

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

**In Attendance**

Members:

- Tom DiMaggio (Chair) NH Mushers Association
- Chris Gamache NH Trails Bureau
- Al Cooper NH Snowmobile Association (NHTSA)
- Debbie Briscoe NH Horse Council
- Kim Fortune NH Farm Bureau Federation
- Peter DeSantis New England Mtn Bike Association (NEMBA)
- Larry Keniston NH DOT Bike/Ped
- Roger Lohr XC Skiers
- Michael Williams NH Municipal Association (for Judy Silva)

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 April 12, 2011 meeting reviewed, corrected and approved.

**Member Updates**

NHTSA presentation postponed until January meeting. Change in representation on the committee and was unaware of presentation until recently.

**OHRV/Snowmobile Update**

**Recreational Trails Program**

No new highway bill and only 6 month continuing resolution passed to date. We have received ½ of the money for FY12. Bureau plans to announce grants funds as we normally do but final awards will be determined by final funding received. Megan DeNutte has been hired to coordinate the RTP component within Trails Bureau. Working part time until a final highway bill is passed and future funding is known. Deadline will be January again organizations should submit grant applications.

SCORP updates were discussed in relation to their relevance to RTP funding. Not directly related to RTP but would be used for major projects and support or those. Committee asked that Bureau forward SCORP survey out to committee members to fill out, when it is available.

**Heritage Trail Update**

No new project updates

**New Business**

New Director of Parks & Recreation, Phil Bryce, has been hired. Phil was former Director of Forests & Lands and made quick headway in Parks. Chris relayed Phil's apologies for not being able to make the meeting.

Funding stream for Fish & Game Search and Rescue Operations is needed and committee spent considerable time discussing options and ideas on ways to raise the revenues for this need. Legislative bill this past session started by requiring AMC and RMC huts to pay \$3/person/night to F&G to help cover budget shortfalls. Group has been working to address ways to raise the needed funds. Legislative study committee has met twice and wants to hear from DRED next week. Ideas discussed are as follows: seek voluntary relief from manufacturers of outdoors goods (low likelihood of success), Trailhead Pass required

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at parking areas (trailheads). Would be voluntary at first but if bought one would exempt holder from paying for a rescue (\$40 value offered), mandatory that all people rescued must pay something back for the service, certification of guides and outfitters with certification fees to F&G, Non-Motorized trail pass or stickers (bikes, horses, etc) but not all funds can go to F&G-would have to have some to Parks/Trails to improve trails for non-motorized users, AMC pay voluntary figure to help as they have huts/lodges that invite people to go and stay at and have a revenue source to pay funds back, insurance card for rescues (see trail pass discussion above) in which if hiker bought it would not be billed for rescue but has to be priced at \$40-50, surcharge on outdoor goods sold in NH (#1 recommendation) however equates to a tax and would be difficult to get passed.

Final supported solutions were that STAC believes all people that utilize rescue services should pay some sort of minimum back for the service; sell a Trail Pass for \$40-50 that would be voluntary but if you need rescue you do not have to pay unless negligent and AMC and other large organizations with lodging facilities who are major players in the hiking/climbing industry should pay some value back into a fund for search and rescue; Parks should not be covering this fund with Cannon/Parks funds.

Other Power Driven Mobility Devices: Department of Justice ruling March 15<sup>th</sup> allows people with mobility disabilities to use power driven mobility devices (such as ATV's). Update that no new policy has been developed yet for trails on state lands. Agencies are continuing to work on it.

Landowner lawsuit in Epsom.

#### **Old Business**

DRED volunteers: The Volunteer Program is still moving forward; with budget cuts at Trails the program with non-motorized trail groups will be transitioning to Parks, likely with Community Recreation Specialist. Bureau will keep committee updated as the process and person is defined better. Jennifer's position in Trails was cut in recent budget and as such the person working with non-motorized groups is no longer in Trails. Parks Division is still committed to working with non-motorized trail groups and will continue work Bureau was doing, with Bureau assistance, in the future.

House Bill 131 has passed and signed into law. Recognized volunteers on DRED property are protected for indemnification and defense when doing work agency has approved, in the event someone were to sue them for their work on the State land.

#### **Guest Comments/Questions**

Question on sales of State Park Plate? Seems to be popular and doing well. NEMBA had meeting with Parks to improve communications and will be working on a plan for trail improvements and development at Bear Brook State Park. NEMBA fest this past weekend was best attended event for NEMBA in New England.

#### **Next meeting**

Set for January 10, 2012, 7 PM, DRED conference room, 172 Pembroke Road, Concord.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.