

Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee
MINUTES
July 20, 2011

Location: Wells State Park, Sturbridge, MA

Time: 3pm to 6pm (hike included)

Members Present:

Bill Boles: New England Mountain Bike Association

Benton Phelps: New England ATV Association

Becky Barnes: DCR Trails Coordinator

Becky Kalagher: Bay State Riders

Dean Zuppio: Snowmobiles Association of Massachusetts (SAM)

Dick O'Brien: The Trustees of Reservations

Dick Williamson: Rail Trails

Matt Moore: Appalachian Mountain Club

Amanda Lewis: Recreational Trails Program Coordinator

Recreational Trails Program Update

- The 2011 RTP grant cycle recommendations for funding have been announced and the award letters have gone out. Ten projects are being held back from funding until further MHC review is conducted, as requested by FHWA. The funds for the remaining 42 projects have been obligated and released for spending.
- 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).
- MassDOT has rescinded \$500,000 of unobligated RTP funds. This is not the entire balance of unobligated funds available, but represents a significant blow to the balance of RTP funds which might become available for future funding opportunities.
- There will be an RTP Event to announce the awards for 2011 at Mt. Tom State Reservation on Thursday, August 4th at 10am. The Commissioner will be there to present the grant awards and will also formally present the CRT award to MARTAB at the event. All MARTAB members are highly encouraged to attend and help out at this event.

Follow-up: Amanda will print out a copy of some talking points for MARTAB members to use at the event, in order to bring any interested parties up to speed on the funding issues within the state (MassDOT) and on the federal level (re-authorization).

Board Roles, Offices, Terms, and Membership

- Given the fact that MARTAB is working to expand its role and take on greater responsibilities, Amanda suggested that there be a more formal process that will consist of term limitations for offices within the board, such as Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, etc. After a brief discussion, the board agreed that the following will be written into the bylaws and implemented as of the next in-person MARTAB meeting, which will take place in November.

Chair: one year term limit

Vice-Chair: one year term limit, then automatically becomes Chair for one year

The Chair will facilitate the meetings and author and sign any communications. Other duties will be defined as necessary.

The positions of Secretary and Refreshment Provider will rotate once per each meeting (including just a Secretary for teleconferences of official MARTAB meetings – this does not include separate, smaller committee meetings).

- Dick O'Brien asked that his official capacity as a MARTAB member be reduced from voting member to associate member, in light of his recent efforts to start a trail consulting company, which he believes could conflict with his role on the board in making decisions about grant recommendations. An associate member will continue on as a board member, but not participate in any votes.
- According to the bylaws, board member Chris Burton will be contacted one more time before he is no longer a member and will need to be replaced by another off-road motorcycle representative. The board discussed the need to seek out new members to represent land management agency/organization as well, since Dick O'Brien no longer represents that category.

Follow-up: Amanda will contact Chris Burton and determine if a new off-road motorcycle representative will need to be nominated and appointed. MARTAB will seek out options for a new land management representative and have nominations sent in as soon as possible. A vote on new members will hopefully take place at the November grant review meeting. A motion to change the bylaws and establish offices and terms for those offices was made and seconded. The board voted unanimously to approve those changes. Amanda will make the necessary changes to the bylaws. Amanda will also make a list of board member, for which the Secretary and Refreshment Provider will be identified for each future meeting.

Conference Planning

The board discussed the proposed agenda for the November 12th Massachusetts Trails Conference, to be held at the Doyle Conservation Center in Leominster, MA, from about 7:30 to 5pm.

- **Keynote Speaker:** Dick suggested that either David Lindahl of Morton Trails, LLC or Janet Zeller from the USFS make the keynote, initial presentation. Discussion continued around the type of presentation involved whether or not the speaker should have a primary focus in their speech, or if they should be more all-encompassing and serve as an initial kick-off to a day full of diverse trails planning workshops. It was agreed that it should be more of a motivational presentation than anything else. Amanda will contact both possible speakers about availability and how they might approach a morning presentation. A decision will need to be made on the keynote speaker before the end of August. A maximum of 30 minutes will be set aside for the morning address. It was suggested that the speaker look at the list of morning workshops that have been proposed, in order to get an idea of what the conference is trying to achieve, then develop a presentation based on that.
- The rooms at Doyle were discussed and it was agreed that seeking out another separate room would be important, rather than splitting up the main room into three different sections for the morning workshops. Amanda and Dick will follow up with Doyle on this and see if other rooms can be found that would avoid this.
- The board went through each proposed morning workshop and made suggestions for each one. The agenda will be re-worked and incorporate the suggestions of the board, before final approval. Here are some notes from that discussion:
 - SCORP report: this is supposed to be updated every five years – where is DCR in that process? Can MARTAB be a part of the process? How can this be integrated into the conference and discussion around Connections? The Statewide Bike Plan is also similar to Connections. Should these plans also be included as a part of the discussion?
 - Funding Opportunities: 4 or 5 on a panel to discuss this. Can include a brief discussion or mention of the new OHV fund and possible opportunities that will develop from this.
 - Trail Protection: ask Jennifer Howard or Soper to talk about trail protection options, then ask Rena Sumner to offer some case studies from SAM's efforts in trail protection.

Afternoon Session:

A lot of discussion around the afternoon determined that more planning and brainstorming is necessary to fine-tune the agenda.

- It was suggested that the attendees not split into groups and there just be a group discussion. It was also mentioned that the conference as it is sounds more like a meeting than a conference, since a great deal of the afternoon revolves around groups discussions and looking forward as a trail group- instead of learning opportunities, there is more of a planning atmosphere. Are we asking people to come to be active participants in the planning process, or just to come for the learning opportunities? The purpose of the conference

was stated to be devoted to building a coalition of trail advocates and to establish what the group's goals are for the future of trails in Massachusetts.

Follow-up: More discussion and planning needs to take place about the afternoon session. The group will meet again via teleconference within the next month. Meanwhile, the options for keynote speaker will be fine-tuned and finalized. As a result of MARTAB's discussion, it is apparent that the goal of the conference is not clear and/or agreed upon among all members of MARTAB. Amanda will work to clarify this and send out a statement of the goals for the conference for MARTAB to approve or develop further. After the goals are established, then plans for the afternoon should be more easily attainable and identified as consistent with the overall purpose of the conference.