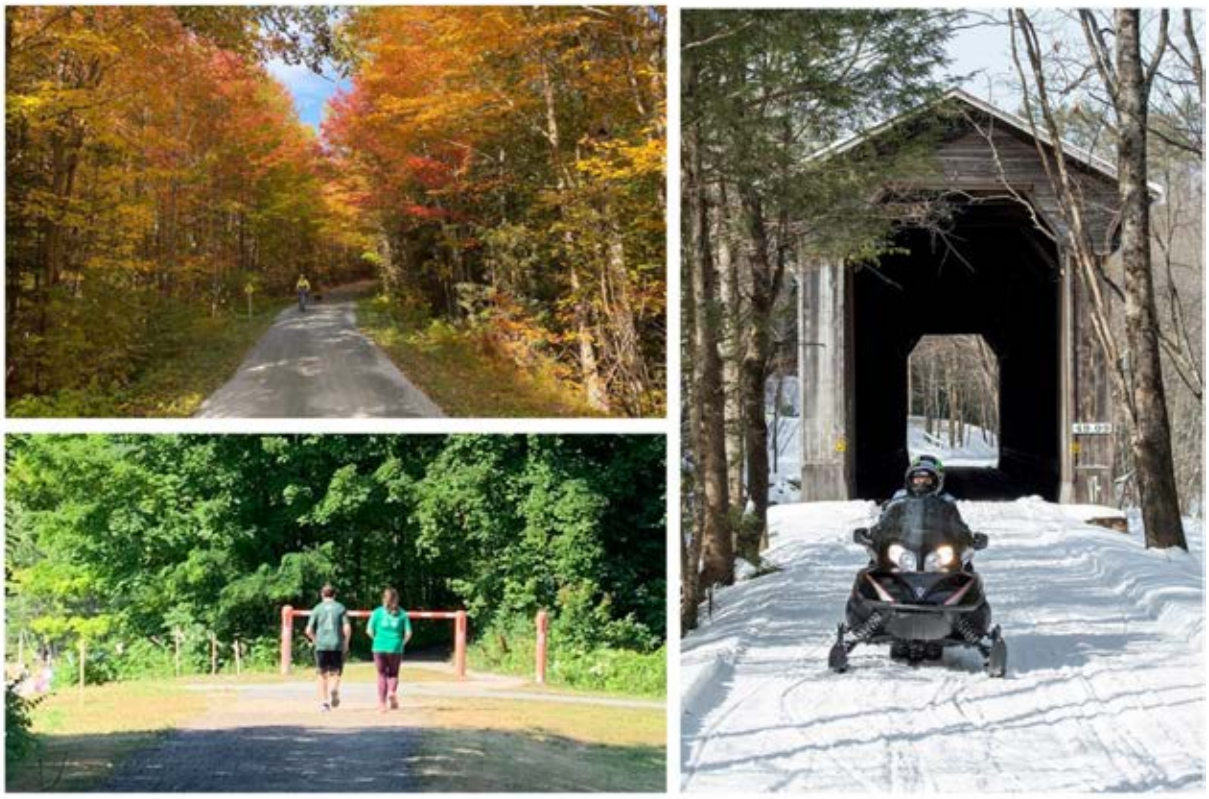

NEW HAMPSHIRE
RAIL TRAILS PLAN

August 2022

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APPENDICES

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

The following terms and acronyms are used in this plan:

Abandoned Railroad Corridor. Railroad corridors, or portions of them, are considered abandoned when:

- The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Bureau of Rail & Transit has determined that there will be no rail service in the near-term on specific sections of railroad corridors; and
- NHDOT has obtained formal abandonment approval from the Surface Transportation Board.

Active Railroad Line. An active railroad line is one that currently has train service, no matter how infrequently.

CMAQ (Congestion Management Air Quality). CMAQ is a Federal-aid program that provides for transportation projects designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Motorized uses (i.e., OHRVs) are prohibited on corridors purchased or improved with CMAQ funding.

DNCR (New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources).

FHWA (Federal Highway Administration).

GIA (Grant in Aid). New Hampshire funding program to provide assistance to organized, non-profit OHRV and snowmobile clubs for projects that will benefit the ridership of OHRVs and snowmobiles. Funding for the program is derived from OHRV and snowmobile registration fees.

HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program). The HSIP is a Federal- aid program that provides funding to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-State-owned roads and roads on tribal lands.

IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) or (BIL) Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The IIJA or BIL is the federal funding package signed into law in 2021 to fund transportation, broadband, clean water and electric grid projects. The IIJA addresses formula

funds apportioned and allocated to states (such as TAP) and competitive discretionary grant funds that are open to local, regional, state and tribal governments.

NHDOT (New Hampshire Department of Transportation).

OHRV (Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle). OHRVs typically include All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), Trail Bikes, and Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs).

Out-of-Service Railroad Line. An out-of-service railroad line or section is one that currently has no train service, but rail service could be restored with some infrastructure improvements, and the section or line has not been formally abandoned through the Surface Transportation Board.

QR Code. A type of matrix barcode that can be read by a smart phone that links to a particular URL (web address).

TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program). TAP is a federal funding set-aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program intended for a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, and safe routes to school projects.

TE (Transportation Enhancement Program). The Transportation Enhancement program was a federal funding program providing for the implementation of a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects including pedestrian and bicycle facilities. TE was replaced by TAP. Motorized uses (i.e., OHRVs) are prohibited on rail corridors that were purchased or improved with TE funding.

Rail Trail. A rail trail is a trail that has been established on a rail corridor, either active or inactive, that is managed for year-round use.

Rail Trail Agreement (RTA). A Rail Trail Agreement is a written agreement between NHDOT and another agency regarding the management and maintenance of rail trails developed within rail corridors owned by NHDOT.

Rail with Trail. Rail with Trail is the term used to describe rail trails that have been established within railroad corridors that have active railroad use.

Recreation Trails Program (RTP). RTP is a federal funding program that provides funding for the development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and nonmotorized users.

SB 185 (Senate Bill 185)

Legislation passed by the New Hampshire legislature in 2019 directing the preparation of this state rail trails plan.

Surface Transportation Board (STB). The Surface Transportation Board is an independent federal agency that is charged with the economic regulation of various modes of surface transportation, primarily freight rail. For more information see: https://www.stb.gov/

USDOT (United States Department of Transportation).

PRESIDENTIAL RAIL TRAIL, PONDICHERRY SECTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The New Hampshire State Rail Trails Plan (Plan) is a plan for future rail trail developments and investments and fulfills the requirements of Senate Bill 185, adopted by the state legislature in 2019. Senate Bill 185 (SB 185) was an act to develop a New Hampshire state rail trails plan to guide the preservation and investment in New Hampshire's state-owned rail corridors. SB 185's Statement of Purpose is as follows:

> *"…This act requires the development of a plan for the state rail-trail system to ensure the preservation and integrity of these assets and to provide direction for future development. In addition to defining the role of the department of transportation in preservation of rail corridors, the plan will determine the best way to maximize the return on investment from, and leverage future investment in, the state's rail corridor assets. Additionally, this plan will determine how to engage towns, cities, and private rail-trail organizations in these efforts..."*

This plan builds on prior efforts, including the 2005 New Hampshire State Trails Plan, and focuses on the unique opportunities and management considerations associated with rail trails. New Hampshire's network of rail trail corridors that have been improved for trail use has grown steadily since 2005 – today there are 338 miles of rail trails established or under design within rail corridors owned by the state. The scope of this Plan, as established in SB 185, is noted below:

- Update the 2005 rail corridor inventory through state records, statewide trail organization, and regional planning commissions, including, by trail, the funding sources and permitted uses;
- Include a statewide economic-impact analysis on the value of rail trails;
- Consider maintenance and cost of maintenance for rail trails, including state responsibility for the underlying structural integrity of abandoned rail corridors while permitting trail organization and town to perform routine maintenance of trail surfaces and other amenities;
- Establish a tier system for prioritizing state investments in rail trail projects, based on criteria such as geography, connectivity to other rail trails, proximity to population centers and natural attractions, and other criteria as deemed appropriate;
- Develop recommendations for a state funding mechanism to support rail trail projects and the management structure of such funds;
- Develop a template trail management agreement outlining responsibilities of state, local and private organizations involved with management of state-owned trails;
- Compile and maintain a list of trail organizations and the area of the state each serves;
- Identify best practices for acquiring insurance for volunteer trail management groups;
- Document state commitment and support for the development of rail trails for their transportation, recreation tourism, and other economic value;
- Determine how to ensure the integrity of publicly owned rail trail corridors. This may include reestablishing property lines with abutting property owners; and
- Hold a minimum of three public hearings, each in a different area of the state, to solicit public comment to shape the plan and make the final plan available on the Department of Transportation website.

