

VAST
41 Granger Road
Berlin, VT 05601

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
February 23, 2004

DIRECTORS, ALTERNATES & STAFF PRESENT: Lisa Viau-Addison; Norm Roark-Bennington; Ken Gammell-Caledonia, Jim Hill-Chittenden; George Holobowicz -Essex; Jodie Ross-Franklin; Bill Oakes-Grand Isle; Brian Wells-Lamoille; Larry Trottier-Orange; Brian Cook-Orleans; Barry Bradley-Rutland; Scott Stone-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, Don Glover, Conrad Steward, Maridelle Tomlinson, John Ross, Robert Viau, Evan Shangraw, Sue Trottier, John Lynds, Sandy Woodbeck

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

AGENDA: Norm Roark moved and Pat Poulin seconded to approve the agenda as presented with additions. Motion carried.

9c Windsor County – Bruce Murray

9d Ideas from Vermont Forest Products Association as presented to Ann Shangraw

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Dave LaBelle moved and Norm Roark seconded to approve the minutes of January 12, 26 and February 2, 2003 as presented. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Dave LaBelle reported that we are down 8,200 members from where we were last year at this time. We may still hit the same numbers as last year but we can not count on it. This is a good reason why we do not base the budget on the total amount of the previous year's membership but were conservative. As of last week we had about 25,000 membership forms in. Not all clubs have turned into their TMA's. Ann Shangraw asked why we the Board packet via Postal Express mail. Bryant Watson reported that we had someone new in the office that sent out the Board package this month because they were short staff due to illness. Jodie Ross asked about the charge for the Fatal Vision Goggles if and they came out of the safety committee. Mitzi Oakes will bring them in next month for the Board to view. Page 3 of the disbursement report is missing. Bryant Watson will present the missing page at next month's Board meeting. **Brian Wells moved and Jim Hill 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 with Lisa Viau seconded the approval of the Consent Calendar as presented. The motion carried.

Ann Shangraw asked Bryant Watson and Alexis Nowalk for reports on the recent trail closure in Barre. We have a trail closed permanently in Barre on Corridor 14 and 302. You now have to go thirty miles around to get to East Montpelier. The trail was originally closed for only two weeks. More will be reported later in the meeting. We are in week #11 for grooming payments. The payments will be mailed the end of this week for contracts that have provided the grooming logs. The trails committee is creating a groomer safety protocol and a bridge policy. They had their first groomers trail ride and had a great turnout. Scott Stone suggested that the safety report and bridge protocol would be interesting to the insurance company. Brian Wells said that most of his clubs are at their grooming maximum for the season.

Bryant Watson thanked Larry Trottier and Ann Shangraw for the trail ride and lunch for the Northeast Chapter meeting. There weren't any Canadian representatives due to their budget cutbacks. Lake Morey Inn did a fantastic job. Thursday afternoon and Friday was spent riding 262 miles of flawlessly groomed trails. Charlie Kurtz was very impressed with the challenge of the trails and that you are constantly going up and down mountains and around curves. It was ironic that there were two kids (a 14 and a 16 year old) that were operating on the lake unsupervised by their parents. One kid t-boned the other's kids sled at a high rate of speed. Luckily there was only a severe compound fracture of the wrist to one of the boys. Massachusetts wanted to get a committee together and investigate an insurance policy for all the northeast states. Not all the states in the NE Chapter are interested. New Hampshire has 6000 miles of trails. In NH if you have any violations you have to go to a "Bad Boy" class. We have some concerns that need to be addressed by ASCA. If Maine participated in the NE Chapter, 65 % of the dues paid to ASCA would be from the North East. Not counting Maine, the North East accounts for 50% of the dues paid to ASCA. The ASCA Board members are all volunteers too. We're having the same problems in the Green Mountain Forest and the White Mountain Forest that Yellowstone is having. Vermont Public TV is going to do a 15-30 minutes segment on snowmobiling in the Green Mountain National Forest and Glastonbury Mountain. Norm Roark, Bryant Watson and several folks from Bennington along with some safety instructors are going to participate in a ride for the segment. Bryant Watson also invited some of the congressional delegates. Some would be interested if it's just a Congressional Delegation and 4-strokes were used. They need two weeks advance notice to work schedule this. WOKO radio invited Ann Shangraw and Pat Poulin for a discussion on snowmobiling.

