

Carrabassett Valley Trails Committee



Date: January 8, 2024

To: Carrabassett Valley Trails Committee (CVTC)

From: Ed Gervais

Subject: Agenda for January 12, 2024 Meeting

The next CVTC meeting is set for Friday January 12, 2024, from 1:00-4:00 PM at the Carrabassett Valley Town Office.

1. Decisions and Actions from our November 17, 2023 Meeting (Ed)

I have attached our “Decisions and Actions” document from the last meeting for reference.

2. CVTC Effectiveness and Chair Position

Wow, another year! It has been a privilege to work with the CVTC partners over the past year. I’d like to take a minute for feedback on how we are doing, how I am doing, and whether you’d like me to continue as chair, or if its time rotate to someone new.

3. Trail Damage Summary (Josh, etc.)

Josh put together a brief report regarding damage to the trails system. It’s extensive. I am hoping Josh, (and perhaps Dave C and others) can give us an update so we can begin a discussion around resource needs and plans for addressing the damage. Dave, Josh, and Deb and the Town of CV have already done significant work in this area – we are very lucky to have the Town’s unwavering support for the recreational trails here in CV.

4. Additional winter trail at Sugarloaf Outdoor Center

Sugarloaf has some (valid) concerns and has concluded that additional winter fat-biking trail should not be opened on the SOC side of Route 27, at least not this year. A deeper understanding of those concerns would be helpful, not only to support discussion on potential ways they could be addressed at the SOC but also to inform plans around other potential trail expansion initiatives.

5. Review of any winter grooming needs/coordination

CRNEMBA purchased a second snow dog and a Quonset hut for their storage. Miraculously, both units seem to have survived being partially submerged during the flooding.

6. Trail Open/Close Policy and Procedure

revisit/reconfirmation of the bike trail opening/closing policies and process. Some confusion seems to have arisen so I think we should review the how and the why the trails are opened and closed. The current Trail Conditions page language describing our policies and process is attached for reference. In my view this has been largely successful. However, we may need to clarify certain aspects given what seem to be more frequent snow/dirt riding transitions recently.

7. Newtons (and Crommett's) Capital Maintenance Project(s)

As we all know, a significant wet and muddy area opened up at the base of Newton's last year. It became bad enough to have a significant impact on the riding experience and was completely out of character with the quality of the rest of the network. Several wet areas on Crommett's were not far behind. This will be a significant project which will require some financial and civil engineering to pull off. We should discuss how to get started.

8. Pump Track

We had some good work started last year (thanks Deb, Adam, and Josh). I think we need to keep a cadence going on this important aspect of the CVTrail experience and work toward a complete plan this coming year with a goal of 2025 implementation. Tom Butler forwarded a neat video of an example: https://youtu.be/uUWFJxRF_HE?si=1ha-90NtHeIDdCj5. You can probably also find it by searching YouTube for "Parked. Episode 2 - Bluffdale, UT".

About our Trail Conditions

This trail condition page is hosted by CRNEMBA on behalf of the Carrabassett Valley trails Committee (CVTC). The CVTC is a partnership between the [Town of Carrabassett Valley](#), [CRNEMBA](#), [Maine Huts & Trails](#) and [Sugarloaf](#) created to coordinate and fuel the growth and maintenance of the unique, world class trail system here in the Carrabassett Region. A subcommittee was recently appointed to manage the maintenance and opening and closing of the trails. The following will guide those decisions:

- Trail closure avoids costly damage when a significant length of trail surface is soft enough to rut with a tire. Efforts to repair damaged trails use resources better spent on new trails, and lead to longer term closures.
- The CVTC and its subcommittee understand and share the desire to ride and intend to keep the trails open as often as possible! During spring and fall months, following some weather events, and depending on ground saturation, system wide closure may be necessary.
- Closure decisions will be made by the subcommittee and will be based on input from a network of local riders.
- Trail closures and openings will be made public via the CRNEMBA website Trail Conditions page and at Trailhead kiosks.
- This is not yet an exact science. The subcommittee will do its best to adjust the criteria for determining closure as it continues to gain experience.
- Landowners (e.g. Sugarloaf, Town of Carrabassett Valley) or leaseholders (e.g. MH&T) may exercise their right to a final say on closing or opening of certain trails.

Please direct questions or comments to either [Josh Tauses](#) or [Sam Punderson](#).

Carrabassett Valley Trails Committee



Date: 18-Nov-2023

To: CVTC Committee

From: Ed Gervais

Subject: Decisions and Actions from November 17, 2023 Meeting

Postscript: As agreed at the meeting, Tom Butler, John Freeman, and Tim Flight walked the candidate area at the Sugarloaf Outdoor Center where a connection to new single track might be possible and report some workable options. Tom Butler and the Sugarloaf Nordic staff are now evaluating.

The following highlights, decisions and actions were taken from the subject CVTC meeting.

9. Current Trail Status

- Tom Cromwell relayed (from Josh and other trail condition monitors) that single track remains closed but that there was hope that anticipated cold weather would see the ground freeze up and trails opening within a week or so.

10. Narrow Gauge Grooming

- Tom Butler indicated that Sugarloaf would commit to not only grooming the Narrow Gauge during peak season, but also during the early winter periods that were usually covered by Chip Cochrane. The Outdoor Center purchased a new roller drag which can be used with minimal snow depth. The roller does not have a Nordic track setting attachment so when snow depths allow, the Outdoor Center team will transport their Ginzu drag across Route 27.

