

VAST
41 Granger Road
Berlin, VT 05601

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
April 19, 2004

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

GUESTS: Mitzi Oakes, Betty Roark, Star Poulin, Jim Holbrook, Roberta Stammers, Don Glover, Maridelle Tomlinson, Conrad Stewart, Michael Lori, John Lynds, Ed Larsen, Representative Dave Brown

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm by President Ann Shangraw.

AGENDA: Pat Poulin moved and Brian Wells seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Dave LaBelle moved and Norm Roark seconded to approve the minutes of March 22, 2004 as presented. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Norm Roark moved and Dave Page seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried.

We are down in TMAs from last year. Dave LaBelle will have the final numbers soon. Bryant Watson attended the VT Senate Victory Dinner. It was \$500 a plate. This was just for the Democratic Dinner and Bryant Watson has already attended (and paid for) the Republican Dinner.

CONSENT CALENDAR-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: David LaBelle moved and Roone Gibbs seconded to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. The motion carried. Bill Oakes questioned the survey of the number of ATV's owned by snowmobilers. It will be discussed later on the agenda.

County Reports: John Ross reported that they are doing the Franklin County parade this weekend. They had a landowner dinner. Lisa Viau reported that Addison County just found out that they have a Polaris 550 to give away this year. So be looking for tickets! Norm Roark said they are getting most of their gates closed as soon as they get them dug out of the ice in Bennington County. Jim Holbrook reported that Orange County is parking cars for the Vermont History Expo at Tunbridge Fairgrounds in June again this year. Jim Hill reported Chittenden County had their county elections and he is here! They've had discussions that some of their neighboring clubs are selling TMAs in their area in local businesses. The counties will need to determine if they are going to create a county policy regarding the sale of TMA's by dealers. Mount Philo had a meeting and the sled dogs were a problem but there wasn't a problem with snowmobilers. Bill Oakes of Grand Isle County discussed putting an additional price on TMAs that are purchased from dealers so that they will be helping to pay for trails. Stakes are all pulled up, in the barn and ready to go next year. Alburg thanked their landowners by giving them a gift certificate to a local pizza place. They were sent to the landowners and the club will be charged as they are used. Greg Rouleau reported that Washington County has purchased two snowmobiles from a Stowe dealer for the sheriff's department. He also reported on the meeting they had with the parents and teens that they had problems with. The biggest problem was the parents not knowing the laws. There is a big communication gap between parents and VAST. Greg Rouleau is going to recommend that we change the policy of the safety class and that they have to be sponsored by an adult. He would like to see that we have a refresher safety course for offenders of any age. He will also be attending the next Safety meeting. Brian Wells has most of their stakes up in Lamoille County. Eden voted their new officers in and hopefully the problems with that club are done. They had to vote three times due to ties. They are having their landowners' dinner soon. Windsor County is all well as reported by Bruce Murray. They had their county meeting. They have problems getting county officers. Steve McLeod gave a good presentation. It went well and each club representative will go back to their clubs. They collect \$5 for county dues and they have about \$60,000 in their treasury. Bonnie Holbrook reported that the Hartland Hill Hoppers had their landowners' appreciation dinner. Ken Gammell reported things are great in Caledonia County. They had a landowner's appreciation dinner and they thanked everyone for the use of their land. They will have a County meeting this Wednesday. Ann Shangraw will be attending a meeting in the problem area tomorrow night. Barry Bradley is going to implement a county due of \$1 in Rutland County. Roone Gibbs from Windham County reported that Wilmington had a landowner dinner. Brian Cook reported all well in Orleans County. They had a county meeting and they used some of their money to put ads on the radio on the _ hour that the trails are closed and that anyone found on them would be found trespassing. Some of the landowners appreciated the ads and made use of the information. The ad started off by thanking the landowners and then stating the trails were closed. Dave Page reported that gates are closed and they have begun pulling stakes in Essex County. Island Pond club sends a gallon of Maple Syrup to every landowner!! They have found that worked better than trying to have a landowner's dinner.

