

TOWN OF JAFFREY
Jaffrey, New Hampshire

Ad hoc Open Space Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2010

Present: Chairman Kresge, Members Graf, Garretson, Doane

Absent:

WORKING SESSION

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Minutes from the Feb. 17 meeting were approved without changes.

Names of potential contacts for working lands focus group were discussed and responsibilities assigned for contacts/invitations prior to the March 17 meeting.

Discussions on the beta website pages, comments were solicited from committee members. No substantive changes suggested, so Chairman Kresge will create links on the Town website and bring the site live. Additional content can be added as we go along, and meeting agendas and minutes will be posted on the site.

Discussion topics/questions for each focus group that were formulated during the last meeting were reviewed. Procedures for focus groups were discussed, with emphasis on the notion that these are information gathering sessions, looking for group's input rather than driving a discussion from the committee's perspective. We should try not to get into extended conversations on possible prioritizing or tradeoffs, keep the focus on obtaining as much as info as possible about the group's needs and values.

SNOWMOBILING FOCUS GROUP 7:30 p.m.

Four members of the Monadnock Sno-Moles attended the meeting. Chairman Kresge provided a brief introduction on the objectives for the committee and described the process being used for the focus group sessions. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to conversation regarding the Sno-Moles' activities and general issues and concerns for snowmobilers in the area. Specific discussion items are summarized below.

Focus Group Discussion Topics:

1. *What are the land values most important to your group?*

Access is number one issue – both at local level and a more regional level. Ideally, would like to have access to trail corridors that extend long distances (30-40 miles) for day-long rides. Jaffrey not currently a destination area for riders due to lack of extended corridors, but if corridors could be developed, would be a significant boon to local businesses.

2. *What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?*

Grant funding is available for maintenance on rail trail and any other trails on the Sno-Moles club trail map. Grants issued by the State must be matched by club funds or in-kind resources such as labor, materials and equipment time. Sno-Moles rebuilt the rail trail Contoocook Lake bridge south of Red Dam last summer.

TOWN OF JAFFREY
Jaffrey, New Hampshire

Ad hoc Open Space Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2010

The club solicits permission from landowners for use of trails. When landowners sign a State-issued permission with the club for the free use of their land, the NH DRED Bureau of Trails provides them with a free liability insurance policy for any liability incurred during trail use. Agreement can be for a fixed term or indefinite term, but in any case can be terminated upon 30 days written notice.

3. Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?

Access to private lands is threatened when other users such as Jeeps and 4-wheeler ATVs rip up the trails or are disrespectful of landowners' wishes. Club tries to post signs restricting usage and monitor usage, with limited success.

Creating trails and access into undeveloped areas is a double-edged sword. It makes for enjoyable riding, but there's really no way to police usage – once access is established, it invites all sorts of usage.

4. Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?

Rail bed, trails across private lands on southern side of town, Class VI roads, wood-pole power lines. As a future goal, would like to build bridges and clear the rail bed on the northern side of town to link up with Peterborough rail trail. Funding might be available for a good-looking bridge to continue the rail bed crossing at the swampy area below W. W. Cross across from Ridgecrest. Would like to create a loop from the rail bed back toward the east to link up with Swamp Rd in Sharon or Annett Forest trails.

5. Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?

Snowmobile use is generally compatible with equestrian use, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking. Club receives donations from non-snowmobile users to support their beneficial trail maintenance activities.

When the State reviews grant applications, it considers the club's grooming logs that document the other trail users that are encountered during grooming activities.

Grooming equipment could potentially also be available to the Town for winter emergency situations – access to backcountry locations, rescues, evacuations, etc.

6. Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?

Jeeps and 4-wheelers ripping up the trails and Class VI roads. Reckless users may only be a minority of the drivers, but create a lot of damage, erosion and ill will with landowners.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY
Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2010**

7. *What is the general sense of future participation in your activity? Expanding? Contracting?*

Club membership is generally over 1,000 users, but fluctuates year to year. Was down to 600 users four years ago, but has rebounded. Still significant usage by younger people, so can expect to continue into the future. Club is interested in encouraging more participation by younger members – “They need to participate in all of this, or it’s going to be gone. We don’t want to see it go away.”

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Next meeting will be on March 17.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee