

Statewide Trails Advisory Committee (RSA 216-F:5)
 Wednesday March 22, 2023
 DNCR Conference Room (172 Pembroke Rd, Concord, NH 03301)

Attendance

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

	Name	Organization	Attended?
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)	YES
4	Tom Levesque	NH Off Highway Vehicle Association (NHOHVA)	YES
5	Amanda Peterson	Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)	NO
6	Dennis Pavlicek	NH Municipal Association	NO
7	Matt Scaccia	Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF)	YES
8	Jason Soukup	NH Heritage Trail	NO
	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	Gerry Bedard	NH Department of Transportation-Bike/Ped	YES
13	Tim Blagden	Human-Powered Winter Sports	YES
14	Peter DeSantis	New England Mountain Bike Association	YES
15	Abby Evankow	NH Bike-Walk Alliance (NHBWA)	YES
16	Stanley Carte	White Mountain National Forest	YES

Guests:

Name	Organization
Avis Rosenfield	Non-Motorized
Lou Barker	NHDOT – Bureau of Rail & Transit

DNCR Staff:

Name	Organization	Attend?
Alexis Rudko	Bureau of Trails, Deputy Chief	YES
Jay Scarborough	Bureau of Trails, RTP Coordinator	YES
Brian Wilson	Director, Division of Parks & Recreation	YES
Andrew Pacuk	Bureau of Trails, Non-Motorized Coordinator	YES

Open Meeting

6:30 meeting called to order. Roll Call Conducted.

Introductions and Review Minutes

- Introduction of members and guests made.
- Introduction of Andrew Pacuk – Bureau of Trails non-motorized coordinator.
- Introduction of Brian Wilson – Division of Parks & Recreation Director.
- Minutes from the November 15, 2022 meeting reviewed. **Minutes approved.**

Poll of members:

- **Debbie (NHC):** Bear Brook – Salt lick and Wildcat bridge removed, Horse council donated money, will go towards culvert and replacement of Salt lick. Trail etiquette - Please don't pass through horses, especially from behind. Equestrian trail access not growing like other user groups, concerning trend. Parking is difficult. Equestrian use is very important, low impact and low key. Open to having conversations with landowners about equine access.
- **Terry (NNSA):** Snowmobile season continues, but opportunities are less with warmer weather. Registrations are down from last year but not terrible and membership is down in our organization a little. Overall, a decent year but lack of frozen ground was impactful on riding.
- **Tom L. (NHOVA):** Land ownership changes are making keeping trails open difficult. Working hard to increase OHRV tourism, will be attending the Springfield Sportsman's Club meeting.
- **Tom D (NH Mushing Association):** Tough winter for the Mushing Community. Ground was not frozen, lots of mud. Lost trail corridor in Tamworth due to land ownership changes. A family from Milan went into the Iditarod, the father dropped out but his son completed the race. Mushing community is proud of their representation of NH.
- **Tim (Human Powered Winter Sports):** Nothing significant to report. Working with Andrew to make a map for non-motorized winter trail users.
- **Gerry (NH DOT – Active Transportation):** Not much to report. The State is developing pedestrian bike plan for summer 2023. The State Rail Trail plan was completed last year.
- **Peter (New England Mountain Bike Association):** Mountain biking occurs in the winter, preferably on groomed trails. Feedback, why not more trails groomed at Bear Brook? We do have a groomer on site, but we are limited to only a few trails. Some trails are double wide, we could groom half and leave the other half fresh.
- **Abby (NHBWA):** Confusion about E bikes and electric motorcycles. Some motorcycles are trying to pass as E bikes.
- **Stanley (WMNF):** Mountain Bikes were able to ride later in the year, issue is fat tired bikes riding on groomed trails for XC. Trying to avoid conflicts between user groups.
- **Matt (SPNHF):** Quieter time of year for us. 11 of our properties plowed throughout the state for winter access. Lots of maintenance to prepare for the next season, our stewards are working hard. Mt. Major is a focus for us, we have a large RTP project upcoming there, as well as Monadnock maintenance in conjunction with the State. We are excited to have a non-motorized coordinator on board at the Bureau of Trails. Kelsey Notch is an issue, was voted to be permanent OHRV access, Forest Society testified against this.
- **Lou (NH DOT – Bureau of Rail & Transit):** heads up as we move into April - active railroad use will resume, which includes maintenance so possible unscheduled train activity.
- **Tom L:** Trying to educate users on not damaging trail conditions on the motorized side, concerned that bikes/wheeled users shouldn't be on the snowmobile trails.

- **Peter:** We are grooming, but trails are all rutted up. Saw ATVs and believe F&G got them on trails and we recognize its an education issue. Agree next year that we should work on this together.
 - **Craig:** Jericho allows ATVs year round, we don't have a below 32 degrees rule to enforce, this is a trail etiquette thing that we definitely need to work on.
 - **Tom D.:** Musers have same issue with rutted up trails, concerned that dogs could get injured.
- **Brian (Director – Div. of P&R):** question about grooming, are different types of grooming based on use?
 - **Terry:** can be variable, 12' to 14' foot wide, smooth level base
 - **Peter:** Track machine, just flattens and smooths out what's there.
 - **Tim:** Called a Snow Dog, you stand behind in sled and it pulls you along. 2 styles of XC - skate skiing, classic skiing want to see a groove.
 - **Stanley:** conflict we are having is regarding to XC trails and how they are groomed... fat tire bikes on XC trails.

