

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

July 28, 2003

DIRECTORS, ALTERNATES AND STAFF PRESENT: Lisa Viau-Addison; Norm Roark-Bennington; Ken Gammell-Caledonia, Patrick Poulin-Chittenden; David Page-Essex; Jodie Ross-Franklin; Bill Oakes-Grand Isle; Michael Cote-Lamoille; Ann Shangraw-Orange; Brian Cook-Orleans; Barry Bradley-Rutland; Greg Rouleau-Washington; Roone Gibbs-Windham; Bruce Murray-Windsor; Ron Bartemy-President; Hal Coughlin-Vice-President; David LaBelle-Treasurer; Bryant Watson-Executive Director; Alexis Nowalk-SSTP Trails Administrator; Bonnie Holbrook-Recording Secretary

GUESTS: Mitzi Oakes, Bill and Ruth Benham, Jim Holbrook, Star Poulin, John Ross, Betty Roark, Conrad Stewart, Jim Hill, John Lynds, Addison and Jenny Cook, Sandy Woodbeck, Matt Tetreault, Howard Smith, Scott Stone, Steve McLeod, Leonard Guildhall.

The meeting was called to order at 6 pm.

AGENDA: Dave LaBelle moved and Ann Shangraw seconded to approve the agenda. So carried.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Norm Roark moved and Ann Shangraw seconded to approve the minutes of June 23, 2003. With one correction to change .8 mile to .8 acre in the section regarding Stormwater Runoff. So carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: President Ron Bartemy asked the secretary to make note that all counties are present and accounted for by directors or alternate directors. There were no questions on the budget. Barry Bradley moved and Greg Rouleau seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried.

CONSENT CALENDAR-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: David LaBelle moved and Bruce Murray seconded the approval of the Consent Calendar as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Ann Shangraw questioned the rules for the political bumper stickers from 501c.

VERMONT TRADITIONS COALITION: Greg Rouleau moved and Ann Shangraw seconded to remove the Vermont Traditions Coalition from the table. So moved. Greg questioned again the purchase of political bumper stickers during a campaign. We can support a group for indirect lobbying. Under the 501c rule for indirect lobbying, we are limited to the amount of money that we can spend on indirect lobbying. Leonard Guildhall said that he heard that David Page had stated that an official was heard to say that we would be cutting our arm off if we align ourselves to the Vermont Traditions Coalition and HAT. Bruce Murray feels there is a dispute between what was said about Ann Shangraw having a better working relationship with government agencies and Bryant Watson stating in his report that VAST has a better relationship with government agencies. Ann Shangraw suggested that we present the Vermont Traditions Coalition at the Annual Meeting for discussion by the membership. Then afterwards the counties will have a chance to meet and the directors can obtain the opinion of their counties.

Ann Shangraw shared that The Caledonia Record covered the Work Study Meeting and wrote a very nice article. The Caledonia Record stated that Lt. Buck suggested that we (VAST) need to get together and lobby more and legislators will listen. Mr. Kenyon (Representative from Orange County) also expressed his opinion that we need to do more lobbying. Ann Shangraw stated that she still has a problem with the thinking that State Officials can hold us hostage. Officials are state employees and are held hostage. Bryant Watson's concern is we would be the largest donor. Steve McLeod stated that the Champion Land Owners have donated over \$11,000 and HAT has donated over \$6,000 so that means VAST would not be the largest donor. Ken Gammell informed the group that Peter Welch, Pro-tem lawyer for CLF (the Conservation Land Foundation), is over in Montpelier lobbying every day. He (Peter Welch) has been quoted as saying that he wants to see that every native Vermonter is run out of Vermont. Ann Shangraw brought up Ron Bartemy's comment that the state could come in and pull our funding if we support VTC. If the State were to come in and remove our funding we would fight back. David LaBelle said that the person from the ANR (Agency of Natural Resources) said that VAST needs to come in force to some of the hearings and be more active in lobbying. Bruce Murray asked Bryant Watson how many hours a year he spends lobbying. Bryant Watson replied that it depends on what is going on and what committees need to be addressed. He said it varies from a couple of times a week to full days several times a week. David Page doesn't understand why VAST has to support the VTC because some counties are strongly against and some are for.

