

Trails and Business Conference
Wednesday, April 02, 2008
Minutes

Morning Plenary Session

Welcome: Sally Jacobs “We’re going to have a trail!”

Introductions of Speakers

- Community Planning Track
- Business Track

Many Thanks

- Thanks to the sponsors
 - Maine Snowmobile Association
 - ECG
 - ATV Maine
 - Go Maine
- Thanks to faculty who sponsored this event and are participating today.
- Thanks to the planning committee that helped to organize this conference

Notes on the Information Packets

- Speaker Bios
- List of participants

Promoting the DEST

- Getting the DEST onto state visitor maps
- Looking for various ways to raise awareness
- We invite more people to be involved in the Sunrise Trail Management Committee

Slide show in the background

- Illustrates trail conversion process
- Pre-Bid conference tomorrow in Machias
- Welcome to Fred Marshall from Plymouth Engineering

Mapping Exercise: Tora Johnson

- Welcome to UMM
- Note the current draft maps along the wall of the auditorium
- Please indicate sites along the trail that you feel should go in the brochure
- Connect table of information with pre-coded red post-its (stickies)
- This will give us a chance to identify new locations to highlight on the trail

Trail Updates – David Rodrigues, John Picher, Charlie Corliss

- MaineDOC worked with MaineDOT and local representatives to create a trail management plan
- DOT owns the corridor
- BP&L will be the manager
- Working now on construction of the trail

Bidding – John Picher

- RFP out on March 27
- In the bidding process now
- Bidders meeting 4/3/08
- Counting on salvage steel to pay most of the costs
 - Prices are good now
 - Higher salvage prices will result in more gravel for the trail
- Bids are due on April 30th
 - Public can attend for the bid opening, but there isn't much room
 -
- If there is an acceptable bid, work will begin in May
 - Encouraging companies to complete the Machias area first
 - Want to salvage hardware – spikes, signals, etc.
 - Bidders need to figure out the value of the salvage
- Ambitious amount of work – particularly due to beaver activity
 - Culverts
 - Fill
 - Washouts
- Completion target 9/1/2010
 - Access limitations will slow work
 - Can't even turn around in some areas
- Questions
 - Is bid opening public? Yes – but space is limited
 - Comment – the pace is actually quite ambitious.
 - Salvage companies are in charge
 - Will some sections be useable before the entire trail is complete?
 - Yes, will post areas that are open
 - Is it possible to use the rails to bring in supplies?
 - That is up to the salvage company
 - It is dangerous to use the rails now because of the washouts
 - Is any portion open now? NO
 - Will one contractor/salvage company have the entire project? Yes, they can subcontract it
 - The salvage company will need to front much of the money to get started
 - Will there be parking areas in wetlands?
 - NO

- There are only two now, in Washington Junction and Ayer's Junction
 - Others will be proposed
 - DEP will be looking over
- Link to BID – Bureau of Maine General Services
 - CD's are available
 - See also Plymouth Engineering Web Site
- Surface Treatment
 - Gravel requires maintenance
 - The trail should hold up provided people behave well.
 - Eventually may want to pave sections close to towns
- Memorabilia will be owned by the salvage company that can sell it as they see fit
- Ongoing Maintenance
 - BP&L will be responsible
 - MaineDOT will provide some financial support for this - \$50K/ Year
- Restroom Facilities?
 - No plan for these now
 - Sally noted that we are speaking with towns about maintenance. Towns have not stepped forward on this.
- Winter grooming for snowmobiles and skiers
 - Bill Cherry noted that the groomers are maxed-out now
 - Scott Ramsay will speak about this in the afternoon session

Current Trail Status – Charlie Corliss

- Total trail length will be 87 miles (2 miles of rail with trail in Ellsworth)
- Fact slide – 28 bridges from 12 to 150 feet
- 57 washouts
- Used GPS to mark the trouble spots
- Going to leave the rail in place over Schoodic Bog, and build over it
- Stone work at culverts is notable
- Longest bridge is Cherryfield over the Narraguagus River
- Chandler – 900 feet under water
- Ayers Junction – end of the line
- There are seven ATV and five or six snowmobile trails that cross this trail
- A new ATV/Sunrise Trail map is being produced now – a sample is available in the hall
- Office in Cherryfield – ready to get this project up and rolling

