

Sunrise Trail Coalition

Meeting Minutes 3/25/09, 1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Down East RC&D Offices, Cherryfield

Present: Katherine Cassidy, Bill Ceckler, Polly Ceckler, Stephanie Clement, Charlie Corliss, Sally Jacobs, Eleody Libby (by phone), Peter Poors, Sharon Poors, Arthur Tenan, Dave Wood

1. Introductions and Approval of Minutes

Everyone at the meeting introduced themselves.

MOTION: To approve the February 2009 minutes.
MADE BY: Sally Jacobs
SECOND: Polly Ceckler
VOTE: Unanimous in favor

2. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was distributed. Bill reviewed it with the Board. He asked what the definition of a member is, and Eleody replied that it is everyone who has contributed dues since October 2008. Bill urged the Board to bring more members in. Bill reported that Bar Harbor Bank and Trust and Cadillac Mountain Sports have agreed to sponsor the activities for the Sunrise Trail Coalition for the year. This will include two newsletters and all activities. Bill will send them the invoices and have them mail their checks to Eleody. The newsletter cost \$483 to print. Bill will send the bill to Eleody for payment.

Eleody reported that the Rails to Trails grant from 2007 has been partially spent, but the 2008 grant has not yet been touched. Some has also been spent from the Norcross grant. Charlie said that he needs to purchase a screen for presentations and wondered whether the Norcross and any other funds could be used for this purpose. Sally said that she would look at the grant language. Eleody said that the Rails to Trails funding was dedicated to Station 98 as a trailhead in Machias. Sally remarked that the boxcar needs to be finished. Bill said that Charlie should go ahead and purchase a screen and that funding could come out of the general fund if needed.

MOTION: To accept the March 25, 2009 treasurer's report.
MADE BY: Sally Jacobs
SECOND: Dave Wood
VOTE: Unanimous in favor

3. MDOC/MDOT Update – Charlie Corliss

Charlie reported that snowmobilers have generally been happy using the trail. He said that grooming is done for the year and worked out well. He added that dirt patches are beginning to show through on the trail. Bill asked which snowmobile clubs are grooming sections. Charlie replied that the Narraguagus club has been grooming 9 miles, the Machias club 11 miles, the East Machias club 9-10 miles, and the Dennysville club 17 miles. He added that the East Machias club would have groomed more, but the washout hampered connectivity. The Frenchman Bay snowmobile club in Lamoine wants to groom all the way to Cherryfield, and the clubs will work on how to divide up territory. Bill asked about the type of equipment that the Lamoine club has, and Charlie responded that they have a 4-wheeler with a drag presently, but are looking to purchase additional equipment. They maintain approximately 50-60 miles of their own trails presently.

Charlie said that he is presenting progress on the trail to the Downeast RC&D Council meeting. He also plans to work with Sumner high school on a project to stain all of the signs needed on the trail.

Dave asked how much of the trail has the final surface on it, and Charlie responded that approximately seven miles are completely done. Dave asked how well the surface held up over the winter. Charlie said that they will know more as the snow recedes. He added that the trail will soon be posted to ATV's while the ground sets. Sally recommended that the trail also be closed for bicycles and pedestrians, and Stephanie wondered whether the trail could be closed altogether for a time. Charlie said that he is not sure how the other multi-use trails handle springtime, and the management committee could ultimately decide how they'd like to see the Down East Sunrise Trail handled.

4. Hall of Flags event

Eleody reported that the Hall of Flags event went well. There were numerous attendees, and many stopped by the trail display. Jeremy and Maggie staffed the Down East Sunrise Trail booth.

5. Map Committee

Sally met with Charlie, Bill, Jim Fisher, Rick Scribner (UMM), and Tora. Dan Stewart is going to have the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) put together the map and visuals and publish a brochure. Dan has agreed to pay for this brochure, but it will not include information on private businesses. Ideally, this will be completed by National Trails Day. Another map meeting is needed, and Charlie will try to schedule it by April 15th.

6. Newsletter

The newsletters were distributed at the meeting for folding, labeling, and sealing. Sally and Bill said that they hoped to have the next newsletter out in July or August. Dave reported that Maggie will be really busy with her job with the Bicycle Coalition of Maine until the Lobster Ride at the end of July. The estimated time to edit and lay out a newsletter is a week. Katherine suggested that the newsletters should be timed for December and June – one to feature the summer season and one to feature the winter. Dave recommended electronic updates in between newsletters. Sally asked about the accuracy of the e-mail list. Eleody said that an e-mail was sent out last fall, and if the message was sent back twice, then the e-mail address was considered to be bad and was taken off the list. Bill mentioned that future sponsors could include Friend and Friend and L.L.Bean. He recommended that since Whitney's Tool Shed has given so much to the Sunrise Trail Coalition, it should be recognized as a sponsor this year. Stephanie recommended that the Sunrise Trail Coalition be clear about categories of donors (such as in-kind donations, donations to member clubs, financial sponsorships for newsletters and events, event sponsors, etc.). Bill will speak with Bar Harbor Bank and Trust and Cadillac Mountain Sports to see if they are O.K. with Whitney's Tool Shed also being recognized as a newsletter and event sponsor for the year.

7. Organization/Management

Sally said that the Sunrise Trail Coalition (STC) is presently the de facto management committee for the Down East Sunrise Trail. Charlie added that the management committee eventually may need to be broader than STC. Charlie described issues that need to be decided by the management committee including shared use trail signage (presently on back burner for Maine Department of Conservation); parking areas (14 parking areas have been identified, but may not all be set); and trail kiosks (first one makes sense in Machias, but advertising policies, solicitations, and where funding

goes needs to be decided). Bill added that safety and plowing of parking areas also needs to be discussed. Charlie remarked that plowing was an issue this winter. It was taken out of the original grants used by snowmobile clubs to groom the trail, and the road crossings often did not get plowed. Charlie said that in January, a mock emergency drill was held by the Warden Service in Machias featuring a scenario where someone was hurt on the trail. Information about the trail needs to be given to all the emergency service providers near the trail.

