

## VAST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 28, 2008

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

**GUESTS:** Jim Holbrook, Star Poulin, Ed Hebebrand, Mike O'Hara, Frances Pillsbury, Sandy Woodbeck, Dave Pistula, Alan Robertson, Bruce Kenyon, Stacey Lynds, Dave Neff, Kevin Malloy

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by President Pat Poulin.

**AGENDA:** *Jim Hill moved and John Ross seconded to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.*

10b VAST Websites – Club Information

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** *Mark Ellingwood moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the minutes of March 24, 2008 Board of Directors meeting. Motion carried.*

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** *Jeff Fay moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried.* The expense for the Essex County Sheriff's Department was for guarding the Groomer that was vandalized. There was a short discussion on a few other items.

**CONSENT CALENDAR-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** *Jim Hill moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried.*

**COUNTY REPORTS:** **Washington County** had a good season. The cost of grooming is a big issue with some clubs deeper in the hole than others. They have the basic end of season cleanup. **Franklin County** groomed 8 miles in the Maple Festival! They had their groomer in the parade! One of their concerns this year is the cost of grooming. Franklin County feels that we need to look at third time grooming and if we have to pay for an increase in TMAs, so be it. It would take about \$20 increase to pay for third time grooming. **Rutland County** still needs to work on a wash out they had. **Chittenden County** has a new Vice President. They also have a couple of land owner issues that need to be addressed over the summer. The Sheriff's Department is going to be in receipt of two new Skidoos this fall compliments of BRP. **Addison County** has all of their signs pretty much picked up in the lower part if the county but not the higher areas. **Orleans County** still has a lot of snow in the higher elevations. They are in pretty good shape. **Orange County** had a trail closure between Washington and Williamstown that was not able to get rerouted. It will be a high priority to get a reroute in place for the next season. **Windham County** has no report from the southern part of the County. There's a 6/10 of a mile reroute that needs to be done to get off a section of road. **Caledonia County's** Cole Pond Sledgers club celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Caledonia Trails Club had a landowners' appreciation dinner. This year "they have come together and things really clicked". **Bennington County** is pretty much cleaned up. There is a section of Corridor 7 trail that needs some work. The Forest Service worked closely with the county this year. The Forest Service revoked the permits for two commercial tour operators for two days as a warning for not following the rules. **Windsor County** has a strong concern with proper communication from the VAST Office. The Windsor County Executive Board is very upset with the communication from the VAST Office on the Bridgewater situation and the VAST Board's decision to write a resolution to oppose any taking of snowmobile trails by prescriptive easements. Windsor County also expressed concern with the directives for the law enforcement agencies.

**OTHER:** Bryant Watson reported that we have the new Toyota courtesy of Toyota-Scion. The Foote of the Mountain Club has been working on the issue near the Emus. VAST will also be in receipt of a Skidoo from Bombardier to use for one year. Once we have all the TMAs accounted for, we will have an update with the numbers. There was an error in numbers reported last month. One of the clubs in Bennington County reported that they received a check from VAST saying they over paid but they don't feel that is correct. Bryant Watson will look into it.

**THIRD TIME GROOMING - BMW:** We are going to be close to expending all the grooming funds this year. We are paying for first and second time grooming including the first and second time grooming for weeks beyond their contracts because of the snow conditions. The Contingency Fund is going to be just about exhausted for the Fuel Subsidy payments. We have been operating on a deficit budget the last couple of years and if we continue to operate on a deficit budget, we will not have enough funds to carry us forward next year. The Finance Committee will be meeting soon to work on the proposed budget for the next fiscal year and will be looking at proposing a balanced budget. We need to be very careful with expenditures. The cost of diesel is anticipated to go much higher than this year. Ken Gammell pointed out that he has been asking for the Board to increase the TMAs a few dollars each year instead of waiting and having to increase TMAs by \$20 at a time. *John Perkins moved and Larry Trottier seconded that we do not pay for third time grooming this year. Motion carried with two nays.* Bruce Murray reminded folks that Windsor County pays for third time grooming with their County dues. Alexis Nowalk has done some preliminary work on gathering data on the cost and revenue per mile per state and province. The following are amounts reported by some of the states and provinces.

