

VAST BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

March 24, 2008

DIRECTORS, ALTERNATES & STAFF PRESENT: Steve Fielding-Addison; John Perkins-Bennington; Ken Gammell-Caledonia; Jeff Fay-Chittenden; Dave Page-Essex; John Ross-Franklin; Bill Oakes-Grand Isle; Brian Currier-Lamoille; Larry Trottier-Orange; Brian Cook-Orleans; Merritt Budd-Rutland; Mark Reeves-Washington; Roone Gibbs(**Absent**)-Windham; Bruce Murray-Windsor; Pat Poulin -President; Jim Hill-Vice-President; Mark Ellingwood-Treasurer; Bonnie Holbrook-Recording Secretary; Bryant Watson-Executive Director, Alexis Nowalk-SSTP Trails Administrator; Kent Gardner-VAST News Editor

GUESTS: Mitzi Oakes, Jim Holbrook, Star Poulin, Conrad Stewart, Ed Hebebrand, Mike O'Hara, Frances Pillsbury, Sandy Woodbeck, Roberta Stammers, Ken Hoffner, Dave Pistula

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by President Pat Poulin.

AGENDA: *Larry Trottier moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.*

- 8c Toyota-Scion offer
- 8d Chittenden Bank Investment Offer
- 9e FY08 Equipment Budget (Alexis)
- 10b Essex Timber Update
- 10c Impact Study Update
- 14 Executive Session - Barnard/Bridgewater

SECRETARY'S REPORT: *Bruce Murray moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the minutes of February 25th, 2008 Board of Directors meeting. Motion carried.*

TREASURER'S REPORT: *Larry Trottier moved and Bruce Murray seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented.*

Motion carried. Mark Ellingwood reported a positive cash flow. Last year at this time we had a negative flow. We will probably have a deficit this year. It looks like we will be spending the full amount budgeted for grooming. The amount of income is different from the amount budgeted. This could be because some clubs are apparently still selling TMAs at the Early Bird price. The office has been consistently receiving Early TMAs almost daily but the deadline was the end of December. John Perkins suggested we send those clubs a letter letting them know that they were beyond the deadline and they needed to provide an explanation why these are so late. There were other questions addressed on the budget. More discussion will follow later on the agenda.

CONSENT CALENDAR-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: *Larry Trottier moved and Bruce Murray seconded to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried.* There were more questions on the number of the TMAs and how it affected the budget Matt & Trish Tetreault have given birth to a baby girl and all are well. Alexis Nowalk announced that the May 22 Construction Seminar with one of the guest speakers is setup. More information will follow next month.

COUNTY REPORTS: **Lamoille County** reported that trails are good except in Jefferson where the snow cover is low and another area in Eden. **Orange County** has some road riding in Thetford that is not very good other than that, trails are still pretty good in most of the county. Larry Trottier has done about 10 more miles of trail maintenance. With such a deep snow base, they have had to go out and do more debrushing! **Bennington County** has pretty good riding in the mountains but is pretty much done in the low elevations. They have had some trail damage from the ice storms. **Rutland County** has some decent riding left in Mt. Holly, Chittenden and Pittsfield which is about the only place in the County to ride. **Caledonia County** is still boasting they have the best riding. **Franklin County** is good in the east but not the west. **Washington County** is in pretty good shape. The guys are out grooming and trails are looking great. They should be riding until April 1st at least. Although **Grand Isle County** is without clubs in the lower part of the county, they have been riding in the northern part of the county and have gotten their trails in great shape. **Windsor County** has a lot of brown areas but pretty good in higher areas. Bruce Murray read a letter that Windsor County Snowmobile Club has sent to the Governor's Snowmobile Council regarding Law Enforcement Funding. They also voted unanimously that they do not want an increase in registrations. **Addison County** lost all their snow in the lower areas but still have some grooming being done in the higher part. **Orleans County** is really good and they are not even thinking about getting done yet. They had some bad damage from the ice storm and there is going to be a lot of work to do to get some of the closures reopened from the storms. **Chittenden County** is pretty much closed except for about 11 miles from Bolton to Richmond. Camels Hump was great riding and they may have snow until June!

VAST WEBPAGE STATUS - KENT: Kent Gardner reported the new website is up and running. People are spending more time looking at the website than the old one. The website is much quicker even if you have dialup. Kent apologized for the webpage with the club links not being up. That is being worked on.

