

Maine Department of Conservation
Bureau of Parks and Lands
Meeting to Discuss Proposal for Developing a Snowmobile Plan
For the Katahdin Region

Bangor Motor Inn, September 27, 2006

Landowner Session Attendance

Terry and Craig Hill - Shin Pond Village/Bowlin Matagamon SC
Rick Hill – Bowlin Matagamon SC
Lisa Hayes – Katahdin Press
Bill Miller – Prentiss & Carlisle
Peter Pray – Millinocket
Frank Clukey - Millinocket
Jensen Bissell – Baxter State Park
Bill Patterson – The Nature Conservancy
Marcia McKeague – Katahdin Timberlands, Katahdin Forest Management
Matt Polstein - New England Outdoor Center
Eric Horschak – Elliotsville Plantation, Inc.
Kevin Miller – Bangor Daily News
Scott Ramsay – Bureau of Parks and Lands
David Rodrigues – Bureau of Parks and Lands
Chuck Simpson – Bureau of Parks and Lands
John Titus – Bureau of Parks and Lands

Stakeholders/Interested Parties Session Attendance

Ken Delano – Benedicta Snowgang
Phil Knowles – Benedicta Snowgang
Jim Nichols – Mt. Chase Landowner
John Neff – Friends of Baxter State Park
Sen. Paul Davis – District 27
Doug Smith – Dover-Foxcroft, District 27 Candidate
Craig Gordon – Cedar Lake/Jo Mary Sledder
Lisa Hayes – Katahdin Press
Rosemary Winslow – Congressman Michaud’s Office
Kevin Miller – Bangor Daily News
Jim White – Maine Snowmobile Assoc./Trails Committee
Bob Meyers – Maine Snowmobile Assoc.
Rick Hill – Bowlin Matagamon SC
Craig and Terry Hill – Shin Pond Village/Bowlin Matagamon SC
Rick Lavasseur – Jo Mary Riders SC
David Moore – Northern Timber Cruisers
Peter Pray – Millinocket
Howard Weymouth – Katahdin Timberlands/Katahdin Forest Management
David Soucy – Director, Bureau of Parks and Lands
Scott Ramsay – Bureau of Parks and Lands
Tim Hall – Bureau of Parks and Lands
David Rodrigues – Bureau of Parks and Lands
John Titus – Bureau of Parks and Lands

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Landowners Session – Discussion Summary

- Snow conditions diminish as you head east from the Millinocket area, one reason why it is important to preserve opportunities in this region; there is more pressure to provide trails where there is sufficient snow (stakeholder)
- Lands being “locked up” east of Baxter State Park force the creation of longer loops, which will limit users and negatively impact the snowmobile industry (stakeholder)
- Losing land in the Katahdin area to ride on means more pressure will be put on the use of the Perimeter Road (stakeholder)
- The policy on snowmobile use in the park was settled in 1981, which allowed for ungroomed use of the Perimeter Road; probably the most controversial issue the Authority has had to deal with; tote road provides good early snow, so there is more use this time of year than at other times, except late in the season; policy consistent with Baxter’s wish that the road be used to access areas within the Park only; latest figures indicate 1,500 – 2,000 sleds per year use the road; grooming would increase traffic and speed; some snow machines are quieter, and can “sneak up” on skiers, as there has been some complaints
- Corrections to the landowner map are needed (Katahdin Timberlands, TNC, others); if you have shape files, they can be sent to gena.denis@maine.gov, who will incorporate them into the Bureau’s data files.
- Expanding trails west and north of BSP is not feasible, as this gets riders (particularly tourists) away from services (stakeholder); several landowners agree that this would be problematic, as this could create conflicts between owners (in trying to tie together longer trails between multiple landowners)
- There is an interest in guiding in the backcountry, a limited number of people are willing to pay for that experience
- Need to determine the cost of preserving the trail system and cost for managing the infrastructure; this cost could include money to acquire access (landowner)
- What about managing fewer miles of trail, but having those trails managed more efficiently? Are there trails that could be discontinued because they are not cost-effective? (ORV Division)
- What about the idea of landowners providing “floating easements,” whereby they commit to the trail, but not to an exact location, which gives them flexibility year to year as to where the trail will be located (stakeholder); this idea has been tried between Portage and Caribou, although it is not in the form of an easement (ORV Division)
- It would be helpful to first identify the needs of the stakeholders and users, then come back to the landowners with this information (landowner)
- “Encumbrances” on the property diminish the value of the property, unless it is adequately compensated for, and provided they do not burden our ability to capture value (landowner); we cannot recover value from the land like we once did
- There needs to be a better focus on benefits and impacts to the landowners when it comes to planning for these uses on private lands (landowner)