County Reports: **Lisa Viau** has ridden some of Addison County trails and they need more snow. She thinks things are fine. There is a person that is upset about the snowmobile trail running in front of their house but it's a legal right-of-way. The club has permission from the town to use the road. She reports that this person stated that snowmobiles and ATV's are running on her land and she wants them off. Lisa Viau advised her to call the local Club to address the snowmobile issue and to call the local Sheriff's Department to address the ATV issue. This person also wants the signs taken down that say "no snowmobiling beyond this point" along the right-of-way at the edge of her property. Conrad Stewart is working on this issue. **Brian Wells** reported that Lamoille County has plenty of snow. They are breaking all kinds of records at local stores. One store ran out of gas last weekend. They haven't seen this kind of snow in a long time. The town of Stowe has closed the town to snowmobiles although they will allow you if you are running out of gas and need to get to a gas station. One rider broke his neck on his snowmobile in the county. Eden is open and Ann Shangraw and Alexis Nowalk helped a lot with issues there. They are having problems internally. There is a groomer operator that is not following instructions in the Eden area. This issue needs to be addressed. The club secretary is documenting incidences. **Brian Cook** from Orleans County has good snow and pretty good riding. They are having a lot of problems with 5 mile an hour brains and 100 mile an hour thumbs. **Jim Hill** of Chittenden County reported they could use some snow. Not much is going on. They had a county ride to the Dutch Mill and had about twenty riders show up. **Larry Trottier** reported that things are going well in Orange County and they had a great ride with ASCA. **Grand Isle** County Director, Bill Oakes, reported if there is no snow, they hit the ice on the lake. They aren't pushing their grooming cap like some clubs are. The club in the southern part of the county is in limbo as they've lost their trails coordinator. The trails did not get marked in South Hero but people are still riding. **Roone Gibbs** reported that Windham County trails are great. They have not had any reports of trail problems. Norm Roark reported that Bennington is A-OK! All trails are open and groomed. **George Holobowicz** from Essex County reported that there aren't any big issues going on except they are seeing a lot more teenagers riding alone and it appears that they are mainly non-residents. **Bruce Murray** reported that Windsor County is fine and has resolved the problem at the Springfield Dam. There is a 50 mile an hour speed limit and there will be patrolling for speed there. He has had reports of noisy sleds and the suggestion of implementing curfews. **Jodie Ross** reported trails are great in Franklin County. She has been contacted by the chairman of the railroad safety committee and he wants to work with VAST regarding railroad crossing safety. He will be at the annual meeting. Secondly, she shared the suggestion to improve our VAST website to allow the individual clubs to input the individual TMA's. There are several clubs in Franklin County that are inputting the same information into databases that VAST does. Bryant Watson responded that work is already being done to be able to be able to give access to clubs for inputting data. This should be a good tool for clubs that are computerized. It would also save on temporary help that is hired for processing TMA data. They would need to have the software and use it as the club's database. Then using built in reports, clubs will be able to electronically report to VAST all the information for TMA's sold. Some clubs are selling TMAs over the internet. **Ken Gammell** reported that Caledonia County is in pretty good shape. Groomers are working. **Barry Bradley** reported that Rutland County's high country is great. In the low country, they probably will be out of snow by the end of the week. They had a ride and raised about \$5000 for Camp Takunta. One guy alone raised \$1600. **Scott Stone** reported that unfortunately the trail closed in Barre happened on the same day as the Make-A-Wish Ride In. There were many people that had to detour way out of the way to get home from the Make-A-Wish Ride In. There was a group of snowmobilers that went all over a field that was roped off and had several signs to stay on the trail. These same gentlemen also decided to do some road jumping. The land owner closed his property for two weeks. Then someone went around the gate and the signs on that temporary closure. So the landowner closed it permanently. The eastern part of Washington County has been very good. Waitsfield groomed to Northfield for the first time due to ice. They've done plenty of grooming, just not that one trail. There has been a lot of trouble with ice in their area. The suspension bridge is open. Matt Tetrault helped tremendously and did a lot of work hunting down water permits. Ann Shangraw thanked Sandy Woodbeck for his help with the problem in his area and it wasn't even the club that he belongs to.

Recognition Committee – Volunteer Weekend Proposal: Star Poulin reported on the Recognition Committee. They have been discussing options and are looking into the grand prize award for the volunteer weekend. When the grand prize was a snowmobile, it was donated to VAST and it did not cost VAST anything. The committee is looking at different options for awards and to still stay within their budget. The committee will continue the drawing for a free TMA to one person from each county so that a volunteer from each county will be recognized, but they are looking at ideas for a new Grand Prize. The committee is also looking at the scholarship program. The scholarship has a budget of \$3,000. The committee asked the Board to approve two scholarships for \$1,500 each due to the policy that the board determines amount of scholarships. Lisa Viau moved and Scott Stone seconded to approve that we give two \$1,500 scholarships and for the committee to address the policy and make it clearer. Motion carried. The Volunteer weekend was discussed further. The committee would like a grand prize but not specify it as being a life-time TMA for this award. This year it will stay as it has been. The committee would like to be given a budget to work with for prizes and have it be up to the committee to decide on the prizes so they can be more creative. **Lisa Viau moved and Brian Cook seconded to propose the policy that the awards will be as the committee sees fit within a budget. Motion carried with one opposed.** A couple more suggestions were to include donated prizes or to eliminate the prize for the volunteer weekend.