The full text of SB185 is provided in the Appendix.

This plan was developed under the direction of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and in close coordination with the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR). The plan was developed with the active participation of a Rail Trail Advisory Stakeholder Committee (Advisory Committee) and is considerate of feedback received via a public outreach process. The Advisory Committee included representatives from a variety of entities (state agencies, modal user groups, statewide coalitions, planning commissions, railroad operators, etc.) that have an interest in the preservation and integrity of the state-owned rail corridors and, specifically, their development and use as rail trails. The Advisory Committee included one representative from each of the listed entities/groups:

- NH Governor's Office – Office of Strategic Initiatives
- New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT)
- New Hampshire Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (DNCR)
- NH Department of Business & Economic Affairs
- NH Regional Planning Commissions
- NH Municipal Association

- Business & Industry Association of New Hampshire
- New Hampshire Rail Trail Coalition
- Railroad operator on state-owned rail corridor
- Non-motorized users
- Motorized users
- Homeowner

The Advisory Committee convened six meetings and provided valuable input and information that helped guide the plan development. The public outreach process included four public hearings, one virtual and three in-person, that were geographically dispersed (Concord, Keene, and Littleton). Public feedback on all aspects of the plan, including a review of the mapping and rail trail inventory, prioritizing state investments in rail trails, and suggestions for a state funding mechanism were discussed at all four public hearings.

The scope of this plan was set by SB 185 and is addressed within five chapters, listed below and subsequently summarized:

1. Inventory of Rail Trails
2. Economic Impact of Rail Trails
3. Funding Rail Trails
4. Prioritizing State Investments in Rail Trails
5. Improvement, Management, and Maintenance of Rail Trails

INVENTORY OF RAIL TRAILS

State-Owned Rail Trails by the Numbers

- **27 Rail Trails**
- **338 Miles**
- **Longest Rail Trail: 58 Miles (Northern Rail Trail)**
- **Shortest Rail Trail: 1.5 Miles (Profile Rail Trail)**
- **Miles on Inactive Rail Corridors: 334 Miles**
- **Miles on Active Rail Corridors: 4 Miles**

Miles. There are 27 state-owned rail trails on 338 miles of state-owned rail corridors in New Hampshire. These trails range from the 1.5-mile Profile Rail Trail in Bethlehem to the 58-mile Northern Rail Trail which connects ten communities between Lebanon and Concord. State-owned rail trails are distributed throughout the state with significant mileage within the Monadnock Region (approximately 85 miles) and the White Mountain Region (approximately 73 miles).

Activities. The state-owned rail trails range in condition from paved surfaces to unimproved corridors with rails still in place. New Hampshire rail trails are noteworthy for the variety of activities that they accommodate. The WOW (Winnipesauke Opechee Winnisquam) Trail in Laconia accommodates active rail and a trail ("rail with trail") within its corridor. A section of the Cotton Valley Rail Trail accommodates wheeling on "speeder cars" that run on the track, which is still in place. Paved sections of rail trails in Lebanon, Keene, Salem, Londonderry and

