

## **Sunrise Trail Coalition**

**Meeting Minutes 5/28/08, 1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.**

**Down East RC&D Offices, Cherryfield**

**Present:** John Ashmore, Pam Ashmore, Bill Ceckler, Polly Ceckler, Stephanie Clement, Charlie Corliss, Judy East, Sally Jacobs, Jay Johnson, Sandy Johnson, Darrin Kelly, Kathleen Shannon, and Rick Tanney

### **1. Introductions**

Judy reported that Jeremy has had a son and will be on paternity leave until July 1, 2008. Sally and Charlie reported that Charlie's office has moved to 140 Main St., Cherryfield.

### **2. Review of Minutes**

The board reviewed some of the action steps from the April minutes. Sally said that she is still planning on speaking with Michael Shook about larger Flickr photos for the website. She is also still planning on speaking with Dan Stewart about the discrepancy with the Maine Bicycle Tours brochure and map through Pembroke. She added that Michael is still hoping for more photos to add to the website.

### **3. Update on routing between Calais/Charlotte and the trail**

Sally asked Judy for an update regarding extending the trail to Calais and Charlotte. Judy said that Calais is proceeding with the South Street sewer project this summer. This will include a sidewalk that is the critical connection from Calais to Moosehorn Wildlife Refuge. She added that it helps to keep pressure on the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to be sure that the sidewalk is kept in the project plans. Judy also reported that Moosehorn is on board for possible connections to the trail except that ATVs are not allowed by their charter. Judy added that Charlotte has elected a completely new selectboard and will require some education on the trail, which Washington County Council of Governments is prepared to do.

Sally reported that the Power Point presentation on the trail is set up. She said that she stressed to the Calais Rotary that they need to work hard to get the connection between Calais and Ayer's Junction.

John asked about the funding that had been appropriated for Ellsworth and Calais' connections to the trail. Judy said that the design funding came through, and the plans for the trail were established, but the funding to construct the trail was cut by MDOT. Sally added that Ellsworth has since gotten their money back from MDOT for construction. She added that she thought there was a problem with a landowner in Calais that could potentially hold up construction of the trail. Judy asked about this, and Sally said that Dan Stewart would know the name.

John asked whether ATVs will be able to connect to Calais if it is a problem going through Moosehorn. Sally said that MDOT has decided not to lift the rails between Ayer's Junction and Charlotte. If the trail is constructed within MDOT's right of way through Moosehorn for the rail, could ATVs be allowed? Judy said that it is quite wet through Moosehorn, so permitting for trail construction could be difficult. She added that alternative routes were also explored on snowmobile trails that could avoid the Refuge. One of these is constrained in the summer because of a field that

is actively farmed and therefore off-limits. Judy said that the routing study done by Washington County Council of Governments is on the Sunrise Trail website.

Judy pointed out that there is a physical bottleneck in Charlotte where the rail corridor travels between the shoreline and the camps on Round Pond. John and Charlie said a similar shared-use trail had been built in Newport and Dexter between camps and a lake. The area is signed well for slow travel by ATVs, and it has worked well.

Sally said that there is an economic stimulus bill being proposed in Congress. Rails to Trails is actively involved, and Washington County was suggested as a location that could benefit from the receipt of additional funds. Sally suggested to Rails to Trails that \$4 million could easily be used. Judy and Jeremy's study of trailhead needs will help support this figure.

### **3. Treasurer's Report**

The written report was distributed by Sally. One question remains – whether the Maine Snowmobile Association's sponsorship was included in the “conference registrations”. If so, it should be moved to the “conference sponsorship” category. Rick indicated that he would take this question back to Eleody.

### **4. Report from Charlie Corliss**

Charlie said that the bids for rail removal and trail construction have been opened, and a contractor (Vaughn Thibodeau) has been selected, but the contract has not yet been signed. A letter of intent will be sent out. The state expects to receive \$2.7 million for the rail removal. Sally added that the Commissioner has said that the funding can be put back into restoration of the rail bed and trail construction.

Charlie said that the state is still working on a performance bond, but the plan is to start rail removal on June 15<sup>th</sup> in Machias and work both directions. After six months, they hope to have all the rails removed and forty miles of the trail completed. They expect to have the trail constructed to Cherryfield. Charlie added that they are hoping to complete the trail next year.

