

Statewide Trails Advisory Committee (RSA 216-F:5)

8/13/2025

DNCR Conference Room (172 Pembroke Rd, Concord, NH 03301)

Attendance: STAC Committee members: 9 minimum to meet quorum (because some positions are vacant.)

	Name	Organization	Check in
1	Craig Rennie	Chief of NH Trails Bureau (BOT)	Yes
2	Captain Mike Eastman	NH Fish & Game Department	No
3	Director Heather Shank	NH Office of Planning and Development (DBEA)	Stand-In
4	VACANT	NH Department of Transportation	N/A
5	Bill Fin	NH Gov. Commission on Disability	No
6	Terry Callum	NH Snowmobile Association (NHSA);	No
7	Jerry Livesey	NH Off Highway Vehicle Association (NHOHVA)	Yes
8	Matt Moore	Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)	Yes
9	Dennis Pavlicek	NH Municipal Association	No
10	Matt Scaccia	Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF)	Yes
11	Don Waldron	NH Heritage Trail	No
12	(Director Robert Johnson)	NH Farm Bureau Federation	No
13	Debbie Briscoe	NH Horse Council (NHHC)	Yes
14	Tom DiMaggio	NH Mushers Association (Chairman)	Yes
15	Tom Thomson	Landowner Representative	No
16	Gerry Bedard	NH Department of Transportation-Bike/Ped	Yes
17	Tim Blagden	Human-Powered Winter Sports	Yes
18	Peter DeSantis	New England Mountain Bike Association	No
19	Abby Evankow	NH Bike-Walk Alliance (NHBWA)	Yes
20	Stanley Carte	White Mountain National Forest	Yes

Guests:

Name	Organization
Lara Renner	NH Mushers Association (President)
Avis Rosenfield	Derry Trail Riders (President)
Brendan McDowell	(Stand-In for Heather Shank with DBEA)

DNCR Staff:

Alexis Rudko	NH Trails Bureau (Deputy Chief)
Andrew Pacuk	NH Trails Bureau (Non-Motorized Coordinator)
Brianna Leone	NH Trails Bureau (RTP Coordinator)
Nate Kenison-Marvin	Parks and Recreation Attorney

Open Meeting: Meeting called to order at 6:04PM, by Chair, Tom Dimaggio.

Introductions and Review Minutes: Minutes from the 02/19/2025 meeting reviewed. Adjustments recommended for correction “Gerry Biddard” to “Gerry Bedard” on page 3.

Motioned and seconded. All in favor as accepting the minutes as written with minor edits, approved.

Poll of Member Groups:

- **Tim Blagden** (Non-Motorized Winter Sports): Has reached out to NENSA (New England Nordi Ski Association) via email for public input and comment regarding non-motorized use on state owned trails. Public comments are intended to report back to DNCR (Department of Natural and Cultural Resources) and BO (Bureau of Trails.)
 - o Requests public access to maps of state-owned trails for assistance in gathering user feedback.
- **Debbie Briscoe** (NH Horse Council): Thank you to the Bike Walk Alliance article for the timely reminder regarding approaching horses. There has been shared appreciation for users stopping, and saying “hello” to equestrian riders, instead of using bells on bikes. If users or groups need brochures or signs for the “Stop and Say Hello” Campaign, they can reach out to Debbie Briscoe for the .JPEG.
 - o Pisgah State Park has started their 2025 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) project. They are doing a lot of great work on the trails and with redecking bridges. Debbie thanks everyone, especially the volunteers, for taking part in the park’s beatification.
 - o Bear Brook State Park is receiving positive comments for the campground bypass near Hayes Marsh. Otherwise, trails such as the Ferrit Trail have received mixed reviews by equestrian riders due to large stones on trail. Debbie would find it useful to be in the loop regarding maintenance plans.
 - Andrew Pacuk: Snow Slickers are making their way through repairs on the mentioned trail but have yet to add the dirt layer. No rip wraps to be added; the current base of the trail is stone until work is finalized. (Snow Slickers current GIA Project.)
 - o Mast Yard State Forest in Concord, there have been multiple requests for equestrian parking. Suggests using open-logging areas for further parking along the trails.
 - Tim Blagden: Working on creating a parking area in Hopkinton and at Mast Yard in which equestrians can use if the conversion is successful.
 - o In general, equestrians are requesting additional access to parking and when coming to the state, would like more information on where to go. Recently, a Pennsylvania Rider reached out and mentioned it was difficult to find camping and/or trails for equestrian use in New Hampshire. Online access is sparse.
 - o NH Horse Council has donated to the Monadnock Collaborative for signage on the Cheshire Rail Trail.
- **Abby Evankow** (NH Bike Walk Alliance): There have been some issues of Rail Roads wanting to use the abandon corridors without recreational users being informed. Recreational users would like to be in the loop of any change regarding trail use and access.
 - o Craig Rennie: Marianne Borowski is meeting with DOT (Department of Transportation) at the end of August to bring these concerns up and ideally expand recreational access.

