

Call to Order at **10:00 am**.

In attendance:

Appointer	Member	In Attendance (Y/N)
Tamworth (2)	Jeremy Phillips/Karl Behr	N/N
Madison (2)	Tia Gagnon/TBD	Y/N
Ossipee (2)	Kyle Copeland/Chris Elliot	Y/Y
Albany (2)	Jim Drouin/TBA	Y
Conway (2)	Erik Corbett/Ryan Sheperd	N/Y
Recreational/Tourism	Bob Boose	Y
NH Horse Council	Debbie Briscoe	Y
NH Snowmobile Assn (NHSA)	Sean Pinard	Y (teams)
NH Off-Highway Vehicle Association (NHOHVA)	Steve Wilkie	Y (teams)
NH Rail Trail Coalition (NHRTC)	Marianne Borowski	Y (teams)
Friends of Ossipee Rail Trail (FORT)	Philip Villari	Y
Cotton Valley Rail Trail Coalition (CVRTC)	Bruce Stewart	Y
DPR Planning	Johanna Lyons	Y
DPR Trails Bureau Chief	Craig Rennie	Y
DPR Trails Bureau District Supervisor	Mike Weeks	Y

Agenda

- Welcome & introductions.
 - o Several audience members. Not all names were recorded.
 - o Some attendees on teams (not all recorded).
- Acceptance of Minutes from July meeting.
 - o Some minor corrections
 - o Motion to accept & seconded for the minutes from meeting on 7/10/25 with some corrections.
- Private segment agreement with DNCR
 - o DNCR finalized an exchange of use agreement with the private landowner (Niel Underwood of Silver Lake RR) that owns a piece of the rail corridor (NOTE: Executed agreement was emailed to Committee on 9/5/25, signed agreement was not presented at meeting on 9/4/25). This agreement is non-exclusive (in other words the private landowner does not get to exclusively use the state section) and secures access through the private section and connects Ossipee to Madison for the duration of the agreement. This is a 3-year temporary agreement with the ability to do a 5-year extension through G&C. This has been a priority to secure access for future use as we build this trail.
 - o DNCR notes that the agreement hasn't been signed as of this meeting, but it is close to signature.
 - Town of Madison is requesting for the committee to take a walk and take people to see this line and the environmental aspect.
 - CVRTC comments they are using the rails which are in place, there is no other infrastructure in place to allow other uses.
 - o Is this section open at the same time as the business?
 - It is not open to the public at this time, just for snowmobile use once winter hits.
 - o What restrictions will be used? To protect the environment through this section?
 - At the moment it is undefined. These are concepts.
 - The private landowner does have space to the side of their property that they are willing to allow us to build a trail through when we are ready to build.

- What about the Coleman site? Do they own the section?
 - That site was a decade long court case. The DNCR attorney is reviewing the documents received from DOT as part of the transfer.
- Town of Madison is concerned that a business is opened on the trail without the consult or review of the town of Madison. This agreement was secured and a business opened for snowmobiling use and not for all uses.
 - The section is privately owned. DNCR & DOT have been working to secure this agreement for many years to allow for connectivity for all the towns during winter (NOTE: with planned for year round recreational use).
- FORT & Town of Ossipee believe there is a double standard that a precedent was set to skirt the process of this selection committee.
 - The trail was transferred from DOT to DNCR for recreation and the private landowner was a key piece to secure the use for the whole line.
 - Town of Ossipee wants to know why only this section is allowed to have a commercial business and not other segments of this line?
 - This particular section has a privately owned piece; the rest of the line does not.
- Town of Madison is asking if this agreement is for the whole section in Madison?
 - The business has to stop just shy of the boulder street bridge (~3 miles).
- DNCR stated that the town of Madison voted for this business to be approved within the town.
 - Madison issued a business permit in the village district.
 - DNCR notes that had a public process with the planning board for the town to approve a business permit.
 - Town of Madison notes this is a continuation that was previously established from many years ago. (Note: not presented at the meeting, but see [Town of Madison Planning Board meeting minutes from 6/4/2025](#))
- Town of Ossipee asks for this committee to have purpose, process & communication: this item is new to this committee and asks for these items to be brought to the committee before negotiation and signature.
 - DNCR notes the state negotiated this agreement with a private entity. And will share item with the committee once signed. Previous meeting minutes show this was an item DNCR was working on.
- Comment from town selectmen (not on committee): while we can understand communication requested by committee, this was in the final report for [HB 1468](#). The report states the private landowner agreement is the urgent and top priority to get this line secured for snowmobiling.
 - CVRTC says the minutes for the Conway branch planning group (see [HB 1468](#) link for final report) says securing access for snowmobiling is top priority and that is from over a year ago. Trail is not set up for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
 - Town of Ossipee says Senator McConkey talked about snowmobiles with these negotiations and were not disagreeing. Why hasn't DOT developed a master plan, which was pushed by DOT?
 - Town of Madison comment they have gone to all select towns with FORT to present and get involved in select towns.
 - Town of Ossipee notes the town has a warrant article from tax money for trail. Asking if committee is not involved in negotiations, why was committee formed?
 - DNCR response with the DNCR commissioner has final authority over the trail but takes recommendations into consideration. That's is what we are seeking.
- Town of Madison's comments that the town's concerns are not a waste of time.
 - DNCR says most of this committee was in the room for the Conway Branch Planning Group, but town of Madison was not. NOTE: Correction: Town of Madison was present at first meeting.

- FORT understood there was something happening. Says the committee didn't understand or wasn't under the impression that it would be another section of trail in exchange. No one in the group has an issue on how to open the section of trail, but does not understand why Joy Rails can't open in Ossipee?
 - DNCR responds with the RFQ has options for governance. The state has to go through a bid process to make agreements with commercial enterprises. The town doesn't own the rails. Underwood has transferred some rights (as a private landowner) to the company of his choice. This is a very unique situation (among state parks) with this exchange of use agreement. We asked our attorney and this is the best option we could come up with.
- Comment from Niel Underwood (Silver Lake Station LLC): I have allowed snowmobiles to use the trail (through his property) with nothing in exchange. In the early years it was a bit rough but the snowmobile club came in and made it right for 2 decades. We are looking to open up the station again for people to have fun. Originally, we wanted an 8-mile section and I work with my business partner to keep this (his portion) open. The state is trying to take care of this area. If people go out back (behind his buildings) it has to be fixed.
- Comment from Parks Christenbury (Ossipee Valley Snowmobile Club & on FORT): thank you Mr. Underwood for letting us use this section and thank you to the state for securing this agreement. This is the first step to secure this agreement for year round use and not just snowmobile use.
- Comment from Hank Walther (Rail Ventures d.b.a Silver Lake Railriders): thank you for considering this endeavor. I did turn on bookings for the future for once I have the paperwork secured. I invite the committee to rail bike for free.
 - Comment from CVRTC: our club cut the 3-mile section to clear brush. The corridor is 20 feet wide.
- DNCR comments: in light of this discussion, DNCR commissioner is aware of this and seeking to complete this agreement. Can we have the support of this committee to get this across the finish line?
 - Town of Madison: not until a public walk though is conducted and until town stakeholders voices are polled and a public hearing takes place.
 - CVRTC: Yes. In support.
 - Town of Ossipee: can we have a 6 month hold?
 - DNCR: no as the state has already been in negotiations with Mr. Underwood. DNCR is still looking at a future build out. We negotiated with Mr. Underwood on a good faith effort.
 - Motion to approve – seconded.
 - Vote: Yes: 10. No: 3. (Of the voting members who are present in this discussion)
 - FORT would like to formally ask that we accelerate the 2.4 mile section for Ossipee.
 - DNCR responds that this is a priority in RFQ.
 - Trails Supervisor did meet Saco Valley Land Trust (SVLT) about blocking access off at Forest Pines Road. There are sections that could have trails within the rails. SVLT are looking to hook up to the Madison boulder (state historical site). It is an option to discuss to bypass some of the wetlands. SVLT seemed open in the idea.
 - DNCR noted the selected consultant will talk to them as a stakeholder.
 - Town of Madison would like to extend that opportunity to other stakeholders in Madison.
 - DNCR noted that is what the consultant is for and addressed at the public input.
- RFQ responses. Consultation selection for interviews. Discussion about each submission
 - GPI (selected for interview)
 - Trails: they are making assumptions about rail removal.

