

**MERRYMEETING TRAIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2009 AT 11:00 A.M  
BOWDOINHAM TOWN OFFICE**

**Present:**

Amanda Bunker, Wright-Pierce  
Amanda Hopkins, Access Health  
Andy Hendrickson, Kennebec River Rail Trail Board  
Ben Long, Bowdoinham Walking, Biking, Paddling Committee  
Carrie Kinne, Kennebec Estuary Land Trust  
Lynne Sanford, Bowdoinham resident  
Nicole Briand, Bowdoinham Planner  
Rich Rothe, Midcoast Council of Governments  
Rod Melanson, Topsham planner  
Steve Chandler, Topsham resident  
Steve Musica, Richmond resident  
Tom Reeves, Gardiner resident  
Victor Langelo, Topsham resident

**1. Status of SPO Challenge Grant Funding**

Rich Rothe reported that MCOG has not yet received the Challenge Grant funds from the State Planning Office, so the existing conditions report will have to wait until spring. Within the past week, SPO informed MCOG there would have to be a cash match, despite earlier assurances from SPO that the match could be either in-kind or cash. Since the grant money is federal, federal money cannot be used as a match. It was generally agreed that it would be good to get some municipal financial support, but it will be difficult because all four communities are facing budget challenges. Nevertheless, four people volunteered to check with their respective communities:

- Rod will check with Topsham
- Nicole will check with Bowdoinham
- Steve Musica will check with Richmond
- Tom will check with Gardiner

The Merrymeeting Bay Trust was mentioned as a possible source of match money. Rod will check on this. The Maine Community Foundation was mentioned as another possible source. Ben will be on the lookout for other grant opportunities.

**2. Status of National Park Service Application**

Rich distributed copies of the National Park Service's positive response to the application. While the NPS cannot provide all the service requested, they can provide some staff assistance. There was a general discussion about the proper entity to handle finances on behalf of the trail effort. Currently, Midcoast Council of Governments is set up to handle funds for the group but at some point, there will need to be a formally established board to take on this responsibility on behalf of the communities. Tom explained that Augusta handles finances for the Kennebec Rail Trail Board, but it's a separate account; the communities want to see exactly how their funds are being spent.

### **3. MaineDOT funding status report**

Nicole and Rich reported that MaineDOT does not have any new money for the trail, but is looking into using existing funds to support the trail effort. The Quality Community Program could be used to help build a small part of the trail, but there is a match requirement, and if applications are due in June, the existing conditions study would first have to go quickly and smoothly.

### **4. Update, Corridor Study Committee**

Andy and Rich commented on the trip down the rail on August 4. There were four boards at the meeting showing pictures taken along the way. There are numerous challenges, but there are also sections of double track (one in each community) that are at least a mile in length. MaineDOT would like to retain the double track in Bowdoinham, but the other three could be converted into a single set of rails with a trail alongside in place of the other set of tracks. Lynne stated that the double tracks in Bowdoinham are actually four sets of tracks. Several could be removed while still retaining the double track.

### **5. Logo**

There was considerable discussion about the logo examples provided by MaineDOT. The group agreed to number the nine examples horizontally. All agreed to eliminate numbers 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9. Tom pointed out that Brian Kent designed the logo for the Kennebec Rail Trail; it's considered the best in the state. There was considerable discussion about whether or not to include the names of the four communities on the logo. One the one hand, it would indicate the general location of the trail; on the other hand, it might discourage other communities from joining the effort. The group agreed to see if Brian would design a logo for the Merrymeeting Trail. There could be two logos – one with town names and one without. All agreed that the logo should read "Merrymeeting Trail."

### **6. Website**

Nicole reported that we are still waiting for money from the towns to set up a website. Victor reported that it would cost about \$90 annually to maintain it. It was generally agreed that we wanted a Maine firm to design the website, even though an out-of-state firm might be cheaper. Rich was asked to see if MCOG had \$120 that could be used for design purposes.

### **7. Next Meeting**

The group agreed to meet next on the second Monday in January unless the need for a meeting arises in the meantime.