

Regional Trail Meeting Minutes July 23, 2008

Present: Gardiner - Jason Simcock (Gardiner Planning & Development Director), Tom Reeves; Bowdoinham - Tony Cox (Bowdoinham Economic & Community Development Director), Lynn Sanford, Nicole Briand (Town Planner); Interested Party – Steve Balboni (Bath Recreation Director) and Guest – Sally Jacobs from the Down East Sunrise Trail.

Sally discussed some of her trail work with us:

Started in 1976 with the Orono to Old Town bike trail

The Sunrise Trail

- 1976- idea for trail
- The Sunrise Trail Coalition started with writing letters. Then the Hancock Planning Commission got a grant to organize. Then they got people with authority involved. Then they received the NPS-RTCA grant to help facilitate and organize the project. They held a business conference to discuss the economic benefit of the trail.
- The Sunrise Trail is mostly rail-to-trail with some portions of the trail at either end being rail with trail.
- The trail is 87 miles long and connects 18 towns.
- The trail is a multi-use trail including snowmobiles, ATVs and (allowing motorize vehicles that cannot be road licensed).
- Now all the various players are working together to create a terminal to serve as a train station, a bus station, a trail head and a park & ride.
- They had to remove the existing rail because the rail and the existing gravel are not up to code for current train usage. The money from the metal is paying for the trail (rail rehab) construction. They (MDOT) are funding the project to rehab the existing rail bed so that one day they can put new track down for the trains.
- They had to go through the legislature for the project.
- Different user groups provided support for the trail and trail maintenance.
- They are thinking of paving areas in the Village Areas to discourage snowmobiles and ATVs in those areas as well as to provide for winter use for the other user groups.
- The trail goes through a village center about every 15 miles. Schools are trying to hook into the trail and new businesses are starting along the trail corridor.
- Some people are worried about night usage.
- Their big political mistake was to fight with MDOT about how they were going to use the money they were going to get then they took up the track (back in 1986), instead of just letting them do it, because that is when people found out and fought the track being removed.
- They have used inmates for labor.
- They need not have to go through permitting because they are rehabilitating an existing corridor.
- They became organized when MDOT created a pre-management committee with stakeholders to create a management plan.
- The Maine Department of Conservation pays for a trail manager.
- *They are going to have a steering committee with all stakeholders, then a management team to do most of the legwork and report back to the steering committee.*

- For enforcement, warrens are deputizing people and they are getting money for the police to buy ATVs.....BUT first need rules to enforce.
- They are trying to get the University of Maine to do an economic study on the trail because the trail could serve as a baseline, as they have just started construction on one of the segments.

Lessons/Advice:

- Money for trail maintenance or to rebuild a trail is difficult to get
- Trust for Public Land – can help to organize towns, raise money and help with mapping
- NPS – RTCA – they had their help for 3 years and would not be where they are without them
- Must have feasibility study in order to obtain federal funding
- Be careful of the spin – how the project sounds.
- It is important to talk about access: the connections the trail provides (to what destinations) and the user groups.
- It is important to have branches off the main trail to destinations.
- Think about trail heads, kiosks and bathrooms.
- The state is now talking about making multi-use a requirement for funding.
- Have a management plan for all user groups.
- Create a management team that has all user groups represented.
- Must get the public and stakeholders involved as soon as possible
- Trails can bring communities together.
- Be careful when constructing a multi-use trail, as there will need to be a spec that will work for all the user groups....Jay-Farmington had to rebuild their trail.
- What resources could our colleges provide??? (mapping, studies, etc.)
- **Be part of a larger picture.**
- **You must get the backing of people with authority.**
- **Do Not Give Up**

7/23/08 nb