



Town of Warner, New Hampshire
Mink Hills Recreation Committee
Wednesday, May 18, 2022

MINUTES -Draft
IN-PERSON MEETING
Warner Town Hall, 7:00 pm

Attending: Craig Tufts, Sarah Allen, Rebecca Courser, Peter Bates, Gerald Courser, Nancy Martin, and Andy Duncan.

Motion: To approve April Minutes at our June meeting. Motion-Peter Bates; Rebecca second; Approved.

Andy asked if Class VI roads are now open because 4WD vehicles are using Class VI roads.

The group looked at Craig's revised Mink Hills map. Rebecca commented that the Bradford method to assess Class VI roads was used to classify the roads shown on the map uses to assess their Class VI roads. The simple method describes sections of roads/trail conditions as good, fair, or poor. All sections shown are GPS'd. Rich Cook wants to know what to do with the data.

Craig will overlay wet, steep, and rocky conditions on the map. Horne St., Page Rd., and Collins Rd., will be added to Craig's sections map. Andy would like to see definitions for good, fair and poor added to the map and to the final report along with a description of procedures, ratings, implications, and recommendations. We need to tie descriptions to roads/ trail conditions. Peter said we have data on sensitive wildlife and plants that should go on the overlay to describe the ecological environment.

Sarah remarked that every road has a "poor" section. How do we manage all roads with a "poor" section? Does that mean that all roads labeled as good could be used and all roads labeled "poor" cannot be used? ATV trails are all in poor condition. Use may be dependent on weather and wetness conditions. Class A trails are a possibility.

Andy said we need an example with an estimate of the cost to repair the road to "good" status to use to educate the public. We could get that from DPW.

"What If" analysis. If we open a road under current conditions would it get worse? What could the town do? Craig suggested a "Prevent Further Degradation" approach.

Nancy researched gates on Class VI roads in Springfield. Star Lake Farm- Privately owned then conserved. Class A trails that are gated. The question asked: What was the process to put gates on Star lake roads. Did the town vote on conversion from Class VI to Class A trails? Nancy will try to get an answer from ASLPT.

Peter commented that Class A trails are more controllable. The Town cannot maintain a Class VI road, but could maintain a Class A trail. We could put the conversion of a Class VI road to a Class A trail before Town Meeting in March 2023. Connecting points of interest would bring up policy options for the Town. eg, enforcement, justification for maintenance. Town residents would have to vote. Class A trails cannot be upgraded to Class VI (or more) This discourages development.

Cunningham section near beaver pond is in poor condition. Windsor Ward, an organization in the Lakes Region, owns both sides of road near Sisco Cemetery. The property has many blazed trails that Windsor Ward may not know about. The area is sensitive bobcat habitat. This would be a good candidate to become a Class A trail. Badger Lane lookout is another potential Class A trail.

How can we make improvements that are effective? We can:

- ID big expensive projects;
- ID potential Class A trails to prevent further degradation
- control mud season
- look for grants to improve Class VI roads with permission from BOS and DPW
- Low hanging fruit-better job of communicating low impact MH info, as a town asset, using signage, maps, comparison of current use to future low impact uses giving our recommendations. Eg, impact from 4 wheeled vehicles. What are the implications of the impact? How can we manage access.

Rebecca laid out What's Next?

- Sarah, Rich and Rebecca will finish the job of assessing road/trail sections
- Complete the spreadsheet matrix
- Map areas that are wet, steep, eroded (lines up well with conditions)
- ID Suitability of uses
- Overlay heat maps
- ID where there is no connectivity, no loops available except for hikers
- What can we improve with water bars for hiking
- ID steep trails for non-motorized use
 - eg. Daisy Hollow
 - almost all trails are suitable for hiking
 - maintenance is easier without motorized vehicles

- ID East West connector that could reduce traffic
- Use Badger as Class A example. If converted from Class VI could the land heal?
- Is Bonding required for logging roads? Better enforcement

Next Steps

- If Badger went to Class A trail what would the benefits be? Name the negatives
- Larger discussion needed to lay the groundwork. Describe conditions, describe degradation, possible improvements, with *A Hard Road to Travel* as a Reference.

Next Meeting:

- Subcommittee to complete the matrix describing uses that could be supported. How steep does it have to be?
- A map for hiking, separate map for biking, separate map for ATV
- Maintenance = Sustainability
- Question-Class VI-What's Allowed? Summarize *Hard Road*.
- Question-Can you lock a gate during mud season, until further notice?

Action Items:

Sarah - Class VI, Class A- what's allowed

Subcommittee - Complete matrix, aim at different maps for different uses

Craig

- revise maps

Rebecca-

- to check on "bonding"
- present photos,
- develop pro's and con's of Badger Lane as Class A trail.

Andy

- check on 4 WDs at night
- present videos

Nancy

- Follow up on process to convert Class VI to Class A trail

Next Meeting: June 16th 7:00 @ Town Hall

Motion: To adjourn: Peter made the motion; Rebecca seconded; Approved