

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

October 23, 2019

DNCR Conference Room

In Attendance

Members:

Chris Gamache, NH Trails Bureau (BOT); Debbie Briscoe; NH Horse Council (NHHC); Terry Callum, NH Snowmobile Association (NHSA); Raynold Jackson, Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF); Larry Keniston, NH DOT, Bike/Ped Program (DOT); Tom DiMaggio, NH Mushers Association (Chairman); Scott Munroe, Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) Marianne Leberman, White Mountain National Forest (WMNF); Tim Blagden, Human-Powered Winter Sports

Staff/Guest:

Alexis Rudko, Bureau of Trails, RTP Specialist (staff); Phil Bryce, Director, Division of Parks & Recreation; Paula Bedard, Bike-Walk Alliance of NH; Rod Grimsley, Bike-Walk Alliance of NH

Open Meeting

6:33 PM, meeting called to order

Introductions and Review Minutes

Introductions of members and guests made. Minutes from the May 9, 2019 meeting reviewed and one edit made. Minutes approved.

OHRV/Snowmobile Update

Gearing up for the season. Clubs and Bureau are trying to finish up trail projects before snows arrive. Approx. 44,000 registrations last year. SB 187 created a Snowmobile Program Review Committee to meet over 2 years and make recommendation for future GIA Rules, funding, etc.

OHRV season is winding down. Northern Coos County trails closed now and State highways will close to OHRV use November 1st. About 35,000 registrations anticipated for this year, which is the same as last 2 years. HB 630 increased fines for some violations, from \$75 to \$243. Fines increase was sought by snowmobile community for their trails but also included OHRV fines, with support from agencies and OHRV community. HB 660 requires agency to do some trail plans and economic studies, but did not identify or provide any funds to do them. Agency applied for Northern Borders Regional Commission grant funds, but were unsuccessful in approval.

Recreational Trail Program Update

Alexis R reported that 2020 grant applications were in environmental review process. FY 2019 projects are underway. Grant limits for 2020 are the same as in previous years. There were 36 applicants for 2020 grant funds.

Heritage Trail Update

Nothing new. Topic is on agenda because legislation requires it as an agenda topic.

Old Business

-Legislative updates: There was discussion about several pieces of legislation that would have impacts on trails. Senate Bill (SB) 185 will update a 2004 DOT State Trail Plan. The plan is actually about rail trails and would be renamed the State Rail Trail Plan and the bill has some funding to complete the work. DOT has not set up the advisory committee yet and no meetings have been scheduled. Legislators are filing Legislative Service Requests (LSRs) for upcoming legislative session. There are only titles so far, no bill language. Unknown what would affect trail related items at this time.

-EBike law was discussed at length, including future Agency Administrative Rules that would be needed to address their use on State lands. Agency has no proposed language at this time, but goal would be to have something in place for next summer season. Ebike Rules would be part of

a larger Rules package to legislature that would also include park Rules, such as campgrounds, etc. Rules that are less restrictive would be the goal. No need for a Rule if it is not enforced. Need to address actual issue today, not 'what-ifs'. Asked if Parks would bring draft Rules to STAC for input before moving forward? Phil B said he would share with STAC but timing is concern and STAC may have to hold an additional meeting to keep with Parks timeline for Rules. Marianne L brought up that the Department of Interior (National Parks) recently put out a memo saying eBikes are allowed on all trails, however the Department of Agriculture oversees National Forests and they define eBikes as motorized vehicles; as such eBikes are not permitted in the White Mountain National Forest.

-Parks lost \$27,000 on the hiker shuttle this summer, but considering it a successful program because it got people off the highways and there were no injuries on the highway from people parking to access hiking trails. The shuttle allowed state to maintain the hiking experience for the guests, and did not compromise the Tram, Beach or Flume parking lots and revenue generation at these fee-use facilities. Agency planning to charge for parking at Falling Waters and Lafayette Place parking lots in future. Discussions about costs and responsibilities of agencies. Cones and signs effective but not eyesore. More signs needed to guide people to exit 34B parking. Discussion about high cost to stay at AMC huts and do they have to pay for multiple days to occupy parking at Peabody lot? Yes.

-Tom D gave an update on the status of the Bear Brook State Park Management Plan process and timelines. Recently had a Heritage presentation that was very interesting. State doing archaeology studies in the park. Road/trail signage a bit discussion. Plan should address overcrowding in the future, need to look at metrics of experience/values. Trail maps and mapping apps should be looked at in the future.

-Winter etiquette still not ready for discussion. Agency has not done anything more with this since last meeting. Centers around winter fat-tire bike use and grooming trails for bike use; bike groups want others to stay off trails and not "post-hole" trails they want to use. Adirondacks State Park has policy not allowing users in high country except on skies or snowshoes to prevent 'post-holing'?

New Business

-When a representative leaves STAC and organizations want to appoint a new representative, they must send a letter to DNCR Commissioner with name of requested representative and include some basic information about the person (why entity would like them to be on STAC and their role with requesting organization). AMC and NHA have new representatives and are 'statutory' members of STAC (organization is listing in the statute guaranteeing them a seat at the table). Bike-Walk Alliance is a member by request to the agency, and they need a new representative. Tom D noted that some consistency from members is desired at future meetings it would be good for members to give a quick summary of the purpose of the organization that the members represent. Scott Monroe, AMC, was thanked for his time on STAC (this was his last meeting).

-Tim B asked to discuss the Wakefield Story Walk, which was removed from the Cotton Valley Rail Trail by the State. Chris G gave a short history of the project, which was installed on State trail without review and approval (though the local library thought they had been given permission, but entity that gave permission had no authority to do so). Concept is good, but the installation of new posts are a safety issue for winter trail users and projects on State lands have to meet agency goals and receive formal approvals. Library is submitting project for agency review, in hopes of approval for 2020.

Guest Comments/Questions

No guest questions

Next meeting set for January 15, 2020. Next meeting will start at 6:30

Motion to adjourned by Chris G, second Ray J. Meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.