

VAST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 27, 2009

DIRECTORS, ALTERNATES, OFFICERS & STAFF PRESENT: Conrad Stewart-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; Tom Baltrus *(Absent)*-Windham; Dick Jewett-Windsor; Pat Poulin - President; Jim Hill-Vice-President; Mark Ellingwood-Treasurer; Bonnie Holbrook-Recording Secretary; Bryant Watson-Executive Director, Ann Shangraw *(Absent)*-Past President; Alexis Nowalk *(Absent)*-SSTP Trails Administrator; Kent Gardner-VAST News Manager
GUESTS: Star Poulin, Mitzi Oakes, Jim Holbrook, Ed Hebebrand, Francis Pillsbury, Joe Cicia, Matt Goodyear

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by President Pat Poulin. It was noted that Grand Isle County has matched Caledonia County in number of guests present tonight.

AGENDA: *Larry Trottier moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.*
9d Landowner booklet

SECRETARY'S REPORT: *Conrad Stewart moved and John Perkins seconded to approve the minutes of March 23, 2009 Board of Directors meeting as amended. Motion carried unanimously.* There were a couple of corrections and clarifications.

TREASURER'S REPORT: *Larry Trottier moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.* We have approximately \$300,000 grooming payments that were made in April that are not reflected on this month's report, which is month ending March 31st. As of the end of April, 30, there has been 481 TMAs processed. We heard many complaints that the 5-day passes were hard to find. It also appears that not all clubs are participating in selling 5-day TMAs.

CONSENT CALENDAR-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT and TRAIL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: *Jim Hill moved and Mark Ellingwood seconded to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried unanimously.* Ken Gammell spoke on Bryant Watson's comments in his written report regarding the LVRT. Ken wanted to make sure that everyone knows that the LVRT is very important to Caledonia County and is a major proponent in connecting all their trails together. There is concern with the Act 250 permit jurisdictional opinion. If we have to go through Act 250 permit process, then it could cost additional millions of dollars and years of work to the project. It appears that one district manager is holding up the decision. We have been over one hundred days waiting for the Jurisdictional Opinion. We may have to ask the Governor and Lt. Governor to get involved. Bryant Watson has asked Jeb Spaulding (VT Treasurer) about selling some revenue bonds to support the LVRT project.

COUNTY REPORTS:

Champlain Valley; Addison County has some bridge work to follow up on. **Chittenden County** reported they have a new President, Mike Burritt. Fred Cota has stepped down as President and is now Vice President.

Central Vermont; Orange County received some good work from our Sheriff's Department this year. They worked closely with our county. **Washington County** has a lot of stuff shaking. John Lynds has met with the engineer to assess the "Winooski Wonder" suspension bridge. Doug Wilson is involved on that big project also. They are trying to get the bridge redone. This is a pretty strong and important project. The sheriff's department patrolled a lot in their county. Johnny shared that he got to ride one last time this season after his illness. He reported that a group of us road with Roberta Stammers so she could get the 17 miles in that she needed to hit the 100,000 miles of snowmobiling mark! It was a picture perfect day with a barbeque and riding each other snowmobiles. We had a blast.

Northeast Kingdom; Caledonia County has a lot of funds together. **Essex County** is waiting to get in on the Champion Lands to get the rest of their signs. **Orleans County** reported everything is perfect.

Northwest Vermont; Franklin County had their landowners' dinner that was a success. **Grand Isle County** has a beaver issue. They lost about 30 signs on about a five mile loop of trail that was stolen. This has been reported to the State Police and they do have a suspect.

Lamoille County is getting ready for their county wide landowner appreciation dinner.

Southeast Vermont; Windham County was not present to report. **Windsor County** has a new treasurer and secretary. The Bridgewater saga continues on.

Southwest Vermont; Bennington County is pretty quiet. **Rutland County** has a new County Treasurer.

ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE: Things are moving along. They have an onsite meeting scheduled on May 12th. They have to do the official signing of the contract. Clubs in the county are working hard preparing for the Annual Meeting. We are looking at having a really fun time. They are working to get a radio station involved and get some advertising this summer. Johnny's got a great crew working on it. He needs to firm up how the budget works. They are going to be working on the seminars for in the morning and they are also working on tightening up the schedule. They are going to have a lot of family activities.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION: Last meeting we talked about having the Strategic Planning Session on May 9th. Jim Hill asked for a show of hands on who is attending. The following said they would attend. John Perkins, Mark Ellingwood, Jeff Fay, Ken Gammell, Merritt Budd, Bryant Watson, Joe Cicia, Pat Poulin and Jim Hill said they are planning on attending. Others had prior commitments.

TRAILS POLICY CHANGES: The Trails Committee voted unanimously to support the recommendations from their Subcommittee. This would require a policy change in the Trails Policy Manual. The lack of data from all the clubs made a huge impact on the survey for costs for grooming. *Jim Hill moved and Jeff Fay seconded to approve the policy change as recommended by the Trails Committee. Jim Hill removed his motion and Jeff Fay withdrew his second.* The recommendations from the Trails Committee were:

- *Based on the collected data, the current grooming reimbursement rate is adequate. The committee is recommending that the reimbursement rate per mile will not increase for the 2010 fiscal year.*
- *The committee is recommending that the VAST Board of Directors consider additional funding in the equipment grant program in order to maintain an average grooming fleet age of ten years or less.*
- *The Trails Committee approved that each VAST Grooming Club/Contractor submit an end of the season financial report, which will be tied to their annual VAST grooming contract. At the end of each season, the financial information will be entered into a database and the grooming cost will be determined before the upcoming year's budget is prepared. Final grooming payments will not be authorized until this information is submitted to the VAST Trails Administrator.*

The Policy Committee and the Trails Committee Chairs, along with the Executive Director are to review the policy and clarify the points raised at the Board Meeting.