UPDATE ON ATR GROOMING: Pat Poulin asked Alexis Nowalk to report on the ATR (American Thunder Riders) Grooming. There was a meeting with clubs involved. Unfortunately there was some discontent. The Lunenburg Polar Bears are very interested in taking over the grooming contract for the ATR trails and buying out the Piston Bully. Alexis Nowalk instructed that they go to the County and if they have

support from the County then she would be fine with the decision. The Piston Bully has been vandalized several times. Kassborer has been there a few times and this has cost VAST a lot of money in the range of thousands of dollars. The Sheriff has been patrolling more. It's parked with two log skidders and the groomer was vandalized while the owner was away. Lamoille County Director, Brian Wells, has been volunteering his time (and driving over an hour each way) to help a neighboring county out by keeping grooming continuity going. He has been stranded out in the woods because of this vandalizing.

TOYOTA-SCION OFFER: John Henning has accepted the counter offer of not providing our membership list directly to him. Any mailings from Toyota-Scion will be through third party mail clearinghouses or through the VAST News. *Dave Page moved and Larry Trottier seconded the motion to approve the Toyota-Scion Offer from April 1, 2008 and expire March 31, 2011. Motion approved with Jim Hill abstaining.*

CHITTENDEN BANK INVESTMENT OFFER: Bryant Watson has some paperwork that is ready for signatures. He needs to get Bonnie Holbrook's (VAST Recording Secretary) signature. Bryant Watson has not checked on other banks yet. He checked with one credit union but they were unable to help. Once the investment policy is decided on then Bryant needs to bring it to the Fiscal Committee for approval prior to bringing it to the Board.

LVRT FUND RAISING ALTERNATE PROPOSAL - BMW: The ethics of fundraising mandates how we reward campaign staff. Bryant Watson reviewed his counter offer to an hourly wage of \$30, reimbursement of expenses and 10% (bonus points) of the funds raised, be it cash or materials that are raised. Ken Hoepfner shared some information about his background. He envisions the Rail Trail as the "third biggest attraction" to come to the State of Vermont. He is proposing that we break the trail down into smaller increments and have a goal to obtain "sponsors" for each section of the trail and for the bridges. He has someone that has already agreed to a very sizable donation. Ken is expecting to raise \$3.4 million in a year's time and feels there are lots of opportunities available. He asked that if we have someone in our area that might be interested then email their name and contact information to Ken at KenandSue@hoepfner.com. There will be a big celebration at the end of the campaign. Ken requested that the amount of money that he donates to VAST from the amount he is paid for raising funds be put into an escrow to go to a charity of his choice. *Jeff Fay moved and Larry Trottier seconded to amend our original motion so that we pay Ken Hoepfner an hourly contract payment of \$30 hour and that it will in turn be donated to a charity of his choice with a maximum limit of \$30,000. Motion carried.*

APPROVE GROOMING FUEL ADJUSTMENT PAYMENT: Alexis Nowalk reviewed the spreadsheet for the fuel adjustment payment that was approved at the beginning of the year. There are clubs that have spent over \$20,000 in fuel this year so far. The fuel adjustment was approved for only the "approved" miles for up to two times a week grooming. Some clubs have submitted for third time grooming even though it has not been approved for payment by the Board at this time. If we decide to pay for third time grooming, we would probably need to tap into the contingency fund. Alexis will email the figures for third time grooming to the Board this week. The sixteenth week of grooming is April 6th. *Dave Page moved and Ken Gammell seconded that the seventeenth week goes into the five year averages for clubs that can groom week seventeen but not get paid grooming by VAST per grooming contract. Motion carried.*

MILEAGE FOR LAC MEMBERS – JIM HILL: A couple of months ago, there was a question whether the LAC members get reimbursed mileage. There are thirteen members. Out of that, the regional members and town members already get reimbursed so probably would not be requesting reimbursement from VAST. *Bruce Murray moved and Dave Page seconded that we pay reimbursement mileage for the members of the LAC. Motion carried with one nay.* Jim Hill expressed concern with VAST paying for everything and none of the other user groups expending any money at all. John Perkins also expressed that we do not have a budget for the LVRT nor is there a business plan for it. We, VAST, are paying all the bills. We will be coordinating efforts between VAST and the "Friends of the LVRT" in regards to fundraising. Pat Poulin asked Bryant Watson to get an estimate from the members for costs for mileage reimbursement.