Guest Speakers – Re: Fulltime Lobbyist: Ed Larsen, VT Forest Products Association and Representative Dave Brown, Walden. There have been discussions on hiring a fulltime lobbyist. Ed and Dave Brown are present to discuss the issues involved and why we should consider a fulltime lobbyist. Dave Brown thanked us (VAST) for everything we do. He said that this is the first time that he has had a chance to thank us for our work and all the work of the clubs. He has represented Walden and Hardwick for the last 6 years. It was about 2 years that he found out the impact that VAST needs to make and how strong a voice we need to make to get these bills to go through. He has been learning what Montpelier means to VAST. He has been getting an education. As a VAST member he really believes that VAST needs to look into hiring a lobbyist for Montpelier. He knows that it will be very expensive but it would also be very expensive to lose some of the bills that we have had very close calls for. H397 for example, it went to rules and is going back to the Senate Judiciary and Senate Transportation committee. He talked about the process of getting bills through and educating Montpelier. He has seen us lose ground recently on a few bills. As you know, we are having more and more anti-snowmobilers all the time. Bryant Watson is not always able to be present when needed. ATVs are going to be a threat to snowmobiling. They already have a lobbyist and he recommended that we do not hire the same lobbyist as VASA. Even though many do not think the ATVers are organized, they have already hired a lobbyist for their cause and have been moving along because of VAST having paved the way to organizing a trail system. Our cultural and our heritage are being taken away more and more. Dave Brown strongly feels that we need to hire a PROFESSIONAL lobbyist. Bryant Watson can not be there all the time. Ed Larsen is a professional lobbyist. He works fulltime lobbying in the winter time which does cut down tremendously on his snowmobiling time. He has found that the representatives in Montpelier need and rely very heavily on lobbyists. He thinks that Bryant Watson has been doing a good job. Although, he feels that we need to look at getting more exposure in Montpelier. He works with many organizations that have a leader (Executive Director) that is not in Legislature daily. The Executive Director visits periodically. They (the Executive Director) make a bigger impact by attending occasionally and strategically. They use their professional lobbyists to be in Montpelier every day and all day. The lobbyist does a lot of facilitating. You need a lobbyist that can help you work through the process and what the politics are. He is engaged in the fall researching the candidates and learning what makes them tick, what they want to accomplish. Politics are getting a lot more complicated politically and more like Washington every year. The lobbyist will write about decisions and will report on them. Ed Larsen hasn't been watching all of the issues that VAST are interested in and working on because he has not been working on them. Sometimes having a person there at the right time with the right information is important. He avoids the camera as much as possible. He works hard on the behind the scenes facilitating issues and having a strong impact. When it's time for the limelight, then it's time to bring in the Executive Director. Dave Brown has found that issues have come up many times when he has needed an answer immediately that he knew would affect snowmobiling and Bryant Watson was not available to answer due to his other duties as Executive Director.

