

**Vermont Trails & Greenways Council  
Annual Meeting  
May 17, 2007**

**9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Seyon Ranch State Park  
Groton, VT**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members in attendance:** Ed O’Leary, Sherry Winnie, Luke O’Brien, Frank Stanley, Jen Lamphere, Paul Moffat, Alexis Norwalk, Justin Kinney, Beth Ann Finlay, Jennifer Waite, Ben Rose, Tom Hark, Matt Tetreault, Danny Hake, Todd Sheinfeld, Tara Hamilton, Kevin Russell, Walter Opuszynski, Jessica Ricketson

**10:00 AM call to order/Intros**

**Treasury Report- Alexis**

- Alexis summarized the current budget by stating the balance as \$2,385.24. Revenues have been \$930.00 since January 10, 2007 and can be attributed to membership dues. Expenditures of \$170.63 have gone to the development of the VT&GC’s own website.
- Sherry currently compiles the member list and any changes should be given to her to update. Justin Kenney has worked to develop a new, more user-friendly, database for the membership list and should help us in the future to keep track of members and distribute information.
- We have received 13 checks from solicited towns. Ben Rose questioned whether we have sent out thank-you letters to these towns and other new members, and we have not. Luke said that he will draft a thank-you letter and Alexis will send them out.
- Alexis stated that the fiscal year will begin on June 1<sup>st</sup> and dues notices should be sent out. Sherry stated that she will send out the notifications. We will have a new application on the VT&GC website.
- Beth Ann questioned if all board members have paid.

**Agenda- Luke**

**Officers- Ben Rose**

Ben led the nominating committee and called for the present members to review the list of the new officers. The group approved. The Board is as follows:

**Officers:**

Luke O'Brien, Chair  
NorthWoods Stewardship Center  
PO Box 220  
East Charleston, VT 05833  
802-723-6551 x117  
[luke@northwoodscenter.org](mailto:luke@northwoodscenter.org)

Jen Lamphere, Vice Chair  
Northern Forest Canoe Trail  
PO Box 565  
Waitsfield, VT 05673  
802-496-2285  
[jennifer@northernforestcanoetrail.org](mailto:jennifer@northernforestcanoetrail.org)

Walter Opuszynski, Secretary  
True to the Land Trails  
PO Box 1211  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
Home (802)229-1929  
Work (802)498-4506  
[walter@truetothelandtrails.com](mailto:walter@truetothelandtrails.com)

Alexis Nowalk, Treasurer  
VT Association of Snow Travelers  
(VAST)  
41 Granger Rd  
Barre, VT 05641  
802-229-0005 x13  
802-229-4316 Fax  
[alexis@vtvast.org](mailto:alexis@vtvast.org)

**Board:****Local/Community Trails (1)**

Tim Tierney  
Kingdom Trails Association  
PO Box 204  
East Burke, VT 05832  
802.626.0737  
[tim@kingdomtrails.org](mailto:tim@kingdomtrails.org)

**Regional Trails (2)**

Beth Ann Finlay

Northern VT RC&D Council  
617 Comstock Rd, Suite 2  
Berlin, VT 05602-8498  
802-828-4595  
802-223-6163 Fax  
[beth\\_ann.finlay@vt.usda.gov](mailto:beth_ann.finlay@vt.usda.gov)

Todd Sheinfeld  
New England Trail Rider's  
Association  
Cycle Conservation Club of Vermont  
PO Box 412  
Waitsfield, VT 05673  
(802) 496-3806  
[todd1063@aol.com](mailto:todd1063@aol.com)

**Statewide Trails (2)**

Virginia Lancaster  
VT Horse Council  
PO Box 2  
Woodstock, VT 05091  
(802) 457-1792  
[virginia@vthorse.com](mailto:virginia@vthorse.com)

Julius (Red) Goodman  
VT Musers Association, Inc  
POB 514  
Waitsfield, VT 05673  
802-224-6514  
[president@vtmusers.org](mailto:president@vtmusers.org)

**Commercial/Individual (1)**

Gray Stevens  
VT Outdoor Guides Association  
(VOGA)  
PO Box 10  
North Ferrisburgh, VT 05473  
(802) 425-8747  
(802) 4256211  
[info@voga.org](mailto:info@voga.org)

## **Project Reports**

### **A. Recreation Trails Grant Update- Sherry Winnie**

- Sherry summarized this years competitive grant awards. In January FPR received 24 competitive recreation trail grants and 21 mini grants.
- Todd requested that there be more of a synopsis available about the details of the competitive grants as well as more details about the review committee's comments. He also pointed out that 75% of the organizations requesting competitive grant money and 54% requesting mini grants were not part of the VT&GC. He suggested giving points to organizations that were part of VT&GC.
- Jen Waite said that this was not fair and had been discussed in the past.
- Sherry said she could send a notice to all organizations that receive competitive trail grants to inform them about the VT&GC
- Kevin asked if we should put a question on the application asking if the organization is part of the VT&GC.
- Jen Waite stated that this would be biased and unfair.
- Kevin suggested that solicitation of applicants become an action item and Luke volunteered to write a letter that can be distributed to applicants for competitive grants inviting them to join the VT&GC.
- Jen Waite asked if the RTP grant confirmation letters that organizations received were on FPR letterhead. Yes, Sherry sends letters on FPR letterhead. Brief discussion ensued questioning if it should be put on VT&GC letterhead.
- Both Luke and Kevin questioned why there was a drop in the number of applications this year. Sherry said it could be due to the change in timeline this past year, due to changes in FPR staffing last year. Grant applications went out in November 1<sup>st</sup> instead of late September/early October. This year applications will be ready in September as in prior years.
- Beth Anne asked if the ceiling could be raised on mini-grants.
- Kevin was concerned planning grants were being overlooked and expressed that planning was a pivotal part of project completion.
- Justin expressed that an increase in mini-grants would have a ripple effect increasing the amount of oversight that would be needed to monitor and process a larger number of grants.

- Competitive grants are capped at \$20,000.00 with the exception to raise the cap to meet federal requirements such as the 30%-30%-40% allocation distribution rules for motorized, non-motorized and diversified trail projects.
- Sherry said that any change in the way money is distributed in competitive grants would have to come from a program review. Many council members suggested that a program review was in order. Sherry said that the best time for a program review to happen would be August. Sherry will schedule an early August RTP review and will contact people with more information.

### **B. Vermont Trails Symposium – Luke**

- Sherry stated approximately \$20,000.00 may be available from RTP carry forward funds for the VT&GC to potentially host a statewide trails training symposium and asked whether the Council would like to explore the feasibility of hosting a Vermont Trails Symposium. This created much discussion.
- Tom Hark said that a Vermont Symposium could be sustainable if there is a charge for participants.
- Tim mentioned that Vermont already has a lot of training out there but a lot of work can be done to publicize and coordinate this training to reach more people.
- Dan suggested that we should focus the content of the symposium on topics that are universal and not specifically for trail construction.
- Ben questioned the \$20,000.00 of rollover money that could be made available for the symposium. He asked if there were other things that we could be using the money for. Discussion ensued but there were no definitive answers established.
- A survey was handed out by Sherry and Justin to explore the interest in a Vermont Trails Symposium. They asked that it be filled out and returned by June 1<sup>st</sup>. The survey will also be sent out to the VT & GC distribution list.
- Tim suggested that the money amounts checked boxes be taken off the survey.

### **C. No Child Left Inside – Sherry**

- Sherry gave the history of “No Child Left Inside” (NCLI) explaining that the idea was inspired by a book written by Richard Louv called “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder” and a conference call that members of FPR had with Connecticut State Parks.
- FPR has adopted the NCLI initiative, inspired by Connecticut’s Great Parks Pursuit. A logo was created and the main goal is to get children outside and

active. FPR is trying to collaborate with other state agencies and organizations to spread the message.

- Ben asked if the logo was available in digital format. Sherry said that she would get the logo to everyone. Todd asked if there were any standards that need to be followed or restricts of use for the logo and message. There were no standards or restrictions identified by Sherry or Ed.

#### **D. VT Trail System – Beth Ann Finlay**

- Beth Ann announced the completion and FPR approval of the revised VT Trail System application form. She read the revised application to the council verbatim in order to receive feedback. Beth Ann said that we still need to work out the details of the award system, logo, and maintenance of records and files.
- Tim asked if there were any downfalls to being part of the VT Trail System. He said that the name would be a turn off to some landowners because it would be associated with the state. There was discussion about the slightly higher degree of protection that comes from being part of the VT Trail System.
- Todd explained the difference between OHV (Off Highway Vehicle) and OHM (Off Highway Motorcycle).
- Walter asked if the review committee for the VT Trail System would do site visits. Beth Ann said that was not a part of the review. He also asked if GPS information would be required and explained the advantages of having this information. Beth Ann said that the application was asking for GPS coordinates if possible.
- Beth Ann said that all past members would be grandfathered in and would not need to be reviewed for the next five years. All members of the VT Trail System will need to be reviewed every five years and reissued their status.

#### **Adjourned for lunch 12:30**

Ed O’Leary said that FPR will maintain the VT Trail System paperwork.

The council passed the VT Trail System Application

#### **E. Website – Alexis Norwalk**

- The website is up and running. The new address is [www.vermonttrailsandgreenways.org](http://www.vermonttrailsandgreenways.org) Alexis explained that it is now under a Powershift account. She will have time to make little changes to the content and structure of the website and suggested that if people wanted to make large changes to the website volunteers would have to step forward.
- Tim volunteered to work on the website.

#### **F. Governor’s Conference – Paul Moffat**

- Paul stated that the next Governor’s Conference will be October 24<sup>th</sup> at Lake Morey Resort. There will be 30 vendor booths available and the title of this year’s conference is: “Recreation in a changing environment.” The fee for members has gone up to \$55 for the whole day. There will be 18 educational sessions. The committee is still in the process of choosing the sessions because they have received more applications than slots to fill.

#### **G. Manual – Jen Lamphere**

- Jen said that before the manual gets printed we should review the contact information and URL’s to ensure that the information is current and correct. The pages of the manual with contact information was passed around and members of the council had the opportunity to make any necessary changes.
- Jen Waite suggested that we shoot to have copies available for the Governor’s Conference.
- Jen Lamphere suggested that we get her any new information before the copies are made. Now that we have the manual in a Word document it will be easier to make corrections.

#### **H. Newsletter – Luke O’Brien**

- Luke said that we have \$4,160 in grant money for 2 issues of a newsletter and that we will have to develop and RFP to solicit a company.
- Jen Lamphere said that she would coordinate the release of an RFP.
- An e-mail will go out to members of the council soliciting articles of 250 words and a photo.

#### **Other Reports**

- Todd expressed to the council that the ANR revamp did not properly take into account recreation and Fish and Wildlife.
- Dan gave council members a handout recapping recommendations pertaining to the Recreation Division vacancy in the Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation. He said that he was not sure what needs to be changed in order for a Recreation Division to be established. There was some discussion about the feasibility of creating a Recreation Division.
- Ed O’Leary asked what a Recreation Division would look like. The council brainstormed ideas. Ideally there would be a Division Head and a person in each district devoted to recreation. It was determined that the ultimate decision to create a Recreation Division was in the hand of the legislation and our representatives.

#### **Other Business**

- Dan expressed to the council that all of the motorized recreation organizations would be having a meeting in the near future and he would like them to be represented on the council.
- Jen Waite said that there were 10 infra-red trail counters for use in the National Forest. If anyone is interested in how they are working we should get in touch with Chuck Weis or Jen.
- Luke presented the council with the idea of having the committees be disbanded and for the council to be more task oriented. There was no opposition to this idea and it was determined that the tasks that we devote our attention to as a council include: the VT Trail Symposium, the council's website, the manual, newsletter, and recreational advocacy within the State of Vermont.
- Ben Rose said that Rebecca Washburn will be taking his place and that he will not be attending the meetings on a regular basis.

**The meeting was adjourned at 2:36**