



## **Sunrise Trail Coalition**

**Meeting Minutes 11/19/08, 1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.**

**Down East RC&D Offices, Cherryfield**

**Present:** Katherine Cassidy, Bill Ceckler, Polly Ceckler, Bill Cherry, Stephanie Clement, Charlie Corliss, Sally Jacobs, Jacob Van de Sande

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

MOTION: To approve the October 2008 annual meeting minutes.  
MADE BY: Sally Jacobs  
SECOND: Polly Ceckler  
VOTE: Unanimous in favor

### **2. Treasurer's Report**

Eleody could not attend the meeting, but sent a Treasurer's report via e-mail. The total funds are \$13,646, the majority \$6779 of which is restricted grant money. One invoice was paid for membership in the Machias Chamber. The Sunrise Trail Coalition has five new members [Eleody later corrected this via e-mail to seven new members]. A membership drive for 2009 is needed. Charlie said that he plans on using the remaining Norcross Foundation funds for a screen to go with the Sunrise Trail Coalition projector.

### **3. MDOC/MDOT Update – Charlie Corliss**

Charlie reported that Dave Rodrigues has taken a new position at the Maine Department of Conservation (MDOC), and it is not certain whether his old position will be filled.

Charlie said that it is not certain whether the trail will be usable this winter. The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) is looking into legal issues. Charlie will let the Sunrise Trail Coalition board and the snowmobile clubs know about the outcome of MDOT's decision.

Charlie reported that the Whitneyville bridge may be completed soon. Two bridges have been completed on tidal water section between Machias and East Machias.. The bridge over the East Machias River has also been completed. The contractors will continue east on a series of small bridges through the end of December as weather allows. The contractors have stopped removing the rails at the Harrington/Columbia Falls town line. Most of the rails are melted down as scrap, but some are re-used on sidings. Twenty to thirty loads of the ties were taken to the town landfill, ground up, and buried, but it is anticipated that in December, the ties will be sent to Canada for biomass. Some of the good ties are also being sold in bundles of 25 for landscaping.

Charlie said that he has been working with the local snowmobile clubs in the Machias, East Machias, and Dennysville area to gear up for winter grooming. Machias has offered to submit the municipal grant for grooming in the region. Plowing will also need to be done at the road intersections to

eliminate berms on the trail. Charlie indicated that Dan Stewart is interested in putting in a walking trail next to the Sunrise Trail in Machias. A fence will be needed to prevent the road plows from pushing snow into the trail along the dike in Machias..

Charlie reported that the contractors will only put in another two miles of surface material. Around one mile of surface did not meet specifications and will be pulled up and replaced. There were too many stones larger than 3/4" for comfortable bicycle riding.

Charlie said that there has been a big tidal washout in East Machias. Approval has been granted to put in a 6-8 foot concrete box culvert with open bottom. Charlie said that it may take 3-6 weeks to get the culvert ordered and built so it may not be in place until the end of December. If this is not installed then snowmobiles will not be able to travel between Machias and East Machias this winter, but will still be able to travel outward from there.

Charlie said that the washout in Jonesboro will require lots of gravel. He said that there has been a new washout created by a plugged box culvert. A new 36-inch culvert will be put in place that should allow the contractors to access the larger washout. Charlie predicted that this would be fixed within several weeks.

Moving forward, the contractors will be working on ditches and culverts to prepare for spring runoff. Charlie reported that he and the contractors are just finishing layouts and site specifics for culverts for another 10 miles of the trail. Charlie added that the contractors have found it difficult to get the right mix and enough of the surface materials. Sally asked if there are any fine materials that MDOT might not be able to use for the roads that could be placed on the trail. Charlie responded that he didn't think so.

The ability for snowmobiles to use the trail this winter depends on the legal determination by MDOT. Sally asked how to inform the public about this decision. Katherine said that this decision would be big enough to be covered by the news media. Charlie also said that signposts have been put in place on 10 miles of the trail. He will be putting plywood up on these signposts to which paper signs can be stapled.

Bill Cherry asked about how vehicles will be prevented from driving on the trail in summer. Charlie replied that he has signs that outline what uses are prohibited and if there are problems, gates can be installed. Sally asked about bollards. Charlie said that the construction contract has waste blocks written into it that can be placed on the trail if needed.