BOT has monthly meetings with the Bureau of Transit to coordinate options for recreational use. The largest roadblock now is the thin corridor widths impacting availability for multiple user groups.

- Alexis Rudko: Fabyans will only be open for winter snowmobile users. No summertime access as it is an active Railroad.
- Tunnel in Derry is to be built for the connectivity of the Granite State Rail Trail. The tunnel is to be built at Exit 4a in Derry.
- City of Concord is buying a large parcel of the Rail Trail to extend its length.
- **Stan Carte** (White Mountain National Forest): No major changes with the WMNF other than changing to staff within the Forest Service. Down to only 1-3 people for district trail crews, which has led to more reliability on trail partners such as AMC (Appalachian Mountain Club), BOT, volunteers, etc.
- **Tom Dimaggio** (NH Mushers): There is a newly elected president Lara Renner who is in attendance. There was a recent meet and greet with a gentleman from NH who placed 5th in the recent Iditarod. Not much else to report as the season is over.
- **Brendan McDowell** (Office of Strategic Initiatives): Brendan stood in for Heather Shank and may replace her position on STAC. Heather requested the new Outdoor Recreation of Industry and Development tool be shared. Working on an accessible tool for trail planning. The information meeting is next week, on August 27th, 2025. They are seeking feedback from STAC and other parties on the new Wildly Responsible cross planning tool for recreational users. [Wildly Responsible](#) (see website) is also live – seeking feedback.
- **Gerry Bedard** (NHDOT) (Active Transportation Engineer): Nothing to report from the Bureau of Transit other than to reinstate the study of rail trail crossings and connectors will assist in determining where work should be prioritized.
 - Alexis: can we see which order the trails are being studied? Can Conway be first?
 - Tom: Are you looking for visibility? Gerry: Yes, to make trail users aware of upcoming crossings.
 - Criag: Who is the consultant? Gerry: GPI.
 - Tom: if you cross the road on a dog team, it's much longer than a bike, visibility for mushers would be appreciated.
- **Jerry Livesly** (NH OHRV): Horses are welcome at Pisgah State Park, which has three parking lots that accommodate horse trailers. Trails across the state are generally in good shape but the conditions have been dry, and users should wear dust masks. Summer Grant-In-Aid (GIA) projects have been started. OHRV registrations are down from 2024, the current number of registrations is around 45,000. Around the same time in 2024, there were about 62,000. In general, clubs are concerned about the increase in high-speed e-bikes on OHRV trails without regulation or control. Clubs would like to see regulations requiring registration, and additional enforcement. Many e-bikes are the size of Dirt Bikes and have similar power. Fish and Game has recently handed out tickets for users going over 6-MPH on OHRV trails.
 - Gerry: To clarify, there are three classes of e-bikes that get up to 28 mph, but they are not allowed on Rail Trails.
 - Jerry: It's a concern about enforcement. If they are allowed statewide then the state is missing an opportunity for revenue if the bikes are not regulated.

- Craig: They have been driving around on main roads; the Department of Transportation should be brought into this conversation.
- Tom D: E-Bikes have been all over the streets of Manchester and they move fast. There should be a registration.
- Debbie: It should be made clear that the class 3 bikes have been on trails and those out of class should also be considered electric bikes, even if individuals add pedals. Are these considered Off Highway Recreational Vehicles (OHRV), or not?
 - Craig: BOT, Fish and Game and other stakeholders are working on legislation regarding state laws on E-Bikes. There are many classifications that need to be reviewed which makes it a complicated process.

Matt Scaccia (SPNHF): There are no major concerns to discuss. There is a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) project starting in October. The project will work on an accessible trail from parking to the Merrimack River viewing point in Concord, at SPNHF Headquarters.