Don Glover thanks Dave Brown for all of his hard work on the Lamoille County rail trail. Greg Rouleau asked about the chance of discussions and convincing decisions out side of the senate floor. Dave Brown stressed that we need a full-time voice/contact in Montpelier. Norm Roark said that he found that some of his representatives from Bennington County only find out information if the committee chair chooses to share it. A lot of the representatives view the calendar first thing in the morning to see what they will address that day. Dave Brown pointed out that there are times that the Executive Director has to be careful how he asks for information or why someone votes the way they do. A lobbyist can be more vocal and they also keep track of the bills. We need to realize that we can not afford to NOT get a lobbyist. David Page asked for clarification that there are times when a lobbyist may be able to shield the organization. Dave Brown stressed that the Executive Director has to touch the line a lot more carefully. The lobbyist is there all day long, for many issues. They also know a lot of the personalities back in the districts. Brian Wells ask how much it would cost. Ed Larsen said that he is not a lawyer and he does not work on lawyers fees that can be as high even \$100/hr. He does not recommend that we go that route. Ed Larsen knows the issues and the history and needs of the organization. He also stressed that you have to LOVE doing this, which he does. He said that we are talking about five months of full time work and attending meetings. He would estimate about \$20,000 to \$40,000. He is a contract lobbyist and he represents Vermont Forest Products Assoc., Vermont Retired State Employees, Vermont Grange, Vermont Dam Owners and the Use Value Appraisal Coalition. He is also a voting member of VTC. Vermont Traditions Coalition (VTC) is set up as a one-veto vote. If one member votes no, then they veto that issue. If he has a conflict of interest, then he discloses that and will take himself out of the game if needed. There are about 300 registered lobbyists. There are about 40-45 that are regular in Montpelier. Dave Brown has found that the lobbyist will give you an honest answer and a lot of information. If they don't answer honestly, they will be done. It is illegal to have a lobbyist on a contingency basis. They pledge to do everything they can to get their issues pressed. Ed Larsen is in his 11th year. Jim Holbrook asked how often he would report to Bryant Watson if he were to be a lobbyist for VAST. Ed Larson carries a cell phone, and if things are moving and hot, he would be on the phone every few minutes if needed. It depends on the organization. He would need someone here in the office, like Alexis, for a backup. Jim Hill suggested that it may be in our best interest to hire a lobbyist, considering the direction that ATV's are heading. Greg Rouleau asked if Ed Larsen just maintains knowledge on the affairs in Vermont or does he keep track of the national issues. Ed Larsen replied that he tries to keep abreast of national issues but his main issue will be to get issues through in Vermont. Bruce Murray said that he thinks the time has come to hire a lobbyist. Barry Bradley said that he thinks he agrees with Bruce Murray. He thinks that Bryant Watson works very hard for us but the time has come to hire a lobbyist. He also thinks that the \$40,000 figure can buy us a lot if just one major issue passes. Dave Page thinks it's high time that we hire a lobbyist. The ATVers know what they want and they are willing to go after it. We need to know what we are doing, where we are going, and are willing to work to get there. Conrad Stewart asked if a contract would be on an annual basis, which it would be. Ed Larsen feels that he is a

better lobbyist because he ran for the state senate a while back. One of his job as a lobbyist is to get a clean vote list and role call. Brian Cook asked for clarification that we are bringing this issue to the annual meeting and asking for the membership vote.

Dave Brown wanted to clarify that he came in here tonight as a VAST member. He did talk to several other representatives and asked their opinion if VAST should hire a lobbyist. He feels very strongly that VAST needs to hire a professional lobbyist at this time. Ann Shangraw thanked Ed Larsen and Representative Dave Brown for taking their time to come here and address the Board.

July Mtg at Oakes camp: Bill and Mitzi Oakes have invited the Board to have the July Board meeting at their camp on Lake Champlain. **Dave Page moved and Bonnie Holbrook seconded to have the July 25, 2004 Board of Directors meeting at the Oakes Camp in Grand Isle. Motion carried.**

ISC Travel Reimbursement: Ann Shangraw realized that last month when we talked about the reimbursement of driving cost to those (Ann Shangraw and Bonnie and Jim Holbrook) driving out to Congress compared to the rate of round trip airfare into Omaha we forgot to include the cost of a car rental. Since that time, plans have changed and Ann will be flying. Jim and Bonnie Holbrook will be the only ones driving. VAST will pay \$470 for driving out which is the equivalent to one person flying and renting a car. **Ken Gammell moved and Lisa Viau seconded to pay for Jim's registration for Congress. Motion carried.** Bill Oakes had suggested last month for VAST to pay for Jim's expenses to Congress as Jim will be heavily involved in the 2006 ISC in Burlington with Bonnie being the chair of the committee.

County Input Nuts and Bolts Sessions: Norm suggested that we have the software for entering the TMAs at the annual meeting for folks to look at. Several folks felt that it would be too hard to "pack in" several workshops on the day of the annual meeting. Many thought there was not enough interest. There was some interest in workshops though. Windsor County was favorable to having workshops. Bruce Murray suggested that we could possibly have them on Sunday. Ann Shangraw agreed with Bruce Murray's idea. She has asked the Fiscal Committee to present the budget very thoroughly so the membership can understand it. Lisa Viau suggested that "how to run a successful club meeting" would be a very important issue. Ann Shangraw asked that we bring this issue back to our counties one more time. Jim Hill suggested that there is enough positive feedback to move forward with this. **Jim Hill moved and Lisa Viau seconded that the Board Resources put together some workshops and dates.**

ATV Survey Request: Bryant Watson reported last month that he was asked by the Senate Transportation Committee for VAST to conduct a survey on ATVs and how many VAST members own ATV's. We were also asked to do this at the cost of VAST. Ann Shangraw suggested that we should not do this at our cost. She suggested that we let Montpelier pay for the survey. There are some other concerns that Montpelier is interested in. Dave Page suggested that it would be in our best interest. Ann Shangraw reminded everyone of all the money that VAST spent on relocating trails because of ATV issues. Roone Gibbs suggested that we should have it done professionally instead of through the VAST paper. Tjark suggested that we create the survey and we can address what the landowner concerns are. Ann Shangraw shared that she found from professionals that there are certain words that can trigger certain responses. The cost to have it done officially through Johnson State would be around \$2500-\$3000 to do the survey. The chairman of the committee addressing ATV issues as asked us to do this survey and suggests that the information would be beneficial to us too. He would also like the results prior to public meetings beginning around July. Pat Poulin reminded the Board that last year, Montpelier charged us to conduct the summer study, which we did. When we presented the findings of the study, they ignored us. Ann Shangraw asked us to table this issue and have Bryant Watson come back to the Board with a cost figure and what the time turnaround would be. Bruce Murray suggested that we conduct this as a phone survey if we do this. **David LaBelle moved/Pat Poulin to table this until next month.**

House Approved Version of H. 397: A lot of Senate Committees shut down last Friday. Senate Judiciary was all done last week. Bryant Watson briefed the Board on the actions for H.397 that happened last week. The House Committee were emphatic that ice fisherman should have liability insurance. They felt they did not need a trails maintenance assessment decal but definitely should have liability insurance. The revision they (the House) asked for is (5) on frozen bodies of water as designated by the agency of natural resources under the provisions of 10 V.S.A. § 2607. For purposes of this subdivision a snowmobile shall not be required to display a trails maintenance assessment decal or will they be required to have liability insurance as provided for in subdivision 32006(b)(19) of this title, if not operating on a portion of the statewide snowmobile trails system; or. Bryant Watson stated that the promoter of organized ice racing has to have liability insurance but the participants do not have to be registered or have liability insurance. Jim Hill pointed out that we are being asked to deal with an issue that is affecting people that are not members of VAST. **Pat Poulin moved and Lisa Viau seconded that we support the current version of H.397 as passed by the House of Representatives. Motion carried.**

Annual Meeting: The Committee has been working hard on the Annual meeting. The meeting is off Exit 19 in St. Albans.

Any Other: Jim Hill asked what the results were from the landowners that approached the Board last month. Don Glover and Ken Gammell, along with Dave Chase and another gentleman, met with the landowners and addressed their issues. The landowners are now happy with working with Dave Chase and the suggestions presented.

Addition of Committee Co-Chairs: Jodie Ross asked to be temporarily removed from her duties as chair of the two committees due to demands from her job. Donna Bryan will step in as co-chair of the marketing and public relations committee. The Board Resources committee co-chair has not been found yet.

New Committee – Website Review & Design: Samantha Grout from Island Pond and Angela Laquerre from Barre SnoBees will be asked to be on the Website Review & Design. Tjark is trying to organize the work on the committee.

Pat Poulin moved and Bonnie Holbrook seconded to extend meeting 15 minutes. Motion carried.

Update De-brushing Policy: Alexis Nowalk presented the de-brushing policy. The Trails Committee suggests a three-tier de-brushing. **Norm Roark moved and Pat Poulin seconded that we accept the policy rate change for the de-brushing. Motion carried.** They have to apply prior to the work to get the money. The clubs' project work must be verified and approved by the County Trails Coordinator before the project is approved for reimbursement.