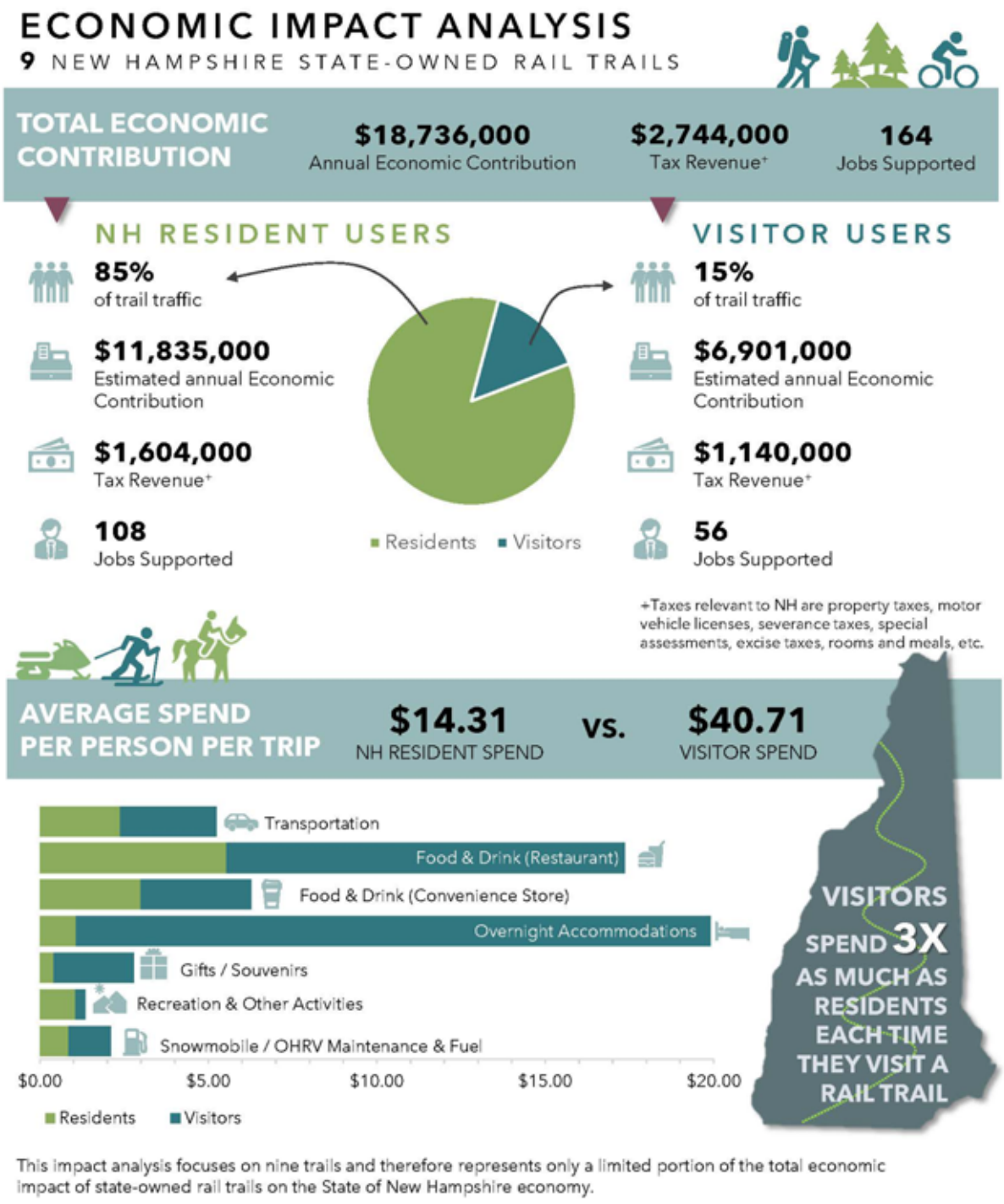
State-owned rail trails in New Hampshire accommodate a wide range of activities.

Windham accommodate recreational and non-recreational (i.e., commuting, errand running) trips. Most rail trails, however, are gravel or earth paths that accommodate primarily recreational uses including walking/wheelchair use, hiking, bicycling/mountain biking, horseback riding, Nordic skiing, mushing, and snowshoeing. Motorized uses including snowmobiles and OHRVs (off-highway recreational vehicles) (ATVs and dirt bikes) are allowed on designated rail trails. Snowmobiles are allowed on approximately 304 miles of state-owned rail trails as shown in Table 1-2, and OHRVs have access to approximately 70 miles of rail trails in the summer and 97 miles of rail trails with snow cover.

