

**VT Trails & Greenways Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 9, 2004**  
**Fellowship Hall, Westmore VT**

**Attendance:** Matt Tetreault - VAST [mtetreault@vtvast.org](mailto:mtetreault@vtvast.org), Beth Ann Finlay - N VT RC&D Council [beth\\_ann.finlay@vt.usda.gov](mailto:beth_ann.finlay@vt.usda.gov), Joel Cope - Town of Brighton [joelcope@sover.net](mailto:joelcope@sover.net), John Watson - NE Kingdom Collaborative [jvwatson@earthlink.net](mailto:jvwatson@earthlink.net), Bob Barnham - NGA [transit@together.net](mailto:transit@together.net), Ed Leary - FPR [ed.leary@anr.state.vt.us](mailto:ed.leary@anr.state.vt.us), Gray Stevens - VOGA [gray@voga.org](mailto:gray@voga.org), John Brodhead - Craftsbury Outdoor Center [johnbrod@craftsbury.com](mailto:johnbrod@craftsbury.com), Paul Moffat - Westmore Trails [paulmoffat@aol.com](mailto:paulmoffat@aol.com), Ben Rose - Green Mountain Club [ben@greenmountainclub.org](mailto:ben@greenmountainclub.org), Mike Stafford - Morristown Trails [msstafford@vtusa.net](mailto:msstafford@vtusa.net), Jennifer Waite - NPS Rivers & Trails Program [jennifer\\_waite@nps.gov](mailto:jennifer_waite@nps.gov), Kevin Russell - Mad River Path Association [path@madriver.com](mailto:path@madriver.com), Luke O'Brien - Northwoods Stewardship Center [luke@northwoodscenter.org](mailto:luke@northwoodscenter.org), Sherry Smecker - FPR [sherry.smecker@anr.state.vt.us](mailto:sherry.smecker@anr.state.vt.us), Rebecca Brown - FPR [rebecca.brown@anr.state.vt.us](mailto:rebecca.brown@anr.state.vt.us).

1. Mike Stafford, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10 AM and declared a quorum was present.
2. Those present introduced themselves and the organization they represent.
3. The minutes from the May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved with the revision in 7a. "...the executive director of a recreational organization..." (O'Brien/Waite).
4. Treasurers Report - \$687.87 with 27 current members. Balance is almost enough for a newsletter (O'Brien/Waite).
5. **Membership Committee**  
Kevin Russell passed out report showing the makeup of the VTGC database. Provided an overview of the membership solicitation activity. Amy Bell and Kevin will be meeting with the VT League of Cities and Towns to cultivate members through their contact lists. Beth Ann thought thank you notes should be sent out to acknowledge receipt of membership. It was decided that when membership is received, Kevin will either email a thank you or send out a quick note.
6. **Government Relations**  
**6a. Ancient Roads & Highways Policy** - Ben reported that after a meeting of the government relations committee, Preston Bristow developed a draft position to be adopted by the VTGC. Mike Stafford summarized the meeting and expanded on the meaning of ancient and historic roads. The number one issue was defined as the need for town's to map the roads and how is this going to be paid for. Draft #3 of the proposed position on ancient roads and highways was read to the group then passed around the table. There was some discussion of exactly what types of roads were being discussed. Gray pointed out that the idea proposed in the position was to research back to Book 1 and whatever can be mapped in 7 years be kept. Paul moved to accept the position and Beth Ann seconded. Jennifer recommended that the position appearing as the last sentence be included in the introduction. Paul added to the motion that Preston have the ability to continue revision to include comments from meeting then pass on to Commissioner. Luke pointed out that the issue is

identified in the VTGC Plan and should be referenced in the position. (Issue #7 page 84 of VTGC Plan).

**6b. ACT 250** - Matt explained that legislation passed 2 years ago exempting VAST, GMC and CTA from ACT 250 would sunset July 1, 2005 unless replacement legislation is passed. Ben asked if the Council knew of anyone that has exercised their exemption rights. GMC had planned on letting it sunset and seeing where the chips fell. VAST is trying to replace legislation with permanent exemption. Kevin noted that he testified two years ago supporting the inclusion of all VT Trails System members in the exemption. Mike didn't think all trails should be exempted from ACT 250 because there can be environmental impacts. The Council decided that the government relations committee needs more discussion to form a concise position for the Council.

**6c. Law Enforcement** - Matt explained VAST's proposal to fund an enforcement division for oversight of recreational activities. Ben asked if VAST had revised the position from the previous legislative session. Matt thought the position was basically the same.

**6d. Planning Management** - Matt noted request was for funding an FPR recreation staff person and the position remained the same from last session. Mike thought the Council should refresh their support for portions of this legislation with a letter. Kevin thought the Council should be more proactive because of its impact on all trail organizations and trail users.

**6e. Impact Study** - Kevin passed around copies of a draft letter to the Commissioner supporting the release of the gas cap and the need for an impact study to obtain a better evaluation of recreation's economic importance to the State. Joel thought the Council should seek to quantify the amount of money averted because of health and wellness. Jennifer suggested the letter clearly state what the Council is asking for. Ben suggested sending copies to numerous involved governing bodies. Luke proposed more extreme action if the release of the cap does not succeed in this legislative session. Ed explained the current financial situation of the Department to attempt to ground the Council's request in the number of other issues the Commissioner is dealing with.

## **7. Operations Committee**

**7a. Proposed Ranking Committee Members** - Sherry provided overview of recommended ranking committee members for the appointment of the motorized, private landowner, and non-motorized representations. Ken Robbins - Motorized, Virginia Lancaster - Private Landowners and Penny McEdward Rand - Non-Motorized. Other likely candidates mentioned were Bettina McReady and Luke also volunteered if necessary. Beth Ann felt uncomfortable endorsing a slate with so little information about the candidates. After discussing other options it was decided that the Council's responsibility is to recommend candidates to the Department and the Commissioner would appoint new representation.

**7b. RTP Application Materials** - 2005 application materials have been revised and will be available on the internet and by calling FPR after September 15<sup>th</sup>. Major changes to the program consist of providing a grant workshop and instituting a \$20,000 cap on grant requests. Members of the Council volunteered to be present at many of the VIT sites around the State for the workshop. Paul - Williston, Beth Ann

- Randolph, Ben - Waterbury, Ed - Newport. Paul suggested contacting ranking members and asking them to volunteer at sites as well.

**7c. VTGC Manual RFP** - Beth Ann and Luke met with Amy Bell in April. Luke identified one of the challenges being the lack of an electronic copy to work with.

**Action:** Ed said he would ask Susan where an electronic copy might have been kept. Luke thought the rec trails grant would at least fund the development of the manual so the revised edition could be available on the internet. The Council would have to request additional funds for printing and distributing the Manual.

**Timeline:**

- RFP Out - Sept 30<sup>th</sup>
- Responses Due - Oct 31<sup>st</sup>
- Selections Made - Nov 30<sup>th</sup>
- Contract Signed - Dec 30<sup>th</sup>
- Entrance Conference Kickoff - Jan 15<sup>th</sup>
- 1st Draft Reviewed by Council - Spring Meeting
- Committee Responses/Review
- Comments with Contractor - April 15<sup>th</sup>
- Final Draft to Council - Annual Mtg or June 15<sup>th</sup>
- Formal Comment Period - April 15<sup>th</sup> to Annual Mtg
- Contract Complete - Aug 31<sup>st</sup>

Volunteers to review RFP are Mike, Becca and Sherry. Steering Committee members are Luke, Beth Ann, Amy, Tim Tierney, Alexis, Jennifer, CTA, Horse Council Virginia, ANR - Sherry. Bid advertisement will be through email list, table at Governor's Conference and Mike recommended contacting Robin at [thinkvermont.com](http://thinkvermont.com).

**7d. VT Trails System** - Mike opened discussion of the Trails System by noting the process explained in the application says a committee needs to be appointed by the Commissioner for reviewing applications. Jennifer said the Council was appointed as the Committee years ago. Luke agreed the process and criteria need to be revised and he had comments to bring to the operations committee for discussion. The operations committee will meet to draft a new process and criteria to be reviewed by the Council at the next meeting and approved by the Commissioner. In the meantime the Council will use the same process for recommending applications received. Mike summarized the refusal of the Cross Rivendell Trail by the Commissioner based on the potential for the CRT to become entwined in the land use restrictions proposed by the ATC. The memo from the Commissioner was read to the Council. The Council thought this was a wrong decision based on a lack of logic. Paul thought the Council should ask the Commissioner about the specific source of his concern.

An application from the Lake Iroquois Recreation District was reviewed by the Council and recommended for inclusion in the State Trails System (Rose/O'Brien). Mike asked that the vote be tabled until all those in attendance have reviewed the application. The motion to recommend was later approved.

**7e. Landowner Liability Booklet** - Ed presented draft revisions to the Landowner Liability Booklet. Second paragraph was further revised so that it is clear which option is not feasible. Council moved to approve revision as edited (Finlay/Waite).

**Action:** The electronic copy on the website will be revised and addendums will be

printed to be included in the remaining hard copies. **Action:** Becca to check balance of landowner liability grant and report back to Council.

### **8. Public Relations**

**8a. Governor's Conference** - Conference flyers were circulated. Mike asked for volunteers for organizing next year's conference. Paul volunteered.

**8b. Newsletter** - November 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for content. This newsletter will include a grant calendar insert. Council is questioning the resources for paying for a newsletter. **Action:** When newsletter design is complete Becca will obtain quote from Buy Monthly and the BGS Print Center.

**8c. Website** - New website should be launched within a month. **Action:** Becca to email link to Council when complete.

### **Other Business**

John Watson from the NE Kingdom Collaborative explained what the function of his organization is. He said he was encouraged to attend one of the Council's meetings to develop ties with the recreation community as well as garner support and gather information about developing a single track bike path from the Nulhegan Gateway to Island Pond. Jennifer recommended contacting IMBA, American Trails, FHWA and NPS for information about developing a trail as well as gathering support for the creation of the trail.

Sherry announced the National Trails Symposium in Austin TX.

Gray mentioned he will be bringing proposed legislation to the next meeting for non-motorized commercial access to F&W boat accesses.

### **Future Meetings**

January 20<sup>th</sup> 2005 - State House

March 24<sup>th</sup> 2005 - Marsh Billings Center

May 19<sup>th</sup> 2005 - Seyon Ranch SP (Ed to reserve)

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2 PM

Rebecca Brown, Recording Secretary