

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

May 9, 2018

DNCR Conference Room

In Attendance

Members:

- Chris Gamache NH Trails Bureau (BOT)
- Debbie Briscoe New Hampshire Horse Council (NHHC)
- Josh Walter Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire (BWANH)
- Tim Blagden Human-Powered Winter Sports
- Raynold Jackson Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF)
- Scot Heath NH Snowmobile Association (NHSA)
- Larry Kenniston NH DOT, Bike/Ped Program (DOT)
- Tom Lesveque NH OHV Association (NHOHVA)
- Judy Silva NH Municipal Association (NHMA)
- Tom DiMaggio NH Musers Association

Staff/Guest:

- Alexis Rudko Bureau of Trails, RTP Specialist (staff)
- Patrick Hummel Office of Community Recreation (staff)
- Phil Bryce Director, Division of Parks & Recreation

Open Meeting

6:30 PM, meeting called to order

Review Minutes

Minutes from the November 7, 2017 meeting reviewed. Motion to approve by Tim B, second Chris G. Minutes approved.

OHRV/Snowmobile Update

- Season ended with 42,952 registrations; down about 4,000 from last years numbers. Good start in December but rains in January and warm weather in February impacted trails heaving. Late snow in March was good for trails but few riders register at the end of the season. NHSA, Trails Bureau and Fish & Game have been meeting to discuss future funding models for snowmobile program.
- Gearing up for start of OHRV season on May 23rd. Registrations to date are 36,239; up about 1,000 registrations over last year (5th year in a row of 1000 registration increase). May 1st the "club incentive" law took effect. It mirrors the snowmobile registration law in that it increases registrations by \$30 per machine, but riders can avoid the \$30 increase by joining a NH club that is part of the NH OHV Association. This will be first year of the change so we do expect some sort of registration impact but unsure what it would be. Goal is to get more people to be members in the volunteer clubs.

Recreational Trail Program Update

Alexis R reported that we hope to go to Governor & Council on June 6th for the 2018 RTP Contracts. There was a delay at DOT getting the program into the federal financial system but we believe it will be done this week. 2019 grant applications are on the website and 3 workshops are being done next week; 1 in Lancaster and 2 in Concord. Buy America provisions greatly impacting equipment purchases through RTP. Applicants can get U.S. steel beams/products for bridges, etc but they have to tell the vendor they need U.S. steel. It does increase the price but it is available. Equipment (groomers, etc) all have foreign steel and components that do not meet the federal requirement so NH is no longer approving equipment requests unless the applicant can demonstrate (with the application) that what they want can be approved. The U.S. made requirement is for any steel bought that is over the \$2,500 threshold.

Heritage Trail Update

Memo from Scott Monroe distributed to the group. Scott will comment on it at a future meeting.

Old Business

- eBike discussion from the fall meeting. A copy of new legislation from the State of Washington was distributed to the members and discussion about the Federal definitions of eBikes occurred. 750 watt and under are considered assist devices and allowed on pedestrian trails, over 750 watt are motorized vehicles by Federal definition. NH definition is that all eBikes are motorized vehicles and only permitted on motorized trails. Not sure if they would then have to register as an OHRV. NEMBA sent a letter to bike dealers in April asking them not to sell eMtn Bikes in NH, concerns over landowner issues and trail damages. eBike vs eMtnBike discussion ensued. Further discussion about 'intent' of eBikes being pedal assist to allow more people to get outside and recreating. Topic will continue to be discussed at future meetings. Division of Parks & Recreation will need to be involved in the discussions and it would be better addressed through legislation than agencies Rules.
- Chris mentioned there are two entities working on trail matters in the WMNF at this time; the WM Trail Cooperative is a group of hiking trail organizations that do work in the forest and there is also the Franconia Ridge Working Group. A history of the parking and trail issues in Franconia Notch was given; federal aid highway and illegal to park on it, trails are over used and impacted from the volume of hikers. Agencies working on a bus/shuttle plan to try to implement in the future.
- SB 560, NH DOT Statewide Trail Plan bill was voted to Interim Study by House committee. Basically means the bill is dead. This bill would have directed DOT to update the 2005 trail plan and name it the State Rail Trail Plan and appropriated \$150,000 to DOT to complete the work. Senate passed the bill but changed the funding to \$1.

New Business

- Ray asked about Wapack trail users that travel into Miller SP from Temple Reservation. Some are asked to pay the car fee? Phil clarified that Miller SP is a fee use area and all people that enter it are expected to pay the fee because they have access to the facilities. It is not a vehicle fee at Miller, it is a user fee. Agency will look to put up a sign at the property line in the future to clarify this for pass through hikers.
- Chris noted that a new Horse Rider Loading Ramp was just completed by Park and Trails staff earlier today at Bear Brook State Park. Funding was donated to the agency by the Derry Trail Riders. Agency will work with the equine community on a ribbon cutting in the near future.
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Guest Comments/Questions

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday October 17, 2018. Meeting will start at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.