

VAST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

March 23, 2009

DIRECTORS, ALTERNATES, OFFICERS & STAFF PRESENT: Conrad Stewart-Addison; John Perkins-Bennington; Ken Gammell-Caledonia; Jeff Fay-Chittenden; Ray Dubriel-Essex; John Ross-Franklin; Bill Oakes-Grand Isle; Brian Currier-Lamoille; Larry Trottier-Orange; Brian Cook-Orleans; Merritt Budd-Rutland; Mark Reeves-Washington; Tom Baltrus-Windham; Bruce Murray-Windsor; Pat Poulin -President; Jim Hill-Vice-President; Mark Ellingwood-Treasurer; Bonnie Holbrook-Recording Secretary; Bryant Watson-Executive Director, Ann Shangraw-Past President; Alexis Nowalk-SSTP Trails Administrator; Kent Gardner-VAST News Manager

GUESTS: Star Poulin, Mitzi Oakes, Jim Holbrook, Ed Hebebrand, Francis Pillsbury, Joe Cicia, Matt Goodyear, Mike O'Hara, Sue Trottier, Gordon Holmes, Tom Smallwood, Mark Hershel, Vincent Didio, Dave Page

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

AGENDA: *Bruce Murray moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.*

SECRETARY'S REPORT: *Conrad Stewart moved and Larry Trottier seconded to approve the minutes of February 23, 2009 Board of Directors meeting as amended. Motion carried unanimously.* Bryant Watson asked that the sentence in the first paragraph of the Consent Calendar needs to be removed as it was an incorrect statement. The statement, "All these delays are losing funding that could be spent on the project." are to be removed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: *Larry Trottier moved and Bruce Murray seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.* We had a negative cash flow last month but it's still a positive cash flow for the year. We seem to be in good shape. There were questions on the insurance costs. One of the insurance payments was for two years as we weren't billed for last year. Larry Trottier questioned the cost of mailing the VAST News. We are sending about 27,000 papers an issue.

CONSENT CALENDAR-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: *Jim Hill moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried unanimously.* Alexis reported that after this week we will not be reimbursing clubs for grooming unless they have weeks left on their grooming contract. She does not anticipate any grooming after this week. They are trying to close out FY09 Construction Grants. We still have several outstanding grants. Clubs need to contact Alexis by April 1st if they are going to complete the project this FY. Technically they should have been cancelled if not completed by December 15th. Alexis is looking to use that funding for emergency projects that have been completed but not funded.

COUNTY REPORTS:

Champlain Valley; Addison County is waiting for the frost to leave so they can pull their stakes. Chittenden County is pretty much green grass!

Central Vermont; Orange County stopped grooming about a week and a half ago. Washington County reported all is pretty quiet. County Director Johnny Lynds has been ill and out of work.

Northeast Kingdom; Caledonia County had a really good winter. Kenny Gammell has spoken with some of the businesses and they had a pretty good year. Essex County is still riding. The trails are doing pretty good outside of Island Pond heading north. They had a fatality a couple of weeks ago which was not alcohol or speed related. Orleans County still has six to twelve inches of snow in the Derby area.

Northwest Vermont; Franklin County reported they are pretty much shut down. Grand Isle County does not have the snow. Lamoille County had good riding up until about three weeks ago when it ended abruptly.

Southeast Vermont; Windham County reported they are pretty much shut down. Windsor County is quiet and they are pretty brown in a lot of places. They have had some problems with riding off the trail this season. They suggested that we add "subject to a \$350 fine for off trail riding" to the TMA forms.

Southwest Vermont; Bennington County still has riding! There are still a lot of people riding. Woodford is probably still grooming. Rutland County hasn't had snow for a while to ride on. At the County Meeting the Vermont Achievement Center is going to have a plaque with Charlie Monroe's name on it and will have it displayed on one of their walls.

Kent Gardner asked that if we have businesses that could benefit from receiving a copy of the VAST News to let him know.

