

New Hampshire Statewide Trails Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes, October 12, 2011

In Attendance

Members:

- Chris Gamache NH Trails Bureau
- Gail Hanson New Hampshire Snowmobile Association (NHSA) (for Al Cooper)
- Debbie Briscoe NH Horse Council
- Peter DeSantis New England Mtn Bike Association (NEMBA)
- Larry Keniston NH DOT Bike/Ped
- Diane Hanley NH Rails to Trails (NHRTC)
- Jack Chapman Friends of Massabesic Bicycling Association (FOMBA)
- Jack Wheeler NH Off Highway Vehicle Association (NHOHA)
- Marianne Leberman White Mountain National Forest (WMNF)

Staff:

- Megan DeNutte NH Trails Bureau

Guests:

- Matt Caron NEMBA

Open Meeting

7:05 PM, meeting called to order.

Introductions

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations.

Review Minutes

Minutes from the October 12, 2011 meeting reviewed and approved.

Member Updates

NHSA presentation postponed until next meeting. Al Cooper was unexpectedly away on business.

NEMBA is still working on something for Bear Brook State Park for trails. Hopefully more to update in the Spring.

OHRV/Snowmobile Update

2012 snowmobile season has gotten off to a slow start. This winter is comparable to winter 2006. Lack of snow is hurting local businesses. Maine and Vermont are in the same position as NH is, in regards to lack of snow. Reciprocity weekend for Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire is Friday January 27 – Sunday January 29. This means you only need one registration to ride in all three states. Reciprocity weekend with Quebec is the second week in February. Think snow!

NHSA is updating their Economic Impact Study. NHSA sent out 3,000 letters. As of right now, over 1,000 have been returned. Study was last done ten years ago.

Recreational Trails Program

All of 2012 RTP funding has been rescinded by FHWA due to a technical correction in the formula. Total money taken back due to this formula is \$676,000. 27 snow belt states had to give back money. 5 states lost all funding completely like NH. Need a program reauthorization. Decision is now up to Congress. Continuous support from trail users and organizations is helpful. This committee will not disappear if RTP funding does.

Heritage Trail Update

The town of Hooksett wants to connect Concord to Manchester – Route out toward Candia. A majority of the river front is owned by Pan Am.

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New Business

HB 1551: Landowner Liability update. All attendees were provided with a copy of HB 1551. This HB was created due to the landowner liability lawsuit in Epsom. It was created to strengthen landowner liability laws. There has never been a successful lawsuit against a NH landowner. Landowners affect all groups in committee and through these generous landowners; we have access thousands of acres of land. Our landowners are a big part of NH trails so it is important to protect them. This HB is very likely to pass. The latest it would be in effect in June.

Old Business

Funding for F&G Search and Rescue Operations: Much time was spent on the previous meeting discussing possible solutions to funding issues for search and rescue. No one has been able to draft a bill to solve this problem.

Landowner lawsuit in Epsom. Lawsuit was dropped. Person seeking lawsuit had never actually seen or met the landowner before. The person whom he gained permission to use lands from was not a landowner.

Guest Comments/Questions

Chief Gamache will keep committee updated on status of HB 1551 and RTP funding.

Next meeting

Date not yet set. Committee decided it would be easier to decide on a date closer to time of meeting. An e-mail will go out in the beginning of April to collectively decide on a date.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.