11. Sugarloaf Outdoor Center

- Tom Butler indicated that this year's policy for fat bike access would continue with a philosophy of providing connectivity between the base area and Campbell Field. Fat bikes will be allowed access, free of charge, trail conditions permitting, to Snowbrook trail and short section of the race trail to the Route 27 Connector.
- Tom described the new Nordic Pulse app that Sugarloaf would be using for Nordic trail conditions, pointing out that input to the app was GPS enabled so it would show the user when trails were groomed by color-code on the map.
- There was some discussion around the potential for additional access but in the end the conclusion drawn in 2022 was reaffirmed. As excerpted from October 2022 Decisions and Actions:

"There was discussion and general agreement that the Nordic and fat biking trail systems should be as separate as possible for the best experience for each user group".

There was general agreement that it was appropriate to periodically revisit access policy as the activities, users, and the trail networks evolve.

- Tom indicated that Sugarloaf's fat bike rental fleet was safely stored away in good condition but that there were no plans to reintroduce a rental option this year.
- Tom also brought up the previously discussed potential of additional single track on the Town Lot below and to the East of the Outdoor Center lodge (separate from the Nordic trail system) and that Sugarloaf might potentially be able to help with snowmobile grooming if that additional trail was realized.

12. MH&T Winter Grooming & Riding

- Seth reported that MH&T has two new sleds and three operators lined up to groom a target of four nights per week and that there was potential for a few additional operators to provide backup, etc.
- Plans are to groom Newton's, Crommett's, up to Poplar Hut, out Sticky Trail, by Half-Way Yurt, to Flagstaff, and the dam and perhaps as far as Big Eddy.
- Unfortunately, Seth reported that recent warm and wet weather conditions had not allowed him to get to the drainage fixes he had hoped to on Commett's.
- Seth pointed out that MH&T trails are always open.

13. Single Track Grooming and Riding

- Tim Flight reiterated that he would be stepping back a bit from the hours he has (so generously) put into grooming operations over past seasons but will stay involved in planning, managing the trail conditions page, and be willing to fill in from time to time. Tim Gerencer thought that he and Mark Schwarz, with occasional help from Tim Flight, could handle the grooming. Tim will confirm this with Mark. Tim Flight recapped the challenges of adding volunteers given the flexibility needed for grooming expeditiously when conditions dictated (usually at night). When the potential was brought up, Tim Gerencer did not think a paid grooming position was needed, at least not yet. Adam offered to help with grooming.
- Additional single track grooming support resources were discussed.
 - It was concluded that a snowmobile was not yet needed
 - The time has come when a second Snow Dog would be very much appreciated. Sprocket is going on its seventh season and experiencing more frequent mechanical failure. The grooming team will settle on track length. Valerie and Ed will revisit the funding subject at this weekend's CRNEMBA BOD Meeting.

- While not absolutely necessary, it was clear that a portable drive-through Quonset hut “dog house” at Campbell Field would be very beneficial. The hut would eliminate the drag setup time and most of the shoveling required by the current “chain and tarp” storage strategy. Deb did not see an issue with putting a portable hut on Twon land in the location where Sprocket has traditionally been stored. Tim Gerencer agreed to measure the grooming rig and make a recommendation regarding hut size. Valerie and Ed will revisit the funding subject at this weekend’s CRNEMBA BOD Meeting.
- Additional single track at the Sugarloaf Outdoor Center was discussed at some length.
 - Tim Flight, Tom Butler, John Freeman, and perhaps a few others will be walking the area below (North) and to the East of the Outdoor Center lodge this weekend to explore options for connecting from the OC base area. Such a connection would be designed to minimize any additional trail sharing between Nordic skiers and fat bikers. Tim Flight thought 3-4 miles of sperate single track might be possible if a connection can be made.
 - If a connection is worked out, Tom Butler and Sugarloaf will evaluate resource availability to help realize the new trail.
 - Tim Flight will also send a map to Deb for review by Rec Committee.
 - If the above can be worked out, CRNEMBA will organize volunteers as needed to brush out corridor adequate to support grooming by snowmobile.
- Adam asked about options for steeper singletrack -Oak Knoll for example. It was acknowledged that current grooming equipment options would be challenged by the terrain. Adam suggested a look at the Widescape WS250 as a possible option (<https://widescape.co/ws250/>).
- Other perennial issues with trail use and misuse were discussed.
 - Tim Gerencer pointed out the benefit of more coordination of snowshoe support after significant storms. Valerie suggested pulling together a list of willing volunteers to whom direction could be communicated for more coordinated and responsive support.
 - Post holing -uhg. Discussed again, with no silver-bullet solution evident. More prominent signs or ones with larger lettering were discussed but there was no overwhelming sentiment to purchase new signs, at least not this year. Tom Butler indicated that temporarily closing single track trails on Sugarloaf land to allow them to set up after grooming was acceptable.
 - The little “presents” left behind by dog owners at parking areas and for the grooming operators to find remains a problem. After consideration of the inconsiderateness of these owners, some hand-wringing, and no obvious solution, the meeting was adjourned.