The role of trails in Community and Business Development

Panel

- David Rodrigues, DOC
- Kathy Mazzuchelli, Caribou Recreation Department
- Carl Knoch, Rails to Trails Conservancy

- Jane Murphy, New Brunswick Trails Council
- Judy East, WCCOG

Judy East – WCCOG

- How Communities Plan for Trails
 - Regional Planning
 - Train Management Plan
 - ECG
 - Blackwoods Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plans
 - GIS and Mapping Information
 - Data – topography, slopes, flooding
 - Location / proximity tools
 - Ask questions about services – what restaurants are available?
 - Visitor assistance – many maps don't tell people what is available in an area
 - Policies
 - Towns can identify their connections to the trail and services
 - Recreation, Economy, Public Services, Transportation
 - Example – Jonesport Comprehensive Plan
 - Indicates public access to water, trails
 - GIS map indicates amenities using a variety of icons
 - Walkability Audits / Bike Pedestrian Planning
 - Inventory infrastructure
 - WCCOG
 - Milbridge and Lubec Walkability
 - Calais downtown
 - Mapped trailheads along the rail corridor
 - Routing Studies
 - East Coast Greenway
 - Identification of gaps – planning for completing the trail
 - Working on options – for Ayers Junction to Charlotte
 - Partners
 - RPCs
 - Trail groups
 - Modal Associations
 - Land Trusts
 - Maine State Agencies – MaineDOT, MaineDOC
 - National Park Service
 - BP&L – useful website (note that Nick Rogers will be working with the program – has links to other groups)
 - Healthy Community Coalitions
 - Funding Sources
 - MaineDOT – Safe Routes, quality communities
 - NPS –

- Land and Water Conservation

Questions –

- Links to off trail sites – like Roque Bluffs
 - Yes, there are several ways that these will be linked
 - Harold Claussy and Sherry Churchill are working on strategies for promoting nature based tourism
- What can we do to improve connectivity
 - Towns have been asked to provide MaineDOT with their transportation infrastructure improvements
- Is there a trailhead study for Hancock County? YES – didn't appear in this slide
- Gary Edwards – Towns should also be looking for off road trail concepts
- Sally – looking for connecting hiking trails

Jane Murphy – New Brunswick

- Trail projects
 - Roosevelt Trail
 - Northern New Brunswick Trail
 - Master Planning for St John River Trail (400 KM) and Star Trail – Acadian Culture
- Want to activate the trails – increase use and economic, health and other benefits
- Benefits
 - Connected population – pride and involvement
 - Example of community – 93% of community uses the trail
 - Was controversial at first, but very important now
 - Education
 - Environment
 - Healthy communities
 - High rate of obesity in New Brunswick
 - Trail is barrier free
 - Incorporated into daily routines
 - Economic vitality
- Tourism opportunities
 - Outdoor recreation is growing in popularity
 - Trail tourists - \$1.8 million in benefits
 - Higher economic impact \$199 versus \$123 per day (bike tourists)
 - Come from further away
 - Stay longer
 - Middle age- physically active
 - More educated, higher income
 - Stay in more expensive accommodation
 - Trail business infrastructure (more on this in the afternoon)
 - Accommodation
 - Food

