

High Peaks Trails Summit: Invited Trail Group Representatives Comments,  
September 24, 2013, Webster Hall in Kingfield

Summit attendees were asked to comment on 4 strategies to improve the back-country trail network in the High Peaks Region for the enjoyment of future generations.

**Strategy # 1: Enhance regional connectivity for all back-country trail systems by working together.**

**Comments:**

- Some trails are built for single use and are specifically designed for that specific use and to provide a certain experience.
- It is good and appropriate to share some trails. Important regional connector links are a good example.
- Rural economic development. The Northern Forest Canoe Trail markets itineraries for visitors to an area. These may include different types of trail experiences. Businesses can provide shuttles. For instance it might be possible to provide packages of activities for ATV visitors or Maine Huts and Trails users.
- Explore offering multiple recreation activities for visitors. Clubs could partner on events or itineraries.
- Camp groups currently organize trips in the Flagstaff/Bigelow area where they both paddle and hike.
- Maine Trail finder was mentioned as a good trails resource for visitors as well as residents, but it is only for non-motorized trails.
- On the Abraham Trail there has been some inappropriate motorized use on what has become an ecological reserve. There is opportunity there for a new hiking trail.
- One unique thing here is the connection to Canada. Why not market trails connecting to Canada? On weekends with reciprocity among the states, why not try to set up cross-border reciprocity as well?
- JV Wing snowmobile club has on their agenda getting back snowmobile access across the AT in the Caribou Pond – Barnjum area. This area is of interest to many groups and it is also an area of conflict. It is also an area with important conservation values. This crossing has been used for 20 years, but something changed last year. Moderator suggested going into details after the meeting.
- Integrated Resource Policy (IRP) used by the Department of Parks and Public Lands offers a good process for coordinating among many interests and uses including recreation, forestry, and preservation. There is a challenge to balance the needs of the AT and other trails in the region. IRP may provide a process.

**Strategy # 2: Enhance the capacity of all back-country trail systems both through a shared investment in the regional system, and by working together to resolve our differences.**

**Comments:**

- Why not share more trails among users rather than having single use trails and building new ones? Why not share trails rather than building new ones?
- Each trail system has worked somewhat separately. Motorized and non-motorized have been somewhat divided. They are coming together somewhat now.
- Bigelow Preserve creation was strongly supported by snowmobile clubs from around the state. This helped with a critical vote and is a reason snowmobilers have a place in the preserve today.
- The Carrabassett River bridge multiple use project also attracted broad support.
- It would help to get projects mapped along with information about who is working on them.
- Sharing trails, such as winter trails, can be a safety issue. However, the experience may be a good one if all parties are aware.
- In shared use areas where there is an increased amount of traffic, it would benefit everyone to work together to deal with more and more trail users. For example, working together to build and site back-country privies/toilets.
- From a state perspective collaboration is critical. Joint use can work (rail-trail examples). It is not perfect, but can be useful. Androscoggin Riverlands example. Sunrise Trail Coalition is another good example of the above.
- Rafting companies in the Forks have found it useful to offer different choices of activities in their vacation packages. This helps offset weather challenges.

**Strategy # 3: Increase youth engagement by working together to create and sustain opportunities for kids to get outside and enjoy all kinds of recreation.**

**Comments:**

- The Rangeley Snowmobile Club will go to the high school and ask kids to get involved. They will offer free club memberships. They will ask students to volunteer for event support.
- High Peaks Alliance has created summer jobs by hiring kids to be on trail crews. This work could be expanded to include work on many different clubs/organization's trails.

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- On MDI Friends of Acadia (FOA) have programs to get kids working in the outdoors. The challenge is that such programs may work well, or they may not. Contact FOA for details about their successes and issues.
- Other important sources for youth involvement include the Boy Scouts and YETI program at Mt. Blue.
- CRNEMBA includes a kids' race when they hold mountain bike races/events. They try to recruit kids to participate in hopes that they will grow to enjoy and support the sport when they are older.
- Recruit interns from the University of Maine at Farmington's outdoor program.

**Strategy # 4: Creation of a Trails Council, or Network, to collaboratively continue development of the regional vision.**

**Comments:**

- ATV clubs helped haul material for trail construction on the AT and MATC was grateful. Collaboration made the work more efficient, and a network/council could coordinate similar kinds of projects in the future.
- At last summer's trails fest, Maine Huts and Trails partnered with CRNEMBA on trail building. MHT offered free lodging which introduced their system to visitors from away. New trails were built and bike riders from away learned about the trails in the area.
- Some winter trails are not designed for summer use. A regional trail council could help sort out any issues.
- A network could help get the word out about trails in the High Peaks. It could share information about all trails with local people and visitors. See Downeast Sunrise Trail example.
- It would be good to have a clearinghouse for information about all trail types. One challenge is that some trails, particularly snowmobile trails may change season by season because of logging operations.
- A network could help resolve landowner issues.
- It would be beneficial to work together. HPA has received a grant to help encourage working together, listening to each other, keeping the communication lines open.
- You should share this with other trail builders around the state. It would be good to communicate with trail groups from other regions of the state. Network to share best management practices.

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<u>Participants</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Jim Boyce	Kingfield Sno-wanderers
Barry Turcotte	Carrabassett Region New England Mt Biking Assoc.
Alison Thayer	Carrabassett Region New England Mt Biking Assoc.
Bill Birden	Sandy River Riders, Narrow Gauge Snowmobile Club
John Evans	Sandy River Riders, Narrow Gauge Snowmobile Club
Sandy Dumont	Rangeley Snowmobile Club
Jim Vogel	Department of Parks & Public Lands
Dick Fecteau	Maine Appalachian Trail Club
Tellis Fenwick	Kingfield Quad Runners ATV Club
Chris Beach	High Peaks Alliance
Betsy Squibb	High Peaks Alliance
Susan Hunter	High Peaks Alliance
Jerry Hunter	High Peaks Alliance
Bill Munzer	JV Wing Snowmobile Club
John Tobias	JV Wing Snowmobile Club
Don Cutler	Mt Abram Riders ATV Club
Scott Ramsay	Department of Parks & Public Lands
Rex Turner	Department of Parks & Public Lands
Walter Opuzynski	Northern Forest Canoe Trail
David Farrington	University of Maine Business School, student
Charlie Woodworth	Maine Huts and Trails
Tom Saviello	State Senator (Moderator)
Burnham Martin	NPS RTCA Program (Recorder)
Ben Godsoe	High Peaks Alliance (Co-facilitator/presenter)