BoT/OHRV/Snowmobile Update: Craig Rennie, Chief – BoT

- **Bureau of Trails received an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** award for \$4 million dollars to assist with replacing our aging snowmobile grooming fleet and to help create a statewide trail mapping GIS tool to assist with management of the statewide trail system.
 - Meeting with 911 at Department of Safety – they have strong mapping system in place. This will be more of an administrative tool for the State but looking to the future we intend to have a public facing version. We would like people to know where to go, particularly with non-motorized users.
- **Off Highway Recreation Vehicle (OHRV) registrations and report:**
 - As of March 2, 2023, 40,822 OHRVs were registered in NH for the 2022 season, of which 24,497 are resident registrations, and 16,325 were non-resident registrations.
- **Snowmobile registrations and report:**
 - As of March 20, 2023, 37,572 snowmobiles were registered in NH for the '22/'23 riding season, of which 23,142 are resident registrations, and 14,430 were non-resident registrations. With much of this year's snowfall occurring in late February and March, registrations have decreased by 7,748 registrations compared to the '21/'22 riding season.
- **Grant in Aid (GIA) Updates:**
 - 2023 GIA spring grant round is coming up in May and BOT staff have been working closely with the clubs to start planning for the upcoming grant application process. Our goal is to send out grant applications a week early this spring to give clubs more time to apply. We are still working on GIA rule revisions to bring more clarity to the application process and to simplify things where needed.
- **Legislative items:**
 - **HB 1188 5-year Study Committee:** The last committee meeting was held on February 10, 2023 at DNCR HQ and there was review and discussion of **SB160** relative to the use of OHRVs on designated trails and requiring a permit to operate certain OHRVs from before sunrise and after sunset, as well as the Montana plate issue. Also, the committee discussed **SB256** establishing a safety program for OHRV's.
 - **HB1188 Montana plate issue:** Citizens are registering OHRVs in Montana as highway vehicles, which is allowing them to be taken onto highways in NH. Bill will make it illegal for Montana registered OHRVs to ride on NH trail networks.

Recreational Trail Program Update: Jay Scarborough, RTP Coordinator – BoT

- **Project Z FFY-2022** community projects have all been completed, with one exception which was granted an extension due to unforeseen circumstances involving a significant portion of the project.
- **Project A FFY-2023** is wrapping up the NEPA review process. Contracts are anticipated to go out to grantees in early May for signatures prior to being sent to Governor & Council for final approval. Once approved by G&C, the FFY-2023 grantees will receive official notice to proceed and may begin work.
- **Project B FFY-2024** grant applications will become available on the RTP website Monday, April 3rd. With the applications, dates, and times for the Mandatory RTP Information workshops will be posted. Potential grantees must attend at least one workshop session to submit their RTP application.

Heritage Trail Update

- **Jason Soukup not present.** No updated information.

Old Business

- **Alexis (Deputy Chief - BoT):** Working on MOAs – have been getting them out to clubs – working on Friends’ groups now. Several were approved by G&C; some were kicked back but just a formatting issue will be rewritten and resubmitted.
- Creating the signing guidelines has been passed to Andrew. Has been given all collected information and is reviewing it to progress.
- **Tim:** E-Bikes on Rail Trails, please do something.
 - o **Craig:** we are working on the issue, updating information/guidance on the Parks website. Really want to get guidance out there.
 - o **Stanley:** USFS only allows on regular roads where motorized vehicles are permitted, gated roads off limits. Want to make the Forest Service stance known, information is on website.

New Business

- **What 3 Words App:**
 - o **Craig:** I thought this would be useful and wanted to bring it to your attention. We have been working with 911 on Mapping and they brought it to our attention. You can call 911 and give 3 words provided by the App and they will know where you are within a few meters. Works off GPS on phone, no phone service needed. The words never change across the globe, this is an international rescue method.

Guest Comments/Questions

- **Debbie:** Would like upcoming plans to come through STAC, so people know what’s going on. Office of Recreation and Outdoor Development had a 1-hour focus group, I missed it in Feb. haven’t heard back about what was missed. NHSCORP had online survey, last day was Feb. 24. At Pisgah there is some expectation that the gate users are having trouble with will be reviewed for relocation.
- **Terry:** As snowmobile season winds down, I want to recognize something. Our system has nearly 7000 miles of trails, mostly on private lands but there are many public partners helping to maintain the systems. Private owners are amazing, but without these public partners it wouldn’t be possible. I just want to say thank you for all you do.
- **Tom L:** Rail Trail users in Derry, HB506 didn’t pass?
 - o **Lou:** DOT does not own the rail trail section in Derry.

- **Avis (non-motorized, equestrian):** I recently partnered with a group of women, who are bicyclists and unfamiliar with etiquette regarding equestrians. Working to educate Bear Brook users on etiquette and horses to prevent conflicts and injury.
- **Brian:** Important to bring up **SB55** - \$25 million to renovate Cannon Mountain Tramway. You'll probably hear more as the legislative process moves along. That part of our parks system experience is huge and iconic, particularly to Franconia Notch. Largest visitation is in the summer, the tram is not just a ski lift used by the mountain. I encourage you to stay informed and follow the legislation as it progresses.

Next meeting tentatively set for June 28, 2023.

Motion to adjourn, seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01 PM.

APPROVED