- Guide and outfitting
 - Retail
 - Spin off effects – multiplier effects
 - Indirect effects – re-spending of money
 - Induced effects – quality of life
 - Veloroute des Blueuets
 - 256 KM around Lac St. Jean in Quebec
 - increased activity during the shoulder season
 - 217,542 users in 2006, showing strong growth
 - \$7.9 million in direct benefits, \$6.6 from cyclists
 - Three maison de velo – bicycle houses where people can meet
 - baggage transportation between B&Bs so you don't have to carry them
 - Trail ambassadors – provide people with information and assistance
 - Length of stay – 6.24 days – nearly double prior average
 - Building and Maintaining the trail
 - Surveying and mapping
 - Planning, design and engineering
 - Building trail
 - Life cycle and maintenance – much of this is paid work, seasonal employment
 - Federal, provincial and local government receive revenues that result from trail usage and need to pay back into maintenance
 - Trail Benefits – Active Transportation Systems
 - People are more likely to walk / exercise 30 minutes or more per day
 - Active - Human power for transportation
 - Trails within communities allows for safe ways to practice active transportation
 - Generating cultural change – social infrastructure for exercise
 - Maximizing trail
 - Support
 - Trail focused goods and services
 - Amenities – signage, information, picnic areas, wash rooms, paved pathways
 - Niche products and other trail compatible marketing
- Questions
 - Who pays for promotion?
 - New Brunswick Trails Council
 - Maintenance funds - \$450K for 500K of trails
 - Program needs more funding
 - Regional and local tourism associations promote their areas
 - Department of Tourism is improving their information
 - Need to be willing to ask for help.
 - Is there potential for linkages between NB and Maine?
 - Worked with WCCOG on Roosevelt Trail Concept

- Would like a trail linking ECG with the Trans-Canada Trail
- Examples of how communities have been encouraged to support branch and connecting trails?
 - Non-motorized trails groups have not been as active in working in remote areas
 - The motorized partners have worked in remote areas more effectively
 - The non-motorized group has not advocated multiuse trails. Need to work on ways to design multiuse options.
- Are there places where people can get off their ATV's and rent a bicycle to go into town?
 - No examples yet, but working on this concept.
- Any people providing motorized guided tours – multi-passenger golf carts or other permitted uses?
 - Not aware of any examples
 - Worth exploring these options

Kathy Mazzucheli – Economic Impacts of Trails or ... Show me the money

- Tourism is large in Maine 115,000 jobs, \$2.5 billion (Longwoods International, 2002)
 - Presented many statistics on the economic impacts of tourism
 - European impact is growing (Exchange rate)
 - Canadian tourism is also growing (Exchange rate)
- Close to Acadia National Park
- Support multi-use trails – don't have an option in many cases
 - Primary support comes from Snowmobile and ATV users
- Activities
 - Tour state – 40%
 - Maine Outdoors – 20%
 - Attend Special Events – 10%
 - Beach – 9%
- Walk – 40.4%, Bike 15.9% - cycling is increasing exponentially
- Cycling 54.6 million people
- Equipment sales - \$14,420 billion annual an increasing
- Snowmobiles
 - groomers cost \$150K each
- Demonstrated calculations for benefits of tourism for Aroostook County
- Took her calculations to council in Caribou
 - They exceeded her request, purchasing trail groomers, created maintenance plans, etc.
- Case studies of successful trails projects
- **Irish Diplomacy** – the art of having people do it your way
 - Demonstrate how leisure and recreation expenditures are important in your state
 - Show examples

- American Spending – very high priority on Leisure
- A business man’s judgment is no better than the information than his information.

Questions

- Economic impacts of the connector trails? Don’t know.
- Bill – Kathy directs parks and recreation in Caribou – knows a lot about maintaining trails. Suggest talking to her about maintenance questions. She is also very good in working with people who are concerned about trail related complaints.

Carl Knoch – Rails to Trails Manager to Trail Development NE Region - PA to ME

Case study of the Pine Creek Rail Trail – available on www.railstotrails.org

- 64 mile rail trail in rural PA
- ten year process to create trail
- Connects Wellsboro to Jersey Shore – the grand Canyon of PA – Pine Creek Valley
- This is a tourist area that had a lot of camping and hiking
- Conducted a trail survey – 1,049 responses
 - Origin
 - 86% PA, 5% NY, 6% other states
 - 57 of PA’s 67 counties
 - Frequency of use
 - 20% first time
 - Time on the trail - 63% over two hours
- Economic impacts
 - Hard goods - \$354.97 – 26% on bike supplies, 23% on bike
 - Soft goods - \$30.30 / person / trip – 14% didn’t buy anything – beverages, ice cream, food (average for day use trails is about \$10.00)
 - Overnight stays - \$69.08 per night
 - Length of stay 3.34 nights
 - Overall - \$4.5 million per year from trail users
- Impact on local businesses
 - Interviewed businesses along the trail
 - Creative marketing methods from businesses
 - Building connector trails
 - Selling products like ice cream
 - All businesses said they added products and staff to accommodate trail users
 - Ice cream, food, picnic tables, bike racks, ...
 - Businesses restored due to increased demand
 - Example of the Hotel Manor at Slate Run – burned down, was rebuilt, better facility and more than doubled the rent even off season
- Great Allegheny Passage – Cumberland to Pittsburg
 - Revitalizing the economy
 - Ultimately connects to DC for a five day trip

