

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

June 14, 2017

DRED Conference Room

### In Attendance

#### Members:

- Chris Gamache NH Trails Bureau (BOT)
- Tom Levesque NH Off Highway Vehicle Assoc (NHOHVA)
- Debbie Briscoe New Hampshire Horse Council (NHHC)
- Tim Blagden Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire (BWANH)
- Andy Welch White Mountain National Forest (WMNF)
- Raynold Jackson Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF)
- Scott Monroe Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)
- Larry Keniston NH DOT, Bike/Ped Program (DOT)
- Peter DeSantis NE Mountain Bike Assoc (NEMBA)
- Judy Silva NH Municipal Association (NHMA)
- Tom DiMaggio NH Mushers Association

#### Staff/Guest:

- Alexis Rudko Bureau of Trails, RTP Specialist (staff)
- Patrick Hummel Office of Community Recreation (staff)
- Emily Lord UNH Cooperative Extension

### Open Meeting

6:30 PM, meeting called to order and introductions made.

### Review Minutes

Minutes from the February 8, 2017 meeting reviewed. Motion to approve by Tom D, second Debbie B. Minutes approved.

Emily Lord, Stewardship Outreach Coordinator for UNH Cooperative Extension's Stewardship Network gave a presentation about the Stewardship Network and their trail programs. Specific topics were the Stewardship Network and its role, Trailfinder GPS maps and Economic Development Team projects for trail connections to communities. Emily handed out a packet of information to committee members and discussed the Trail Maintenance for Volunteers workshops they are teaching. Resources can be found at [www.newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/trails](http://www.newengland.stewardshipnetwork.org/trails) they are hoping to offer a bridge building class in the fall. Focus at this time is southeastern NH but hoping to spread out to rest of state in the future. Her handouts included the new card about the Trailfinder gps program and discussion ensued about who can authorize trails to be listed; only land owners or land managers can authorize trails to be on the program. Trail user groups could be valuable to get input from but they will not put trails on the layers without landowner authorization. [www.trailfinder.info](http://www.trailfinder.info) and lastly, she discussed UNHCE hiring on a Natural Resource Economic Development person to help communities plan out ways to connect trails to business districts, etc. Lots of towns in southern NH looking for ways to get people from trails to businesses. Recommendation was to look at SB 80 rail trail committee report from 2016 to help with this. She asked STAC to get the Stewardship Network Facebook page out to as many people as possible to follow.

### **OHRV/Snowmobile Update**

Chris G noted that a short summary of the winter snowmobile season was on everyone's agenda. Good overall season. Statewide riding available for several weeks and snow arrived before XMAS/New Year holiday week and Mass school vacation week. Unreliable weather patterns with heavy snows and then warm weather. Most trails closed mid-March but some riding available in Pittsburg area until early May (5 months of riding). Registrations numbers were just over 47,000 sleds.

NOHVCC/INOHVAA Annual Mtg, Manchester NH, August 22-26. First time national OHV conference held in Northeast. Mobile Workshop will be held at Hop-Ev Riding Area outside of Concord.

Trails opened on May 23rd in many areas, but wet spring caused delays in several of the connector trails in the North Country. Bureau expecting busy summer season again this year, with registrations at or above last year.

### **Recreational Trail Program Update**

Alexis R reminded the group that applications for 2018 funds are due June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Good attendance at the three grant workshops. She recently attended a meeting of RTP coordinators out in Ohio and it was clear that every state manages the program differently and each Federal Highway office interprets the federal rules differently. Agency still discussing changing format for application reviews and scoring, to use State staff and not members of STAC. Had some issues with scoring of applications over last 2 years and think it would be more fair for all applicants.

### **Heritage Trail Update**

Scott M reviewed HT files at Trails office to get a better understanding of the history and intent of the program. He will give an update to the group at the fall meeting.

### **Old Business**

Trail Group Insurance/Parks – Patrick gave a short final update on the program. Insurance is in place for about 14 organizations that could not otherwise afford or acquire it on their own. It covers their activities on DRED lands only. Still working with insurance company on an actual certificate for the groups and scope of work agreements with the organizations. Other groups working on trails are protected from suit by NH law, but can always be sued for anything and the organization would have to defend itself. The insurance has been in place since March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Legislative updates: SB 383 (hiking trail study committee) has not met. Discussions about WMNF meetings on trail overcrowding and parking issues that have been ongoing for past 6+ months. Chris G a short summary of the state budget bill and timelines for bill passage. The state budget would also split current agency (DRED) into two separate agencies: Dept of Business and Economic Affairs and the Dept of Natural & Cultural Resources. STAC should see not impacts to its involvement with the Division of Parks & Recreation from the split, but uncertain where offices would be housed in the future, etc.

### **New Business**

Chris handed out copies of the new printed BMP manuals to attendees. Some edits to make but those edits will appear only in the on-line downloadable version at this time.

<http://www.nhstateparks.org/uploads/pdf/BMP-Manual.pdf> Trails Bureau had 300 hard copies printed for distribution. Debbie B inquired about the status of the proposed wetlands protection bill in the legislature, but its status was not known by members of the committee.

Tom L asked if eMTB (ebikes) had been resolved in regards to having to register them or not for use on public trails. Under Parks Rules they are considered motorized vehicles and can only operate on motorized trails. Requirement to register is unknown at this time but will need to be clarified. NHOHVA is working on an on-line club membership program to meet the registration requirements that take effect next May and if ebikes have to have registrations it would be good to know this year. Feeling from BWA and DOT was they would not be impacting to trails and

unlikely to be found on mtn bike trails. Lower watt versions should likely be classified as bicycles. May want to look at registration for higher wattage bikes. Ebikes will be on the fall meeting agenda for discussion.

**Guest Comments/Questions**

Tom L asked Chris to tell the group about the NOHVCC meeting in August. Chris gave a quick update of the NOHVCC annual meeting be held in Manchester in August and that it is the first time this national association has met in New England. The OHV agencies in each state are all on the planning board for the conference.

**Next meeting** scheduled for Wednesday October 11, 2017. Meeting will start at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM. (moved Chris G, 2<sup>nd</sup> Judy S)

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