

New Hampshire Statewide Trails Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes, May 11, 2010

In Attendance

Members:

- Tom Dimaggio (Chair) NH Musers Association
- Larry Keniston NH Department of Transportation/Bike-Ped
- Scott Hatch Northeast Association of 4WD Clubs
- Dennis Ford NH Snowmobile Association
- Judy Silva NH Municipal Association
- Chris Gamache NH Bureau of Trails
- Diane Hanley NH Rail Trail Coalition
- Bill Darcy Appalachian Mountain Club
- Kim Fortune NH Farm Bureau Federation
- Denis Laliberte Summit School

Staff:

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

Guests:

- Peter Desantis New England Mountain Bike Association
- Matt Caron New England Mountain Bike Association
- Charles Martin Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County
- Raynold Jackson Trailwrights

Open Meeting

7:10 PM, meeting called to order.

Introductions

Members and guests introduced themselves and their affiliations. The Chairman stated that guest questions and comments would be allowed during the meeting provided that they are relevant to the meeting topics.

Review Minutes

Minutes from the January 12, 2010 meeting reviewed and accepted.

OHRV Update

The 2009/2010 snowmobile season was a bad season for low snowfall and heavy rain. Several areas that typically experience a 12 week season were down to a 4 week season. It is hoped that because of the bad snow season that there will be leftover GIA funds from unused grooming hours, that can be applied to summer maintenance grants.

Recreational Trails Program

Preliminary amounts for FY 2010 grants have been selected and will need G&C approval and completed contract to finalize. Funds can't be release by FHWA until list of selected/approved project is provided. The Trails Bureau is currently working on memorandums and agreements between FHWA-DOT-DRED to further remove DOT from administrative roles within the program. Clarification from FHWA on grantee procurement requirements has been received. Equipment/goods/materials purchases \$2000 and over, and service contracts \$3000 and over a minimum of 3 bids/quotes will be required. Lowest bid/quote wins unless other is reasonably justified. Sole source vendors/contracts may be approved if justified. RTP will now only reimburse standard heavy equipment rates as set by DOT (to be used in GIA too). Program reauthorization is still in limbo. A continuing resolution has been adopted through Dec 2010. Beyond that the program's future is not clear. It's possible another continuing resolution will be adopted. Support for the program to NH's congressional delegates is still needed. The Trails Bureau can draft a letter to be sent by Chairman DiMaggio on behalf of STAC. Motion to send letter to congress made by Dennis F, passed. Unskilled hourly wage has been raised for the 2010 grant year from \$10.67 to \$18.58 based on federal rates.

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Heritage Trail Update

Trail activity has been generating in Lancaster, Whitefield and Bristol. The NH legislature has recently repealed the STAC Heritage Trail sub-committee portion of RSA 216-F:5. HT activity was heavy in early 90's but has waned considerably in recent years. Sub-committee hasn't met in over a decade, however the HT will remain as an agenda item on the STAC. Trails Bureau will continue oversight.

New Business

Liability Insurance: Earlier this year the Trails Bureau requested responses from trail user groups relative to liability insurance. Who has it, what type, what does it cost, what does it cover, etc? This topic stemmed from discussions with the Attorney General's Office regarding trail maintenance and other functions held on state property. AG said groups should have insurance. Currently it is not a requirement. Most volunteer groups cannot afford or obtain insurance. The Trails Bureau understands that if groups are required to hold insurance they may be driven away. The Trails Bureau researching insurance costs and policies for trail groups. Groups that don't have insurance rely on statutory protections. Discussion.

DES Stream Rules: DES stream rules are being amended. Permitting will show increased costs with less impact, and more regulations for notifications and permits. The proposed new rules were confusing and would be more costly for trail organizations. The current draft did not pass legislative committee. The Trails Bureau opposed much of the initial drafts, and ultimately helped to re-write the trail portions of the rules. Stream channels will be limited to 8' or less for culverts. Bridge work in jurisdictional banks can have up to 3000 sq ft of impact with abutments as long as no work is done in the water. The Trails Bureau worked hard to get good amendments made. Club will need to be attentive in following new rules. Details are still being worked out for changes regarding trail work along prime wetlands. Many rail trail corridors abut prime wetlands, mostly in South and Southwest areas of NH. Waiver process is being established.

Transfer of rail trail corridors from DOT to DRED: DRED will receive transfer of rail bed from Colebrook to Stewartstown. The current proposal for this corridor is to remove rails and ties for better use by horses, bikes, snowmobiles, etc. Putt-Putt owners have been using this section of track, however illegally, and will likely come out in vocal opposition of rail/tie removal.

Old Business

Pisgah State Park management and recreation plans: Recreational groups are looking at the future of trails in PSP. An increase in equestrian and mountain bike access is being looked at. Proposal for creating more trail loop opportunities for mountain bikes is currently in state review process. The draft plan should be completed at the end of summer/early fall.

Trail Etiquette: The draft version will be sent to committee members for comment.

Legislation: HB1689-1690, STAC to continue as advisory committee, however Heritage Trail Subcommittee has been repealed. Bicycles to be added to duty of care law. HB1422, establishes a study committee to evaluate formation of a state department of natural resources with report due by September. HB1445, repeals the state campground tax. HB1520 give rule making authority to the Division of Parks and Recreation relative to fines. Fine schedule to be established. Included in this will be prohibited use of trails. Enforcement by local police, can keep ½ of collected fine. HB1620 approves the creation of a special license plate for supporting state parks. SB313 extends repeal date of the State Park Advisory Committee by one year. SPAC will need to argue to extend for 10 years to coincide with state parks 10 year plan. SB366 looks to expand size limits of ohrvs within Jericho Mtn State Park.

Other

- Next meeting set for September 14, 2010 DRED conference room, 172 Pembroke Road, Concord.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM (motion by Scott H)