Charlie said that he went on a recent inspection of the rails. He found a four-foot long section of the rail missing. Charlie added that the issue of disposing of the railroad ties has not yet been settled. He also said that he has been GPS-ing the center of the rail corridor.

Sally mentioned that Dale Henderson in Hancock has filed an injunction to stop construction of the trail. He says that a fence needs to be installed along his property per conditions in his deed. Charlie reported that he examined the rail line through Mr. Henderson's property and found a fence in most locations. It was buried in many places. There are other locations off of Mr. Henderson's property where a fence was also installed. Charlie did not think this would hold up the process. Sally added that the injunction is on trail construction, not the removal of the rails. She also said that the purpose of the fence is in question.

Charlie said that he received a permit from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for culvert work. He said that one beaver dam blew out on its own. It did not wash out the corridor, but created a mess downstream. He added that there is a new washout in the Centerville area and a Machias washout got larger. Darrin asked whether beaver deceivers would be put in place along the corridor, and Charlie replied that they are in the contract.

## **5. National Trails Day**

Sally handed out posters to advertise National Trails Day and thanked MDOT for assisting with making them really professional. Sally sent out the announcement to the newspapers and radio stations. Sally asked everyone to forward the posters to their various listserves. Judy said she would send to the towns in Washington County, and Rick said he would check with Eleody to make sure her lists are covered.

Bill has spoken with Betsy Fitzgerald who is organizing the parade permit and securing a police escort for the 10:30 a.m. parade. She will be there at 10:00 a.m. to speak, as will Senator Dennis Damon.

John reported that he has received news that it is O.K. to have the ATV's in the parade, but they cannot be ridden back through town after the parade. John said that he will have his machines there. Acadia Area ATV'ers are also working on having representatives at the parade, and Gary Dowling is helping.

Sally reported that Dave Whitney is excited and will have refreshments and the ukulele band again. Sally will ask Dave for his big tent and two tables this year. Rick will ask Eleody to bring her small tent as a back-up. Kathleen will call the bank to see if they would mow the property.

Sally said that she has been unable to find equestrians for the parade. Judy said that she would put out word with her horse contacts in Perry. Sally will contact Fran Robinson. Rick suggested contacting Pat Fallon with Mounted Search and Rescue (733-1090), and Sally said that they are her neighbors so she would try to reach them. Darrin suggested contacting Kelly Pontbriand, but added that she may be busy with National Trails Day activities at Acadia.

The schedule for the day is a 9:15 a.m. arrival and set up of tents, and tables. At 10:00 a.m., the speeches will be made by Betsy Fitzgerald, Senator Damon, and others. The parade and bike ride will follow. Senator Raye and Rep. Emery are not able to be there. John indicated that he spoke with the Governor in passing at an event, and the Governor said that he would be there. This differs with what Sally heard from MDOT and MDOC staff. She added that the official groundbreaking will be sometime in June and that this might be the time that the Governor would attend. Sally said that she will be away for the anticipated time of the ground breaking, but that Bill could officially represent the Sunrise Trail Coalition.

Kathleen reported from Betsy Fitzgerald that the parade permit will be for one side of Rt. 1. She also added from Betsy that there is nothing new to report on Station 98. Sally asked about the possibility for a Transportation Enhancements grant application from Machias for the Station. She added that Dan Stewart indicated that it would be a good time to apply again for the grant (due June 6<sup>th</sup> this year). Judy and Rick volunteered to help the town with the grant application. Kathleen spoke with Betsy who said that the concern is that Machias doesn't want to jeopardize the ability to get funding for other projects it has in mind. There is also a potential issue with the original architect on the Station 98 project who claims that he needs to approve all revisions to the plans.

## **6. Updates on the Boxcar**

Sally reported that she spoke with Marilyn Dowling who had knee surgery. She contacted Whitney's Tool Shed for scaffolding because Americorps volunteers will be trying to get the boxcar stenciled

on one side. Charlie said that the boxcar will not be moved prior to National Trails Day, and he needs to find out if the switch will work. Kathleen said that four sections of rail have been identified to be kept. Bill asked if the rails to be kept needed to be marked, and Charlie said that he would be working closely with the rail removal contractors so he didn't think it would be a problem. Sally asked Charlie to let the contractors know that the Sunrise Trail Coalition is interested in having memorabilia saved for the rail museum.