Limitations on Use. Funding sources used to purchase rail corridors dictate certain limitations regarding their use. For example, no motorized uses (specifically OHRVs) can occur on corridors or segments that were purchased with Transportation Enhancement (TE) or CMAQ (Congestion Management Air Quality) funding. Corridors purchased with Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funds must remain in open space in perpetuity. Funding sources for various rail corridors are contained within the plan.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RAIL TRAILS

The economic contributions of rail trails to New Hampshire's economy were studied by a team of researchers from the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. The team collected data on nine rail trails in New Hampshire and determined the economic impact of each trail in terms of resident and visitor spending, as well as the jobs supported, and taxes



generated by spending and visitation associated with rail trails. The team calculated the economic impact based on intercept survey data, path count data and an economic modeling tool, IMPLAN. The economic study found the following:

- Based on intercept surveys conducted by the research team, the majority of rail trail users (85%) were New Hampshire residents.
- Visitors were a smaller proportion of rail trail users (15%) but spent three times as much money as residents. Visitor spending represents “net new” spending, more specifically spending that would not come to New Hampshire but for the visit to the rail trail. This market represents and economic growth area for the state.
- Rail trail visits not only bring spending to communities and regions, but they also contribute to tax accounts and support jobs.
- In aggregate, the nine trails studied provided economic benefits to the State of New Hampshire as summarized in the graphic on the previous page.

Funding Rail Trails

Rail trails in New Hampshire are funded through a combination of federal, state, and local funds, as well as those derived from fundraising efforts, private contributions and volunteer labor contributions. The rail trail funding picture in New Hampshire is summarized below:

Federal Funding: Federal funding for rail trails has been provided primarily through three federal programs: Transportation Alternatives (TA), Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ), and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). These are “formula” funding programs that are provided to all states by the USDOT Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) based on an allocation formula and the funds are administered by the state through competitive grant solicitations. For the period 2014-2021, $14.8 million was programmed for rail trail projects through these three programs. Rail trail projects compete with other projects for these funds, and each grant solicitation identities the requirements and criteria for that specific solicitation. For the period 2014 through 2021, approximately 20% of TAP funds, 24% of CMAQ funds, and 10% of RTP funds were programmed for rail trail projects.

State Funding: The Grant in Aid (GIA) program is the only consistent source of state funds for rail trail projects. GIA funds are administered by DNCR and are derived from state registration fees for OHRVs, snowmobiles and unrefunded gas taxes and are not available to trails that do not accommodate motorized users. For the period 2017 through 2020 approximately $190,000 of GIA funds were awarded for rail trail projects.

Municipal and Non-Profit Funding. Municipalities and non-profit organizations are vital to the support of rail trails in New Hampshire. These organizations support rail trails through direct funding and/or the provision of volunteers to maintain and improve rail trails. Municipalities and non-profit organizations may sponsor acquisition, improvement, or maintenance projects, apply for grant funding, provide the local match, and provide volunteer labor. Non-profit trail organizations, such as “friends” groups or trail coalitions and recreational clubs (i.e., snowmobile or OHRV clubs), are typically composed of trail users and often focus on rail trails within a specific geographic area and form partnerships with trail management entities. These organizations collect funds via private donations, local business sponsorships, and private grants and also hold fundraising events.

State-owned rail trails in New Hampshire accommodate a wide range of activities.

Opportunities to Increase Resources for New Hampshire Rail Trails. Several resources, programs, and strategies are identified to allocate additional resources to New Hampshire rail trails. In addition to CMAQ, TAP, RTP, and GIA funds, rail trails in the North Country are eligible for FLAP and Northern Borders Grants; the economic study undertaken as a part of this plan supports the economic development benefits of a well-maintained rail trail system that is attractive to visitors. Additionally, the IIJA is increasing funding to TAP and CMAQ, which may provide opportunities for increased rail trail funding. Furthermore, new funding opportunities through the IIJA could be pursued for rail trails that serve a transportation purpose.

At the state level, there is a range of dedicated rail trail revenue sources that could be considered, including establishing a voluntary non-motorized user fee, a rail trail parking fee, and perhaps even a general fund appropriation through the state operating budget. Dedicated revenue sources would allow advanced planning, scheduling, and forecasting, which is more akin to how other state assets and infrastructure are managed.