Policy for Revocation of Grooming Contract: Alexis Nowalk presented a policy for revocation of grooming contract and asked for approval by the Board.

5) Contract Revocation

The VAST Tailored Grooming Contract is an annual agreement between VAST and the VAST Club or Individual Grooming Contractor. The contract will be issued to the Club/Contractor in the fall prior to the snowmobile season. It is the Club/Contractor's responsibility to groom their trails that have been assigned to them on a weekly basis and in accordance to the VAST standards. This includes grooming when the conditions warrant twice a week for the duration of the season and with the limits of their grooming contract. Such grooming will be charged to the grooming Club/Contractor's contract. All grooming on the Statewide Snowmobile Trail System should be logged on the proper grooming log sheets and must be submitted on a weekly basis. The tailored grooming contract I issued on the Club/Contractor's five-year average for grooming trails twice weekly, the contract mileage and the equipment classification. Weekly and total mile mileage above the two-time cap will not be paid.

If the Club/Contractor fails to comply with their contract, the contract may be revoked upon the recommendation of the County Director and the County Trails Coordinator for one or more of the following reasons:

Submittal of fraudulent claims on the VAST Grooming Log Sheets

Inconsistent and infrequent grooming runs

Failure to respond to written complaints regarding trail conditions

Failure to groom the assigned trails when conditions warrant

In the event that a Club/Contractor's contract is in question, written documentation must be submitted to the County Trails Coordinator and the County Director. The County representative will contact the Club/Contractor to discuss the issue. If the issue does not get resolved at the County level and the grooming Club/Contractor does not display any progress and improvement, then the county representative will contact the VAST Trails Administrator. The VAST Trails Administrator will contact the grooming club or individual and make the decision to renew or revoke the contract at that time.

If a Club/Contractor has a dispute over the decision made, they may follow the resolution of disputes and the grievance process as defined by the VAST policy manual.

Dave LaBelle moved and David Page seconded to adopt this policy. Motion carried. The Trails Committee voted for Alexis Nowalk to deny payment of minimum grooming payment to the groomer in Groton that did not fulfill his grooming obligation.

Dave LaBelle and David Page moved to table 9e, 10b, 10c, 10d, 11a&c, 12 & 13. Jim Hill asked to be put on the agenda next month for discussion on VASA's annual meeting he attended. Motion carried.

Conservation Law Foundation: Bryant Watson briefed the Board that we have been accused of actively lobbying for padding of resolution. Bryant's letter said that we were supporting the process for passing resolutions. Everyone agreed that Bryant's responses were fine.

Pat Poulin moved and Lisa Viau seconded to extend another 15 minutes. Motion carried.

Fulltime Lobbyist: Bryant Watson was asked for his input on a full time lobbyist. He asked us to take the time to think about the process and what we expect to get from hiring one. Ann Shangraw asked Bryant Watson to sit down with her and draw up a list of expectations. Michael Lori asked how do we know what is competitive and how do we select. We would have to send this out for bid because of the price and we would have to make sure it's someone that we trust. Bonnie Holbrook brought up two points. One, Dave Brown strongly suggested that we need to have a full-time lobbyist in Montpelier and the time is now. The second point was that she heard a comment during the break about Bryant Watson needing to decide if he wants to be a full-time lobbyist or the Executive Director of VAST. Jim Holbrook asked where in the budget the money would come from. David LaBelle suggested that we add to

Bonnie Holbrook's comments the idea that do we want to look at hiring an assistant executive Director and have Bryant be the full-time lobbyist.

Washington County will provide the refreshments next month. The next Director's Meeting is May 24, 2004.

Bryant Watson moved and Dave Page seconded to go into executive session to discuss Groton issues. Motion carried.

Bruce Murray moved and Lisa Viau seconded to come out of executive session. Motion carried.

David LaBelle moved and John Ross seconded to adjourn at 9:50 PM. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Holbrook

Recording Secretary