- Projects need to be addressed in larger context; what constitutes a “complete” project? Example: East Millinocket to Shin Pond might constitute a complete project, or perhaps preserving a local or regional loop, or some may look at the trail system from Kittery to Fort Kent as a project
- Need to look at ways to better fund trails; the ORV Division only has so much money; realize there are also local efforts to raise money (ORV Division)
- Would landowners consider tax incentives where they provide trails? (stakeholder)
- I would not want to see tax incentives; tax breaks with “strings attached” is not an attractive option, even if it seems to add value – would rather raise more money from the landbase from which taxes would then be paid (landowner)
- Can’t charge for public use of the trails, as this would remove liability protection provided by the state; liability insurance premiums are exceptionally high around the country where this is being done (landowner)
- Landowners can only give yearly agreements for trail locations and use, as management on the landbase changes frequently – so a yearly conversation with trail groups is desirable over providing long term agreements (landowner)
- The Katahdin Region has 7-8 trail clubs – is there a more efficient way to converse with landowners, maybe have one representative for all of them? (stakeholder)
- Katahdin Timberlands currently deals with 4 clubs (landowner)
- Part of this Plan effort might include prioritizing trails; the ORV Division cannot do this
- It would be unfair to put money and effort into one trail system at the expense of another – although some trails get more use than others, those lesser used trails are still terribly important to people (stakeholder)
- The ORV Division needs to prioritize what it is able to provide (ORV Division)
- What is the most critical need regarding these trails? We would rather focus on that first (landowner)
- The ORV Division needs to run some numbers and examine costs as a part of this plan effort; determine a cost per mile (landowner)
- ORV Division each year runs out of money to fund projects. There is more project need than there is money to assist; because of this it is hard to talk about expanding trail opportunities (ORV Division)
- Maybe trail users need to pick up more of the tab (landowner)
- Trail users do not fit into a universal category; some are highly dedicated, devoted users, some are casual or occasional users; others just come for the ride; need to consider all users when accessing fees (stakeholder)
- Some riders use trails to access fishing areas only, and don’t want to be burdened with paying for an entire ITS system (stakeholder)
- The plan should concentrate first on trails that have the greatest economic impact - this could be an ITS, or it could be a local trail (landowner)
- Perhaps the state should focus on the ITS only (landowner)
- There is a need to take care of the landowners first, as they are the ones that provide the trails. Stay away from ideas that puts pressure on the landowner, like demanding easements be conveyed (stakeholder)
- Lets continue to work first with those who are willing to work with us, then find ways to work with those who aren’t (stakeholder)
- Everything worked out as part of the Katahdin Lake deal has been negated as a result of Roxanne Quimby’s recent purchase (stakeholder)
- Landowners have to find value in the trail corridors on their land (stakeholder)

