

**Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee**  
**MINUTES**  
**January 19, 2011**

**Location:** Teleconference Call-In

**Time:** 7pm to 8pm

**Members Present:**

Bill Boles: New England Mountain Bike Association

Benton Phelps: New England ATV Association

Paul Jahnige: DCR Greenways and Trails Director

Becky Barnes: DCR Trails Coordinator

Becky Kalagher: Bay State Riders

Dean Zuppio: Snowmobiles Association of Massachusetts

Amanda Lewis: Recreational Trails Program Coordinator

**Recreational Trails Program Update**

- The 2011 RTP grant cycle recommendations for funding and for potential funding are currently undergoing the environmental review process as well as the approval process through the DCR Commissioner and up to the Governor. This will take several months to complete.
- There is no new information on the process of RTP re-authorization in the next transportation bill, except that the current bill will likely be extended through the end of the federal fiscal year (it is now extended through mid-March).
- There is no new information on the whether or not MassDOT will program the additional funds into the current STIP. The STIP itself is actually in the process of getting signed off on by both FHWA and MassDOT, and it is likely no amendments will be discussed until after the STIP has been signed. DCR will work from their end on working with MassDOT to get the additional funds programmed and obligated.

**Conference Planning**

- Amanda suggested that any conference planning discussion be tabled until the next meeting, as the next meeting will also be called for the purpose of reviewing the education grant proposals, and some of those proposals may fall in line with plans for the next MARTAB-planned RTP conference. MARTAB will likely only have the capacity to hold, at most, two conferences a year and they would ideally be held in the spring and fall, when Amanda's workload is less focused on the grant review and approval cycles. So, if a conference planning committee were formed and could have a solid set of ideas and agenda by the next MARTAB meeting, it would be possible to hold the conference in the spring. A conference planning committee was appointed in order to come up with a general

agenda and time for the next meeting. The Committee will discuss a date and time to meet via teleconference to discuss the conference in greater detail.

Members of the Spring, 2011 Conference Planning Committee:

Dick O'Brien

Dean Zuppio

Bill Boles

Becky Barnes

Amanda Lewis

### **Discussion/Vote of Richard Williamson to replace Craig Della Penna on MARTAB**

- Craig Della Penna has nominated Richard Williamson, a long-time advocate for rail trails, to replace him on the board as the representative for rail trail users in Massachusetts. He has submitted a nomination form, and, as there is no organization on the statewide level for rail trail construction and use from which to solicit nominations, this will likely be the only nomination that we receive. Since the board has received the nomination form with the meeting agenda, the nomination was directly called to a vote. Bill Boles made a motion to appoint Richard to MARTAB, Ben Phelps seconded the motion. Becky Kalagher asked if there was any discussion. Dean Zuppio asked if Richard had a background in support of snowmobile use on rail trails, as there are many such trails in the state which allow snowmobile use. If he did not support motorized use on the trails, then it may be difficult to work with him on issues pertaining to RTP funding for rail trails. The board agreed that a more extensive outline of Richard's rail trail experience and advocacy should be obtained before a final vote on the nomination, to be sure that Richard's views and actions fall in line with the purpose of the recreational trails program. The board agreed to table the matter until the next meeting, after such information has been obtained.

*Follow-up: Amanda will talk to Craig and possibly Richard to follow-up on this request and add more background information about Richard to the nomination form. The form will be circulated before the next meeting and the board will vote on his nomination then.*

### **Schedule Next MARTAB Meetings**

- **Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 4-6pm:** This meeting will be held in-person at central location and will focus on review of the RTP Education Grant Proposals which are due by the postmarked date of February 1<sup>st</sup>. Amanda will circulate the proposals to all MARTAB members via email and the board will review and make recommendations at this meeting. The board will also discuss the next RTP-funded trails conference, organized by MARTAB, which is lined up to take place in the spring. Details on the conference agenda and date should be

presented at this meeting, and consideration for certain grant proposals may be integrated into this conference planning.

- **Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm:** This meeting will be held via teleconference to discuss any changes/additions to the current grant guidelines and requirements as well as the possibility of additional information to be posted on the web to help guide grantees in their planning for RTP trail project proposals.

### **MARTAB advocacy for RTP RE-authorization**

- MARTAB would like to increase its advocacy for the inclusion of RTP within the next federal transportation bill, which is currently up for re-authorization and has been extended until March but is expected to be extended again through October 1<sup>st</sup> and possibly longer. Several Massachusetts trail groups have signed on to become a part of the “Recreational Trails Council of Advisors”, set up by the Coalition for Recreational Trails to advocate for increased funding for the program in the next bill, as well as some additional changes to the program legislation (see <http://americantrails.org/resources/fedfund/RTPreauthCRT09.html#186> for more information on this and to get a copy of the sign-on form).

