

Sunrise Trail Coalition

Meeting Minutes February 25, 2009, 1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Down East RC&D Offices, Cherryfield

Present: Carol Cuddy, Bill Ceckler, Polly Ceckler, Stephanie Clement, Charlie Corliss, Carey Crosby, Harold W. Crosby, Jr., Jim Fisher, Sally Jacobs, Sandy Johnson, Maggie Warren (by phone)

1. Introductions and Approval of Minutes

Sally introduced Carey and Harold Crosby who are from Whiting and are equestrians.

MOTION: To approve the November 2008 minutes.
MADE BY: Carol Cuddy
SECOND: Sandy Johnson
VOTE: Unanimous in favor

2. Announcements

Sally said that she expected Eleody to arrive during the meeting to pick up the Sunrise Trail Coalition display for the event at the Hall of Flags in the state legislature. Maggie will use this at the event. Sally also mentioned that Bill and Polly Ceckler will be late to the meeting, as will Maggie, who will join on the phone around 2 p.m.

3. MDOC/MDOT Update – Charlie Corliss

a. Trail availability. Charlie reported that 49 miles of the trail is available for use this winter. The trail is available from the Columbia/Harrington town line to Ayer's Junction except for the washout in Machias. The contractors are working on the washout – placing footings and a culvert. Snowmobiles have been getting around this spot O.K.

b. Grooming report. Charlie said that the snowmobile clubs are doing a great job grooming the trail. He added that there have been minor equipment glitches. The Narraguagus Club recently purchased a snow cat and is working on a grant for a new piece of equipment. To accomplish grooming over the entire trail next year, the clubs will have to expand the amount of territory they groom. Bill asked about maintenance of grooming equipment, and Charlie said that the clubs each maintain their equipment. There are several garages that donate maintenance, and these garages should receive recognition in the Sunrise Trail Coalition newsletter. Charlie reported that Ellsworth and Lamoine clubs may help next year and a new club may start up in Gouldsboro. Charlie added that to groom 10 miles of trail may take about four hours at a speed of 5-7 mph.

c. Construction Plans. Charlie reported that the present priority is to fix the washout in Machias. The contractors have set dams to keep the water out while setting the footings and culvert. After this is completed, the contractors will add fill, remove pilings, and install rip-rap. In April, two construction crews are expected to start work. One will remove the rails from Washington Junction to Cherryfield with culverts being installed behind, and the other will work from the eastern end finishing culverts, reshaping, and putting down the final materials. The Maine Department of Conservation will inspect the final trail and accept it when ready from the contractors. The goal is to get the trail completed by the end of the year.

d. Henderson challenge. Charlie mentioned that Dale Henderson owns land along four miles of the railroad in Hancock and now owns a portion in Steuben. Mr. Henderson believes that ownership of the rail line reverted to him along these sections, and he has blocked off both ends of his property along the rail line. Mr. Henderson was reported to the Department of Environmental Protection because one of his dirt piles was too close to a wetland and no erosion control measures were taken. Sally asked whether Mr. Henderson's challenge would slow down the process, and Charlie said that he thought that the land disagreement would end up going to the Maine Supreme Court. He added that he is not sure how the contractors will work around this issue.

e. Management Committee. Charlie said that a management committee meeting was held in October. He said that signage has been placed on the trail for snowmobiles. Eventually, this will be replaced with signs that encourage multi-use. Charlie distributed examples of multi-use signs. Charlie said that it is best to keep the signage low-tech because signs are often removed or defaced.

f. DOC website. Everyone agreed that the photos and information about the Downeast Sunrise Trail on the Maine Department of Conservation website are wonderful.

4. Newsletter

Sally said that the ribbon-cutting ceremony in Dennysville was wonderful, and an article has been written about it for the newsletter. Bill said that his President's letter has been written, and he will have Charlie review it before giving it to Maggie. Maggie will ask Jef Fitzgerald for an article regarding all the bike projects going on in Ellsworth, specifically the Bikes Belong grant, the economic stimulus funding, and the design of the Ellsworth trail. Jim will send to Maggie the update of the map showing what sections of the trail have been completed. Charlie will send Maggie a photo of the snow cat purchased by the Narraguagus club.

Bill is working on getting newsletter sponsors for the year. He has spoken with representatives from Bar Harbor Bank and Trust, the Bar Harbor Bicycle Shop, and Cadillac Mountain Sports. Sponsorship would include having a logo on the website and on the newsletters. Bill added that the Sunrise Trail Coalition has enough money already to get one newsletter out without having secured sponsors, and the Board agreed that it's important to get the newsletter out.

The goal is to deliver the newsletter to the printer in time for a folding party on March 25th.

5. National Trails Day

Sally said that the National Trails Day celebration on the Down East Sunrise Trail will be Saturday, June 6th at 9:30 a.m. in Machias. Amy and Sally are finishing the plans.

6. Boxcar

Sally reported that Kathleen will be able to join the Sunrise Trail Coalition meetings again in May. Bill will speak with her regarding the status of the boxcar. Charlie reported that the trail contractors won't use the boxcar for storage beyond May. Sally said that she had not yet heard about whether the historic grant was awarded for the boxcar.

7. Organization

Bill said that he will put out a strong plea for membership in the next newsletter. Bill and Polly had a good discussion with Leslie Harlow, the owner of the Maine Grind in Ellsworth about possibly hosting a gathering there to generate membership.

Bill strongly recommended that we gather selectmen from Franklin, Sullivan, and Hancock in March to discuss the trail and what will need to be done in future years. Bill especially mentioned parking areas. Charlie said that Plymouth Engineering has been hired to do parking lot designs for the trail. Jim said that he is planning a meeting with these selectboards because he is hoping to extend the Black Woods scenic byway through Franklin to Hancock. Jim recommended that the Sunrise Trail Coalition approach selectboards at their meetings rather than calling separate meetings.

8. Miscellaneous

Stephanie asked about the idea of putting up membership boxes along the trail that encourage people to join the Sunrise Trail Coalition. Perhaps these funds could be used to provide local matching funds for grooming grants. Charlie said that this funding could be helpful in getting the berms plowed at each trail intersection with the roads. Charlie also said that there will be a need for mileage markers on the trails.

Sally asked about kiosks at trailheads. Charlie said that these will probably be the only place that business advertising will be allowed on the trail. Bill said that the Sunrise Trail Coalition may want to consider publishing its own guide to the trail.

Revising the membership form was discussed.

Jim said he will change the Sunrise Trail Coalition website to include Charlie's name vs. Dave Rodrigues.

9. Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn.
MADE BY: Sally Jacobs
SECOND: Polly Ceckler
VOTE: Unanimous in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie M. Clement