- Monadnock Trails Week is coming up at Monadnock State Park. Forest Society owns most of the mountain but is shared leased with DNCR and other local landowners. Volunteer efforts will take place from September 4th-8th, 2025. Monadnock Trails Week usually sees over 45 volunteers to assist with trail projects and maintenance. SPNHF is always open for more volunteers.
- The Five-Hike Challenge is continued outreach that began about 5 years ago. This “Do-it-yourself” challenge will begin in August and continues until October 2025. If you visit 5 properties owned by SPNHF, you receive a patch. This challenge is good for guided and easy trail preparation. About 3-5 hundred people participate annually, SPNHF will send information to those interested.

Matt Moore (AMC): Camp Dodge has around 75 seasonal staff members from Maine and New Hampshire. There are about 13 back country caretakers and 6 operating Pro Crews with 5 staff members in each. These groups run until October and mainly do work on the Appalachian Trail with continued work on the ongoing Franconia Loop project. The project has included removing many bog bridges and doing masonry up the Old Bridal Path and relocating the Falling Waters trail. The AMC Pro Crews will continue working on the Lonesome Lake trail, near the existing hut to do work on the boardwalks using RTP funds.

- The two AmeriCorps crews of 10 working in the White Mountains will close out their 11-week season tomorrow (August 14th).
- The Trail Adaption program is going strong, about 400 miles of trails have been adopted by ~100 volunteers.
- Jobs for Americas Graduates Highschool program in Berlin, NH is going well with two full time, seasonal staff members working until November.

Guest Comments:

- **Avis Rosenfield** (Derry Trail Riders): ZOTIS company sent her info. 70% of equestrians are trail riders. There are many individuals seeking horses camping at Bear Brook State Park, for an opportunity for equestrians and for the state to potentially have a substantial return on investment (ROI.)

- **Lara Rennie** (NH Musers Association – new president):
 - o September 20th, there is a Rail Trail clean up scheduled with Army Corps and local dog teams. Clean-ups are a part of our agreement to have access to those trails.
 - o New England Sport Dog Trail Seminars: Gilmanton NH at Griswold Boy Scout Camp from October 11th-October 12th.
 - o October 24-26 North Country Musers Association camping event. Last year 20 teams in Campton NH attended for training ahead of the approaching race season.

Bureau of Trails Update for OHRV and Snowmobiles: Chief Craig Rennie

- In April, the Governor and Executive Council transferred the management responsibility of the 21-mile-long Conway Branch rail line from NHDOT to DNCR (see attached map). Accordingly, DNCR Division of Parks & Recreation formed the [Conway Branch Rail Trail Advisory Committee](#) with representatives from the surrounding communities and from various trail user groups, and committee meetings were held in Ossipee on June 19th, July 10th, and a site walk on August 7th. DNCR also posted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to hire an engineering/consulting firm to assist the committee with infrastructure assessment and feasibility of future trail construction options.
 - o Some communities have applied to grants.
 - o There are rails throughout the trail. DOT gave us the steel as part of the transfer. Which can offset the cost of the construction. But some of the interest groups want the rails.
 - o Some OHRV use is allowed on this section so NHOHVA is part of the committee.
- The public hearing for the proposed **Grant in Aid (GIA) Administrative Rules (Res 8400)** hearing was held on June 20th at the JLCAR committee. The proposed rules passed with a few minor modifications recommended by the JLCAR attorney. The adopted rules can be are now posted on the Park's website under [Administrative Rules](#).
- For the past several years, there has been a desire by non-motorized trail users to make donations to assist BOT with trail maintenance and improvements on state owned trails including our popular recreational rail trails. A **new donation button** was added to the main BOT website and our first few donations came in from our friends at the NH Rail Trail Coalition. This allows for smaller donations which do not exceed \$2,500 per donation. The donation button can be found on the [Trails Bureau Website](#).
 - o Some donations have come in already.
 - o Debbie: How does someone get recognized on the website.
 - Alexis: Not sure where message goes.
 - Craig: we have it grouped to state owned trails, including the rail trails. No guarantee for specific trail because we don't have separate accounts for each trail. It goes to one account
 - Andrew: Each park has its own donation tab.
 - Alexis: go to State Park gift shop online and pick which park you want to donate to.
 - Avis: Your IT person can do a report on this. Craig: We will figure it out.
- Our Non-motorized Coordinator, Andrew Pacuk (Andrew.R.Pacuk@dncr.nh.gov), has been teaching **chainsaw safety training classes** throughout the state with much success. These classes are primarily for organized volunteer groups and clubs who operate chainsaws on DNCR properties. If your club needs certification, please reach out to Andrew to schedule a class in your area.

- Tim: electric chainsaws?
 - Andrew: That is discussed at class.
- **OHRV and Snowmobile Update:**
 - OHRV and Snowmobile registrations from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025:
 - OHRV Registration Total: 40,779
 - Snowmobile Registration Total: 43,079
- **Legislative items:**
 - **HB1188 OHRV Study Committee Meeting:** Not much to report as the June meeting was cancelled. The next meeting is planned for September 19, 2025 in Lancaster where we are hoping to learn more about noise complaints, sound measuring and viable solutions to reduce potential impacts.
 - Jerry: NHOHVA is trying to get Chris Reel to come for this meeting.

Recreational Trail Program Update (RTP Coordinator)

Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (Project B) – RTP

- Grant extension recipients must submit all required documentation no later than August 31, 2025, by 4:00 PM.

Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (Project C) – RTP

- BOT received the FHWA “Notice to Proceed” on June 27, 2025.
- Grantees may now submit for reimbursement of project costs, provided the expenses comply with the specific stipulations of their awarded project.

Federal Fiscal Year 2026 (Project D) – RTP

- All applications for 2026 RTP projects have been reviewed. Fish and Game evaluations are complete. BOT is now proceeding with historical reviews in coordination with the Department of Historical Resources.
- The RTP Coordinator will reach out with any application-related questions as they arise.
 - Fish and Game moving to DES won’t make a difference on the grantee side

Heritage Trail Update: Listed in state law (a concept of a trail that goes from Mass border to Canada. – STAC should have a representative, but it is not required. People have come in and out as multiple people have been in and out.

New Business:

- [Michigan Snowmobiling: Ride Right – Lead Right](#). A state of Michigan Campaign.
 - Michigan had several fatalities where riders were riding on the wrong side of the trail. Michigan created this PR campaign to address rider safety.
 - Avis: as a member of SNHSS: you ride at the speed of the slowest rider.
 - Debbie: like the slogan. Like what we do with equestrians. Ride at the ability of least experienced person. Keep track of who you are with.
 - Tom: Mushing community has been pushing that as well, stay to the right. Hard to do with a dog and voice commands. “G-Over” which means go to the right.

- Laura: at camping weekend we had a seminar. Had many teams sign up to learn this proper training.
- Geographic Informational Systems (GIS) Mapping Updates: BOT has been working on developing the trails mapping viewer with the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. It currently stands as an administrative tool to manage trail systems and share critical information with patterning agencies (F&G, DOT) and has a 911 trail system layer that includes known emergency helicopter landing zones. Landowners including state and federal lands are included for department use. The mapping system is not public facing, as it is missing a lot of data. Future state of the NHBOT trails GIS will (eventually) have a public facing version redacting sensitive information.
 - Avis: Landowner near Pawtuckaway, there are many neighbors that have lands and access to helicopter and 911 for emergencies.
 - Alexis: A lot of the data still needs to be populated. Once we have all the basic data added, we will reach out for missing information from the public to add.
 - Craig: Working on having the “What Three Words” built into this tool. BOT or DNCR does not have a dedicated GIS data specialist. Alexis takes on GIS work for BOT, on top of other regular duties. Other bureaus (DOT) have teams for GIS projects – will take a large amount of time.
- Alexis: Sharing a specific place- on corridor 19, an active railroad – a land owner wanted trails off their property (GIS shows trail going through a company building) BOT pulled up the GIS tool to see and/or adjust where our property markers are to work with the public on fair resolutions.
 - We want the data to be complete before the public can open the viewer to make informed decisions. BOT can assist members by a phone call or email for questions.
 - BOT will ask for input down the line.

Old Business: There is no Parks Director yet. Colin Capelle is the Interim director until the position is filled.

Next Meeting Date: *November 19th, 2025, at 6:00 PM at DNCR HQ.*

- Motion to adjourn and seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 7:30PM.

Meeting minutes taken by:
Name Brianna Leone
Title: Recreational Trails Program Coordinator
NH Bureau of Trails