

**Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Committee
Meeting Notes
October 29, 2011**

In Attendance: Bing Judd, Jim Gallagher, Paul Doscher, Jenn Landry, Dick Moquin, Glenn Normandeau, Ron Hughes, John Stewart and Merrill Dalton.

Chairman Bing Judd welcomed Senator Sanborn, Representative Sanborn and Representative Rappaport to the meeting. The Chairman requested a salute to the flag.

Introductions of committee members – Ron Hughes has been appointed as the representative of the North Woods Lease Holders Assn and is a new member on the committee.

Award Presentation – Chris Gamache presented Lainie Castine with the 2011 American Trails Award as NH's nominated Trail Worker of the Year. Lainie has worked hard to secure landowner permission and working with state agencies for the development of the Cohos Trail. She is a 40 mile maintainer in addition to an officer of the Cohos Trail Assn.

Road & Gate Update – Sandy reported that the spring road damages did not qualify for FEMA. All the operating budget has gone into emergency repairs; #1 priority is logging, #1 is recreation. There was an additional \$480,000 from Hurricane Irene and FEMA has done an evaluation, exact grant dollars are unknown. Snowmobile clubs are working on Cedar Stream bridge.

Dam Update – Jim Gallagher reported Boundary Pond and Scott's Bog will be started next spring as soon as the roads open. Sheehan Pond will be next biennium and the other dams will be programmed out in future bienniums. DES and F&G are working with the landowner and DRED as easement holder to complete the easement, survey, design and permitting.

- Scott's Bog – should it be drained this fall to kill off the weeds since it will be worked on this spring? Late fall draw downs do not allow animals to seek other winter shelter. Glenn Normandeau will ask his staff.

Recreation Plan Update – Johanna Lyons gave the following report:

The Division at the April meeting proposed to do a plan amendment rather a plan revision. The CLHWF webpage has information on the sections to be revised and people can provide comment at any time. Two outreach sessions were held; Sept 17th in Pittsburg & Oct 25th in Concord.

- Hobby mineral collecting – no support for additional regulation; DRED will research the existing law and permitting requirements and post.
 - Noise with mechanized dredging
 - Stream water quality a concern
- Dams – support for upgrading the public facilities at dams including parking, pit toilets and other amenities. No support for a permit system for boat storage, did

- agree that boats should have owner name & contact info. Boats should be removed at the end of season to prevent rotting boats over time.
- Bicycle Use – no change in management direction; support clarification that they are allowed behind gates.
 - Equestrian Use – Several local riders have come forward interested in forming a group. Need to plan for carriage driving.
 - Road Management – need to work out the classification of the roads; do road and/or trail laws/rules apply? Also need to sort out the crossing right with other landowners for the public
 - DRED will put together a working group to review the existing laws/rules and recommend changes.
 - New Uses – broad support for a multi-use volunteer network spanning all recreational users.
 - ATV – We heard broad support for the link. Some concern on conflict management between users & commercial logging. Concern was also expressed on enforcement capacity.
 - Other Issues:
 - Safety & Signage – Need to avoid the seasonal switch of signs and have one system and/or integrate into the 911 addressing system for the property. A recommendation was made to put the GPS coordinates on the address signs. There is a great need for cell service in the North Country.
 - Economic Development – both outreach groups understand the area needs economic growth, however, concerned about changing the area detrimentally
 - Visitor Info/Services – Need more/better info for visitors prior to their visit and once they get into town. Can there be a visitor center in the village through a cooperative agreement?
 - Next Steps
 - Comments gladly accepted until next CLHCC meeting in April 2012
 - DRED will begin to draft amendments
 - Technical Team will likely meet in March 2012 to review amendments
 - The amendments will be posted on the CLHWF website prior to the April 2012 CLHCC meeting for the public to review
 - May 2012 - Revise/internal approval by Commissioner Bald
 - Public Info session in June 2012, then present to the landowner for approval by July 2012

ATV Use on Roads – Bing Judd reported that the Pittsburg BOS has made access to Perry Stream land (8,000 acres) possible on town roads. ATVs on the CLH property can connect to the Parmecheenee Road in Maine. The roads in unincorporated townships in NH are all open to ATVs. Supports a seasonal closure of all the roads to accommodate other uses such as bird hunters (October 1st). Johanna read a letter from NH Grand Brand to the committee (attached).