Charlie reported that he decided not to bother selectboards for informational meetings until the town meeting season is over. He spoke informally to a Cherryfield selectboard member and has agreed to give a presentation at their next meeting. Arthur Tenan asked Charlie to keep him apprised of the date because he would like to attend. Charlie added that some towns have not expressed any interest in being involved with the trail. He plans on presenting to each town's selectboards rather than trying to gather them together for a meeting. Bill will work with him on setting up these meetings.

8. National Trails Day, June 6, 2009

Sally said that she has spoken with Dan Stewart who is updating the National Trails Day posters and will produce them. The event will be open to bikes, ATV's, and pedestrians. Eleody will have balloons and will try to find give-aways. Eleody will try to get walkers out on the trail. Sally asked whether Eleody could help with advertising the event, and she responded that she could help get posters up and the word out electronically. Sally mentioned Judy East as another possible Washington County e-mail contact. Sharon said that she could get the word out to the Acadia Area ATV'ers if the scan of the invitation could be sent to her electronically. She also said she would send it to ATV Maine who has an April 15th deadline for their newsletter. Charlie added that the Maine Snowmobile Association should be added, as well as the Bicycle Coalition of Maine.

Sally wondered if it would be possible to get ATV's to pull people in wagons on the trail that day to maximize the number of folks who get out to see the trail. Sally wondered if event insurance would be needed.

Sally reported that MDOC Commissioner Pat McGowan will attend the event if the weather is good for flying and someone will pick him up at the Machias airport. A list of other dignitaries to be invited was put together: Senator Damon, Senator Raye, Rep. Tilton, Rep. Burns, Rep. McFadden, Rep. Langley, Rep. Eaton, and maybe Reps. Flemmings and Pingree. The Washington County and Hancock County Commissioners should also be invited, along with Sheriff Clark and Donnie Smith (another sheriff?). Betsy Fitzgerald should also be invited. Other town managers?

9. Miscellaneous

Katherine mentioned that she ran into Bill Dowling who commented that 8-10 snowmobiles per day probably stopped at Helens Restaurant this winter. There was an article in the Machias Valley Observer about this. Katherine agreed to do more research on the economic impact of the trail. Katherine also recommended getting Susan Farley back out on the trail for a story. Charlie suggested and the committee agreed that it would be great to have UMM students out on the trail doing recreational surveys and research.

Bill asked whether the Sunrise Trail Coalition should respond to Dale Henderson's blockages of the trail. The consensus of the board was to let this issue play out on its own in the courts.

Bill asked whether grooming would be needed for ATV's. Charlie said that heavy maintenance should not be needed for the first few years, but ATV clubs could help with signage, picnic sites, voluntary education patrols, litter clean-ups, and any minor maintenance projects that Charlie can't get to. Sharon indicated that Acadia Area ATV'ers are interested and have offered help. She also said that volunteers do not want to be involved with directly enforcing regulations, but will write down registration numbers if they witness something inappropriate. Charlie added that clubs can also help figure out connecting trails to the Down East Sunrise Trail. The Gouldsboro ATV club is planning a trail connection. Charlie reviewed the grants that are available for ATV clubs. Sally added that the Outdoor Heritage Fund allows grant applications for ATVs to be used for enforcement. Charlie added that the Maine Warden Service has applied for equipment from this source. Bill added that the Hancock County Sheriff also has an ATV. Charlie said that Sorrento is also planning on applying for a rescue grant.

Bill said that he has heard that several Ellsworth people would like to get involved with the Sunrise Trail, but are unable to make the STC meetings because they are in the middle of the day. He wondered if they could be switched to evening and in Ellsworth every other meeting. Stephanie added that perhaps the other meetings could be switched to Machias to try to accommodate the ends of the trails. **The Board agreed that the next meeting would be at 4:30 p.m. in Machias on Wednesday, April 29th, followed by a 7:00 p.m. public presentation on the trail. The Wednesday, April 29th meeting and presentation was subsequently cancelled. A regular meeting has been re-scheduled for Wednesday, April 22 in Cherryfield at the RC&D.** The May meeting will be on Wednesday, May 27th at 4:30 p.m. at the Maine Grind, followed by a 7:00 p.m. public presentation.

Charlie reported that he had received an e-mail from Scott Shaw at the Maine Seacoast Mission looking for a letter of support for a recreational trail that they are hoping to build on their property. Sally said it would be easiest if the Mission had a draft letter that STC could adapt and send in. Charlie will follow up with the Mission.

MOTION: To approve sending a letter of support on behalf of the Sunrise Trail Coalition to the Maine Sea Coast Mission for their trail building efforts.
MADE BY: Sally Jacobs
SECOND: Polly Ceckler
VOTE: Unanimous in favor

Charlie also received a request from Tora at UMM who is seeking a grant for high resolution data that will help with mapping. She is looking for a list of organizations that would support the grant proposal. Stephanie asked whether "support" is just lending our name or requires the STC to supply funding. Charlie will follow up with Tora.

MOTION: To support UMM's proposal if it does not commit the Sunrise Trail Coalition to provide funding for the program.
MADE BY: Sally Jacobs
SECOND: Dave Wood
VOTE: Unanimous in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie M. Clement