Vermont Traditions Coalition (VTC): Ann Shangraw reported that a person approached her and said they were disappointed that she backed down on the VTC issue since she became President. Ann Shangraw wanted to make it clear that she is still very much involved with VTC. She will pass on the suggestion from Norm Roark to include information on representation on VTC with the membership donation form. She will make the corrections that the Board agreed to and will have one copy of the form made and sent to each Director. Scott Stone reported that Steve McLoad was at Washington's county meeting. All he (Steve) is asking for is that we

pass information about VTC on to other snowmobilers. **Scott Stone moved and Jodie Ross seconded to take this off the table. Motion carried with one opposed. Scott Stone moved and Jodie Ross seconded to approve the suggested letter with the amendments and distributed to the County Directors. Motion carried with the Treasurer along with Windsor, Rutland, Windham and Chittenden Counties were opposed.**

ASCA DC Fly In: The ASCA DC Fly In is April 25-27. We have the budget to send 8 delegates. We will travel on the 24th and return on the 28th. Bryant Watson explained what the fly in is about and the meetings we'll be attending. We meet with members of Congress and ASCA and ISMA. It shows the support of the snowmobile industry. There are representatives from all the snowmobile states, ISMA, ASCA and etc that attend. It's anywhere from 100-150 people from around the country. Ann Shangraw suggested that she has money budgeted for the President's phone that could be put towards the cost of fly-in. **Norm Roark moved and Lisa Viau seconded that we send 8 and possible 9 representatives to the Washington, DC Fly In. Motion carried.**

Approve House Transportation Committee's Version H.397: Bryant Watson reviewed the legislation proposals and what the Transportation Committee is willing to go with. Ice fisherman will be required to have liability insurance to be allowed to operate on a public right-of-way. Public boat launches are considered public right-of-ways. There was much discussion on the fines and fees and whether they should be comparable to vehicle fines and penalties. If they approve the proposals for closed trails, we will have the right to close the trails if they are unsafe or do not have enough snow. If someone violates the closed trail, law enforcement will be able to issue tickets for violation of open/closed trails. If you lose your driver's license for DUI, you can still operate a snowmobile because it is not a "Motorized Vehicle". Bruce Murray suggested that it may be questionable to the insurance companies and insurance coverage if you have a suspended driver's license. Tomorrow at 11:30 they will be addressing Law Enforcement. **Lisa Viau moved and Scott Stone seconded to support the changes in the transportation bill H.397 as presented in the handout from Bryant Watson. Motion carried.**

Annual Meeting – Franklin County: In the next VAST News issue, there is information on the annual meeting. In the June's issue, there will be a lot more information. September 18th is the date. The committee is working on discounts for hotel rooms.

Act 250 – Fayston, Duxbury – Update: Bryant Watson reported that attorney, Brook Dingledine, recommended that we ask for a declaratory ruling after reviewing all the information. She has filed the petition on behalf of VAST. Due to discrepancies in maps, Ms. Dingledine feels that it would have been impossible for the club to have absolutely known that portions of the trail were above 2,500 feet in elevation based on the technology available to the club in 1989. She is further advocating that the SSTS is in fact for the public good and is for a public purpose. Therefore, unless ten acres of land is impacted there should not be a need for a permit.

Windsor County – Bruce Murray: Bruce Murray missed the special Board meetings and some of the Executive Session meetings. He is concerned with the criteria used for the trails committee. He read part of a letter that he sent to Ann Shangraw. He said he certainly does not have the answers but he feels that we need to have some criteria in place for trails coordinators. Roone Gibbs asked Alexis Nowalk to create a seminar for all trails coordinators in the state to address issues of communications and just what it involves with being a trails coordinator. Alexis Nowalk feels that this is covered in the Construction Seminar. Jodie Ross suggested that any seminar that is created should be attended by the Board prior to giving to others to better educate the Directors to take information back to their counties. Conflict management should also be included in the seminar. It was suggested that we revamp the construction seminar to include this and possibly have it on a Saturday and include a BBQ. Dave LaBelle noted that the conscientious trail coordinators will attend but the ones that are causing the damage are the ones that probably won't attend. If you are genuinely concerned, you are probably not the ones doing the damage. Pat Poulin suggested that we have a club seminar on how to run a club. The Board Resources Committee will look into this.

