

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

February 17, 2021

Online via Teams

Attendance

STAC Committee Members:

Name	Organization	Location	Alone?
Clint Savage	Interim Chief of NH Trails Bureau (BOT)	Home	N
Terry Callum	NH Snowmobile Association (NHSA);	Home	Y
Tom Levesque	NH Off Highway Vehicle Association (NHOHVA)	Home	Y
Amanda Peterson	Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)	Home	Y
Dennis Pavlicek	NH Municipal Association	Home	Y
Raynold Jackson	Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF)	LATE	
Debbie Briscoe	NH Horse Council (NHHC)	Home	Y
Tom DiMaggio	NH Musers Association (Chairman)	Home	Y

Guests:

Name	Organization	Location	Alone?
Dennis Laiberte	Educators		
Tim Blagden	Human-Powered Winter Sports	Home	Y
Abby Evankow	NH Bike-Walk Alliance (NHBWA)	Home	Y
Liza Siwinski	North East Association of 4WD Clubs	Mass	Y
Stanley Carte	White Mountain National Forest (WMNF)	Home	Y
Paula Bedard	NH Bike-Walk Alliance (NHBWA)	Home	Y
Tyler Ray	Granite Outdoor Alliance	Office	Y
Jason Soukup	Manchester Heritage Trail	Home	Y
Dave Topham	Guest		
Marianne Borowski	Guest		
Robert Johnson	NH Farm Bureau Federation		

603-863-8901?

DNCR Staff:

Name	Organization	Location	Alone?
Alexis Rudko	Bureau of Trails, RTP Specialist (staff)	Home	N
Phil Bryce	Director, Division of Parks & Recreation (staff)	Home	Y
Eric Feldbaum	Div. of Parks, Community Recreation Office (staff)	Home	Y
Jesse Creedy-Powers	Div. of Parks, Community Recreation Office. Volunteer Coordinator (staff)	Home	N
Johanna Lyons	Div. of Parks, DD&M, Parks Planner (staff)	Home	Y

Introductions and Review Minutes

Meeting began at 6:39 PM. Roll call of members and guests made. Right to know statement meeting minutes read by Chair. Minutes from the February 12, 2020 meeting reviewed. Motion to approve by Tom Levesque, 2nd Terry Callum. Minutes approved by roll call.

OHRV/Snowmobile Update

Clint S. reported that the snowmobile season started slow in North Country. Less snow in southern part of the state. Good snow in Dec in southern part of state and lost it all by Christmas. Starting to get more snow, statewide trails are looking better. Registrations are up from last year.

OHRV season is getting ready for summer's construction season. GIA apps coming in April. Registrations up over last year. Meeting in April with town of Gorham for closing parking lot for summer OHRV use.

Tom L: asked about GIA applications coming this spring. Clint S: responded with applications going out in April.

Abby E: inquired about the Gorham ORHV trailhead on route 16: is BOT going to set up meeting with Gorham to close the parking lot on route 2 to OHRV loading and unloading for summer use. Clint S: replied with at this time that section of trail will remain open.

Tom D: asked about OHRV safety course requirement for everyone to take regardless of age. Clint S: responded with there is an idea for an OHRV & SM safety class mandatory for everyone but Clint understands that will not happen at this point.

Tom L: this is referencing senate bill 131, there is wording to do that as result of increase of fatalities especially from rental units. Would be similar to boating certification. Probably won't happen this year and tourist industry is against that particular verbiage.

Recreational Trail Program Update

Alexis R reported that Project W FFY-2019 is being closed out. Just waiting for a few things to clear the state financial system. Then the project year will be audited and sent in for close out to DOT. Project X FFY-2020 community projects are mostly complete. There are 3 that were extended to the end of the summer 2021 due to COVID and permitting issues. Project Y FFY-2021 are in process of being approved for Spring/Summer opening. Currently going through the NEPA process for all projects. Solicitation for Project Z FFY-2021 community applications will begin in April and go to mid-June. There will be 3 RTP workshops held online and attendance to at least one is required to apply. The application will be posted on the RTP website along with the time and link to the workshops.

To update on federal status: In Oct 2020, continuing resolution of FAST Act for one fiscal year (October 2020 through Sept 2021). The H.R. 5797 Recreational Trails Full Funding Act of 2020 was referred to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit on 2/7/2020 and nothing new since then. We are waiting for S.2302 - America's Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019 for 5 year authorization of funds. As of 2/11/21 – there has been no new movement on this.

Question about how RTP projects selected: via selection committee made up of dept. employees chosen by Chief representing various user groups. Selection committee changes year to year based on availability.

Tom L: requested GIA training similar to RTP training for NOHVAA, online and in person. Clint S responded: working on the GIA training for OHRV clubs.

Heritage Trail Update

Jason Soukup (Guest) from the [Manchester Heritage Trail](#) attended meeting to speak about the Manchester Heritage Trail. He states there are 6 miles of Manchester heritage trail along the riverfront and his goal is to connect to Manchester trails to other town heritage trails. He organized a team to plan future projects for next year and to seek funding and rehab existing trails.

Tom D asked if he had been in contact with other communities like Hooksett and Jason S replied yes along with [Manchester moves](#). Manchester Moves formed about 12 years ago and did work on the bridge over the river on Manchester's west side to connect to Goffstown. Jason S is looking to connect current Manchester heritage trail to existing Rock Rec trail (Portsmouth Branch).

Jason S: states the goal of Manchester heritage trail is to connect all people in Manchester to all NH via trails, pursue strategies to get to that role, seek more public awareness of the opportunity funding partnership design and developments

Tim B: states he helped Allenstown secure rail road grade to connect to Hooksett and connect line along Merrimack.

Tom D: states that he believes the original goal of the heritage trail was to create a north-south trail to connect Massachusetts to NH's North Country. Phil B: agrees that the original goal of the heritage trail was a north-south corridor through the center of NH. Tom D: states that the Manchester to Goffstown line heads towards the coast but that is east west and not a north south corridor.

Tom L: asks if the heritage trail has to be north-south or can it include all heritage like connect to something historic in town of Keene? Phil B: says look at statue for heritage trail first. ([RSA 216-A Expansion of State Park System](#))

Old Business

- Permitted Use Signs for Rail Trails
 - o Clint S reported that BoT redid the signs and made them into hard plastic and now black and white. Some of the old signs have been switched out and BoT staff are working to replace all of them. (Alexis R brought up a picture of one of the new signs) There are 3 different signs for use of Rail Trails.
 - o Question asked about yellow "yield to" signs and if they are being posted on trails. Clint S said he would inquire with other district supervisors if they were being used.
 - o Ray J: asked are these signs going to be put up adjacent to parking areas? Clint S: responded that these will be replacing existing signs at parking lots and at road crossings.
 - o Tom L: asked if there will be UTVs added to future signs? Clint S: not sure, says some signs are on the southern part of the state address the 50" width for UTVs.

New Business

- Discussion after RTP update on STAC committee members status.
 - o Tim B: asked is STAC limited to the 16 members on the RSA? Tom D: the 16 member committee list is only allowed to vote. Tim B: disagrees with this. Tim says this is a change in policy and wants this in meeting minutes.
 - o Paula B: suggests discussion needs to be taken offline. Interpretations of verbiage in RSA.
 - o Current list of STAC members posted on [STAC website](#). This will need review.
- Current progress of the "State Rail Trails Plan" (Abby Evankow, Bike-Walk Alliance of NH rep)
 - o Abby E: rail trail coalition is looking into the rail trail funding issue by studying what other states do to fund their rail trails. Committee will meet for deciding how to fund. Some public private partnerships. COVID has delayed that meeting like everything else.
- HB 311 Bill to "establish a committee to study and develop rail trail best management practices." (Abby Evankow, Bike-Walk Alliance of NH rep)
 - o Abby E: reported that this new plan was voted 20 to nothing in house development committee.
 - o Tom D: NH state rail exists and most rail trails for NH is covered in this plan. ([NH Rail Trail Plan.com](#)) ([NH State Rail Trail Plan](#)). Abby E: current plan is building off that (2004-5) plan. That was the foundation to launch the latest one.
 - o Debby B: explain how this is the same or different then the SB 185 rail trail advisor committee? Abby E: responded it is the same SB 185 is just easier to say.
 - o Debby B: asked about H.B. 311? Abby E: that goes into more details like residual contamination and other impacts. Debby B: this has no mention of bicycles impact. Abby E: you are correct it can be added.
 - o Debby E: how is this different then S.B. 80 if this is about impact? Dave T: bill 311 is on state rail trail advisory committee and the state rail trail plan released in 2005 is being updated and will have a state wide inventory of all rail trails. 311 can be modified to address bicycles.
 - o Paula B: regarding the state rail trails plan – only covers state owned rail trails. HB 311 focuses on ALL rail trails in the state.