#### **4. Interaction with Trail Clubs and Towns**

Charlie reported that the Dennysville Snowmobile Club has agreed to groom 17 miles of trail from Ayers Junction to the T18/East Machias town line. The East Machias Snowmobile Club may take 12 miles of the trail into Machias, and the Machias Snowmobile Club will take the trail from Machias to Whitneyville. Bill Cherry is worried about having enough people to groom the Down East Sunrise trail and other trails for which they are responsible. Charlie reported that the Narraguagus Snowmobile Club has built a new trail connection to the rail bed. Bill Ceckler said that bicyclists need to be encouraged to join the snowmobile clubs to assist with grooming. Stephanie added that donation boxes/membership forms should be throughout the trail to encourage new memberships or a Sunrise Trail grooming and maintenance fund. Charlie said that MDOC has a video to train people to become "certified groomers", but that nothing replaces experience on the trail with other groomers.

Bill Ceckler reported in his activities to encourage involvement of Hancock County in trail maintenance. He called Yogi Jones who organizes the Ellsworth Snowmobile Club and is active in maintaining trails from Ellsworth to Bucksport. Bill said that Yogi is very excited to take on grooming from Ellsworth eastward. Bill also reported that Yogi thought that he might have access to an equipment storage shed or perhaps build one at Washington Junction..

Bill Ceckler also spoke with Bill Clark, the Hancock County Sheriff who is happy to be involved. Sheriff Clark has acquired a patrol ATV on loan from Friend and Friend.

Bill Ceckler spoke with the president of Acadia ATVers who indicated that they are happy to help with trail maintenance for ATVs. Charlie added that there is a Lamoine snowmobile club, and they will be grooming some trails this year. Bill Ceckler will call together a meeting in January or February of the Hancock County snowmobile interests (possibly with the Narraguagus Club) to discuss trail maintenance. Charlie added that if there is enough snow this year, the trail could be groomed over the rails this year.

Bill Cherry asked whether it is possible to lay track for cross country skiers to the side of the snowmobile trail. Jacob said that it's very difficult not to run over the track with snowmobiles after it is laid. Charlie said it could be difficult as the trail surface is 10-ft wide, but there is nothing to lose in trying it.

Bill Ceckler reported that he spoke with Bruce Carter in Franklin regarding how to handle the trail in this area given that there is no official snowmobile club in this area. Bruce said he would speak with the Franklin selectboard. Charlie suggested that there might be enough snowmobilers in this region to start a club. Bill Ceckler added that expanding the Ellsworth Club might be another option.

Stephanie left and Sally continues with notes.

Jacob and Charlie reported on the invitation by the East Machias Aquatic Research Center managers to locate a trailhead at their building in downtown East Machias across the trail from Archibald's Store and gas station.. Dwayne Shaw of the Downeast Salmon Federation had offered to accommodate trail users in several ways: parking lot, barbecue grills, picnic tables, perhaps an awning as a weather shelter, and availability of bathrooms. This promises to be an important destination. Charlie Corliss and Steve Richardson (DOC) engineer visited the site and propose a culvert be installed under the trail to improve drainage. DSF offered materials to build bridges for use from the trail across the drainage ditch so trail users can access the Archibald's store. Parking was discuss. There could be diagonal parking that would accommodate pick-ups but not enough room for trailers. There is room enough for a turn-around. Perhaps Archibald's could create spaces for trailers and a couple might be accommodated in the EMARC parking lot. The DEST construction will need to install a fence to separate the parking lot from the trail. Charlie will discuss all this with Fred Marshall at Plymouth Engineering, the trail designers.

Washington Junction parking, trailhead and equipment shed discussion: There are "No Trespassing" signs on the Washington Junction property that make it appear the the DEST has access to only half the field we expect to use for parking. Charlie says the parking lot design has not been looked at yet. The driveway will be moved and a fence installed to mark the division between the rail yard and the parking lot. The design thus far is just "on paper" and is not the result of a site visit.

Charlie reported that there will be a parking lot at Ayers Junction and all rail has been removed west of Route 214 near Ayers Junction.

Newsletter We should plan to have a newsletter sent out in January with new officers, detailed update by Charlie about construction and grooming, President's column about whether and when the trail will be open (hopefully). We need a strong request for membership. It was suggested that we try to get an organization sponsor rather than just a "temporary s" sponsor for the newsletter. Bill Ceckler we ask Friend and Friend for free maintenance on grooming equipment. Bill Cherry suggested that they might be will to supply parts at cost and contribute labor. David Whitney at the Whitney Tool Shed does this for the Machias area.

We should investigate grants for groomers through the USDA. We need letters that prove there is a need for groomed snowmobile trails to support local small businesses.

Charlie and Sally will be working on getting businesses identified and mileposts, town lines, medivac sites all located with GIS points for our map. Need to work with Tora.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Stephanie M. Clement & Sally Jacobs**