## **7. Newsletter**

The newsletter did not go out in May. Bill indicated that he is still willing to contact Cadillac Mountain Sports and the Bar Harbor Bicycle Shop regarding possible sponsorship. Darrin said that he also has contacts at Cadillac Mountain Sports if needed.

Sally said that there are multiple lists of people interested in the Down East Sunrise Trail. She said that Eleody's list includes everyone from the past twenty years, and she has been working on cleaning/purging the list. Sally also maintains an e-mail list of contacts. New members should be added to Eleody's list, as well as conference attendees. She asked Charlie, Jim, and Eleody to get together and work on combining lists and establishing protocols for keeping one list. Charlie has received permission from the state that partnering on this project is in the purview of his work.

The content for the next newsletter should contain a report on the conference, letters from Sally and Charlie, a report on National Trails Day, and a report on the groundbreaking. Sally will ask Jim Fisher if he could write something about the conference. Bill agreed to write about the groundbreaking (either announcing it or reporting on it, depending on when the newsletter goes out).

Sally said that she will ask Maggie and Jim to assist Bill and Charlie in pulling together the newsletter. The goal would be to get it out in the second week of July.

## **8. Workplan for the remainder of the year**

The Management Committee for the trail needs to be convened. At a minimum, Sally, Bill, Charlie, Dave Rodrigues and Dan Stewart should participate. Sally suggested that maybe they could gather before the July Sunrise Trail Coalition Board meeting.

The committee working on the finances and budget construction for the Sunrise Trail Coalition will need to meet, perhaps in September. The committee exists of Tim, Eleody, Bill, and Sally. Stephanie asked to be added.

Judy said that the countywide transportation corridor committees are supposed to meet quarterly. Stephanie and Bill will participate in the Hancock County version, which is coordinated by Jim Fisher. Washington County Council of Governments coordinates the Washington County committee.

Judy pointed out that the Washington County ONE Community group is more than the Healthy communities groups. The effort relates to social capital, infrastructure, youth, healthy communities, and communications. A brochure will be printed soon. Sally reported that the EDGE group is interested in staying in communication with the Sunrise Trail Coalition.

The map and brochure of the trail will be produced when the trail is built. A membership brochure for the Sunrise Trail Coalition is needed more immediately.

## **9. Miscellaneous**

Kathleen asked for clarification on behalf of Betsy Fitzgerald what condition the rail bed would be restored to. Charlie clarified that the corridor is being rehabilitated for rail, so train service could be restored as soon as there is a demand.

She also asked about challenges at the causeway in Machias regarding the sewer lines. Charlie said that a decision had been made that the sewer lines would not go under the rail bed, but next to it. The sewer may end up in the rail right of way, but would not be under the rail bed.

Sally said that the next meeting for the STAR center in Ellsworth will be on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Hancock County Planning Commission has been hired by MDOT to complete the feasibility study on the Center. The Center will serve the scenic train, the trail, the Ellsworth Chamber, and buses.

Sally reported that she has received several e-mails asking whether the Down East Sunrise Trail will be a geo-caching trail. She forwards these to Jim Fisher.

Judy reported that the Vacationland Resources Committee of Down East RC&D is working on a tourism marketing workshop schedule for November 13<sup>th</sup>. She said that the Sunrise Trail Coalition should be there. The Vacationland Resources Committee (VRC) is also working with consultants and the Maine Office of Tourism to document and highlight Hancock and Washington County's nature-based tourism attractions. The maps and associated businesses and attractions put together through Tora's efforts will be one way to help populate the database of tourism businesses and attractions for the VRC's project. John requested that all maps show connecting points to other trails, and Judy said that the maps could be thematic according to interest.

John asked whether the Sunrise Trail Coalition would be in the Cherryfield parade again this year. He and others cannot make it so the group decided not to participate this year.

Darrin offered to help with events, but mentioned that because of his business, he is unable to participate from June to October. He said that when the time is right, he could help link the Sunrise Trail Coalition members and others into equipment for use on the trails. Judy said that Healthy Communities also has equipment for folks who can't afford their own. Sally added that Dave Whitney is interested in sponsoring a marathon on the trail. She said that the management committee first needs to decide what can and cannot be done on the trail.

## **10. Next meeting**

Due to Sally's scheduled absence, Bill will convene the next meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Stephanie M. Clement**