- Trail Town Program
 - encourage business development along the trail
 - Attract visitors to the towns
 - Web presence
 - Focus on sustainable development and building health, livable communities
 - Business opportunities
 - Ice cream shop one mile off the trail – kids gave out coupons on the trail
 - B&B – business sold for \$508K – near to trail
 - Outfitters – shuttle service
 - Groceries/snack shops
 - Craft stores with convenient shipping
 - Links
 - www.trailtowns.org
 - www.atatrail.org
 - Questions
 - Are these trails paved? Not the examples today
 - Can you put more information about multi-use trails on your website?
 - Can work. Encounters with ATVs in Aroostook County worked very well.
 - Some trouble with trail damage from ATVs
 - Need to set and enforce speed limits, particularly in towns. People need to understand the rules
 - Are there ATV's on the Pine Creek Trail?
 - Used transportation enhancement funds – so cannot permit ATVs
 - One Maine business noted – 61 visitors from PA came to small town and were great customers

Lunch – reminder to do the mapping exercise

Breakout Groups – 1:15 PM

Break-out Session 1: Track 1

Moderators: Betty Egner, Ruth Cash-Smith

Panelist: Carl Knoch, Jane Murphy

Carl Knoch

Carl presented information on the impact of Rail Trails on communities and businesses along several trails in Pennsylvania as well as 2 in Maine.

1. In the numerous visits he has made to trails, in every case he has seen significant benefit to both the communities and the local businesses. In one case a business

was about to go bankrupt as the trail arrived. The owner expanded the business then renovated the property and turned it into a very successful restaurant. Another resort burned down and the owner only rebuilt because the trail was coming thru. Now it is a very successful high end resort. He showed examples where real-estate values increased and a table which showed that these values increase in proportion to the proximity to the trail.

2. PA has a program called “Trail Town Initiative “which has funds available thru “The Progress Fund” to help towns and small businesses take advantage of spin off from trails which pass nearby.
3. He made the strong point that if you want to have people make a return visit to the trail you must have the amenities they need to make the trip a pleasant experience. In the case of snowmobiles be sure to provide adequate parking for cars with big trailers. In the case of bicycles provide bike racks. Bikers like ice cream cones. One general store gave away free ice cream cones and cleaned up on spin off business.
4. He made the point, bikers who come from away and spend multiple days on the trail, spend significantly more than other tourist.
5. Control commercial signs along the trail, otherwise you get a mess. Standardize size signs. Get the boy scouts to take on signs as an Eagle Scout project. Fort Kent has local group that controls signage. They charge \$50/ year for a sign.
6. Construct a demo section of the trail soon so people can see what type of facility it will be.

Jane Murphy

1. Jane thinks of the benefits of trails to towns as revitalization. Many of the small towns along the trail have lost important businesses. In many cases Trail development has revitalized these towns.
2. She thinks there is high potential for 2 country cooperation for the development of trails in Maine and N.B.
3. She discussed several specific examples and their benefits and problems:
 - The tour across Quebec is very popular and involves 2000 people but it is difficult to find accommodations and camp space.
 - Day tripping at resort outside St. John: Rent equipment, also gives Nordic walking classes and Geocaching.
 - Bike rental run by city of Fredrick ton, first rented bikes recovered by police. Fredrick ton is considered to be one of Canada’s most livable cities. They have 85 miles of off road trails.
 - The guest ranch is near St. John and the Fundy trail but also has their own trail system.

4. Other Businesses:

- Home to Home B&B Network. Several B&B join together to offer Inn to Inn tour with baggage transport and shuttle service. 1-800 number to call to set up tour. 10 B&B on the Bruce trail in Ontario
- B&B in bike guide book \$130/ year, must be within 5 miles of trail.

