

Town of Warner, New Hampshire
Mink Hills Recreation Study Committee
November 9, 2022
MINUTES
IN-PERSON MEETING
Warner Town Hall, 7:00 pm

Attending: Sarah Allen, Rebecca Courser, Gerald Courser, Christine Frost, and Vincent Pagano (CNHRPC), David Minton, Peter Bates, and Nancy Martin. Warner department heads Tim Allen (DPW), Jon France (fire), and Bill Chandler (police) also attended.

Sarah opened the meeting at 7:01. She described the committee charges from the Select Board and the work we have been doing for 2 years. Fifty people attended the September 8th meeting. Focus groups indicated that road access and protection of wildlife and natural resources were chief concerns. Subcommittees are moving toward development of a final report with recommendations. Department heads are invited to give their perspective.

Bill Chandler opened the discussion with Class VI roads, OHRVs and 4-wheel drive vehicles. Unlike other towns there are no [MHRSC - but there are] established trails for OHRVs in Warner. Other towns may get better cooperation by having established trails. NH Fish and Game (F&G) are cooperative and helpful where there are complaints. Some complaints are about 4 wheel drive vehicles but they are allowed to be there. Activity is not consistent. Dave Minton asked how many times a year do you access the area to address complaints. Bill said there have been non complaints in 2022. In 2021 there were several. Kevin Bronson, F&G Conservation Officer manages complaints. Warner's Police Department doesn't have vehicles that can get in there. They can share the side by side owned by the Fire Dep't. Violators are often from out of state. Riders are not staging vehicles in Warner. Grants will cover the cost of man hours used on a town-owned ATV to address complaints. Violations included after-market exhaust (noise and fire starters) registrations and age of riders. Dirt bikes and enduro motorcycles cause erosion and ditches. Class VI roads have been ridden for years, some on private property like around the beaver pond, on Knapp and Baldwin heirs properties.

Tim Allen is concerned with losing the Mink Hills Class VI network as it is important to town infrastructure needed by first responders in time of accidents. Rebecca commented that mud season signs have finally been taken down, long after mud season was over. Henniker's has good mud season signs that could be used as a model. Tim said that DPW could order the signs from the maker in Bow. Christine remarked that the Town has the authority to make sure the roads are not deteriorating. Tim said that the town cannot spend money on Class VI roads except when designated as an emergency lane. Bill said that trail systems often get volunteers to maintain the Class VI roads. Rebecca added that the snowmobile club cuts brush and cleans the white and blue trails on the Chandler Reservation. Peter said that culverts work best and

that grants are available to fund materials, bridges and culvert construction. Nancy remarked that once a year with a shoestring budget, volunteer Bradford residents monitor and document the condition of Class VI roads. Their system could be a model for Warner. Loggers on Class VI roads are required to have heavy haul permits. Intents to cut now go to Tim. The road must be bonded if the landowner is not a Warner taxpayer. There have been no problems with bonding. There are problems with rubber culverts on Dummer Rd. and near the Burnap School site. "Wanna be" road builders need to cooperate with the DPW. Should Tim get a request to work on a Class VI road, who will give him permission to do the work? The group agreed that one Recommendation should be that more public education is needed regarding what's allowed on Class VI roads.

Jon French said that the Fire Dep't gets a fire call once a year in the Minks, especially in years when the forest is dry and the fire potential is increased. When a road is designated as a fire lane money can be spent to maintain it, so it is no longer a Class VI road. There are no designated fire lanes in the Minks. Class A trails can be used for walking and emergencies and are opened during snowmobile season.

The summary of results from the September 8th public meeting should be posted. We agreed that there should be another public meeting. The take away from tonight's meeting: fire lanes, signage improvements, volunteer maintenance activities.

Rebecca asked how can recommendations be made before the plan is drafted? Sarah presented the draft report outline from the subcommittee and asked folks to look at it.. She said it still needs narrative filled in and should be shared with other committee members.

Christine said that we need to include the limitations we have to work with regarding: coordination, education, signage, fire lanes, Bradford model, cooperation with the snow mobile club and DPW. But, David added it's only with regard to Class VI roads. Sarah suggested we prioritize Sisco Cemetery and Judytown Rd. (Bear Pond Rd)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Martin, Mink Hills Recreational Study Committee