

New Hampshire Statewide Trails Advisory Committee (STAC)
Meeting Minutes from January 13, 2009

In Attendance

Members:

- Tom Dimaggio (Chair) NH Mushers Assoc
- Greg Placy NH DOT/Dist 1
- Ken Domey NH Off Highway Vehicle Assoc
- Jerry Moore NH DOT/Bike-Ped
- Debbie Briscoe NH Horse Council
- Jack Waldron SPNHF
- Jack Chapman FOMBA
- Dennis Ford NHSA
- Chris Gamache NH Trails Bureau
- Marianne Leberman WMNF
- Denis Laliberte Educators

Staff:

- Jennifer Codispoti NH Trails Bureau
- Bill Gegas NH Trails Bureau

Guests:

- Ted Austin NH Division of Parks & Recreation
- Bill Darcy AMC
- Diane Hanley WOW Trail
- Greg Bakos Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Open Meeting

7:02 PM, meeting called to order.

Introductions

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

Review Minutes

Minutes from the December 9, 2008 meeting reviewed and accepted.

OHRV Update

NH is now into the meat of the snowmobile season. The season has begun with good snow and cold temps. Registration total have not yet been reported by F&G. The 2008 ice storm which occurred only 3 days before the season open date had a massive affect on clubs and the BOT. The BOT alone had over 500 field staff hours logged for clean-up and managed to clear over 250 miles of rail trails. The results of the storm also prompted a massive volunteer effort to clear trails. As of this time, most trails are now open.

Enhanced 911 services have now mapped over 1300 miles of roads and trails in Coos County. The 45th Parallel EMS received a RTP safety grant to develop locator signs for this effort. This should save substantial time during rescue operations. EMS services in Cheshire County are looking to begin the same project.

Recreational Trails Program

The Trails Bureau is currently accepting applications for the FY 2009 grants. Applications are due at DRED by the end of business day on Friday January 23rd. President Obama has chosen his appointee for US DOT Secretary, Ray LaHood. The current secretary is not supportive of the RTP's inclusion into the next transportation bill, however appointee LaHood had been a trail advocate while in public office in Illinois.

A request was made for the 2009 grantee list to be distributed after selections. The Bureau will try to adjust the timetable so that grant award notices will go out sooner

Heritage Trail Update

The Bureau is waiting to hear of a new proposal from the town of Lancaster. There have been no reports on the progress of the HT in Lincoln/Woodstock. Towns should be reporting this week to BEM about ice storm damage.

New Business

The STAC was introduced to Ted Austin, newly appointed Director of Parks. The STAC was reminded that it exists to advise the Director on issues related to the statewide trail system. Director Austin addressed the committee noting that he is anxious to help, considers himself as a trails user on many levels and understands the issues with multi use.

Proposed legislation that the STAC should be aware of:

- HB 191 looks to add "bicycling" to the list of land uses under the Duty of Care law. DRED supports this bill. This bill should be of most interest to the mountain bike representative on STAC. The Duty of Care law is one of the biggest to allow for the development of recreational trails in NH.
- SB 20 proposes to add the Bike-Walk Alliance as a statutorily designated member of the STAC. The Trails Bureau questions why as it seems to be more interested in transportation issues rather than trail issues. BWA works much with DOT-Bike Ped. A newly formed Rail Trail Alliance will soon be operating under the umbrella of BWA. This group will want representation on STAC. The Trails Bureau feels that legislation is pre-mature. Legislation is not needed as the Commissioner can appoint a new group to the STAC. The Bureau would like the BWA to request being appointed before legislation is pushed. It was hoped that a representative from the BWA would be present at tonight's meeting to respond to any question about wanting to be on the STAC. The Chairman said that the STAC should see what the BWA will bring to the table before the committee can support it, asked for recommendations from the committee. A motion was made by the SPNH rep that the Commissioner appoint the BWA to the STAC but that legislation is pre-mature. Diane Hanley, present tonight as a guest representing the WOW trail, said that she is also involved with the BWA can return comments to the group. She was then asked to have the BWA submit a request to the Commissioner, via the Trails Bureau, to be seated on the STAC. The Chairman also asked for a synopsis of the BWA's trail user representation. The committee concurred to oppose SB 20, with preference for the alternative of appointment by the Commissioner.

Old Business

- Non-Motorized Trail Funding

Last year, following HB 441, the STAC was asked by the House R,R&D Committee to propose methods for obtaining funds to maintain non-motorized trails on State Park lands and to create opportunities for volunteers as trail adopters. The Trails Bureau presented a summary of four (4) proposed options as discussed at the December 2008 STAC meeting.

1. Donations and Fundraising
 - Relax restriction on the State's ability to accept donations for trail maintenance
 - Trail pass sales
 - Trail merchandise sales
2. Dedicate RTP Funds
 - Reserve a portion/percentage of the dedicated 30% non-motorized funds towards trails on DRED lands.
3. Expand Use of Iron Rangers
 - As a trail maintenance/user fee (not parking fee)
 - Proposal for 2/3 of funds to go towards trail maintenance costs, 1/3 to fund Parks staff
4. Increase Permit Fees on DRED Lands
 - Fees currently collected from groups using DRED lands under special use permits. SUP required for events that charge a participation fee, provide food, raise funds for charity, etc.

The STAC voted to present the above summary of recommendations to the Director of Parks to take under his consideration.

Other

For his many years of active service for recreation trails in NH, the Trails Bureau recently nominated Tom Dimaggio for the American Trails 2008 National Trails Award Program New Hampshire Trail Advocate Award. As Tom was selected for this award, the Trails Bureau took this opportunity to present it to him and to thank him for his longtime involvement with the STAC and other various user and trail advocacy groups. Congratulations again Tom!

Next meeting set for April 14, 2008 DRED conference room, 172 Pembroke Road, Concord.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.