

Calais Branch Trail Corridor Proposal Fact Sheet

Vision--The proposed interim trail is intended to provide opportunities for economic, recreational, tourism and health benefits to the communities. Once access is provided through the development of the multi-use trail, economic development opportunities will increase for lodging establishments, restaurants, service facilities, and other locally owned businesses.

Benefits of a Multi-use Recreational Trail

- Economic benefits will include a new stream of tourism flowing through Hancock and Washington Counties. The trail will encourage tourists to travel further Down East and remain longer.
- Recreational benefits will accrue in large measure to residents who live near the trail and will have the opportunity to ride and walk it frequently, but will spread to visitors who are attracted by the length of the trail, the easy grades and unparalleled natural beauty.
- This trail will serve to interconnect many of the regions 800 miles of ATV and snowmobile trails, as well as the numerous hiking and biking regional opportunities, including the Calais to Florida East Coast Greenway.
- This trail will bring a much needed economic benefit to the numerous businesses in the towns that this corridor passes through especially mom and pop stores, restaurants and lodging facilities. There will also be opportunity for new businesses to develop along the corridor to support the growing bicycling, ATV, and snowmobile sports.
- Recent economic impact studies show that the ATV industry brings in over 200 million dollars, and the Snowmobile Industry brings in over 260 million dollars to the State of Maine each year. In addition, a recent study estimated that over 2 million bicycle tourists spent 36.3 million dollars in one year. With the development of this trail the Downeast region of the state should capture more of the revenues.

Rail Corridor Preservation Strategy--MaineDOT's number one priority is to preserve and protect the corridor for future rail use. MaineDOT's rail division, as well as The Multi-Modal Program (which handles freight, passenger rail, and trails) has been very involved in the development of this plan. Removing the rail and ties will not affect the viability of the corridor to be used in the future for rail. In fact, the increased attention that the corridor will receive under the requirements of the proposed management plan will help preserve the integrity of the rail bed by having increased annual maintenance, repairs to wash-outs, grading that sheds water off the railbed to reduce erosion, and numerous other maintenance activities.

Trail Proposal—The trail will be built using the existing rail bed from Washington Junction to Ayers Junction. The rail bed is primarily compact gravel and will be improved and compacted for use as a trail, and will be a usable trail surface. The two mile section from Ellsworth to Washington Junction will be a Rail with Trail along the existing trail corridor that runs adjacent to the rail, based upon available funding.

Trail Design--The trail will be constructed as the rails and ties are being removed. The trail will be a minimum of 10 feet wide (unless topography necessitates a reduction in certain areas), crowned, with a compact gravel surface, using existing railroad bed material.



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Proposed Trailhead Locations--Specific locations for trailhead parking will be determined by the availability of land and funding. When possible, trailheads will be located in village areas. Trailhead parking areas will be included wherever possible to better serve the user public.

Construction Funding--MaineDOT/Maine DOC will send out a Request for Proposals for the rail and ties to be removed in the section from Washington Junction to Ayers Junction, and the creation of a long distance trail from Ellsworth to Ayers Junction. MaineDOT will use any rail salvage funds to construct the trail. Because the funds that is generated from the rail salvage and construction costs are based upon market conditions, additional funding may be required to construct the trail.

Trail Administration—Maine DOC will administer the management and maintenance of the trail. A regional trail manager will be hired by Maine DOC to manage this trail and other connecting trails in the DownEast region. Maine DOC has converted many miles of rail bed to multi-use trails. Maine DOC will oversee the day-to-day operation of the trail, address trail issues such as wash-outs, beavers, etc. Trail maintenance may performed by the local communities and counties if they choose to participate, as well as user groups, volunteers and contractors under the supervision of the Maine DOC trail Manager/Coordinator and Trail Advisory Committee described below.

Trail Advisory Committee--To assist with the trail administration, MaineDOC will organize an advisory committee ideally made up of representatives from each community, Hancock and Washington Counties, law enforcement, all the user groups and other interested parties that are willing to contribute.

Community Participation--The communities that the trail goes through are the backbone of the trail system. The benefits of the trail are targeted towards the communities. Communities along the trail are strongly encouraged to participate in any level they are able and willing. Communities are encouraged to participate in the Trail Advisory Committee and all other facets of making this a success in each community.

Administration Funding--In addition to MaineDOT funding to assist Maine DOC for the administration of the trail corridor, additional funding for maintenance and management will come from Maine DOC snowmobile and ATV funds, Maine DOC snowmobile and ATV grants to the clubs and either the Municipalities or the Counties. Contributions may also be obtained from communities and the counties, and grants and donations from the public and private sector. Maine DOC staff, with assistance from the Sunrise Trail Coalition will partner to seek grants and other forms of contributions to provide funding for trail improvements and ongoing maintenance.

Safety on Rail Corridor Multi-Use Trails--The success of a multi-use trail comes down to education, common sense and enforcement. In the past 15 years MaineDOC has developed over 200 miles of multi-use trails throughout the State with relatively few problems between users and few accidents. Rail corridor trails are wide, have good visibility, and have experienced very few safety issues. MaineDOC will use the established rule system that is in place for all trails throughout the State.

Timeline-- It is anticipated that, dependent on resources and the approval of this plan, the MaineDOT and Maine DOC could begin construction within two years.



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