

**Western Mountains Corporation**

**Proposed Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail**

**Presented to Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands**

**August 28, 2013**

**Background and Objectives:**

The Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail is being proposed as a non-motorized recreation and heritage trail that will parallel Route 27 between the Canadian border at Coburn Gore and the Town of Kingfield, approximately 56 mile to the south.

This trail is being planned by the Western Mountains Corporation (WMC) of Kingfield, Maine in conjunction with the updating of the Route 27 Scenic Byway plan that is coordinated by AVCOG and the Maine Department of



*The regional objectives of the Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail include potential interconnect with the AT, Maine Huts & Trails, the CR NEMBA trails, the Fly Rod Crosby Trail, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, the Arnold Expedition Historical Society's existing and planned trails, the Sentiers Frontaliers trail and the Cohos trail, interconnect with existing campgrounds at Natanis Point and Cathedral Pines and to serve the public, businesses and schools in Stratton, Carrabassett Valley and Kingfield. The anticipated users include the patrons of these listed groups and the public that will be interested in the historic, educational and recreational offerings of all of this expanded and united network.*

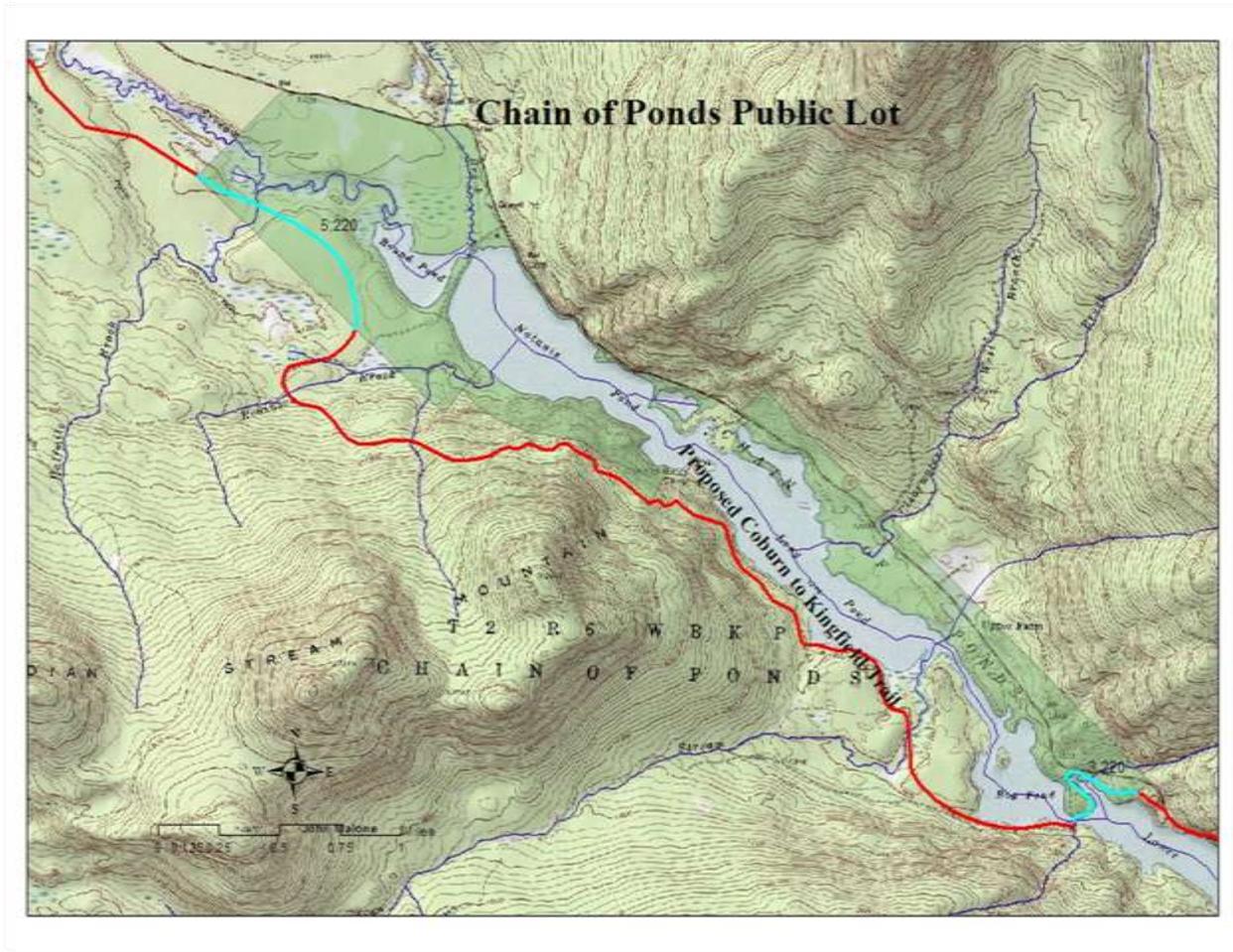
Transportation. This scenic byway has recently been renamed the “High Peaks Scenic Byway,” and an updated plan, including elements of this Coburn Gore to Kingfield trail, is expected to be completed by the end of 2013.

