

VT TRAILS & GREENWAYS COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 9, 2003 MEETING
VAST HQ., BERRE, VT

Present: Ted Milks, Ben Rose, Ed Leary, Rob Center, Gray Stevens, Mike Stafford, Luke Obrien, Paul Moffat, Todd Sheinfeld, Beth Ann Finlay, Kevin Russell, Matt Tetreault, Alexis Nowalk, Becca Brown, Bonnie Waninger, Sherry Smecker, Dana Szegegy, Eric Sharnberg, Diane Konrady, Bruce Hyde

1. Chairman Mike called the meeting to order @ 9:07am and declared that a quorum was present. Reference the September 9, 2003 meeting agenda items (by number) previously mailed to the Council.
2. Those present introduced themselves and the Organization they represented.
3. The *Minutes of the May 8 Annual Meeting* were approved... Motion Ben Rose, 2nd Kevin Russell
4. The *Treasurers report May7 through Sept. 5, 2003* approved by. Motion Luke Obrien, 2nd Rob Center. Noted that the ANR Commissioner declined to approve the printing of the last Newsletter but will approve the cost of the Landowner Liability insert using \$360. of the former L.L. booklet fund. Also **Note: Only 8 members have paid the 2003 dues !! PLEASE SEND YOUR DUES TO BEN ROSE.** We only have a \$593 balance. Not enough to publish the next Newsletter.
5. VT Department of Tourism & Marketing Commissioner, Bruce Hyde came @ 11:45am. Diane Konrady, Public Information Coordinator preceded him and talked of the main issues the Department was addressing. Also we looked at the VT Travel Planner, www.vermontpartners.org, www.ThinkVermont.com, www.VermontVacation.com Web sites courtesy of Alexis's VAST Laptop. Diane introduced Bruce who talked about their 2003 thrust: The \$2 million allocated to marketing VT Tourism will be spent to bring out of State visitors. Expansion of the Travel Planner to emphasize VT Products & Recreation year round in addition to State Parks, lodging, food services, points of interest and ski areas. He mentioned the new NE Kingdom Heritage Trail booklet (released 9/10/03) as an example of niche type guides that are planned for Mt. Biking, Kayaking, Canoeing, etc. He also told of the planned low frequency FM 96.3 that will be installed for tourists to tune into for seamless local area information as they travel the main highways. VT will be the first of two states to have this! Mike, Sherry, Ben and Kevin made the point that Trails are what connects all of the points of interest and the Council is not adequately funded to carry out our Legislated mandate. A copy of the VAST paper proposing the lifting of the \$75K off road gasoline tax cap on the VT Recreation Trails Fund was given to Bruce. He said that he would work with the T&GY Council as long as the promotion of tourism was the main thrust. **Action: Ben, Mike and the Government Relations Committee to follow up.** Also for 1999/2000 UVM Research statistics on tourism go to www.uvm.edu—click on “research”; “Research Centers & Programs”; scroll down to “Vermont Tourism Data Center, “Publications”, and finally “outdoor Recreation”.
6. *Government Relations Committee*... Ben reported that they had met this morning with Bryant Watson of VAST and reviewed a “Draft Report of the Summer Study for Funding of Snowmobile Trail Related Issues”. On page 2 & 3 of that report is a proposal for legislation to change the annual Gas Tax allocation from ¾ of 1% not to exceed \$370,000 to a \$.15/gallon of gas tax to be used for the VT Recreation Trails Fund. This would increase the portion available for Trail Grants. While it was too early for the Committee to comment on this proposal, Ben asked that the Council review the VAST proposal draft and send e-mail comments to his committee by October 31. **Action:** Beth Ann moved and Gray 2nd a motion that the Government Relations Committee be given authorization to come up with a Council proposal re: lifting the current cap on the Trails Funding by November 30. This proposal would then be reviewed by the Board of Directors to develop our position. In the meantime VAST is proceeding to have public hearings though VT Interactive Television their proposal September 9 and 16. Copies of the Vast Study were distributed. Also it is on the VAST website-<http://www.vtvast.org/funding.html>.
7. *Business Plan Committee*... Mike reported that they had a telephone meeting and discussed various Council tasks. Becca Brown will be taking over the administrative tasks that Jean Neil has been doing for the Council. Ed Leary confirmed this change in FP&R assignments. **Action:** Your Secretary will thank Jean for all of the support that she has given.
8. *Recreation Trails Grant Program*... Sherry announced that there will be a Press release of the 2004 Trails Grant Program on September 10th. She passed out the new Application booklet and Administrative Guide. Then she reviewed all of the changes that the Ranking Committee & FP&R had proposed and approved by the Council. Becca & Sherry have improved the Application packet greatly

- by incorporating the prior Applicant and Council suggestions. Copies are now available through Becca at FP&R. *Changes highlighted are:* Written land owner permission for trails on private lands is required prior to initiation of the project. Ranking points have been adjusted and a new section incorporates Project Readiness and Cost Effectiveness (20 points). Readiness includes discussion of the planning, public meetings expenditures and volunteer work that has been accomplished prior to submittal of the Application. Planning Grant set aside remains unchanged at 10% (\$7,000). **Action:** Becca will provide the Council with a history of the grant program back to and including year 2000.
9. *Vermont Trail System Applications...*(as appended to the agenda). (A) Northern Forests Canoe Trail as presented by Rob Center was approved (motion, Gray Stevens, 2nd Luke Obrien) with a note that the it is a 174 mile Trail in VT as designated by Northern Forests Canoe Trail Inc. consisting of access areas, portage trails, campsites and signage. (B) Brownway River Trail , 1.2 mile section connecting to the Missisquoi Rail Trail as submitted by North Woods Forestry (Nancy Patch, Trail Manager) was approved (Ben Rose motion, Sherry Smecker 2nd) with comment that it will be connected to the School property as well as the Rail Trail. **Action:** The Operations Committee will recommend that a representative of the submitting organization present the VT Trail System application to the Council. This will allow for answers to the questions raised prior to approval. In addition all Council participants are requested to send e-mail suggestions to improve the VT Trail System designation criteria to Becca Brown. She will consolidate these and send them to the participants prior to the OP's Committee forwarding of a recommendation to the FP&R/ANR Commissioners.
 10. *Governor's Conference on Recreation...* will be held October 8, 2003 @ the Capitol Plaza Hotel Conference Center. All Council Members are urged to participate. VRPA has lowered the Registration Fee to \$35 (\$45 after 9/24) for Council volunteers. Ted Milk reported that "Trails Track" (a part of 3 educational sessions) was organized and speakers lined up by Lenore Budd (CTA) for the Council.
 11. *Public Relations Committee--VT&GY Newsletter and Web Site...*All agreed the Summer 2003 issue of the T&GY Newsletter was the best so far! Thanks, Jennifer & Kate. Jennifer Waite sent a copy of the 01/9/03 draft of information to be included in the T&GY website. She and Laurie Smith are working on this with Bruce Amsden. Laurie was using the "Front Page" program templates and Bruce indicated that was not compatible with the new State format. **Action:** Ed will check with Bruce to see if the "Front Page" information can be converted. Paul will contact Laurie and urge her to keep trying to work this out with Bruce.
 12. *Membership Committee...*Kevin Russell handed out their Report which listed "Some early Directions" planned: 1) Meet with representatives of VT Leagues of Cities & Towns .. to develop contacts. 2) Promote T&Gwy Council through contacts with VT Regional Planning Commissions. 3) Plan and budget for a broad based Membership Drive. 4) Craft a compelling pitch for the benefits of T&Gwy Council Membership. 5) Further refine the VT&GC brochure. 6) Work with FP&R on the maintenance of an accurate membership and contact database. "The purpose of the Council is to include diverse Trails & Greenway interests and secondarily to obtain financial support (DUES)". The T&Gwy Council Membership must support financially in order to have at least a Newsletter. Note: Organizations that represent VT Trail Systems should all be sustaining Members!
 13. *Planning Manual...*Amy Bell –not report submitted. Defer to January Meeting.
 14. **Meeting dates:**
January 8, 2004 at Ethan Allen Room, Statehouse 9:00am (Ben To Confirm).
March 11, 2004 – TBA
May 13, 2004 – Annual Meeting @ Seyon Ranch (?). Sherry to check availability.
 15. *Other Items of Business:* Ed Leary handed out copies of "Economic And Social Values of Vermont State Parks-2002" a report that he had promised at a prior meeting. Since trails are a vital feature in all State parks the information should be of help to the Council's "Plan Forward". Also he gave us a 04/29/03 ANR press release "Survey Reveals VT Wildlife are Important Recreationally and Economically" which states that Vermonter's rank only second to Alaskan's in enjoying wildlife resources recreationally! Also that this Recreation Contributed \$386 million in 2001 to the VT economy.

16. *Roundtable:*

VAST- Alexis summarized the Summer Study (above). They are having 5 public meetings, using Interactive TV for some to discuss 4 proposed Legislative issues: Removing the “cap” on the Off Road Gas Tax funding for Trails; Incentives for Landowners to continue to open their lands to Trails, Snowmobile Trail Liability Insurance and special vanity “Snowmobile Vermont” Auto/Truck registration plates.

VASA-Todd reported that the ATV organization obtained Liability Insurance for members! They have a new Board of Directors and are working to get more ATV’s registered in the State (for Funding.)

CROSS VT TRAIL- Eric: New I91 underpass dedication this week! Trail is now designated as a National Recreation Trail and a Millennium Trail! All Trail segments are in place with signage in process. Website is up and running.

VOGA- Gray: serving now 6000 visits/week from website. 6 events for women this year!

NFCT- Rob Section type organization in place and working on the waterway corridors/campsites/portages. Fall Foliage Outing planned.

FP&R Adm.- Sherry: The Recreation Trails Grant Application & Guide booklets can be downloaded online. The VRTF & NRTF 2004 Grant program Press Release 09/10/03. (also see #8 above).

FP&R- Ed. New canoe camping area on the Conn. River N Bloomfield, Vt Lyman Falls State Park.

NW Regional Planning- Bonnie: New benches for picnic & relaxation (VRTF Grant) on the Missisquoi Rail Trail! Studying the intersection of Rt.7 and 105 for improved Trail Parking (safety issue). Trail activity high in NW VT. The Isle Lamont “Artistic Rest Stop” on the Island Line Bikeway is a new park just for cyclists! Check it out!

GMC- Ben announced a 09/20/03 Ribbon cutting to open the new trail to the “Back Forty’ at the GMC HQ site. Invited all to check out the new trails in the Elephant Head area of the Notch. Two new Hikers Guides for LT and VT are now available in bookstores. Hikers happy and lots of activity! Efficient management of the composting privies!

CTA- Ted announced; 8th edition of the Trail guide (December) will include new maps based on GPS. Plan for segmented “End to End Tour” over the next 4 years and another full length tour the 5th year.

Mad River Pathways- Kevin: the 8th annual Mad Dash 09/14/03 a community fitness fundraiser. A \$10K award from the Towns of Waitsfield, Warren and Fayson in support of the MRP staff. Also VT Community Foundation Grant to Fayson for the development of a Trails Plan. VT YCC worked on the Kingsbury Bridge Section of the Path in Warren. He passed out the MRPA Pathways Newsletter.

Vt leadership Center- Luke reported that the Fire Tower on Bald Mountain has a new roof thanks to a FP&R Project as well as new steps and Landings courtesy of GMC NE Kingdom Section and the Westmore Assn. Also the NEKSC youth crews worked on trails to Bald again and a new trail to Brosseau Mountain- VRTF Grant Projects.

Morristown Trails- Mike: Town Property – Duhamel Gravel Pit area will include new trails for hiking, bicycling, XC skiing/ snowshoeing and horseback riding. This is currently going through the Act 250 process. Next Trail walk 9/15/03 Beaver Meadow to Bryant Pond and return., Workday on the Catamount Trail -Sterling Valley to Mud City slated for 11/29/03. Planning another regional Trails meeting at the TEGU building for the Lamoille area.

AOT- Laurie sent e-mail..The Transportation Enhancement Comm. Meets in October to review and score the 67 applications submitted under FY 2003 grant cycle. Selected projects will be funded under the FY 2004 round when available (waterfall from Budget ?).

Wheew! I ran out of ink and we adjourned @ 1:30 pm. !!

Respectfully submitted:

Paul Moffat, Secretary