Vermont Forest Products: President Ann Shangraw was invited to a Vermont Forest Products Association Board of Directors meeting. One gentleman suggested that it's this association's opinion that we won't get any property tax incentive, so an alternative suggestion could be to find a money formula that we give landowners a tax deductible form (possibly on the back of their land owners form) for a donation. The formula would place a value on the land that the snowmobile trail covers. Ann Shangraw asked if there was anyone that knows an IRS agent that could check on a formula that could be used and if it would fall under IRS rules. If the land owner got a rebate, it would be taxable income. This is a suggestion from the Vermont Forest Products Association. This is something that won't take any legislative action. Dave LaBelle suggested that we talk to a tax attorney and also make sure we talk to a regular attorney to how we word this. We should check with the insurance issues too.

External Issues: Bryant Watson reported that we were blasted down to the State House. We need to look at what approach we use when working for changes. We need to decide how much we are willing to ruffle feathers. We need to get more friends to participate with us on some of these issues. Some of the groups (State departments and committees) felt that we didn't get input from them for the Summer Study although they were invited to participate in it. There is a legislator that has been assigned to address issues with ATVs. **Scott Stone moved and Brian Wells seconded to extend the meeting for 30 minutes. Motion carried.** Scott Stone pointed out that this is the first time that we approached the State to request more money. We need to continue to fight this fight. Every time we've asked our members to pay more money for improvements to our trail systems. With these improvements, we have generated more income to the State of Vermont. We need to work with our local legislators and educate them. We are impacting many businesses and

we need to get them to help us to address the local legislators to get them knowledgeable on how much snowmobiling impacts their business and livelihood. Out of 180 legislators, only 9 of them are snowmobilers.

Committee Reports:

Board Resources, Jodie Ross, Chair – Jodie Ross will have the results from the survey done earlier in the season. They are looking at doing something in St. Johnsbury for a Board social function. She suggested that we can do something social and get something worthwhile out of it. This would give us a chance to get to know each other so that we can be a more effective Board. They have some excellent suggestions. By-Laws, Norm Roark, Chair – no report. External Relations, Roone Gibbs, Chair – no report. Fiscal Policy & Financial Oversight, Dave LaBelle, Chair – They met and they talked about two-year old budgets. One of the things that they discussed was zero-based budget. Ann Shangraw will send some ideas she is looking at. She also thinks that each committee should submit a budget proposal for what they think they need. There is a couple of folks that asked for a budget report that is about 400 pages to see if they are able to come up with an alternative budget report that would be simpler to understand. Insurance Review, Scott Stone, Chair – no report. ISC 2006 Planning, Bonnie Holbrook, Chair - No report on the Congress committee but would like to take this opportunity to thank Mitzi Oakes for taking the minutes at the special Director’s Meeting on February 2nd in her absence. Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, Sandy Woodbeck, Chair – Perseverance pays off. We got rail banking although we could not understand what the attorneys were talking about. The next issue is to negotiate the lease. Brian Wells and Don Glover thanked Sandy for all his hard work. Nominating Committee, Bill Oakes, Chair - So far, Bonnie Holbrook has come forth and will run again for Recording Secretary. He has not heard from others yet. Organizational Goals & Planning, Pat Poulin, Chair – no report. Personnel, Pat Poulin, Chair – no report.

Policy Manual, Norm Roark, Chair – no report. PR & Marketing Committee, Jodie Ross, Chair - Tjark is putting an article in the VAST News and will send Letters to the Editors to some of the larger papers to put a positive spin on snowmobiling. The ski areas do a large clear cut for their trails that you can see from roads. Snowmobile trails do not do large clear cuts and are not as visible as ski areas. We need to educate people on why we are independent and why we are not a state organization and what the benefits are for not being a state organization. We are getting to the point where we should look at hiring an independent lobbyist. We need more lobbying. We are looking at placemats. We are looking at a book of discounts that we could hand to landowners. Bruce Murray was wondering if we could come up with a standard display for the “depots” (businesses) for selling VAST maps. It was the decision for each club to go to their “depots” and figure out what will work with them to neatly display the maps. Responsible Riding & Safety Education, Mitzi Oakes, Chair - Mitzi Oakes reported on the safety committee. She distributed the minutes from the committee meeting to give the Board a fuller report. Due to the lateness of the hour, she won’t go over all the details but suggested the Board read the minutes. Bruce Murray said that Stockbridge has a boater’s safety course in the school. He suggested that we should check into doing snowmobile safety courses at schools. Trails, Dave LaBelle, Chair – Dave LaBelle reported the committee has created a groomer accident report and safety procedures. The 2ND Trails Coordinators ride in is scheduled to be March 10th and meet at the Chittenden Dam at 10 am. Anyone is welcome.

Bruce Murray asked if there is something that is going to the Legislature on class 4 roads in Windham. Bryant Watson said that Representative Hubie submitted legislation for roads that have not been used in 50 years and giving the adjoining landowner the option to purchase the road,

Orleans County will provide the refreshments next month. The next Director’s Meeting is March 22, 2004. **Lisa Viau moved and Roone Gibbs seconded to adjourn at 9:18 PM. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie Holbrook
Recording Secretary