Steve McLeod asked to address the Board. He is a member of a Barre snowmobile club. He asked if he could provide some information to the Board. First they are not POST. He doesn't feel that POST has gotten hardly any, if any legislation through. Steve stressed that VTC is not ramming anything down people's throat, as Mr. Page indicated. Prior to VTC lobbying on the Willoughby State forest issue, Steve McLeod contacted Bryant Watson for VAST's stand on it. Steve then used information that he received from Bryant for lobbying for the Willoughby State Forest. Steve is an attorney and he is making much less money working for VTC than he does for his private practice. The reason why VTC is a coalition is that he does not have the funding to fight the battle alone. By being a coalition there is more power. The Coalition does not move forward unless it has the consensus of everyone in the Coalition and their approval. VTC competes at the government level. Steve sees many more lobbyists from environmentalist than he does from traditional user groups. He would like to see the Coalition work in unison with VAST. Steve has other 501c groups involved with VTC. He is in Montpelier daily lobbying for traditional uses. It helps to be heard more by having the extra person(s) at meetings with the commissioners and legislators. The environmentalists have many groups that are constantly lobbying against the traditional land uses.

Steve McLeod said that, yes we have to be sensitive to the funding issue. He feels that an alliance with VTC would help to insulate us from losing funding. The more visible we are the less likely we would be cut. Steve said that if an employee is being heard saying things like "we are going to cut off our arms if we support a group," the Commissioner needs to know, as that State Official should not be making statements like that.

Lisa Viau asked about instances when the Coalition is divided. Steve McLeod replied that if the coalition members are divided on an issue, then the Coalition does not work on that issue. He

does do some individual lobbying aside from the Coalition. Norm Roark moved and Boone Gibbs seconded the motion to add the VTC to the agenda of the pre-meeting as a discussion item. So carried with one county opposed.

LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL COMMITTEE: Sandy Woodbeck reported that they had to start over because of the Stormwater Runoff. The Transportation Department has told them for three years that they would be responsible for maintenance of all bridges. They (DOT) have now decided against it. Locating culverts is very hard with the growth of weeds and they are using a Laser Range Finder to find the locations. They are getting television coverage. Alexis Nowalk asked Sandy Woodbeck how the GPSing is coming. They did about one third last fall. When they get up to the point they stopped GPSing last fall they will pick up GPSing again. Sandy Woodbeck and Bryant Watson presented the idea of purchasing a six-wheeler for use for working on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. Ann Shangraw asked why there is only one quote as this is over \$10,000. She will not vote until she can present this to her county. She feels this seems to be extravagant and is concerned if it really is needed. She also wants to know how the purchase of the six-wheeler and the maintenance of it would be funded. Ken Gammell said this would be used to maintain the railway bed. John Ross wanted to know why we are not using the four-wheeler that VAST owns. Sandy currently has it for use on the railbed. He said that the current one needs additional storage capacity added to it. Ken Gammell said that if the six-wheeler has everything on it that is on the quote, then it would be legal to register and inspect so it could be driven on roadways. Pat Poulin would like to see a letter from the Motor Vehicle Commissioner reinforcing the legality of the wheeler. The four-wheeler would not be traded in towards the six-wheeler as Alexis Nowalk and Matt Tetreault use it for trails inspection. It would need to be established where the six-wheeler would be housed and who would be using it. Ann Shangraw questioned again where the money would come from. David LaBelle moved and Lisa Viau seconded to table this issue to the next meeting.

DEPARTMENT OF FOREST, PARKS AND RECREATION SNOWMOBILES: Bryant Watson reported that a few years ago, we purchased two snowmobiles and a trailer for the Forest, Parks and Recreation for use on Champion Lands and Groton State Forest, to check land counters and other things. They have now depreciated to zero. He asked the Board to create a bill of sale for \$1 to sell them to the Department to remove us from liability for them. Ann Shangraw moved and David Page seconded to create a bill of sale for \$1 and sell the two snowmobiles and trailer to the Department.