- Ray J: trails bureau has a maintenance plan for state owned rail trails. What is this house bill goal to distinguish between the trails bureau plan vs HB plan?
Abby E: responded with best practices will refer to all rail trails.
- ["NH Rail Trails Challenge"](#) (Paula Bedard, Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire, guest)
 - Paula B presented a PowerPoint slide presentation of rail trails challenge. Information is listed on NH coalition for Rec Trails website. No start or end date to complete challenge. No fee. Patch awarded when completed. (Technical difficulty with presentation, finished presentation after comments, will send presentation as PDF to be shared with committee once released by Paula).
- Review of e-bikes in Bear Brook State Park (Johanna Lyons, DNCR staff)
 - Johanna L: reports that DNCR formed an e-bike subcommittee under DLMT to discuss e-bikes on state reservations. State reservation are state parks and state forests. Subcommittee is trying to understand the law and what resources are on our state reservations. Many types of roads are in our state reservations and trying to understand all these types. Lots of the forestry roads feed onto natural surface trails. Subcommittee has recommendations they are working through and talking to our lands team. Class 1 e-bikes will be allowed on natural surface trails. Class 2 e-bikes on ATV network (like at CLHW network). Class 3 e-bikes may be used for commuter routes and still evaluating for use on rail trails. Franconia notch bike path may allow class 3. Ordiorne point bike path has lots of walkers so not sure if allowed class 3 and even doubt class 1 (and 2s) as there are so many people walking (small family groups).
 - Ray J: asked if there was a discussion on speed limits? Johanna L: replied with there is no speed limit on rail trails.
 - Ray J: asked if there will there be a website for e-bikes on DNCR website. Johanna L: replied with yes and will be updated once we have a policy.
 - Phil B: state he's not sure about all rail trails, but Franconia Notch bike path has a speed limit. This may change as e-bikes become allowed in more places. We may have to post speed limits as part of discussion with DNCR staff.
 - Paula B: states that she and Dave T discussed e-bikes with Chris Gamache (former Trails Bureau Chief) and provided a letter of input about e-bikes. She feels like all e-bikes should be treated like regular bikes.
 - Phil B: states that this discussion will continue when new Trails Bureau chief is hired. The state is not obligated to provide this opportunity because manufacturers produce a product but we want to try to as much as possible to get people outdoors. The state is looking into rule making to apply to all our state reservations regarding e-bikes.
- [Granite outdoor alliance](#) (Tyler Ray, guest)
 - Tyler R introduced himself and spoke about this newly formed non-profit, membership-based advocate association for outdoor community in NH. Working to cultivate an environmental way of life. Drive policy through businesses reflecting their interests. Grass routes movement with 4 areas: 1) economic development working on infrastructure. 2) Land conservation and stewardship. Working with state on leave no trace partnership. 3) Workforce education. More people available for workforce because of pandemic. 4) health and wellness. NH is all about getting people outside. Alliance wants to act as community organizer and facilitator for existing groups.
 - Wants to be a part of STAC membership.

Guest Comments/Questions

- Debby B: asked about Bear Brook management plan. Johanna L: said final plan is being edited. The steering committee will be back together next month to address any changes

to last couple of chapters. Public comment for 30 days then analyze comments. Bring committee back together for endorsement to commissioner.

- Debby B: asks if there will there be a public section for recreation? Johanna L: replied: No, we presented the rec chapter. Finalizing chapter from previous meeting. Tom D: said most of the direct part of this was addressed at the previous meeting.
 - Johanna L: states that we are setting a framework for requests for trail system. Setting it up so people know HOW to many inquiries for future
- Alexis R promoted combined LWCF/RTP webinar hosted next week by Eric F and Alexis R for federal funding for outdoor projects. Webinar will be recorded.

Next meeting tentatively set for August 2021. Can do a combined in person with on-line option.

Tom D: asking Debby motion to adjourn. Debby: motion to adjourn. (Did not hear second, but Chair says we are done).

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM.

DRAFT