5. Theme Tours: Cyclists do things along trail.

- Geocaching 5000 caches in NB.
- Elderhostel do tour on Fundy trail

6. Make sure locals know about the trail and the condition of the trail. Gaps in trail systems are a big problem.

7. Jane reinforced Carl's point that if you want people to make a return trip you must make sure the amenities they need are available.

Respectfully Submitted by Bill Ceckler

Break Out Session 1 Track 2: Community Planning – Planning a trail in your community

Moderator – Sally Jacobs

Sandi Duchesne – Sewall Company Collaborating with Consultants: A Primer for Municipal Officials in Trailside Communities

Why hire a consultant?

- Specialized expertise
- Creating build-able plans
- Extend municipal capacity
- Cost estimates, funding applications
- Technical services – planning, survey, design, permitting, construction

Trail related investments

- Connector trails
- Downtown revitalization
- Trailside development – public and private

Paying for improvements

- Consultants help identify funding sources
- Obtain funds for planning services
- Pool funding sources

Selecting the right Consultant

- See handout from the association of bicycle and pedestrian consultants
- APBP Checklist for RFP – based selection
- Check references – including projects in Maine
- Personalities matter

Tips

- Know what you want to accomplish
- Look at more than the lowest bid
- Create a citizen stakeholder committee including decision makers
- Let consultants know if you are unhappy
- Listen to consultant on how to overcome problems
- Pay for what you approve and understand
- Consider options that will enhance attractiveness, durability and maintainability of the project

Sipayik: The Real Tale of a Rail Trail – Washington County

- Phase 1 – Enhancement Grant – 1.5 miles paved
- Phase 2 – Bureau of Indian Affairs - .5 miles paved
- Phase 3 – To be built connecting to Eastport
- This was the rail spur to Eastport – the portion passing through the Passamaquoddy Reservation
- Environmental challenges
 - Washouts
 - Flooding
 - Ocean surge impacts
 - Steep slopes off of the trail – used galvanized pipe guardrails
- Inspirational Quote
 - Make no little plans.... David Burnham

Questions

- How long (see above)
- Local participation? Yes, the Passamaquoddy asked for several design changes

John Noll – Denny’s River Pedestrian Bridge and Trail

- Started with a bridge project
- Town contracted with EMDC using a \$10K CDBG planning grant
- EMDC was asked to design some conceptual trail loops
- Town did some preliminary work identifying existing informal trails
 - Town did GPS survey of the area and conceptual trails
 -
- EMDC met with town representatives, land owners and trail users to identify issues
 - Looked at other potential corridors
 - Needed to resolve issues integrating non-motorized and multi-use trails
 - Needed to resolve landowner concerns about liability

- Personally invited the landowners to attend meetings
 - Salmon Commission has easements on several properties
 - Historical society maintains historical information
- Identified funding sources for project work
- Working on landowner agreements for trail access
- Working on maintenance agreements – who keeps it in good shape
- Environmental and ADA compliance
- Working with CES for engineering on the less costly trails

Bangor – Bucksport Trail

- Meeting with town representatives to identify potential trails
- Identifying land owner concerns
- Plan will help in seeking funding for projects

Questions

- How did they contact EMDC?
 - First worked with CES
 - Came to EMDC for planning
- Dan Stewart – Dennysville has progress further than most communities to create and integrated trails system
- Would the trails coming off the DEST have to be multi-use?
 - No – some connecting trails will be non-motorized
 - Landowners will have to give permission for uses on their property
 - Some of the route will have logging trucks

Jim Fisher

- www.DowneastExplorer.Org – geotourism concept
- Ellsworth Bike Pedestrian Plan – see power point

Break

Business Development Session 2 – Resources for Business Development

Elizabeth Sprague – WHCA Incubator Without Walls

Ruth Cash-Smith – Coastal Enterprises

Betty Egner – Small Business Development Center CEI

Georgie – Women’s Work and Community Development

Tim Tunney – Bar Harbor Bank and Trust

Tim Tunney – interested in trails personally, but also think there is economic potential for businesses near trails. Saw successes in other places, such as PEI.

