

## **Lake Placid to Tupper Lake Recreational Trail Development**

### **Stakeholders Meeting Overview**

DEC Region 5 Headquarters Ray Brook

10 am, September 22, 2016

#### I. Attendees

1. Lee Keet, ARTA
2. Peter Edwards, Village of Tupper Lake
3. Paul O'Leary, Town of Tupper Lake
4. Walt Linck, APA
5. Kurt Arnold, OGS
6. Holly Kneeshaw, DEC
7. Michelle Clement, ROOST
8. Ted Blazer, ORDA
9. Tony Carlino, ORDA
10. Kris Cheney-Seymour, ORDA
11. Tony Goodwin, ATIS
12. Chuck Damp, Town of North Elba
13. Jim McCulley, Lake Placid Snowmobile Club
14. Josh Wilson, BETA
15. Rich Shapiro, Village of Saranac Lake
16. Craig Randall, Village of Lake Placid
17. Paul Maroun, Village of Tupper Lake
18. Fran Sheehan, DEC
19. John Schmid, DEC
20. Bob Stegeman, DEC
21. David Winchell, DEC

#### II. Current Status of Recreational Trail Project

##### 1. DEC/DOT MOU

- i. Holly Kneeshaw is drafting the MOU between DEC and DOT that will provide DEC oversight of the long term management of the travel corridor between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake.
- ii. The development of the MOU is progressing.
- iii. APA reports that in a recent meeting DOT expressed their desire to complete the MOU and move forward on the RFP for rail & tie removal and upgrade of railway.

##### 2. RFP for Removal of Rails & Ties Discussion

- i. Municipal governments could undertake some of the removal process in November and December
- ii. Municipal crews will not be available in the spring and summer as they will be busy with their own projects
- iii. Adirondack Scenic Railroad lease of the railway expires November 30

- iv. Snowmobile Association leases the corridor from December 1<sup>st</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup> (or 15<sup>th</sup>)
- v. Good rails and ties will need to be stockpiled for use on the rail upgrade project.
- vi. Concern that connecting the RFP for rail & tie removal with the RFP for rail upgrade could delay removal, prefer separate RFPs for these two projects.
- vii. APA has jurisdiction but no major concerns where the corridor passes through wetlands and along water bodies.
- viii. Concerns with condition of corridor after rails and ties have been removed
  - 1. Corridor needs to be smooth and usable
  - 2. Conditions of culverts, causeways and other infrastructure is of concern.
  - 3. Safety concerns along causeways and other areas.
  - 4. Illegal ATV use
- ix. Rail may be used to deliver and stage trail construction materials.
- x. STAKEHOLDER GROUP CONSENSUS
  - 1. Removal of rails after 2016/17 Winter is acceptable
  - 2. One RFP leading to two separate contracts is acceptable
- xi. ACTION ITEMS: State agencies (DEC, DOT & OGS) will coordinate to do the following:
  - 1. Single RFP for removal of rails & ties and upgrade of railway with two separate contracts
  - 2. Ensure that the rail & ties removal contract includes:
    - a. Culverts, causeways, and other infrastructure is brought into a safe and usable condition
    - b. Surface of the corridor is smoothed after ties have been removed
    - c. Fences, signs, and other measures are will be put into place to ensure safety on the corridor prior to trail construction
    - d. Construction of gates at key access points to prevent illegal motor vehicle and ATV use
  - 3. State and local law enforcement will coordinate to patrol and further prevent illegal motor vehicle and ATV use
  - 4. Coordinate/synchronize rail & tie removal with trail construction to maximize efficiency and limit safety, illegal use, erosion and other concerns.
- 3. Historic Preservation & Funding
  - i. Process to meet State Historic Preservation Office requirement is moving forward and expect good resolution in a timely manner
  - ii. Federal Historic review will delay the trail development by a year or more, possibly even prevent the project from moving forward.

- iii. DEC will not pursue the \$4 million in Federal funds the Town of North Elba proposed transferring to development of the recreational trail to avoid further delays
  - iv. Enough funding is available through NY Works
  - v. Proposed Historical Preservation Sub-group with the following suggested members:
    - 1. Chuck Vandrei, DEC Historical Preservation Officer
    - 2. David Kahn, Adirondack Museum
    - 3. Stephanie Ratcliffe, Wild Center
    - 4. Caroline Welsh, formerly with Adirondack Museum
    - 5. Allison Hass, Lake Placid Olympic Museum
    - 6. John Hopkinson, Lake Placid/North Elba Historical Society
    - 7. Amy Catania, Historic Saranac Lake\*
    - 8. Steven Engelhart, Adirondack Architectural Heritage
4. OGS Involvement
- i. Kurt Arnold of NYS Office of General Services Design and Construction Group is now part of the stakeholder group
  - ii. OGS will:
    - 1. Work with DEC on a Feasibility Study
    - 2. Assist in development of conceptual plan
    - 3. Develop and manage process for RFP for trail design and construction
    - 4. Oversee the construction of the recreational trail
    - 5. Develop Master Plan to coordinate a phased approach to rail & tie removal with trail construction
  - iii. Miscellaneous
    - 1. ATV use will be prohibited on trail
    - 2. Administrative use of motor vehicles will be allowed for:
      - a. Maintenance
      - b. Law enforcement
      - c. Emergency response
    - 3. Adjacent landowners are concerned about the trail
      - a. DEC plans to engage adjacent landowners in the near future outside of the stakeholders group
      - b. Landowners adjacent to other rail trails who have expressed concerns typically have no concerns once the trail is in place – in fact many find the trail an asset and use it often themselves

### III. Use of ARTA Resources

- 1. DEC initially had some concerns using ARTA resources due to the lawsuit and the perception.
- 2. Clearly it does not make sense to reinvent the wheel and not use the materials ARTA had compiled during the past six years.
- 3. Material will be used as starting point and background to inform discussions, and not taken as the final say in any matter.

4. Lee Keet provided a list documents and other resources that ARTA has compiled and are available to the stakeholder group including:
  - i. Name and logo for the recreational trail – Adirondack Rail Trail
  - ii. 501(3)(c) designated organization that can be renamed and repurposed as a friends group overseeing the recreational trail
  - iii. Consulting services of Carl Knoch of the Rails to Trails Conservancy which can continue to be used by the stakeholder group and the friends group.
5. Discussion of recreational trail name and logo
  - i. Need to establish a name to move forward
  - ii. Tri-lakes should be part of name
  - iii. What if other rail trails are developed in the Adirondacks?
  - iv. Michelle Clement of ROOST
    1. Adirondack is a unique, recognizable, marketable name
    2. “North Country” and “Tri-lakes” are terms associated with numerous places around the country
    3. If other rail trails are developed there could be different divisions of the Adirondack Rail Trail for example:
      - a. Tri-lakes Division
      - b. Tahawus Division
      - c. North Hudson Division
  - v. STAKEHOLDER GROUP CONSENSUS
    1. Adirondack Rail Trail will be the working name for the recreational
    2. Name may change based on public feedback
    3. Logo is acceptable
6. Use of Adirondack Rail Trail listserv to communicate
  - i. One e-mail will direct e-mail to all stakeholders
  - ii. For use only for communications with the stakeholder group
  - iii. Address will not be published
  - iv. STAKEHOLDER GROUP CONSENSUS
    1. Use of the Adirondack Rail Trail is acceptable based on the caveats above
    2. Address will be Stakeholders@AdirondackRailTrail.org
  - v. ACTION ITEMS:
    1. Dave Winchell will provide e-mail addresses of all core stakeholders, executive elected officials who have assigned representatives to the stakeholder group, to Lee Keet
    2. Lee will have the listserv address created

#### IV. Operation and Maintenance of Trail – Multi-party Agreement (Group Discussion)

1. Holly Kneeshaw reports she is developing a draft agreement based on the DEC's Voluntary Stewardship Agreement.
2. Reviewed the various issues that would need to be addressed based on the Management and Maintenance of the Adirondack Rail Trail (pgs. 36-42) of ARTA's “Proposal for the Adirondack Rail Trail” dated December 1,

2014 and submitted during the public comment period for the Remsen to Lake Placid Travel Corridor UMP including:

- i. Signage
  - ii. Fencing and Gates
  - iii. Access Points and Parking
  - iv. Access Control
  - v. Restroom Facilities
  - vi. Conformance with Relevant Standards including American with Disabilities Act
  - vii. Trail Inspection and Maintenance
  - viii. Mowing Ditches and Far Shoulders
  - ix. Leaf/Debris Removal from Lateral Ditches
  - x. Culvert Inspections and Repairs
  - xi. Trail Log
  - xii. Law Enforcement
  - xiii. Hours of Operation
3. A discussion on hours of operations of the trail did not reach a consensus:
    - i. Used mainly as a tool to deal with unruly activities after hours
    - ii. Why restrict the use of people not causing problems?
    - iii. Current laws set midnight as a curfew for snowmobilers
  4. Will ARTA becomes the umbrella friends group?
  5. Municipalities are concerned with funding and staffing for maintenance of the trail
    - i. Volunteers from Friends Group can assist. Many people associated with snowmobile clubs have construction businesses which bring equipment, knowledge and experience.
    - ii. Funding sources available include:
      1. NY Works
      2. EPF Stewardship Fund
      3. North Country Regional Economic Development Council CFA grants
  6. Operations and maintenance will be done in accordance with DEC regulations, rules, policies, guidance and oversight.
  7. ACTION ITEMS:
    - i. Dave Winchell will provide a sample Volunteer Stewardship Agreement as a template for the future agreement
    - ii. Holly Kneeshaw will prepare a draft umbrella agreement

#### V. Surface material of trail

1. USOC does not foresee their athletes using the relatively level recreational trail for training as it does not replicate the conditions they face during competition
  - i. Already have a paved loop at the ski jumps for that type of training
  - ii. No need for paving of trail
2. North Elba had originally looked at paving trails, but not now:

- i. Cost prohibitive
  - ii. Costly to maintain and repair
  - iii. Need to repave often
- 3. Stone dust preferred over paving
  - i. Less costly
  - ii. More easily maintained
  - iii. Can accommodate road bikes, strollers, wheelchairs and other wheeled equipment
  - iv. If constructed properly it has similar characteristics to a paved road
    1. Geotextile fabric
    2. Coarse layer
    3. Medium layer
    4. Fine top layer
    5. Slight side grade for drainage
  - v. Examples
    1. Tupper Lake Junction Pass Trail
    2. Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (Vermont)
  - vi. Snowmobiles can tear up stone dust but
    1. Will cause damage to snowmobiles, so snowmobilers are unlikely to go on the trail when snow depths are low
    2. Close trail to snowmobiles when conditions warrant
    3. Gate certain access points
  - vii. STAKEHOLDER GROUP CONSENSUS
    1. Surface material will be stone dust with calcite the length of the trail
    2. Communities can pave adjacent trails within or approaching their community centers in the future if they desire.

## VI. Next Meeting

- 1. Week after Columbus Day
- 2. ACTION ITEM: Dave Winchell will send out Doodle poll to schedule next meeting.