



MASSACHUSETTS RECREATIONAL TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD
MARCH MEETING - MINUTES
October 8, 2025
Remote Meeting
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM



Members Presents:

Marianne Iarossi Co-Chair – Statewide Land Conservation Organization
Larry Tucker – Snowmobilers
Stephanie Giguere – Climbers
Bill Boles – Mountain Bikers
Shelby Aquadro – Equestrian
Liz Johnson – Trails
Joe Geller – Rail Trails
Mike White – Full Size 4-Wheel Driving

MassTrails:

Amanda Lewis – DCR MassTrails
Cynthia Nelson – DCR MassTrails
Lupe Garcia – DCR MassTrails
Jeff Mast – DCR MassTrails

Non-Members Present:

David O’Neil
Ryan Mahan

Meeting start: 3:07pm

Introductions – 3:07PM

- Jeff Mast and Lupe Garcia, new MassTrails staff members
- Nominees for consideration:
 - o David O’Neil and Ryan Mahan

Summer meeting recap: 3:12pm

- In-person outing to the Lake Wallace Sensory Trail

MassTrails Grants and Conference Updates: 3:14pm

- 2026 Meeting Schedule
 - o January 14, 2026
 - o March 7, 2026 (virtual grant review day)
 - o July 8, 2026 (in-person, ideally a field trip)
 - o October 7, 2026 (content TBD)
- Poll:
 - o Stick to the 3pm to 5pm time block or shift to the 4pm to 6pm time block
- Staffing update:

- Eli Velutti-Fry has moved on to a different position within the Commonwealth, Libby Knott moved on to a different DCR position more than a year ago
 - Jeff and Lupe have onboarded for these positions
- Grant updates:
 - Due to financial uncertainty, we had to delay our grant announcement from June to October
 - No public trails event for the awards, please see press release on the DCR website
 - \$1 million of which is for RTP; Massachusetts is allowed to accept federal transportation dollars
 - Splitting funding across state fiscal years
- Conference:
 - Will not be held in 2026 due to federal financial concerns
 - A deposit has been made for the 2027 conference
 - Exploring an alternative event to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary and trails
 - Unaware of if we will have confirmed details by January, but will likely have more information
- Questions:
 - Larry Tucker asks if the Commonwealth is exploring funding RTP as a state project
 - Amanda says that RTP is likely to survive, but did not want to hedge any bets on it for the conference planning
 - Mike White wants to submit a request for Ryan to join MARTAB
 - Marianne says this is on the agenda next
 - Mike asks about the RTP grant that was removed
 - Amanda responds that it was for a DCR property that leadership determined did not need this equipment purchase
- Poll results:
 - 7 votes for 3pm to 5pm
 - 4 votes for 4pm to 6pm
 - 3pm to 5pm stays

New Member appointments: 3:29 pm

- David O'Neil – Skiers/Snowshoers User Group
 - Vacant position
 - Western Mass Backcountry Alliance, manages three areas of cross-country and backcountry skiing
 - Runs community events, safety/first aid trainings, outings
 - Larry makes a motion to nominate David
 - Liz seconds
 - Votes: unanimously in favor of David O'Neil at 3:33pm
- Ryan Mahan – Full size 4-wheel drivers user group
 - Alternate position
 - 20 years of experience, affiliated with clubs for nearly all his driving career
 - Looking to see where he can help provide a voice

- Mike says that Ryan is a “stand-up guy” and promotes the etiquette his club likes to see on the trail
 - Mike makes a motion to accept Ryan has an alternate
 - Liz seconds
 - Votes: unanimously in favor of Ryan Mahan at 3:37pm
- Vacancies (minus the newly filled positions with David and Ryan)

User Group	Member	Alternate
All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Riders	Open	Open
Bicyclists	Filled	Open
Climbers	Filled	Open
Community Trails and Greenway Committees	Filled	Open
Equestrian Riders & Drivers	Filled	Filled
Full Size 4-Wheel Drivers	Filled	Filled
Local Land Trust/Non-Profits	Open	Open
Mountain Bikers	Filled	Open
Municipal (Trails) Planning	Filled	Open
Off-Road Motorcyclists	Open	Open
Paddlers/Rowers	Open	Open
Rail Trail Users	Filled	Open
Snowmobilers	Filled	Filled
Skiers/Snowshoers	Filled	Open
Statewide Land Conservation Organization	Filled	Open
Trail Users with Dogs	Filled	Open
Universal Access	Filled	Open
Walkers/Hikers/Trail Runners	Open	Filled
Youth Corps	Open	Open

Table 1: MARTAB Membership Status

- Mike asks if the member has to be a Massachusetts resident:
 - Marianne says that they should be a Massachusetts resident or work in the Commonwealth
 - Amanda clarifies that the candidate should have a trails interest in Massachusetts

Honoring Past MARTAB Members – 3:40pm

- Former cyclist member Dick Williamson passed away over the summer
- Amanda wants the members to consider how we can remember/honor past members
 - Inviting living past members to conference, field trips
 - Marianne seconds inviting them to the summer field trip and honoring them at the MassTrails conference
 - Marianne also says we can add recognition to the MARTAB webpage

- Joe Geller recommends a small plaque for trails they were involved in (ie the Bruce Freeman for Dick Williamson)
 - Larry recommends a plaque that sits with DCR
 - Mike recommends having someone from the family to accept a copy of the plaque for members who have passed away at the conference
 - Liz says something similar happens with the Golden Spike Conference

Other Business – 3:50 pm

- Developing a standing slide for trails events happening in your area
- Liz recommends publicizing offers/needs for tabling at events
 - Liz recommends the Hardwick Fair for tabling, which happens around August 15
- Mike shares an article on DCR land management and public four-wheel drive access; public comments open until October 18; will send a follow-up email to the group
 - DCR staff members on this meeting are unaffiliated with the public comments and do not endorse any position one way or another
- Joe brings up the Topsfield Fair
- Stewardship Council upcoming
- Environmental Bond Bill
 - Vote upcoming, once in every 5 years (15 million over 5 years)
 - Larry asks if anyone is aware of any organizations promoting increase funding;
 - Marianne mentions the Common Trails Coalition
 - Rae Attinger is the contact person for this
 - Mike brings up that not a lot of people in DCR know that they have this funding available through EEA to maintain motorized trails, would be great to get this information out
 - Amanda asks if this is about the OHV fund (it is)
 - Amanda ads that this fund is “in the red”
 - Ale Echandi of DCR is involved in this committee
 - Mike says there is a funding gap between is owed to the OHV trails community; Amanda and Mike to follow-up offline
 - Liz brings up a need for grant-writing support
 - Marianne says that the Bond Bill is pretty prescriptive

Scoring Rubric Review (Executive Session) – 4:09PM

- Marianne says we are not coming up with a fully new rubric, but wants to review the rubric in preparation for the upcoming grant review
 - Larry says he likes the overall rubric, accept in the instance of accessibility;
 - Applicants need a clearer understanding of what accessibility
 - Also brings up that some trails are accessible in only certain sections; do they get points for accessibility?
 - Marianne says she scores projects on minimum standards of accessibility; if they go above and beyond, they get the 10 points
 - Amanda says that the original understanding of the accessibility criteria as being accessible by FSTAG standards

- All new hiker/pedestrian trails must meet accessibility standards; if a trail is being converted to a hiking/pedestrian trail it needs to be accessible
 - Other projects that aren't accessible may score higher in other areas; but want to support and build out unpaved accessible trails because we lack them overall
- Mike thinks we need to add a 5 points category for underrepresented motorized users who want to use motorized vehicles as mobility aids for terrain
- Amanda and Marianne recommend having an additional meeting/future meeting to bring back Eli into this conversation to provide context on this
- Bill wants to discuss the youth involvement aspect; wants clarification on the vagueness and gray areas of commitment
 - Two different ways to be involved:
 - youth will use it (scored on how much effort is being programmed for youth usage)
 - youth construction (scored on how many components are being constructed by youth)
- Stephanie asks about equity/underserved groups – how does this refer to groups that have lacked funding in the past
 - Marianne points to the full spectrum of “underserved” as in both socio-economic, user groups that lack facilities in the state, people with barriers to access
 - Amanda points to how this year the scoring sheet had information on if the community has received funding in the past
 - Marianne says she can feed press releases through an AI program to find which communities/organizations have and haven't gotten awards in the past
 - Scoring:
 - If an application does not address equity at all, Marianne scores it as a 0
 - If the project is not explicitly about equity, but the application still addresses it in their responses, she give it points because the applicant is thinking about that
 - Amanda says that MARTAB members should review the application materials to see what guidance is provided in the application to prospective grantees
- Mike says that there should be a radio button option for grantees to say they are applying for a certain number of points in each category, and then MARTAB can review if that's a fair self-assessment
 - Amanda and Marianne have not seen this before, but it's worth talking about
- Members are encouraged to think about this in 2026; members are also encouraged to email Marianne and Amanda about this
- Amanda thinks this exercise is a good start; will prepare for the January meeting to address this

- Joe brings up former subcommittee meeting with Eli; do we still have notes from these?
 - A few of these members are no longer involved; notes are not saved on the Drive

Next meeting: January 14

- Larry notes that accessibility and equity discussions always go long; may want to extend the meeting by 30 minutes
 - The primary focus for the January meeting is for grant review prep; Marianne recommends a separate meeting for discussing rubric going forward
 - Current rubric is being used for the 2026 grant round

Meeting close: 5:03 pm