

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/TBD | Y/NA |
| Conway (2) | Erik Corbett/Ryan Shepard | Y/N |
| Recreational/Tourism | Bob Boose | Y |
| NH Horse Council | Debbie Briscoe | Y |
| NH Snowmobile Assn (NHSA) | Sean Pinard | Y |
| NH Off-Highway Vehicle Association (NHOHVA) | Steve Wilkie | Y (online) |
| NH Rail Trail Coalition (NHRTC) | Marianne Borowski | Y |
| 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

- Call to Order at 1:04PM.
 - o Motion & acceptance of the minutes from previous meeting of 9/4/25 with some corrections.
 - o Welcome & introductions. Some people on teams (not all in audience attendance are recorded). About 30 members of the public were present either in person or on teams.
 - o DNCR Interim Commissioner Adam Crepeau introduced himself.
- Commissioner Crepeau had a few things to address regarding this committee:
 - o Even though this group has been operating for some time, we need to formalize this committee either through legislation or with a statement from the governor. Senator McConkey is in the audience and we may ask his assistance with this.
 - o Consultant Services Contract. At the 2/11/26 Governor & Council meeting, DNCR had a proposal for the RFQ for the SE Group to do consultant work (item #26). This item was tabled at this G&C meeting because this RFQ needed to be a RFP with competitive pricing. DNCR will need to put out a RFP for companies to bid for the work with the best price. This will probably delay the consultant portion of this project for some time, but DNCR may try for some work on this corridor in the downtown Ossipee section using in-house labor. The consultant was initially going to be funded with state parks funds but that may not be available and we are seeking how we would fund this consultant moving forward.
 - Chief Rennie says the department understands there is big push for the Ossipee segment as a priority area. We are exploring if our trails field staff with our equipment can work on Ossipee section. There is not as much infrastructure from freight house north to Rt. 16 crossing, so this may be the easiest section to tackle first. For the whole 21 miles, there will need to be more work with engineering and planning at different locations throughout the corridor.
 - Commissioner Crepeau says the department is looking for feedback on that approach. RFP will be late fall/early winter for proposals to come back.
 - Parks planner says that a RFP process is about the same amount of time for RFQ, ~8 months from release to contract but it should not take much editing to flip from RFQ to RFP. Usually there is a month of advertising, then a month of scoring, then a month of paperwork.
 - o Phil asked that don't we need the recognizing as a committee from legislature to edit/provide input to the RFP?

- Commissioner Crepeau says this can be done at the same time. That process, through the legislature, will be telling the agency to listen to the advisory group.
 - Chris asked why were we not formalized at the beginning since we were working and doing things to advocate for this project?
 - Commissioner Crepeau says he can't speak about the previous work done by department. But can say, as state agencies, we have always been required to have a specific advisory group that advises any state agency, be formalized in state law. What we are trying to do now is clean that up from a legal perspective which is important.
 - Phil asked what do you need from the group to formalize?
 - DNCR will work with Senator McConkey to set this group up in statute on our end. We are looking for feedback for the RFP and feedback on Ossipee section of the trail.
- Discussion about difference between a RFP vs a RFQ:
- Commissioner Crepeau explained a RFQ is narrow in scope which allows engineering, architectural and surveying only. Incidental services can be included but must be minimal. The RFQ proposal was much more board with the public outreach with the engineering only being ~30% of the actual contract. We reviewed with our legal council and understood the RFQ was probably not the correct process for this consultant. An RFP is a proposal which will hopefully get us a better price.
 - What is the statute for a RFQ? NH RSA 21:1. DNCR will send with meeting notes.
 - Note: linked here: [RSA 21:1:22 Selection of Engineers, Architects, and Surveyors](#)
 - Will that mean another interview? Commissioner Crepeau explains this is a possibility if necessary with cost & qualifications being factors.
 - Previously DNCR had a selection committee made up of some committee members, but DNCR will need to check with Admin Services to see if we could do the same process. Only thing we didn't score with RFQ was a price. So this time that would add to the scoring process. There was already good work done, just need to work on the RFP.
 - Could DNCR just ask for quotes from the firms from before? DNCR would have to have them narrow their scope. Which would eliminate about 70% of the contract. Or take a RFP approach and solicit for everything were looking for services for better price.
 - Ossipee Committee member commented that for a lot of us that are not used to state bureaucracy, it seems like the citizens are losing on this. By taking over a year to get legislation to get this passed and now another year to redo this (RFP). Very disappointed.
 - Commissioner Crepeau commented that the Governor & Council was correct to table this and that our intention is to correct this deficiency and move forward as soon as possible. Which is why we are looking at our trails bureau staff work on the Ossipee section. We don't take this lightly.
 - Trails comments that good trails take time as the Northern Rail Trail took decades and we really want to do this right. We understand this setback is disappointing. CVRTC commented that the bureau is trying to mitigate lost time with their staff. Commissioner commented that we (DNCR) need to do this study to identify the funding to build the trail as a whole.
 - Trails knows how to maintain some of the infrastructure but are seeking the engineering assessments for some structures to move forward to do work.
- Discussion on what the trails bureau is going to do from now till June for trail work?
- Trails explained not June for construction. We're looking at cost per mile and we spoke about pulling up the rail and adding surface or having a rail w/ trail. It would be helpful to have some consensus from this group to build something out to get happening sooner. We may not be as restricted in what we have to decide since our ROW is wider in this segment. There are 3 options: pull the rails, flood rails with gravel (covering them up), or build rail w/ trail, which would be similar to the cotton valley rail trail.
 - Town of Madison asked how can be begin in Ossipee without formal assessments? How do these decisions get made without assessment of anything? And why does every other town wait?