Harry Brown representing the North Country OHRV Coalition presented a power point to illustrate the support for the Great North Woods Riders proposal and their advocacy for

SB107. The organization expects that when the trails linkages between Berlin, Millsfield, Pittsburg, Canaan VT and Colebrook it will provide a unique experience in the East.

General Comments:

- Main concern is to make sure people stay on the trails. Not enough CO's to police the area.
- Make sure there is a real penalty, not a slap on the wrist for mis-use
- Hoping for reciprocity with VT
- Trails Bureau can write administrative fines
- Trail Patrols need to be established and/or upgraded. Peer to peer enforcement.
- Perry Stream trail patrol does have teeth because is it on private land and misbehaving riders can be given a "time-out".
- F&G gives grants to local Police Depts. (covers overtime)
- Stratford ATV club has radios and F&G Co monitors their frequency. They work with local COs to help with details.
- Sue Rugg, part time OHRV educator stresses making youth operator training days a family day. The key is education.
- What is the significance of the October 1st ATV trail closure date?
 - October 1st starts bird season. Bird hunters with dogs may be in conflict with ATV use/noise
 - Perry Stream closing date is currently later but they are backing up to October 1st, Vince Judd said that the freeze/thaw cycle causes the most damage on the non-gravel roads.
- Is there a way to use ATVs for the moose hunt
- Heavy use can mean noise pollution – camp at Carr Ridge and doesn't want to hear them. How to reduce the exposure to noise pollution. Can the proposal be approved conditionally?
- There is noise standards for ATVs
- 90% of the use in Pittsburg is the 4wd utility type (not sport 2wd). These machines go slower.
- Landowner Protection – all laws and rules apply
- ATV use has no benefit to the landowner or land manager however they understand the economic importance to the community. The integrity of the easement and FSC certification must be maintained.
- The 5 year recreation plan is the vehicle to review and make new decisions on ATV use once this proposal is implemented.
- Need to look at the data and info collected for the Nash Stream trail.

GNW Riders Proposal – Chris Gamache clarified some of the questions raised in the general discussion and presented the GNW Riders proposal, and some variations based upon discussions with others and the SB 107 Study Committee.

- Speed limits assist in noise reduction. Reducing speed from 35 to 25 mph cut the decibels in half. Speed limit on trails statewide is 25 mph now because of that study.

- Water quality samples were taken as part of the Nash Stream project; the three best ways to ensure a well operated/maintained trail is EDUCATION/ENFORCEMENT/ENGINEERING.

It is the goal of the Trails Bureau to have a route designated across the CLH property to link other networks in the area. It may have to move from time to time depending on logging activity – other users may also have to be excluded.

- The off-road motorcycle community will not find this type of riding enjoyable. They prefer technical challenges. And timber companies do not allow them typically so they could not connect to any riding via this proposal. Road registered motorcycles are allowed on the roads.
- Reviewing the road system for physical attributes and other issues over the winter.
- Will post speed limits and under NH law you cannot modify exhaust systems to make them louder.
- SB107 study committee supports putting reasonableness back into the criteria.
- Need to find the balance between economic development and other values. Can't do every activity on every acre but we can find a place that we do activity where there is management in place.

Senator Sanborn commented on the SB 107 study committee and reviews and was glad to hear all the discussion today. He is filing legislation to provide for changes which would allow for the use as outlined and thinks that everything he has heard was reasonable and that all of this discussion will be helpful for the area as a whole.

Chairman Judd requested a motion to send a letter in support to the SB107 committee for their proposed legislation. The committee endorsed the motion with Paul Doscher abstaining until the bill was drafted for review.

Chairman Judd requested a motion for the CLHCC to recommend to Commissioner Bald that DRED move forward with the ATV proposal, as outlined by Chris' presentation. The committee endorsed the motion with unanimous support.

New Business – none

Old Business – none

Adjourn 12:05

Respectfully Submitted, Johanna Lyons, Division of Parks and Recreation