BRIDGEWATER/WINDSOR COUNTY: The Windsor County Snowmobile Club is asking the VAST Board for financial assistance of \$10,000 towards continuing the legal issues in Bridgewater. Gordon Holmes provided the Board with a copy of the notice that the Judge denied the Defendant's Motion to Dismiss. Tom Smallwood, President of the Bridgewater Snowmobile Club, presented a copy of the "Petition the Town of Bridgewater Selectboard to invalidate the 1920 Discontinuance of the Lone Pine Trail (Bridgewater Hollow Road) and Jabez Hill Road due

to said 1920 Discontinuance of Record being legally invalid as per 1917 Vermont statutes and relevant Vermont case law." document signed by sixty-four Bridgewater residents. This is a major north/south trail for Windsor County. This was the first year that the trail was closed. Tom Smallwood, the new President of the club, did state that the Town of Bridgewater has been accommodating to the club (except for use of the Lone Pine Trail). The Windsor County Snowmobile Club has contributed about \$40,000, the Town of Barnard has contributed about \$5,000 and VAST has contributed about \$3,000 towards legal fees so far. The Plaintiffs are claiming that the road was illegally thrown up by the Town of Bridgewater. This has been an on-going issue for about five years now. It looks like it will be about a \$40,000 job to reroute approximately three miles of trails to go around this section. There are a couple of landowners (defendants) that do not want the snowmobile trail to go by their place. We are concerned with the impact from Meadowsend Timberlands, Inc. if VAST supports. **John Perkins moved and Tom Baltrus seconded that the VAST Board supports Windsor County on their law suit and will revisit the issue as the case proceeds. Motion carried unanimously.**

FOREST SERVICE – MEETING W/CLUBS: Bryant Watson received the minutes from the meeting that Alexis Nowalk and Bryant Watson went to with the Forest Service. He provided the Board with copies with sections highlighted pertaining to trails. Notices have been sent to twenty-one clubs and their County Directors to meet to discuss trails on the GMNF. This is a meeting with just VAST people at this time.

H260 Bill: It's a part of a bigger bill to consolidate law enforcement. No action is expected to be taken this year on the H260 Bill for Fish & Wildlife Division becoming sole providers of Recreational Law Enforcement in the State of Vermont.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: The committee had a discussion and realized that we have not had a Strategic planning retreat for a couple of years. We are planning on having a weekend at Seyon Ranch. The dates presented would not work. Ann Shangraw will check with another location for the May 8-10th.

DONNA CRANDALL MEMORIAL FOUNDATION: There is a letter of appreciation from the Donna Crandall Memorial Foundation for VAST's support for the Border-to-Border Ride donation.

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND – BRUSHWOOD COMMUNITY FOREST INITIATIVE: Bryant Watson provided information on this initiative. Bryant Watson and Alexis Nowalk identified \$3,000 in the budget for support of the project. The Brushwood Community Forest Initiative (BCFI) is working to obtain an easement on this parcel of land in West Fairlee and Fairlee. The funds were taken from the Public Relations budget. **Larry Trottier moved and Ray Dubreuil seconded that the Board support the decision made by Bryant Watson and Alexis Nowalk to support the project. Motion carried unanimously.** The chair of the Policy Committee will check to see if there is a policy limiting how much the VAST Office can approve without prior Board approval.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: The **Land Owner Appreciation Committee** has a matrix on the return of the surveys from the landowners. We had a 50% return rate. Jim Hill was very disappointed from the return rate. Clubs are being very vocal asking for more money but are not willing to return the surveys to be able to get a better idea of costs. The **TMA Structural Committee**, which is a subcommittee of the **Fiscal Committee**, will be meeting soon and they are welcoming any ideas. Ideas need to be received by Mark Ellingwood really soon. The **Personnel Committee** met last Monday and they are continuing to discuss some situations. Personnel Committee will be meeting with the staff very soon on the survey. Bonnie Holbrook reported that the **Scholarship and Recognition Committee** is in the process of reviewing and selecting the Scholarship winners. The **PR & Marketing Committee** will be meeting soon. The **Trails Committee** had a Grooming Financial (a subcommittee of the Trails Committee) meeting last week. The full Trails Committee will be meeting on April 16th. Alexis was very disappointed in the response from the clubs. She continues to receive messages from clubs that the grooming costs are too high and they are not getting enough money to groom but those clubs did not bother to respond to the survey. The lack of response from clubs definitely impacted the results of the survey. Many clubs that did respond 'did not know' how much they paid in total for fuel for grooming!

ROUNDUP PROGRAM: The LVRT Fundraising committee has identified a way to raise money. There were some businesses along the LVRT Trail are willing to ask customers if they would like to "roundup" their purchases to the next dollar with the roundup figures to be sent to the LVRT Committee once a month. The idea is on page 3 of the VAST News. There are pledges for close to \$100,000 so far.

The next Director's Meeting is April 27th, 2009 at 6:00 PM with refreshments provided by Addison County.

Jim Hill moved and Bonnie Holbrook seconded to adjourn at 8:46 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,
Bonnie Holbrook
VAST Recording Secretary