- Commissioner responded that the Ossipee section is less complex with terrain. Once you get past the Ossipee section we would need more public outreach and more challenging decisions will need to be made.
 - Trails comments that the infrastructure is a factor to getting this section completed first. In this section there are relatively few infrastructure and are already in good shape. This section would be the low hanging fruit and have less wetlands impacts. This would be a smaller scale but gets us started on potential build out. DNCR might not be able to handle on all of this and we may need to lean on our partners and groups to assist. Commissioner comments that trails bureau is experienced in doing this type of work and is confident in what they can do in this section.
- Town of Madison asked what are the best practices for RFQ process or just in the RSA? So we don't repeat our previous mistake?
 - Commissioner commented that if you don't do RFQ (request for qualifications) you do a RFP (request for proposal) and can solicit anyone interested. Its cost competitive but also lists qualifications.
 - Are there any other processes that we should know about besides the RFP? DNCR believes that was all.
 - Trails notes that we do have BMP for erosion control for trail construction with common sense things to protect water quality (this is on BOT website).
 - Commissioner comments that he plans to be involved in multiple agency DNCR projects. He also works at DES and DES does a lot of RFPs and plans to bring their best practices to DNCR.
 - FORT asks what will this path look like? How will you deal with ROW issues? Even if we break out this section? How are you going to deal with them?
 - Trails responds that we work with our land management team at DNCR. Some of the encroachments we already know about, and we have template letters to send to abutters. We have a surveyor to look at the boundary. There are all levels of encroachment. Some are on the periphery and those are less priority. For our teams, we evaluate our segment and engage our land management for next steps, which we have started to do on some of these encroachments.
 - Audience Member commented that to go for a RFP and find a guy to do it, we will need a qualified person to do the work by being registered with the state to do work. The people who gave us interviews were all qualified.
 - Audience member asked how long does it take to get qualified? Commissioner replied that it's not that difficult but have to register with the state.
 - DNCR commented that there are two different items: 1) proposal for survey, which is easy to get registered with the state & 2) shovels in ground is different to get qualified.
 - NHRTC asked will the BMP include rail with trail? Trails responds that the 2022 state rail trail plan has typicals (design drawings) for rail with trail. If that was the way to go you could? FHWA has guidelines for rail with trail.
 - NHRTC asked how many miles from here (Center Ossipee) to Rt. 16 crossing? ~2.75 miles.
 - What user groups (potentially) are able to use this section? Can OHRVs go here?
 - No OHRVs are allowed in this section. The decision to keep rail or not is impactful.
- Discussion from FORT suggests we start from Rt. 16 south all the way to Rt. 28 and not just the section from Rt. 16 to Center Ossipee. The economic standpoint from the town would be what can we do for this community, which includes this section going south all the way to Rt 28.
 - How many miles from here south? ~4.5 miles.
 - FORT says this section south to Rt 28 is more of potential usage with a potential boon for the town with a rail bike business. We can see go north from here (to Rt. 16) have a rail path but here south could have a rail bike business.
 - DNCR commented that the consultant was supposed to see what potential appropriate uses of the trail are because we are trying to look at this wholistically and need to look at economic opportunities to see what's best for all. Commissioner replied that a rail bike business is something we would need to look at for the consultant.