CONFERENCE CALL OPTION BOARD MEETINGS – JOHN ROSS: John Ross asked about exploring the possibility of adding conference calls for the Board Meeting where Directors can call in, alternate directors and possibly others could call in. There are multiple services we can use. The cost ranges from 3 cents a minute per calling and/or a package monthly deal. This idea is not to replace the Board meeting. Bryant Watson will research the costs and capabilities for use with our phone systems and if we would need additional equipment

ELIMINATE BOARD MEETING MEAL – JOHN ROSS: John Ross about considering eliminating the Board Meeting. Many people have so far to travel, leaving home around 3 or 3:30 in the afternoon. We also try to have committee meetings prior to the Board meeting. The social aspect and the building relationships that we get during the supper break are important. Larry Trottier asked about the counties that do not have funding and how we could help. The consensus was to continue the meals.

LANDOWNER BOOKLET: The Landowner Appreciation Committee provided a written report. The committee met in November and determined that we needed to find out how many landowners the clubs have. We had a survey sent out to every club to find out how many landowners they had, how many snowmobile and what they did for landowners if anything. Only about 54 percent of the clubs returned the surveys. The committee had concerns about giving a landowner a volunteer TMA and what would be done for the landowners that do not snowmobile. The committee is recommending to the Board that we offer a coupon book to the landowners, similar to the Entertainment Book. The committee felt this is a way to get something started with minimal cost at this time. The chair would be asking a few Volunteers around the state to solicit a few businesses and come up with some gift and coupon ideas. Mitzi Oakes told about one of our scholarship applicants essay. His essay was on an incentive for landowner appreciation and suggested that the Landowner Appreciation Committee review it. The coupons could be for discounts like buy one, get one free. The idea was that if we got these back to the VAST Office by the end of June. The booklet could be ready for the clubs to get out this fall when they are getting landowner permissions. *John Perkins moved and Jeff Fay seconded to move forward with the Landowner Appreciation Booklet. Motion carried unanimously.*

LVRT FUNDING: Bryant Watson will send an email as soon as we get the Jurisdictional Opinion. *Ken Gammell moved and John Perkins that we table this until next month when we will hopefully have the Jurisdictional Opinion. Motion carried unanimously.*

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES: One of the legislative issues is H.338 bill that includes the \$.05 per gallon tax increase for both gas and diesel. The other piece of that bill is the \$10 registration increase which has \$5 going to DMV for administrative costs and \$5 to come to VAST for funding law enforcement. This would replace the current budget funding for law enforcement.

VT STATE POLICE YEAR END UPDATE: We received reports from all three enforcement agencies. The law enforcement is looking at reorganizing law enforcement within the state of Vermont. Apparently the current head of the State Police has on his agenda to get the State Police out of the recreational law enforcement prior to his retirement. The Auxiliary Troopers are currently doing a lot of enforcement for snowmobiling and boating. Pat Poulin brought forth Deputy Sheriff Stebbins request legislation for anyone with receiving an SUI (Snowmobiling Under the Influence) to get their Driver's License revoked. This is a topic that has been discussed in the past.

FOREST SERVICE UPDATE: Bryant Watson reported on the meeting with the clubs that have trails on the GMNF. They had representation from all the clubs and the meeting was productive. There were some trails that somehow did not make it on the GMNF Plan. There was a problem with equipment when the trails were GPS'd. We will continue to move forward and have more meetings. This could be a practice in other areas of the state as well. We are going to continue to work with possible partners, including UVM, both for technical and financial assistance, to outline a possible study to investigate the impacts of snowmobiling on Vermont's soils and waters.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: The **Policy & By-Laws Review Committee** chair looked through the policies and he could not find anything limiting how much VAST staff can expend without Board approval. The committee also needs to look at the policy for clubs returning TMAs. The **Fiscal Committee** will be meeting shortly. The **TMA committee** met and may need to meet again soon. The **Nominating Committee** is

currently looking for candidates for President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Pat Poulin is stepping down as President. Currently Jim Hill is running for President. Bonnie Holbrook is running for Recording Secretary again and Mark Ellingwood is running for another term as Treasurer. The **Scholarship & Awards Committee** has selected two scholarship winners. The Annual Award nominations are due May 1st. The **Safety & Responsible Riding Committee** is looking for a better way to communicate the requirement for a Snowmobile Safety Certificate for anyone born after July 1, 1983. If the State Police has a personnel reduction, we may lose the person responsible for creating and sending the Certificates.

ROUNDUP PROGRAM: The LVRT Fundraising committee has identified a way to raise money. There are some businesses along the LVRT Trail who 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 for funding support of the LVRT. 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 TUESDAY, May 26th, 2009 at 6:00 PM with refreshments provided by Bennington County.

Mike O'Hara is in St. Johnsbury tonight meeting with the selectboard and talking on Ancient Roads and how important Ancient Roads are to us. All clubs are hopefully staying on top of this within their towns.

John Perkins moved and John Ross seconded to adjourn at 8:57 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,
Bonnie Holbrook
VAST Recording Secretary