Stakeholders/Interested Parties Session – Discussion Summary

- Summary of this morning's meeting: landowners want trails prioritized, and they want to know what's in it for them financially (ORV Division)
- Most private land is no longer tied to the mills like it once was (Irving is an exception), so the land has to produce all of the time because the mills aren't there to pick up the slack (ORV Division)
- We asked this morning if we really need more trails, or do we need to make what we have work better (ORV Division)
- We need to protect all trails in the state; it is not fair to support one system over and above another system (stakeholder)
- Need to better define the state's role; the trail system did not grow out of Augusta, it grew out of you folks; the state's role is to be supportive, which forces us to have to prioritize how we spend what money we do have. However, what do you think the Bureau's role should be, given the critical economic engine generated by the SM industry? (Dave Soucy, BP&L Director)
- The state should be generating/providing more money for clubs (stakeholder)
- The ITS should be the priority, because it connects important businesses (stakeholder)
- Registration levels should be on a par with other New England states, provided the money is dedicated to supporting the trail system (stakeholder)
- ORV clerical folks are currently tracking approx. 400 grooming units as part of the grant program (ORV Division)
- The "volunteer" model for managing trails works best, over and above instituting a system of paid staff – volunteers, who are currently doing a terrific job, could end up being replaced by folks doing this work only if they get paid. This could put a severe burden on the management of the entire trail system (Dave Soucy)
- Perhaps one commitment the state could make is to groom its own rail trail corridors, since they provide important connections to trail systems statewide (ORV Division)
- Perhaps the state could provide a "contingency" groomer (stakeholder)
- There are over 13,000 miles of snowmobile trails statewide (ORV Division)
- No one is paying for the use of trails on private landowners now. If fees are charged, there may be increased liability exposure (stakeholder, landowner)
- Administrative costs could be recouped without engaging the liability issue (ORV Division)
- There are 15 landowners between Shin Pond and East Millinocket. Can we get 15 easements at the same time? This could create conflicts among the landowners, and we don't want to do this (stakeholder)
- Landowners might consider easements if a trail if it ties together important destinations on either end (landowner)
- Landowners don't want to upset the current system for agreeing to the use of their lands (landowner)
- There are problems finding volunteers to groom (stakeholder)
- Some of us fight a constant battle on all sides - with the state, with the landowner, with users, and with trying to find and keep people to do trail maintenance and management.
- We have to prioritize keeping what we have now (stakeholder)
- It is good to have more trails, because this spreads out the sue, and you don't have the maintenance problems with concentrated sled use (stakeholder)

- The fact that we cannot groom the Perimeter Road is absurd. This is public land for use for all people. We should also encourage increased membership of the local clubs (Sen. Paul Davis)
- We've recently lost a trail loop, and need to find a way to keep users in Millinocket for at least another day – being able to take them on a groomed Perimeter Road would fill that need, and provide an important economic boost to the area (stakeholder)
- There is no provision that allows for all uses in the park. Grooming the Perimeter Road would increase speed and volume in what is a wilderness park, which would not be in keeping with Gov. Baxter's intent (stakeholder)
- If the Perimeter Road is now graded, why is grooming a SM trail an issue? (stakeholder)
- If we push the issue, we run the risk of losing all of the snowmobiling in the park (stakeholder)
- The Authority is entirely self-funded through an endowment left by Baxter, which makes it different from other public lands. The Authority is required through the Deeds of Trust to manage according to Gov. Baxter's wishes (Dave Soucy)
- The speed limit on the Perimeter Road is 25 mph (stakeholder)
- We need a new connection from the Katahdin Loop Trail to Route 11, this would provide a nice "figure 8" (stakeholder); this will also be important when DOT closes the bridge over the Penobscot in Millinocket for up to two years, and southern traffic has to be rerouted (ORV Division)
- Saying "no new trails" could stagnate the industry; users are always looking for new opportunities and different places to ride (stakeholder)
- There are not many scenic vistas in the Katahdin area, we should find more places that accommodate different skill levels (ORV Division)
- Scenic vistas can be found on Coburn Mt., Jo Mary Mt., Ragged Mt., East Kennebago Mt., Cooper Mt., and Bowlin Overlook; many of these are quite steep
- How about swapping the 2,000-acre parcel coming to the state in the Katahdin Lake deal for something we can ride on? (stakeholder); the terrain is not very good for riding on (ORV Division)
- Perhaps a surcharge could be added to SM registrations that could be used for acquiring trail access; adding \$5.00 to the reg. could bring in one million a year (ORV Division)
- Where are we at with the "Baldacci Connector" in the Katahdin Lake property? (stakeholder); this will be opened only if riders can no longer use the Quimby property – it is relatively short stretch, just over ½ mile (Dave Soucy)
- Gardner Land Company has a legal right-of-way across the land in 3-8 and 2-8 (Quimby property) – wonder if there is anyway we could acquire some portion of that (stakeholder); it is not clear if that ROW can be used for public purposes (ORV Division)