

Merrymeeting Trail Alliance

Meeting Minutes - April 11, 2012

Attending: Nicole Briand, Bowdoinham; Tom Reeves; Vicky Boundy, Steve Musica, Richmond; Bob Bruce, Merrymeeting Wheelers; Vic Langelo, Topsham Trails; Burnham Martin, NPS; Alicia Heyburn, Carrie Kinne, KELT; Jon Edgerton, Wright Pierce; Lynne Sanford, Bowdoinham; Andy Hendrickson, KRRT; Linda Christie, Access Health

1. **Introductions**, Alicia Heyburn, KELT, joining group and volunteer note taker

2. **Wright Pierce Study** – Jon Edgerton

Segment sheets are in process and will be done next week incorporating Dan Stewart's comments. He wanted a few small changes in the write-ups, not segment changes. W-P is creating a PowerPoint to aid outreach. It can be used to show the whole trail or altered to focus on town segments.

A drive through with DOT on the tracks is anticipated in late April (date tbd). Nicole has requested two rides so more people can attend. Vic request: take photos of the view/scenery, not just rails!

3. **Organizational Structure** - Tom

A. Review Interlocal Agreement draft dated 4.10.12

Group is now called Merrymeeting Trail Committee

Next steps:

Step 1 – Send packet with the document to the 4 towns

Step 2 – Set up meetings with Town Managers, using PowerPoint (may be followed or preceded by review from legal counsel) See what interest there is and learn what each town anticipates as process for approval. This will drive MMT outreach efforts.

Bowdoinham (Nicole, Tom)

Topsham (Vic & Rod), will be mid May, after town meeting because Alex is hard to schedule

Richmond (Vicky & Steve)

Gardiner (Tom & ?)

Step 3 – Encourage towns to adopt (Perhaps Gardiner first?)

Step 2 – Go to both regional planning commissions. Gardiner is in a separate one.

Step 3 –File with Secretary of State to make the agreement a formal doc.

Topsham referendum for November ballot is not encouraged because the trail is unanticipated. Bowdoinham will be better for referendum. Outreach is needed to prepare town committees to help build support. Topsham is trying to secure funding for other trails now so there is competition.

Make sure to keep Brunswick Bike/Ped informed of the project process, ask them to be part of this.

Do we need to list specific groups in the Interlocal agreement or simply say something like “partnership with other local trail groups...”. This loose language will keep the document more accurate and flexible.

Kennebec River Rail Trail Case Study: Maintenance budget \$20k annually divided by 5 towns, for 6.5 miles of trail regardless of how much trail was in their town. Typically only half of this has been invoiced – spending about \$10k/year now, avoiding keeping a lot of \$ in the treasury. Probably 10 years before major expenses. All work is contracted out so it is capital and operational maintenance. How is \$\$ raised? By friends group, half-marathon earns \$10k/year.

Tom cautions that KRRT does have issues and the Interlocal Agreement he drafted tried to learn from their mistakes (ie: no unanimous consent required).

The whole is more than the sum of the parts. The idea is to divide it equally amongst the four communities. It will likely be built in segments, so some towns will be more active than others at any point in time.

B. Organizational Structure

Kennebec Estuary Land Trust has been asked, and accepted, the opportunity to be fiscal agent and assist with project coordinating and outreach. \$5,000 left in MCOG funds to support KELT’s work. Nicole will talk with MCOG to confirm and get the money flowing. \$ came from the four towns and Friends of KRRT. It is time to refill the kitty. KELT will generate a funding plan for discussion (Robert Wood Johnson, hospitals?) refer to work plan for more ideas

Tom: These are the last remaining funds, can we leave a small money (\$500-\$1,000) in reserve in case of emergency. Carrie suggests that the budget will be updated monthly and be discussed at this meeting. New grants need to be identified. KELT manages the funds for Bath Trails now, it is an independent organization and Carrie serves as Treasurer to manage the money.

Carrie Kinne - new officials in Bath (Andrew Deci) and West Bath (Jonathan Davis) are interested in discussing extension of Andro-Kennebec River Trail. Meeting 4.18.12 to continue discussing this. Propose that this be considered a Trail of Statewide Significance – this step was addressed already for the MMT. Dan Stewart wants to ride the rails with this in mind, it was not on the table when he first reviewed the plans.

Other Trail Projects in the Works (This is certainly a trail NETWORK, not simply a linear trail):

Brunswick to Lewiston is percolating with DOT. Consider including this in the statewide trail discussion. Johnathan LaBonte of Androscoggin Land Trust is interested.

Greater Topsham Trail Alliance has talked of a feasibility study in the next year to get trail from Lisbon border to Topsham.

Nascent citizen group interested in improving bike access/creating trail to Popham Beach from Bath.

4. Task List and Work Plan Update

Quality Community Grant (due 6/29). **Letters of Support due May 15** to Vicky, she will send a template addressed to Grantor. Dan Stewart encourages this application. Letter of support from the MMT committee; this will be the first public communication from the committee. Will be presented to Richmond Selectboard on May 2. Intown transportation is an important focus for the application. Going off budget in the segment sheet, Jon may refine it prior to final application. Richmond local match would be about \$100k which is cause for concern. Needs to review match requirements. Travis of W-P can update map to show specific sites in town that will be enhanced by the trail.

Additional Tasks – fallen behind on winter tasks listed on work plan. Will hear from Dan S. on statewide significance by next month. Get interim signage to show route of MMT – bike council meeting with Burnham and Dave brought up “will DOT fund signs along the interim route?” and Dan says “talk to me”. Nicole will take this on and talk to Dan. Nicole wants to get \$\$ to do implementation plan to guide work. W-P Segment sheets will fulfill a big part of that need. Next: identify the segments: easiest to execute, which are specific to certain types of funding, other categories...

Develop benefits for each segment to help with funding and community support. Funding agencies like to be assured that it can be done for the cost estimated. VHB study says there are lots of miles of tough terrain, and W-P has refined a lot, but the cost estimates are still very rough. It will be very beneficial to spend time on the most costly segments to really make sure the estimates are accurate.

Outreach –

East Coast Greenway Trail Council Meeting – May 19 event in Portland

We can have display with maps, handouts, strip map, Vic will gather materials and create the booth, Tony and Alicia attending as well. Vic will confirm table space, and work with Jon to get it printed.

Next meeting: May 9 8:30am Bowdoinham Library

