducted interviews today for the position and are hoping to make hiring decision in the next few weeks.

### Recreational Trail Program Update

- BOT hired a new **RTP Coordinator Jay Scarborough**. Jay started in August and doing a great job managing the complicated RTP program.
- **FY22 projects** are in full swing and as projects progress, please reach out to Jay Scarborough with any billing or RTP questions. A reminder that billing paperwork must be submitted by your contract completion date of December 31.
- **FY23 projects** are moving along and are currently going through environmental reviews for potential impacts on federally protected wildlife species. Jay will be in contact with any questions, concerns or action items that result from the reviews.
- Prior to snowfall, Jay will be trying to **visit project sites** as they are completed. Don't hesitate to reach out to Jay if you would like to coordinate a visit prior to winter.
  
- Comment: Debbie: would like to be able to review DNCR projects for RTP. Looking to have some kind of input. Craig: the STAC is to advise the director, not the other way around.

### **Heritage Trail Update**

- Jason: where we spend the most focus on is connecting major segments of the rail road. Expressed interest with long term lease of rail with trail over coming months.

### **Old Business**

- MOAs: DNCR is updating all of our MOAs with snowmobile and ATV clubs that operate on DNCR lands that now includes chainsaw safety certification requirements, which is similar to what non-motorized volunteers are required to complete. Friends groups and town MOAs are coming.
- Signing guidelines – working on. Our hope is to have Non-Motorized coordinator help us with this over the winter.

### **New Business**

- Debbie: are DOT and state plans coming out being sent to members? Like rail trail plans and parks plans. Craig: some disconnect between state agencies but not sure how to answer that.

### **Guest Comments/Questions**

- No guests to comment.

**Next meeting** tentatively set for **Wednesday March 22, 2023**.

Motion to adjourn, seconded.

Meeting adjourned at **8:11** PM.

APPROVED