The trail will begin at its northern most point, at the US/Canadian Customs facility in Coburn Gore. The Sentiers Frontaliers, a Canadian trail club, has developed 135 km of trails along the Canadian side of the US/Canadian border from Woburn to Mont Megantic, Quebec. The Sentiers trail is approximately ¼ mile from the US / Canadian Customs at Coburn Gore. We expect to meet the Sentiers trail at the Canadian border. The Sentiers trail follows the US/Canadian border westerly and connects to the existing Cohos Trail at the NH/Canadian border. The Cohos Trail goes south in New Hampshire to the AT in Conway, NH.

### **Partners / Collaboration and Outcomes**

The Route 27 highway from Coburn Gore to Eustis has long been referred to as the Arnold Trail in reference to the expedition taken by Benedict Arnold’s Army during the Revolutionary War in 1775. The land area between Chain of Ponds and Arnold Pond is significant in that the Army abandoned their bateaux in this region before crossing the “height of land” to the Canadian border. The Arnold Expedition Historical Society (AEHS) has expressed interest to create an historical preserve in this area. Their goals include acquisition of land in this area; the establishment of a historical path, dedicated to the route followed by the Army and ensuring the trail is preserved for its artifact potential; interpretative signage to outline the events experienced by the Army and their Native American guides; establishment of trailheads and access points along the Route 27 corridor; and the establishment of a cooperative management process with Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

- WMC has been working with AEHS on identifying trail routes that establish each organization’s objectives and minimize any anticipated conflict in use or operations.
- AVCOG has been coordinating with AEHS on an interpretative signage program that would provide consistent design elements and a comprehensive signage plan for the High Peaks Scenic Byway and AEHS historical preserve.
- WMC plans on developing its trail from Coburn Gore to Flagstaff Lake and naming it the Arnold Trail and providing non-motorized recreational and educational opportunities. Uses include cross country skiing (groomed and ungroomed), snowshoeing, hiking, mountain biking, paddling the navigable sections between Arnold



*The Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail is proposed to pass through the Chain of Ponds public lot in two separate sections. The northerly most section is 5,220' and is in the area north of the Natanis Point Campground. The second section is 3,220' and is proposed to pass through the section from the old dam at the south end of Bag Pond to the public lot line with the Malone property along Lower Pond.*

Pond and Flagstaff Lake and interconnection with the campgrounds at Natanis Point in Chain of Ponds and Cathedral Pines in Eustis. WMC has initiated discussions with all the landowners from Coburn Gore to Kingfield regarding the development of the trail and to negotiate access for the project.

- Much of the proposed trail corridor falls within a nationally significant collaboration called the White Mountains to Moosehead Lake Initiative. The Trust for Public Land has joined with WMC and AEHS on identifying land acquisitions opportunities that would help achieve the historic and recreation objectives sought by AEHS, further the habitat protection and public enjoyment opportunities around the Chain of Ponds, and protect the scenic backdrop and permanent conservation of the Arnold Trail corridor. TPL is leading the effort and discussions with the land owners in Coburn Gore and Chain of Ponds.

### **Management, Access, and Stewardship**

WMC has identified the requirement to establish a 501(C) (3) non-profit corporation to develop and manage the Coburn Gore to Kingfield trail and establish the management plan for the resource. Longfellow Mountains

Heritage Trails, Inc. (LMHT) has recently been incorporated to become the non-profit management organization for the trail. The IRS application for 501-c-3 status is in process.

The navigable areas of the Chain of Ponds and the Dead River adjacent to the Arnold Trail section (Coburn Gore to Flagstaff Lake) are expected to include the designation as an extension of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT). This is a very scenic and easy canoe or kayak paddle that is a great resource of the area.