- FORT: supports selection. This company is aware of how state does things. They have experience in NH with Seacoast Greenway.
 - CVRTC: wants to exclude.
 - DNCR Parks: this company is strong in the planning world. They completed a study in Hampton.
 - Motion to include and second: Vote: yes 11, no 2.
- **SE Group** (selected for interview)
 - DNCR Parks: They are recreational planners. Mostly talented landscape architects not real planners.
 - FORT: supports selection.
 - Town of Ossipee: supports selection.
 - Motion to include and second: vote: yes 12, no 1.
- T&B (selected for interview)
 - Trails: this proposal was very GIS based and mentioned using drones. Trails does not believe this is needed and would be removed from the scope of work.
 - FORT: supports selection.
 - Town of Ossipee: supports selection. They broke down the infrastructure in their proposal. Some good projects.
 - CVRTC: They spoke a lot of the corridor.
 - DNCR Parks: likes that they are group and do not have subgroup to subcontract to.
 - Motion to include and seconded: Vote yes: 11, no: 2.
- **VHB** (not selected for interview)
- **Weston & Sampson** (not selected for interview)
 - **FORT**: likes that they address the ADA/accessibility of the trail.
- Motion to stop and go with the 3 we have and not include the other 2. Motion to Vote: 10, no 3.

- Community Updates

- Town of Ossipee updates that Hank (Silver Lake Railriders) invited us out to ride. It is also in the master planning for Ossipee for future other rail bike locations.
- Tourism asks how will the committee be notified on discussion by (DNCR) commissioner?
 - FORT is asking if Underwood agreement be reviewed by committee before its signed?
 - DNCR send signed version to everyone (on 9/5/25). The committee can choose to go to Underwood property for field trip if committee chooses.
- NH Horse Council asks if there will be anymore walks? (to explore parts of this corridor)
 - DNCR noted November and December meeting dates are good dates for walks. One we have scored and picked a consultant, they give a scope of work and we negotiate price. Then the interim Parks director and DNCR commissioner must approve and then we go to G&C. Consultant task is also to come up with funding ideas.
 - FORT would like this section prioritized in Ossipee.
 - DNCR notes that a question for the interview can be “how would you prioritize this section”?
- CVRTC would like an update on the potential TAP grant the Town of Ossipee applied for.
 - FORT said this was not approved by DOT as they favor sidewalks. None of the rail trail projects got approved.
- CVRTC updated all members that their club’s RTP grant is planning to start brush cutting the corridor (from rt 28 – rt 16) starting November and they will need as many volunteers as they can get.
 - CVRTC asks if FORT ready to apply to grants? (asking if they have insurance, COGS, etc.)
 - Yes.
- Trails reminded that any volunteer maintenance on state land using a chainsaw need a chainsaw safety certification.

- DNCR says thank you to Town of Madison for the community outreach.
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- Note: **Conway** representative **Nathanial (Nat) Lucy** appeared during the meeting. Did not vote on any motions. Has connected with the local land trust and could be a bridge to working with the land trust.
- August Meeting Date/Location: **Friday October 3rd, 9am-3:00pm @ Ossipee freight house.**
 - This will be to interview the consultants who responded to the RFQ.
 - Everyone is welcome. But scoring committee members.
 - Will vote on this meeting minutes at January meeting.
- Motion to adjourn, seconded. All in favor. At **11:52** pm.

Meeting minutes taken by:

Name: Alexis Rudko

Title: Deputy Chief of NH Bureau of Trails

Signature:

APPROVED