GRAND PRIZE FOR VOLUNTEER WEEKEND: Bryant Watson gave a briefing on the prizes for the volunteer weekend. In the past, Polaris and Arctic Cat each would donate a snowmobile to VAST but they are no longer doing this. The committee questioned the giving of a lifetime TMA for the grand prize winner and one TMA to each county. Ken Gammell was the recipient of the lifetime TMA and he is much appreciative. Lisa Viau had a winner in her county that received it one year and hasn't been seen volunteering since. Star Poulin reported that the committee had a meeting and two people were able to attend the meeting. Pat Poulin mentioned that the Snowmobiler of the Year, which is the most important award, is awarded a jacket. The Volunteer gets a lifetime TMA. Pat Poulin would rather see the Volunteer Weekend grand prize winner receive a TMA. Norm Roark suggested maybe a five-year TMA. Ron Bartemy asked the Board's pleasure of getting a jacket or a lifetime TMA membership for the award. The

Snowmobiler of the Year award and the Volunteer Weekend are two separate issues. Bonnie Holbrook stated that she recognizes that these issues of the Snowmobiler of the Year awards, the Volunteer Weekend winner and the possible Volunteer TMAs are very important. She believes that recognition is extremely important. Recently she has had several VAST members from various counties complain that the Board of the Directors is spending too much money. She realizes that recognition is important, but we really need to take a look at how much money we are spending for the awards and on other expenditures. Ken Gammell moved and Barry Bradley seconded that the Snowmobiler of the Year is awarded a jacket and a lifetime TMA. The motion was withdrawn, as it was out of order. Pat Poulin moved and Dave Page seconded to table the awards. Norm Roark moved and Dave Page seconded to charge the Awards Committee to create proposed guidelines for both the Volunteer Weekend and the Awards for 2004 by December 31, 2003. So moved.

OTHER COMMITTEES: Ann Shangraw reported on the Marketing Committee. They have discussed using the safety trailer for more exposure at fairs and such. The committee has obtained a proposal for a professionally done panel display. This would be a lighted display. It folds up into a suitcase on wheels. We can choose whatever we want to show on it. The way it's made, the display graphics can be changed. Lauri Thomas is working on pictures. They have not moved any further on the project until they receive approval from the Board. Ann Shangraw added that there is money in the marketing budget and it will be used for this display. The total cost would be around \$4,000. In a couple of years we could change the type of the header. This has a laminated finish.

The Safety Committee chairperson will be Treenie Bressard and the co-chair will be Greg Rouleau.

Ron Bartemy asked the Board to support reactivating the Ad Hoc Committee for Insurance to meet in the near future to look into other possibilities for insurance. Ron Bartemy has contacted a person he knows that underwrites insurance. This underwriter told him that it takes a very long time to receive a quote from insurance companies. Bryant reported on liability insurance. The underwriter has found a company in Washington that is interested in offering individual insurance policies. Bonnie Holbrook spoke out on the comments that she had been hearing about VAST requiring them to purchase their individual liability insurance through VAST. There have been many people that have approached her that they are very against purchasing their liability insurance with their TMA. They already have full coverage on their sleds and this would be an extra cost that is not needed. Howard Smith suggested that we should separate ourselves from the insurance sales business. Ann Shangraw moved and Dave Page seconded that the Ad Hoc Committee move forward and that Scott Stone is added to the committee. So moved.

Bonnie Holbrook reported on the 2006 ISC Committee. The committee has begun meeting and planning. Pat Poulin asked Bonnie to present the Committee reports in writing to the Board.

Bryant Watson reported on the Work Study. Written notifications of the meetings were sent to the Board of Directors, Club Presidents and Trail Masters. It has also been advertised in the papers. Some of the turnout has been disappointing. The committee will meet in August and create proposals to present on Interactive Television. The meetings on the Interactive Television

will be on Sept 9 and 16 at all 14 sites from 7:15 - 9:15 pm. We have been charged by the legislature to hold a public hearing. That does not end the process. The questionnaire will be in the September issue of VAST News. At the Caledonia meeting, they had a farmer that gave the figures of what it costs a farmer that allows the use of his land for snowmobiling.

Bryant Watson reported on the Annual Meeting. Bolton Valley Resort will be taking care of setting up and tearing down for the meeting and banquet. There is still room for displays inside and outside. Grooming equipment and other large equipment will be right outside. It will be about \$18,000, which is right about on budget.

ISC REPORT: There was a printed report in the packet.

FY02 Audit Report: There was a printed report.

YELLOWSTONE: Bernie Sanders helped us out with Yellowstone. Today his staff confirmed his presence at the August Board Meeting. He wants to address the Board and get our input. He will address the Lamoille Valley Rail Committee.

NEXT MEETING/REFRESHMENTS: The next meeting will be August 25, 2003 at 5:30 p.m. Every County will bring a potluck dish and the office will provide the hamburgers and hotdogs. The first seven counties will bring a main dish and the second seven counties will bring dessert. Norm Roark moved and Barry Bradley seconded to adjourn.