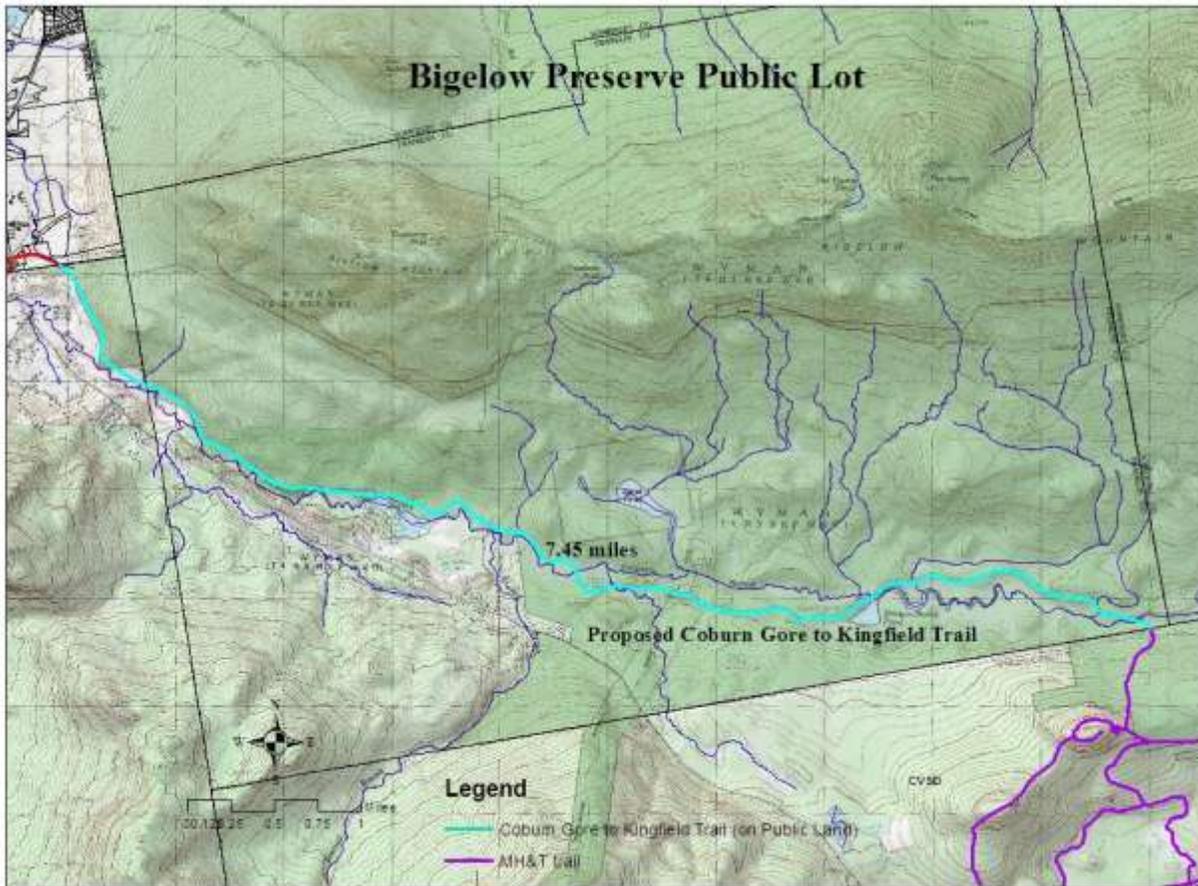
The trail section from Stratton to Kingfield will reestablish the historical rail stops of the Narrow Gauge Railroad and stage coach route from Bigelow Station to Stratton and Eustis. This southerly section will provide access to the AT, Carrabassett Region New England Mountain Bike Associations trails and Maine Huts & Trails from both the towns of Kingfield and Eustis.

The proposed trail through the Chain of Ponds public lot has been identified through the use of aerial photography and GIS mapping tools. No flagging has been set out on the land and no GPS mapping has been done.

There are two bridges identified on sections of the Chain of Ponds public lot. The first is a relatively modest 30' crossing of Half mile Brook south of the confluence with Horseshoe Stream. The second is a crossing along the old dam and road between Bag Pond and Lower Pond. This crossing has been considered necessary due to the existence of ledge along the southwest shore of Lower Pond and the inaccessibility to land suitable for trail construction.

The trail is proposed to follow the Dead River on lands outside of State ownership to Flagstaff Lake and the village of Stratton.

The trail at Stratton will connect to the Bigelow Range Trail trailhead at the end of Currie Street. The trail from the Currie Street trailhead is proposed to follow along the boundary of the Preserve along the north bank of Stratton Brook. The trail will align with the Maine Huts & Trails proposed trail to the Stratton Brook Hut and continue south outside of State Public land to Kingfield along the north side of the Carrabassett River.



The trail through the Bigelow Preserve is approximately 7.45 miles and has been identified with use of aerial photography and GIS mapping tools. No flagging has been set on the land. The trail is expected to be aligned with trails proposed by the CR NEMBA and Maine Huts & Trails organizations.



***This trail has been built along the Carrabassett River, using similar construction and maintenance techniques anticipated for the Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail.***

The trail construction in all sections of the trail would be completed through a combination of mechanical and hand tools, chainsaw crews and light construction equipment. The trail width is approximately 5' to 6' wide. The centerline will be laid out to avoid the removal of as many large diameter trees as possible. Smaller brush and trees will be hand cut and wherever possible roots and stumps removed. The trail will be graded and maintained with the use of a 4' DR grader (picture attached) towed by a John Deere Gator. The Gator will transport crews and equipment to the work site during construction and be used to access areas that need maintenance due to blow downs or other natural or manmade conditions. The trail will be mowed or graded annually as needed to create a safe and enjoyable trail surface for summer users, specifically hikers and mountain bikes. Where permitted, a snowmobile will maintain the trail for safe and accessible cross country skiing if and when, user traffic warrants winter grooming.



*This trail along the Carrabassett River is 5' wide and graded to remove poison ivy and other plant materials on an annual basis. It is groomed by a snowmobile to provide cross country skiing in the winter.*



*Gator and DR Grader used for trail maintenance*