Maine	\$306/mi	New Brunswick	\$345/mi	Ontario	\$800/mi
Michigan	\$1750/mi	New Hampshire	\$394/mi	Vermont	\$861/mi
Minnesota	\$714/mi	New York	\$368/mi		

**APPOINT TRUSTEES FOR VT SNOW TRAILS CONSERVANCY & TRUST - PAT:** *Roone Gibbs moved and John Ross seconded that we approve the slate of proposed Trustees. Motion carried.* The Board of Trustees is Ann Shangraw, Pat Poulin, Jim Hill, Mark Ellingwood, Bryant Watson, Greg Rouleau and Stan Choinier.

**CHESTER SNOWMOBILE CLUB – LOST TMAS – BRUCE MURRAY:** The Chester Snowmobile Club sent a letter to the Board of Directors with their explanation of lost TMAs and asked the Board to not charge them for the lost TMAs. There has been clubs in the past that have accidentally thrown TMAs away and they had to pay for them in full and were not “pardoned”. Some expressed that even though we empathize with the club, it would not be fair to the other clubs if we let this club off. *Mark Ellingwood moved and Conrad Stewart seconded that we acknowledge the club that we received their letter and that we table this until we have all the TMAs in and then look at it again. Motion carried with 4 nays.*

**LVRT ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW:** Alan Robertson provided copies of the LVRT Assessment that he has completed on the LVRT. Alan gave a detailed report on the progress that has been made on the trail. The information that is needed for permitting and public hearings is included in the assessment. The LVRT Committee is working on the management of the trail and Alan Robertson is working on the construction of the trail. The committee has had meetings with the Regional planning commissioners. There are management issues that may be more important to some of the towns than the construction of the trail. The agricultural and industrial encroachments are the biggest problems we need to face with the construction of the trail. We are trying to create a very environmentally friendly trail. The amount from the Transportation is now well over a million dollars less than the original amount promised due to the US Transportation Board chopping away from the amount that Senator Sanders got earmarked for this trail. Most of the trail maintenance costs are due to the other three seasons other than winter use of the trail. The first priority of the trail construction is for bridges and drainage along the trail. There are many permits that need to be obtained. Silt disposal will be a big challenge. Storm water will be another big issue. Another challenge of the project is coming up with “alternative routes”. The only real alternatives are trail heads. Etiquette when using the trail will be an issue, especially during the summer with horses. There will need to be a major effort made to address etiquette. Something that the State of Vermont Legislature has not taken into account when making decisions regarding the trail is the farmers along the trail that depend on sections of the trails that they use for their livelihood. If any club does any work whatsoever along the trail it is imperative that they let Alan Robertson know immediately. If any of the clubs find a washout or the beginning of a washout, let Alan know so he can investigate it. Any excavation, bridge work and/or culvert work of any kind is not to be done without contacting Alan first so he can log it. According to the VAST Trail Work policy, we are not supposed to “move” any dirt without contacting Alexis. This does not stop you from clearing downed trees or clearing culverts of debris or mowing along the trail. Alan just asks that you let him know so that he doesn't send someone else to do it. It will be imperative that we keep the trail, the banks and the ditches mowed on a regular basis. We have advertised for project managers and engineers.

**VAST WEBSITES – CLUB INFORMATION:** Kent Gardner reviewed the options for club websites on our new VAST website. Kent is recommending that we do not charge for club websites. He suggests that there be a nominal one time fee for setup. One of the things we've been looking at for the future is the opportunity for clubs to be able to do online sales through their website. There will be a little bit of a difference in look between the VAST website and the club websites. *Mark Ellingwood moved that we set a onetime setup fee of \$100 with the fee to be reviewed when our Executive Director and VAST News Editor recommends an increase. Motion carried.*

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** The **Personnel Committee** is meeting May 5<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. The **Awards, Recognition, Scholarship & Volunteerism Committee** reminded all that nominations are to be postmarked by May 1<sup>st</sup> or received in the VAST Office no later than May 5, 2008.

**OTHER:** Questions from Rutland County

- \* Rutland County questioned the expenses for Alexis travel expenses for IASA. VAST invoices IASA and they reimburse VAST. Ann Shangraw's expenses are reimbursed by the Northeast Chapter.
- \* Rutland County wanted to know why we paid \$11,000 trailer for a two place double-axle trailer.
- \* Rutland County questioned the income projected for the 5-day TMAs. We did spend \$50,000 for the insurance. Not all TMAs are in yet.

The next Director's Meeting is May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 6:00 PM with refreshments provided by Grand Isle County. *Bruce Murray moved and Jeff Fay seconded to adjourn at 9:06 PM.*

Respectfully submitted by,  
*Bonnie Holbrook*  
 VAST Recording Secretary