- CVRTC comments that this is a 21-mile trail and the spirit of the trail is recreation. The commercial endeavor that takes place in Madison is because of a private owner of the trail. That is not the case for this section. CVRTC has been here for 23-24 years and it's not appropriate to discuss if we should have business that would prevent us from recreating. Commissioner comments that those may not be mutually exclusive and have a trail next to it.
 - Trails comments that the rail bikes and CVRTC would be on the same rails.
 - Commissioner: understood.
 - CBRTC Bruce asked Chris Elliot the reasoning why the rails needed to be lifted and the response was this wasn't the forum (this particular meeting) to do so.
- NH Horse Council asks if we will meet monthly? DNCR is not sure as we need to be semi-official. Commissioner says we can continue to work as long as we are working towards official status.
 - Town of Ossipee says the consultants would be handling the public input. Need good opportunities to hear public opinion by listening to end users for the 2.75 miles within town and down to Rt 28. With consultants coming in we would create public opportunities to talk about this.
 - CVRTC comments that FORT is adamant about removing trails in this area but when you have a 100' ROW is there an ability to have a shared use of the trail?
 - Town of Ossipee replies that is for the end users to speak about.
 - CVRTC what is the downfall of having a rail with trail?
 - DNCR is asking for the public weigh in and we are holding our opinion to see when we call for public opinion. Let us work on a public outreach plan for the 2.7 miles first.
- Representative John Smith (chair of town select board and state rep for Ossipee) says this was my bill with Senator McConkey. This was supposed to be about economic development in downtown area but grew to entire 21 miles. Town needs to bring people here. Focus on the ~3 mile section and get it going. The amount of people that talk to me about this want to use this and include making it accessible.
 - Senator McConkey says we worked on this legislation and DNCR is lucky to have Commissioner Crepeau from DES. Love the idea to concentrate on this section. Executive Councilor Kenney has always favored this project. We did not know how large the project would be and there is great interest to get best multi use of trail. Commissioner said we just need letter to governor to get committee legitimized and we could draft legislation.
- Audience member asked that you mentioned multi use. We used to use the Cotton Valley trail by riding horses into Ossipee. Then the people we offended by horse poo even though dog poo is not organic and we have our trail horses poo in the bushes. People who have horses are overlooked in this area and we spoke against having the horses be kicked off to Cotton Valley Rail Trail. We live in the area, and we want the equestrian community to be included and not pushed out like we were in Wolfeboro. We were very disappointed about that.
 - Commissioner says that's what the consultant is for.
- NH Horse Council asks when you create your public outreach – will there be a detailed map? DNCR comments yes that's the idea. We will have them.
 - FORT asked for the RTP do we need a plan to go forward? DNCR replied that this isn't ready for RTP as you need a plan to go forward to apply.
 - FORT says even if we're looking at just the 2.7 miles, DNCR is looking at prepping to construct that but we can't do anything until we decide what to have the trail be. DNCR commented that other general maintenance items that would be helpful for everybody can be done like drainage work.

- Public Comment: What is the width of the ownership? Trails says the ROW width varies. But it goes beyond the rails. Some areas are 99' wide. We use our VAL sheets to see width.
- Public Comment: Are the VAL sheets public? Trails says yes but they are not online.
- Public Comment: Ossipee plan board and budget for 2.75 mile segment. What is the timeline, cost and how do we open it to as many users as possible?
 - o Trails says for this 2.75 mile segment, we plan to use inhouse equipment and staff to get started sooner. The big variable is if we salvage the steel rails, which could change costs.
 - o Comment from audience says for 6 miles on the cotton valley rail trail, they have a grant for 10K just for stone dust. Over many years with gravel, have spent 120K in grants but that doesn't include labor for match.
- Public Comment: From silver lake area right before the private segment in Madison, the tracks run right through my front yard where our kids play. Who protects them when users come through with E-bikes? It's in our deed that the only motorized allowed use is snowmobile. Trails says class e-bikes are considered bicycles under state and federal law. Public Comment says not class 3s. Commissioner said these issues are exactly why we want a consultant. Also want to know where are users going to park? We put up a sign but people still come in and park. Building up this trail will bring more people. Trails says that also part of the consulting service: to identify where public parking could be added to access the trails.

- Motion to adjourn, seconded. All in favor. At ~3:30 pm.

Meeting minutes taken by:

Name: Alexis Rudko

Title: Deputy Chief of NH Bureau of Trails

Signature: