

VTGC Meeting at Seyon Ranch State Park

August 31, 2011

In Attendance: Walter Opuszynski, Jess Ricketson, Amy Kelsey, Sherry Winnie, Ed O'Leary, Danny Hale, Kate Hilfiker, Keegan Tierney, Josh Ryan, Patrick Kell, Autumn Foushee

Thank you to Seyon Ranch State Park for hosting us. It was a great venue!!

Action Items in **RED**

How can the VTGC help as a council for Hurricane Irene damage?

1. **Pull together resources and send to distribution lists**
2. VTresponse.org
3. Got to local emergency management person to volunteer
4. Direct volunteers to towns and emergency coordinators
5. Post that Trails Community can offer building resources, labor and transportation assistance.
6. **Identify regions where trail resources do not have oversight or help to be repaired: brainstorm those places and offer assistance to those towns/towns forest. Send to Walter via email.**

Sherry: Trails organizations should focus on helping communities with the resources we have to offer. We can and will focus on trails later. Mountain bikers, hikers, ATVs can get into places that vehicles cannot access. Trails are an important alternative transportation resource and we should let people know that and offer the resources we can.

Round table:

Patrick Kell: Summer has been excellent. Four-day bike festival at Trapps was excellent. Finished Camel's Hump—Enchanted Forest trail in Fayston. Adam's Camp and Kimmer's Trail finished recently. Derby Trail is next on the list. Moosalamoo: 22 weeks of VYCC—9-mile loop when complete. 95% done. Crews are working in September. Access from Branbury on Rt 23. Little River state park—funding from Green Mountain Coffee Roasters—making a trail accessible for mtn bikers, hikers and horses.

VASA—chasing floods to repair damages. Concord Vermont—ATV rally—500 people. The event was a state-wide and it went well. Irene is the next big project.

Josh Ryan—Banner year for Timber and Stone. Built 3.5 miles of trail in NH. Working in many communities in Vermont this fall. In business for 8 years. Looking forward to working with VTGC.

Keegan—156 crews in 10 towns, 5 nonprofits, two state agencies, two federal agencies. Crew work went really well. Dry summer for the most part. Late summer/fall projects—one is doing Irene cleanup.

Kate—coordinating projects with NFS and GMC. 7 weeks planned. 8 weeks working with GMC.

Autumn: Update on MRPA trails. MRV Trails Collaborative on October 19, 2011 at Sugarbush 4-6 pm.

Sherry: Rec trail projects. \$700,000 to state parks, forests; \$700,000 to communities. 27 different community grants for local and state-wide projects. Sherry will send out list of projects and funding award information. Thanks everyone for their work! Over 1.4 million in funds.

Ed O’Leary: GMC asked Ed to help select GMC ED. VMBA—Act 250 process for Ride Center in Little River State Park. GMC—Northwoods—Champion Lands—NEK section of Long Trail.

Amy: Assess bridges after Irene. New trail—moved 11 miles of trail—relocations off power lines and ATV trail/snowmobile trails. They have protected 11 miles of trail by moving them onto state or protected lands. Two crews from VYCC. Lots of volunteer help..UVM crew, etc. Race to the top of Vermont moved the day and still had great turn out. Looking forward to winter and snow, but have to assess damage.

Jess: Busy summer with lots of crew changes. Veterans crew members in every region of the state. Worked a lot with VYCC at Niquette Bay. Second round of RTP funding, trying to figure out what can be done. Would like to send crew to help with Irene damage.

Walter: NFCT has had a great year. Expanded their intern program to create GIS database of trail and resources. Allagash trail crew did a lot of work to assess resources. Richford project fueled by RTP and membership. Integrate trail into community, rural development, youth outreach. Put in stone staircase and interpretive panels that ties communities together and showcases what the trail can do.

Amy: Update on Finances

Major expense is Tamarack Media which VTGC has \$10,000 for website work. We will be reimbursed for this soon.

SCORP with Ed O’Leary

State offices are inundated. The complex is contaminated. The state offices are designated as a hazardous site. No email since Sunday and can’t access files. **Contact district offices if you have a need related to state.** Working to relocate offices and employees.

State is in process of updating SCORP. Ed runs Land and Water Conservation Fund. Federal grant program to municipalities and schools for outdoor recreation—acquisition of land and construction of infrastructure...administered by NPS and has 50/50 match. Last year was \$150K to award. Each state is required to have a SCORP. State

Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. We are not eligible until we have this plan. NPS banked money so we can still access it. SCORP is assessment of outdoor recreation needs. UVM group is gathering data and doing an assessment.

Walt Kunsell at UVM: 45% response rate of needs across state. They are doing a trend analysis across time. The information shows what type of outdoor activities people are participating in across the state. 50% response from state and NGO's. Online at FPR website, you can find the current SCORP document. We want to keep the template the same and update the report. Chapter 4 of SCORP is VT Trails and Greenways Plan. This is required part of SCORP. Ed would like VTGC to help with updating Chapter 4 of the current SCORP plan. What is no longer current and what needs to be added? How do we bring it up-to-date?

Document is in Word on the website under the grants page. The goal is that the month of October will be focused on the SCORP. November will have a draft and it will be available on the web...using this as a public review instead of public meetings. Will send it to NPS in December for review. Goal is to have grant round for 2012.

Sherry: Look at current Trails and Greenways plan, look at goals and objectives: what's missing? What should we keep? Do we have new resources, studies with information?

Ed: Plan identifies what is needed and what are the goals for recreation. We will have to set out what is needed—increased connectivity, etc...What goals do we want to promote that grant recipients will have to achieve with their grant projects?

RTP applicant must reference Trails and Greenways Plan. We can rewrite the plan, submit it to Federal Highways next year and use the update for the SCORP for this year.

Each member should look at SCORP in the next week and identify what pertains to your interest group. Ed and Sherry will contact us to see what subcommittee would be willing to update SCORP. Ed needs our track changes in the document by October 15th. Ed will contact Walt at UVM to assess what information being gathered is relevant to Chapter 4. Ed will send relevant sections to each member. Ed will be a point person. Walt will send an email to VTGC list to expect request to review SCORP. Walt will send Chapter 4 to VTGC list. Ed will send a particular section to the relevant person.

www.vtfpr.org/recgrant/trgrant.cfm

The above site is where to access the Word document.

Jess Ricketson: FPR Commissioner Meeting

We want a formalized process for communicating with FPR about VTGC membership needs. The statute says that VTGC is an organization that represents trails and trail-user groups. Shall submit a report by September 1 regarding priorities and budgetary needs. We wanted to pave the way for the type of communication that will facilitate ease of

discussions about changes, funding, etc. We established an estimated timeline for communication with the commissioner. Status report in March, meeting after May 15th, meeting after August 1st, and submit a report and letter of recommendations to commissioner by September 1st. Next March will begin our formalized timeline for VTGC surveys and communication with Commissioner.

Walter: We need buy-in from membership/interest groups. We need input through our surveys to gather the information we need to communicate with Commissioner. This year we are focusing on developing timely and appropriate surveys. We will try to get surveys up after the symposium.

Online Survey Brainstorm Session (5 minutes)

1. How to raise revenues for trails? Minnesota legacy amendment: a whole new sales tax to support trails. The amendment to the state's constitution—3/8 % increase—a portion was allocated to natural resources and trails. Excellent model.

Would people support a tax to bring in revenues for trails?

www.legacy.leg.mn/about-funds

2. Clarifying Act 250 with Vermont Trails System. Organizations are viewed as municipality when applying for Act 250. Permitting for trails—what needs to change? Would we support a permitting process specific for trails?

Trails Symposium

Prepared to release info to public and start registering. Walter discussed agenda, which is online at the VTGC website. Participants can register online. \$5 off if registered by September 23rd.

Venue at Red School House at Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center

Amy: we need 50 people to meet our budget.

VTGC Member organizations: please encourage people to attend. Please post the event on your social media sites, websites, local paper or community events calendar.

All information will be on the website for registration and download.

Posters: classroom photo, and change language to relevant to flood damage (erosion control)

Raffle: trail assessments, among other items. Josh offered to donate a trail assessment for a raffle item

Keynote Speaker idea: River Scientist who do geomorphic assessments—discuss how to manage trails with trails? Mike Klein—planning to build in consideration of streams and rivers. Ed is a good contact person to talk with Mike Klein.

Agenda: Could change CTP to keynote speaker/classroom discussion. How do we mitigate the impact of rivers; and then have an afternoon session that addresses this issue.

Amy will send contact person at Three Stallions to Patrick Kell

Keegan suggested that RTP presentation should be part of the package.

We will include RTP presentation in symposium.

Paid advertisement in 7 days. Sky online ad: Walt will contact her.

VTGC Symposium: Recognize past year's RTP ranking committee at the current year's Symposium.

Approval of Josh Ryan as Commercial Member

Walt made a motion to accept Josh Ryan as Commercial Member. Jess seconded. All in favor.

Membership

We need to send out a letter to municipalities for membership renewal and inquiry for interest in serving as a municipal board member on VTGC.

Danny Hale: We need to add a municipal member to the board.

Agenda item for next meeting: Discuss the inclusion of a municipal board member.

Amy:

VT Trail Ethic: It needs to get out to the public in a more widespread fashion. A copy was released to survey participants.

We need a list of ways to use the Trail Ethic:

- Post on website
- newsletter/outreach
- post at most-used trailhead sites/kiosks

Ed: The Collaborative is responsible for taking the VT Ethic to the next stage. Ed will discuss this with the Trails Collaborative.

VTGC will post to the members and ask them to use the Trail Ethic in the above three mentioned ways.

VTGC Committee Structure

Overview of goals and structure by Walter

Proposed Committees (Please see 2011 VTGC Goals and Structure document for proposed members):

Outreach

Membership

Fundraising

Website

FPR Relations

Patrick Kell said that we should focus on membership. We discussed that outreach and membership are the most important committees. The website committee may not be necessary, but there will need to be 1-2 point people to manage the site. FPR relations committee may really be the Executive Committee.

Walter will revise the committee structure and send out to the board.

RTP Report: changes/application criteria changes: Sherry Winnie

RTP Ranking Committee:

Greg Reilly—VTRANS policy and planning

Danny Hale

Sherry Larson

Luke O'Brien

Jennifer Waite, NPS

Sherry will send out draft of new RTP application by third week in September and will have new application out by the VTGC symposium in October.

Sherry will work with VTGC on how the VTGC plan will play into the applications and choice of grant recipients: how best to allocate the funds. The funds come from the Federal highway Administration and it always unclear what will come out of Congress.

Sherry works closely with VTRANS and the TE grant funds on how to collaborate with RTP to promote alternative transportation routes.

Sept 14-15—State trail administrators meeting in Michigan? What would VTGC members like for Sherry to share at this conference about VT's RTP program? What would members like for Sherry to ask other states about their RTP program?

Members should email photos, and RTP project descriptions to Sherry by Tuesday, Sept. 6th.

The RTP system in VT is working and we are able to allocate our funds into communities. Some states send funds only to one project, but Vermont widely disperses them.

How does VT compare with what we get per capita with other states? It is directly related to recreation vehicle tax. VT gets 1.5 million. VT doesn't have other sources of recreation trail funding other than recreation taxes. Other states—what are other states using a funding sources for recreation trail resources.

Standards, Permitting, Funding –what are other states doing—Sherry will try to bring back this information from the conference. VT doesn't have a state-wide trail standards manual. We have several different manuals for specific uses.

Vermont Recreation Gas Tax Update

Vermont's rate is 24.9 cents per gallon. There is a cap on what recreation trails can receive which is \$370,000. If the cap was lifted, $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1% of the gas tax would be \$475,000. This could be a significant amount of money for recreation trails in Vermont. It could increase our funds by \$100,000.

In 1993, the council was established and the legislation was put in place. When did it hit the cap and if we adjusted the cap for inflation.

40% goes to VAST, 40% to FPR, and 20% to communities for grants

VTGC discuss what options we should present to the Commissioner. Present options.

Legislators there now didn't write the legislation. Legislation are legit form of transportation is the rationale.

We need to do the research to determine why they picked this particular cap. When did we hit the cap established in 1993? What has been the total revenue been since it was established. How much has the state made while the recreation public's portion has stayed the same? How has the overall revenue increased over time and how long our portion has stayed the same since it was established?

Go back to legislative intent to determine what they were trying to accomplish when establishing the legislation. Contact Legislative Council or Sergeant of Arms to get access to legislative intent. They should have the history on this legislation.

What benefits do I find in participation with the VTGC?

Amy: Networking and feeling connected to the larger community

Ed: Communication lines with FPR and VTGC...the linkage to be able to get things done.

Sherry: Listening to members to know what is happening and then being to provide a better program-strengthens state-wide-community relationship

Kate: Face-to-face time

Keegan: Knowledge of what's happening in the trail and then communicate with towns and clients when planning and building trail. Networking is a great benefit.

Josh: knowledge and information to share with people who are looking to get RTP funds, and the interest in growing the symposium

Patrick: learn information, but not always walk away with two pages of things to do , but to be able to learn and put them into action

Walter: The good goal is to connect trails, but there has to be a connection of people before you can connect the trails. It is interesting to see how this shapes up across the state.

Meeting adjourned at 3pm.