APPOINT TRUSTEES FOR VT SNOW TRAILS CONSERVANCY & TRUST: Pat Poulin has not secured the seven members for the Board of Directors for the Conservancy but is still working on them. He has six members that have agreed and a possible few more.

FY08 EQUIPMENT BUDGET: The price for drags is going up April 1st. We had requests for drags now, and money remaining in the FY2008 equipment grant budget. This is outside of current policy and requires the Board to make the decision. *Dave Page moved and Ken Gammell seconded that we allow Alexis to use her discretion to use money out of this year's budget to purchase drags prior to April 1st based on last year's policy. Motion carried.*

OTHER: Bryant Watson has been asked by the Senate to testify on a bill that will include SUI (Snowmobiling Under the Influence (drugs or alcohol)) for snowmobiles along with boats and be the same as vehicle SUI.

TMAS AT THE EARLY BIRD PRICE: Some of the early bird TMAs that have been received late was from clubs that got some of the Early Bird TMAs in on time. Kathy Duprey will be billing clubs the difference for the "early bird" price and the late fee. It was felt that it's not fair to the clubs that did follow the direction/policy if we were to 'accept' the late TMAs at the Early Bird price. If the club has a legitimate issue, they need to address the Board. Pat Poulin asked Directors to go back to their County meetings and inform their clubs if they are one of those clubs, they will be receiving a bill that will need to be paid. Rutland County requested that VAST work on a Tri-State Trail Pass. It was

pointed out that New Hampshire and Maine just severed their reciprocity just a few years ago due to monetary issues. Mark Ellingwood pointed out that he has heard there were a lot of people that wanted a 5-day pass that could not find them.

VAST EQUIPMENT GRANT-IN-AID POLICY CHANGE – ALEXIS: The Trails Committee created a sub-committee to recommend a policy. The sub-committee brought it back to the Trails Committee who approved it. Last month Directors were asked to go back to their counties and discuss this and get feedback. This month the Board is asked to bring back feedback. There was a clause that the CPI automatically goes up a certain percentage every year. Over a ten year period this would increase the top to about \$90,000. The committee's next "committee charge" is to look at the grooming rate. It was suggested that the CPI be used as a guideline and not put it in stone. *Jeff Fay moved and Larry Trottier seconded to extend the meeting a half hour. Motion carried.* The clubs that currently have a grooming contract for less than 25 miles will be grandfathered and will be eligible for equipment grants at the 25 mile level club. *Bruce Murray moved and Ken Gammell seconded the proposed policy change including the CPI clause and the lean for 5 years or 2,500 hours. Motion carried with 9 yes and 5 nays.*

ESSEX TIMBER UPDATE: All of the 83,000 acres that Essex Timber purchased from Champion Lands are up for sale. The easements are on the land to keep the snowmobile trails on the land are in place.

IMPACT STUDY UPDATE: Jesse Leach has been collecting data regularly every week. At the end of the season she will be compiling the data. She has begun writing her report and will have it completed for the Board meeting in May. The Commercial Tour Advisory Committee will be meeting prior to the Trails Committee next week.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS: Scholarship & Awards Committee distributed the new nomination forms that the committee created to assist members in nominations. Bonnie Holbrook announced the winners of the two VAST scholarships and the top five scholarship applications that will be forwarded onto the Northeast Chapter Scholarship.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *John Perkins moved and Jeff Fay seconded to move into Executive Session at 9:24 PM to discuss possible litigation with the full Board and Alternate Directors in Executive Session. Motion carried.*
Mark Ellingwood moved and Jeff Fay seconded that we move out of Executive Session at 9:30 PM. Motion carried.
Ken Gammell moved and Jeff Fay seconded to write a resolution to oppose any taking of snowmobile trails by prescriptive easements. Motion carried.

The next Director's Meeting is April 28th, 2008 at 6:00 PM with refreshments provided by Franklin County. *Jeff Fay moved and Mark Ellingwood seconded to adjourn at 9:34 PM.*

Respectfully submitted by,
Bonnie Holbrook
VAST Recording Secretary