- Community Banks – Five C’s of Credit
 - Character – of the borrower
 - Are they well known
 - How involved are they in the business

- Capacity
 - Ability and capacity to repay loans
 - Cash flow of the business
 - More challenging for new businesses – where all you have are projections
- Capital
 - Borrower's ability to inject their own funds
 - Banks don't like to 100% finance businesses
- Collateral
 - What is the borrower offering to the bank if there is a default
- Conditions
 - What conditions are necessary for a business to succeed
 - The Sunrise Trail offers new opportunities – changes conditions

Georgie Kendal – Women Work and Community

- Best kept secrets in Washington County? Ice Breaker
 - There are many free resources
- Statewide non-profit to help men and women transition out of poverty
- Work with people in transition – such as recently laid off, unemployed, divorced women (and men)
- Four Areas of development
 - Micro-enterprise – start up businesses
- Teach classes in various community sites
 - Basics of starting a business – three week class with CEI
 - New Ventures – 12 week * five hours per week
- Provide one on one assistance with startups
- Handouts
 - Venturing Forth
 - Four Focus Areas
- Small Business Loan Workshops (with SBA) (4/29 Eastport) - \$5,000 to \$25,000 loans

Betty Egner – Maine Small Business Development Center – CEI

- Encourage prospective business owners to speak with a counselor prior to purchasing a business – many people over-pay for a business
- Strongly discourage people from starting a business on a credit card – makes it very difficult for banks to lend to you
- Most people can do a business plan, but they have a difficult time creating a cash flow analysis. Counselors can help them to analyze how funds will ebb and flow – knowing when they are likely to confront lean-times.
- Betty cannot provide funding, but can assist businesses to locate funding

Ruth Cash Smith – Women’s Business Center – CEI (40% of clients are men)

- Conduct much of her work over the phone and internet
- Provide free, confidential, unlimited business counseling assistance
- Run peer networking meetings – for people to learn from each other
- Some counseling results in people choosing not to go into business – need to help people think through their business prospects
- Work on loan packaging
 - Eg. Preparing cash flow and expansion plan before going to a bank for a loan
 - Lending options
 - Banks
 - EMDC
 - WHCA
 - CEI

Elizabeth Sprague – Small Business Coordinator, Women, Work and Community WHCA

- Roots in Johnson Administration and war on poverty
- Started incubator without walls program in 1996 – have conducted 26 IWW sessions
- Micro-enterprise loans – Up to \$10,000
- Economic Development match loan – requires job creation
- WWC can lend in situations where banks may not make loans
- See handouts
 - April 16 workshop on risk management
 -
- Go to www.downeastbiz.com

Gary Edwards – Comments

- There is a lot of collaboration and networking in eastern Maine

Questions

Sally – Would marketing assistance be available for Downeast Sunrise Trail Coalition

Betty – will meet up to two times with non-profits, but often refer people to Maine Association of Non-Profits

Gary noted that the Maine Philanthropy Association, DART, DERC&D and other organizations are available to provide assistance.

SCEC – holds some meetings of non-profits also

SBDC ... can provide assistance in updating your website.

SBDC ... online courses at no charge

Carl Knoch – good example of the Progress Fund - Allegheny small business assistance program

Jim – Grameen Bank Model applicability to Maine

- A common scenario is the person who comes in saying they have just started a business and needs immediate access to working capital. These scenarios are very difficult to support.
 - Incubator without Walls and New Ventures programs – engage people in the educational process
 - These education groups sometimes identify ways that they can work together – exchanging services
 - Help people to identify small steps toward creating a business
 - Don't start by building the restaurant
 - Try making sandwiches in your home
 - Tim – there are government agencies that can reduce the exposure to banks, but Banks and government often slow the process down and avoid the high risk situations.
 - One grant applicant forgot to include interest – underestimating loan service by 50%
 - Business counselors / reality therapists
- Bill – What is CEI, Inc? – Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
- Community Development Corporation – provides a variety of non-profit and for profit business services
 - Enables deal making and public-private ventures

Action: Create a small business page on www.sunrisetrail.org

www.wacobiz.org – Run by WCEC - has many good links