

Merrymeeting Trail Committee
Wednesday, August 31, 2016
Meeting Notes

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m.

Attending:

Carrie Kinne, KELT; Ruth Indrick, KELT; Victor Langelo, Topsham;
Tom Reeves, Gardiner; Nichole Briand, Bowdoinham; Victoria
Boundy, Richmond; Lee Cataldo, BTLT; Jeremy Cluchey, Bowdoinham;
Carol Eyeran, Topsham



Greater Topsham Trail Alliance

- the Topsham trail is being built now!
 - next step is talking with the Highlands about a bridge to cross 196
 - we need to figure out a way to highlight this!
- Topsham river trail/town landing trail - town landing rd to river landing building
 - town of Topsham is working on
 - will be a natural trail with a bridge or two
 - needs a lot of invasive treatment
 - Lee recommends the Wild Seed Project as an affordable source of native plants

Kennebec River Rail Trail

- Cobbossee Stream Trail in Gardiner
 - city council authorized \$400,000 in local match
 - town is also raising funds through Sewall Foundation (50,000), BCM (12000ish)
 - the DOT is looking to fund it
 - they already spent money on a preliminary engineering and feasibility study
 - they are favorable toward a separate bike-ped bridge facility on main ave.
 - timeline is 2020
 - trail is tied to two bridge replacement projects
 - is it effective to tie a trail project to another DOT request?
 - in Gardiner the trail is a small piece of an expensive bridge replacement project

Bowdoinham

- Pork Point road widening is under construction now!
 - 2.2 mile stretch of road, all of Pork Point is being widened as road is rebuilt
 - Brown's Point Road is not part of the project and is not up for rebuild anytime soon

- it would be more expensive and would need to be hired out

Richmond

- the comp plan passed
 - they are setting up an implementation plan
- trail section in town
 - the town has pledged \$25,000 this budget year, with \$25,000 next year, they will meet local match
 - DOT may need to see engineering and construction to make double track decision (double track planned use for farm goods?)
 - this 1/3 section of double track would help expedite trail because there are not multiple landowners
- they will be extending the waterfront trail to Swan Island with a paved path

Trail Planning

- Carrie and Vicky and Nichole will schedule a time to meet with Patrick Adam
- communication with state reps will wait until after January
 - initial will be letter of intro about the trail
 - congratulations, give some info about trail and BOS
- we will give updates in town newsletters about trail
 - bits and pieces of highlights
 - Ruth will put together highlights for all the town projects
 - good place to id that construction is starting

Explore Merrymeeting Bay bike ride

- Review of the ride:
 - There were 16-17 riders total
 - storm cancelled morning family ride
 - storm ended and the intermediate and advanced rides still happened
 - the fast group spent about an hour at every farm
 - bikers really enjoyed visiting farms
 - farmers seemed to appreciate the bikers
 - it will take some fine tuning to figure out the best locations for stops
 - the BBQ was up 30 or 40 people, about 250 total
 - was a great place to share MMT outreach material
- Future ride options
 - Want to continue a bike ride with open farm day
 - Triathlon fundraiser?
 - could check in with midcoast tri group about interest level
 - we have sewall money available now to grow this into a fundraiser, to do it right
 - this ride wouldn't tie in with open farm day
 - KELT will do research on triathalon
 - Tour de Merrymeeting Bay

- some of the volunteers and infrastructure are still in place
- it was taking more work than it was raising in funds
 - there are so many competing ride opportunities
- another farming and biking themed ride?
 - there are two other tour de farms rides in ME, but these are more bike rides than about the farms
 - our ride was very interactive and gave riders the chance to talk directly with farmers
 - the ride last weekend - farm de fondeau - was a foodie ride (went by Wolf's Neck and Crystal Spring)
 - high end food at stops, professionally run ride
 - this ride moves to different locations around Maine, we could ask if they would be interested in doing route along MMBay, and possibly stopping at one local farm - Victor will contact to ask

Name

Options:

- MMT Coalition
- MMT Initiative
- MMT Friends
- Friends of MMT
- MMT Blazers

Board of Supervisors

- our group will meet with the Board of Supervisors on 10/18 at 4pm in Richmond
- we will share the results of the Planning Decisions report

Assessment of Rail and Trail

- regional planning commissions have to do a study to find that track removal will not have a negative impact on region or future economics of region
 - the Sunrise Trail is the only example of this having been done in Maine
- Tom found a series of questions about the railroad along the path of the MMT on a railroad forum that outline the information that needs to be asked to determine if rail is still of value
 - these questions outline the same information we need to understand
 - they have not yet been answered
 - Tom will email out these questions
- Tom has been researching railroad consultants
 - is considering scale, New England location, utility/economic experience
 - want someone with a lot of rail experience, well respected, neutral, who would have the expertise to bring back rail
 - need someone credible
 - Carrie will give George Becke a call

- need assessment of economics, infrastructure improvements, future climate for rail
- opportunities to connect with the council of governments about the rail
 - could be a good way to reconnect with the COGs, tell them about project updates and the rail-trail discussion

Updates for newsletters and planning commissions

- need by early October
- Ruth will put together

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Next MMT meeting: September 21st at 9 a.m. in Bowdoinham

Submitted by R.I.