MARTAB agreed that they would work to make sure their groups/agencies as well as the rest of the trails community is aware of this opportunity to support RTP. Amanda will send out a copy of the sign-on form and other information to the Greenways and Trails listserv.

- MARTAB also agreed that contacting US legislators directly would be an excellent way to advocate for the inclusion of RTP in re-authorization. Communication about the issue to as many people as possible would be the best way to make this happen. In the email with the sign-on form, there should also be a push to contact legislators, especially those in MA who are on pertinent committees in Washington regarding this issue. MARTAB should compose and send letters to each US legislator in MA.
- Dean suggested that MARTAB create its own website, where information like this could be shared, as well as information about the RTP grant cycles and any other pertinent and helpful information for the Mass trails community. The question came up on whether or not RTP Education funds could be used for this purpose and the board agreed that, given that it would be an educational tool for the entire span of recreational trails groups across the state, that it would be an excellent use of Education funds. The website would need to be managed by a consultant hired through DCR or through another non-profit organization, such as TTOR, AMC or SAM, which would then be contracted through DCR. Design of the website would be performed by the consultant, and possibly further

maintenance, although Bill Boles offered to work on updates as necessary. Amanda will look into this further and, likely at the next meeting, a committee should be formed to plan for and discuss management of the website.

*Follow-up: Amanda will send a copy of the sign-on form to MARTAB who will then send it along to theirs and other organizations. MARTAB should compose a letter to send to US Legislators in Massachusetts, asking for their support of RTP, and ask other agencies and individuals to do the same. Amanda will follow-up on some website questions and this will be discussed further at the next meeting.*

### **MARTAB advocacy for full funding programmed in the STIP by MassDOT**

- This year, RTP in Massachusetts was appropriated \$1.3 million by FHWA, but MassDOT only programmed \$626,400 into the STIP. This is 50% of the funds that were apportioned for RTP. Massachusetts is at the bottom of the list (50<sup>th</sup>) of states in the country for the amount of funds that are obligated to the program in comparison to the amount that is apportioned. This has been the case for the past several years and it looks like, according to projections for future STIP's, there is no change in site. MARTAB has sent a letter to the governor in the past to address this issue and advocate for full funding of the program. They have not received a reply from his office. MARTAB discussed any other plans of action to advocate for this funding and concluded that another letter to the governor was necessary and that this issue should continue to be discussed at conferences and other MARTAB events (and on a future website).

*Follow-up: Becky Kalagher will take a look at the old letter that was sent to the Governor previously and update and make changes as needed. She will work with Amanda on including the appropriate facts about program funding. Signatures will be included from all MARTAB members.*

### **Vote on MARTAB Resolution, proposed by Bill Boles as follows:**

In 2008, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) created the "Trail Guidelines and Best Practices Manual." The purpose of this document is to:

- 1) Promote state-wide consistency in how trails are classified, planned, designed, developed, managed and maintained;
- 2) Enhance the management of DCR trails to serve the diverse needs and capabilities of visitors;
- 3) Ensure that trail experiences for all users are safe and enjoyable;
- 4) Reduce costs through the use of practical and sustainable methods for developing and maintaining trails.

The guidelines specific to the procedures and protocols for "Trail System Planning and

Development" are to ensure that the trail system contributes to meeting DCR goals for highlighting ecological, scenic and cultural features, to provide specific, enjoyable recreational experiences to users and to connect important trail corridors, destinations, and population centers.

The Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board (MARTAB) endorses these guidelines and their implementation. While MARTAB also supports the implementation of Resource Management Plans (RMP), the management of DCR properties and trails should not be delayed until such RMP's are completed. RMP's can (and do) take years to write and given the DCR's lack of adequate funding for such efforts, it will take many years - even decades - to complete legally mandated RMPs for all State properties.

MARTAB supports DCR's procedures for Trail System Planning and Development, supports the DCR's ability to make decisions regarding Trails Policy within its parks and lands and supports trail system planning at DCR properties around the State.

- Dick O'Brien wrote ahead that he is in support of this resolution and would like to include a "yes" vote from him. As a quorum was present, Dean made a motion to accept the resolution, as stated, Bill seconded the motion. The board unanimously voted for approval of the resolution. As DCR liaisons, Amanda Lewis, Becky Barnes and Paul Jahnige abstained from this vote. The resolution will be reflected in the minutes and will also be sent to the DCR Commissioner.

*Follow-up: Bill Boles will compose a letter to the Commissioner and all signatures from MARTAB members present tonight (including Dick) will be included.*