



MASSACHUSETTS RECREATIONAL TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD

JANUARY MEETING - MINUTES

January 8, 2025

Remote Meeting

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Members Present:

Marianne Iarossi, Co-Chair – Statewide Land Conservation Organization
Shelby Aquadro – Equestrian
Kathy Baugh - Community Trails and Greenways Groups
Liz Johnson – Cycling
Meg Bandarra – Universal Access
Joe Geller – Rail Trails
Mike White – Full Size 4-Wheel Driving
Miriam Maistelman – Trail Users with Dogs
Sarah LaValley – Municipal Planning
Stephanie Giguere - Climbers
Bill Boles – Mountain Bikers

Liaisons:

Cynthia Nelson – DCR MassTrails
Elijah Velluti-Fry – DCR MassTrails
Amanda Lewis - DCR MassTrails

Non-Members Present:

Stephen Larrick - MAPC
Scott Morrill – EEA
Chip Jones – Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts

Meeting start: 3:04 PM

- Special Introductions:
 - o Chip Jones – SAM
 - o Stephen Larrick – statewide trail mapping project
- Agenda:
 - o Approve Fall Minutes
 - o Grants Update
 - o Statewide trail mapping project
 - If anyone has ideas for future meeting topics or guest speakers (especially for the July meeting), email Marianne
 - Snowmobiles?
 - o Executive session – grant review preparation
- Grants:

- 2021 grant round closed out December 31, 2024 (all extensions) – really good work being done – ex. The DCR universal access signage
- 2025 Grant Round has opened – closes on Feb 3, 2025
- Conference:
 - Great success, over 300 participants, return of Municipal Friday
 - 25 vendor tables (more than ever!)
 - Great feedback – DCR Center was a hit (minus some parking issues)
 - Negative feedback – more time for networking and bagels
 - MARTAB was able to fundraise for a local foodbank
 - Tours:
 - Blackstone Boardwalk
 - Chainsaw training
 - Stonework – we had pretty good weather!
 - You Belong on a Trail – an Indigenous knowledge session was immediately helpful to a grantee who wanted to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into their signage

Fall meeting minutes approval (3:13 PM)

- Kathy Baugh motioned
- Larry Tucker seconded
- All approved at 3:14 PM

Statewide Trails Database: Aggregating and Standardizing MA RPA Trails Data (3:15PM)

- Introduction to an ongoing conversation
- Challenge: atomized sources and formats for MA trails data
 - Lots of different public agencies, tough to get a picture of the full truth – which can make access and equity difficult
 - Solution: standardizing and publishing in useful ways
 - MassTrails grant – working with funding for the last three years
 - How can MARTAB get involved?
 - Work so far:
 - Data Standard Interviews
 - Trails Data Survey + Workshop
 - Existing Trails Data Review
 - Statewide trails data use cases
 - Analysis
 - Advocacy
 - Apps and maps
 - Preliminary data standard
 - Envisioning that RPAs can further develop this for specific uses
- Next steps
 - Trails data management
 - Publish and utilize trails data
 - Working with MassGIS, developing a website (inspiration from the Washington State Trails Data Explorer)
- How might MARTAB get involved?

- Advising/feedback
 - Governance/participation – working group? Outlook group?
- Marianne Iarossi – thinks it would be great to see more standardized data – especially mobile-friendly interfaces
- Question from Liz:
 - Has MAPC looked at MCRT? Have worked on mapping the trail.
 - Stephen: looked at the progress reports from the organization
 - Use cases on gaps
 - One of the precedent websites
 - Would love to content with them
 - The person is Ben Bayes, and Craig della Penna can connect MAPC to others
- Question from Miriam:
 - Works with asset inventory – can MAPC explain more on what they do?
 - Stephen: tough to allocate for funding if we don't have the numbers to back it up
 - Volunteerism and stewardship data
 - Example: street tree censuses can show how much money this saves the city, how much carbon dioxide is captured
 - Marianne points out that we could do something like this with how much carbon dioxide we can avoid emitting with commuter cyclists
 - Colorado has an impact app – crowdsourced with training required
 - Meg says that there's a gap in accessibility data in existing systems
 - Sometimes crowdsourcing leads to inaccuracies, especially for accessibility (since many people don't understand the entirety of what accessibility is)
 - MAPC is not there yet
 - Identifying gaps can start a campaign to get this addressed
 - WA deputized different agencies
- Question from Larry: are you working with MassDCR? Facilities data?
 - Using commonwealth data (bike, bed, etc)
 - Linear referencing
 - Facilities inventory
- Opportunity to have Stephen come back for updates
 - Look at the WA trails website and submit feedback if you have it
 - <https://trails-wa-rco.hub.arcgis.com/pages/create-account>

Other business (3:52 PM)

- Meg is doing a webinar at the end of the month with American Trails: <https://www.americantrails.org/training/access-versus-accessibility>
- Membership update: Sarah has been talking with Massachusetts Back Country Alliance for skier representation
- Someone from SCA emailed Marianne today

Executive session (3:54 PM)

Meeting end: 4:53PM