PRIORITIZING STATE INVESTMENTS IN RAIL TRAILS

Rail trails in New Hampshire are funded through a combination of federal, state, and local public funds, as well as fundraising efforts. Federal funding programs include criteria that must be met to be eligible for the funds and rail trails are only one type of eligible project, so no rail trail specific criteria can be applied to these programs, and the State does not have jurisdiction over local funding. As such, prioritization of state investments in rail trails would be applicable to new

state sources of revenue for rail trails. The following criteria are recommended for prioritizing state investments in rail trails:

- Connectivity with Existing Rail Trails
- Project Readiness
- Connectivity to Community Assets, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Potential for Everyday Transportation
- Social Equity and Environmental Justice
- Maintaining Existing Rail Trails

IMPROVEMENT, MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF RAIL TRAILS

Development and stewardship of the state-owned rail trail network involves the concerted efforts of several partners, including state agencies, municipalities, and rail trail groups, all of whom play different roles in the development and maintenance of rail trails. The final chapter of the plan provides guidance for the improvement, maintenance, and management of state-owned rail trails. The chapter identifies the steps and the roles and responsibilities of rail trail partners in the acquisition, improvement, management, and maintenance of state-owned rail trails. More specifically this chapter addresses:

Rail Trail Improvement Guidelines. Facility development standards, which update and expand upon the guidance provided in the 2005 State Trails Plan, are provided in the plan. The design guidance incorporates standards related to accessibility, as well as design considerations related to various types of users, and include information on items such as rail trail width, vertical clearance, foundations, and shoulders.

Identification of Capital and Routine Maintenance Tasks and Typical Costs. Maintaining a rail trail corridor involves tasks that are recurring and fairly routine as well as larger improvements to facilities that are larger expenditures that occur on less frequent basis. Definitions of routine and capital maintenance tasks and typical rail trail improvement and maintenance costs have been identified.

Recommendations for Right of Way Preservation and Enforcement. Preservation of the state-owned rail corridor property is a specialized consideration. With several hundred miles of rail corridors crossing the state there have been incidences of intentional and unintentional encroachments onto state-owned corridors. Recommendations including obtaining aerial photography of corridors, working with local entities to identify possible encroachments, and providing a consistent reporting process is recommended. Reestablishing property boundaries with abutting property owners should be considered in identified problem areas.

Promotion and Branding of State Rail Trails. Providing information to assist the public in planning trips to New Hampshire rail trails would help attract visitors and add to the economic return on investment associated with rail trails. A web domain (www.RailTrails.nh.gov) and pamphlet has been developed as a part of this plan. Further actions, including development of a state rail trail brand identity or logo and trip planning materials, could be developed in the future to further promote and market New Hampshire's rail trail network. Promotion of New Hampshire's rail trails is not only a state-level effort but would also involve efforts of local supporters (municipalities, trails groups/clubs) as rail trails could be marketed as a community asset and uniquely marketed by local supporters.

NORTHERN RAIL TRAIL

1. INVENTORY OF RAIL TRAILS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the plan provides an inventory of rail trails in New Hampshire. The scope of this plan is focused on state-owned rail trails; therefore, this inventory is primarily concerned with rail trails owned by the State of New Hampshire. A summary of rail trails owned by municipalities and other entities, based on available information, is included in the final section of this chapter for reference.

STATE-OWNED RAIL CORRIDORS AND RAIL TRAILS

The State of New Hampshire owns 541 miles of active and inactive or abandoned railroad corridors across the state. Most of these corridors were purchased by NHDOT (New Hampshire Department of Transportation) to preserve the corridors for future rail use. Rail trails have been established within approximately 334 miles of inactive rail corridors (including trails that are currently in design but not yet open), and there are approximately 4 miles of rail trail established

alongside active railroad ('rail with trail') for a total of approximately 338 miles of state-owned rail trails. State-owned rail trails in New Hampshire range from the 1.5-mile Profile Rail Trail in Bethlehem to the 58-mile Northern Rail Trail which connects ten communities between Lebanon and Concord. Most state-owned rail trails are established within corridors owned by (NHDOT) and are managed by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) for recreational purposes, while some NHDOT-owned rail trails are managed by municipalities. Of the 27 state-owned rail trails, 19 are within rail corridors owned by NHDOT and the remaining 8 rail trails are within corridors owned by DNCR. NHDOT allows interim trail use of the corridors that it owns pursuant to obtaining a rail trail agreement with an entity that will be responsible for managing the corridor for trail use. Currently, DNCR manages 19 of the state-owned rail trails for recreational use (approximately 260 miles) and NHDOT has agreements with municipalities to manage 8 rail trails (approximately 78 miles).

The state-owned rail trails range in condition from paved surfaces to unimproved corridors with rails still in place. New Hampshire rail trails are noteworthy for the variety of activities that they accommodate. The WOW (Winnipesauke Opechee Winnisquam) Trail in Laconia accommodates active rail and a trail (rail with trail) within its corridor. A section of the Cotton Valley Rail Trail accommodates wheeling on "speeder cars" that run on the track which is still in place. Paved sections of rail trails in Lebanon, Keene, Salem, Londonderry, and Windham accommodate recreational and non-recreational (i.e., commuting, errand running) trips. Most rail trails, however, are gravel or earth paths that accommodate primarily recreational uses including walking/wheelchair use, hiking, bicycling/mountain biking, horseback riding, Nordic skiing, mushing, and snowshoeing. Motorized uses including snowmobiles and OHRVs (off-highway recreational vehicles) (ATVs and dirt bikes) are allowed on designated rail trails. Snowmobiles are allowed on approximately 305 miles of state-owned rail trails as shown in Table 1-2, and OHRVs have access to approximately 65 miles of rail trails in the summer and 87 miles of rail trails with snow cover.

Rail trails are distributed through all the state's seven geographic regions with significant trail mileage within the Monadnock, White Mountains, Dartmouth-Lake Sunapee, and Merrimack Valley regions, as summarized in Figure 1-1.

A summary listing of state-owned rail corridors and rail trails by geographic region appears in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 identifies the following attributes:

- **Railroad Corridor**. This is the name of the railroad corridor or branch that was purchased. In several cases, segments of corridors were purchased at different times, using different funding sources.

- **Corridor Miles**. This refers to the mileage of the rail corridor/segment.

- **Rail Trail**. If a rail trail has been established within a state-owned rail corridor, the trail name is listed in this column.

- **Trail Miles**. This refers to the mileage of the rail trail.

- **Owned By.** This refers to the owner of the rail corridor, either NHDOT or DNCR.

- **Trail Manager**. This column identifies the entity primarily responsible for trail management. DNCR manages the rail trails on the corridors that it owns. For corridors

owned by NHDOT, this refers to the entity that has a Rail Trail Agreement (RTA) with NHDOT to manage a rail trail. We acknowledge that numerous trail organizations provide day-to-day management of rail trails, however, the table identifies the entity that has primary responsibility for trail management through its contractual obligation.

- **Source of Funding**. This column identifies the funding that was used to purchase the rail corridor. In many cases, the funding source limits how the corridor can be used. For example, no motorized uses (specifically OHRVs) can be used on corridors or segments that were purchased with Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding. Corridors purchased with Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies must remain in open space in perpetuity. It should be noted that the majority of the rail corridors were purchased in the 1990s through 2019; however, some corridors were purchased as far back as 1934. Documentation of funding sources for older trail purchases is not always readily available, but the funding sources that limit use (i.e., TE, CMAQ, and LWCF) have been verified.

FIGURE 1-1: Miles of State-Owned Rail Trails by Geographic Region

Note: Mileage by region is approximate. Trail corridors that cross regions are included in the region which is home to the majority of the corridor.

TABLE 1-1: State-Owned Railroad Corridors and Rail Trails

ABANDONED STATE-OWNED CORRIDORS

RAILROAD CORRIDOR	CORRIDOR MILES	RAIL TRAIL	TRAIL MILES	OWNED BY	TRAIL MANAGER[1]	ACQUISITION SOURCE OF FUNDING [2]
Great North Woods Region						
N Stratford-Beecher Falls (part)	8.7	Upper Coos Rail Trail	8.7	DNCR	DNCR	FRA
N Stratford-Beecher Falls	0.9	Upper Coos Rail Trail	0.9	DNCR	DNCR	FRA
White Mountains Region						
Berlin Branch (Jefferson-Gorham)	18.0	Presidential Rail Trail	18	DNCR	DNCR	State
Upper Coos (Jefferson-Whitefield)	1.8	Presidential, Pondicherry Segment	1.8	NHDOT	DNCR	TE/State
Berlin Branch (Woodsville-Littleton)	19.3	Ammonoosuc Rail Trail	19.3	NHDOT	DNCR	Hwy,State
Berlin-Groveton (Litt-Bethlehem)	6.9	New Littleton-Bethlehem Section	6.9 [3]	NHDOT	DNCR[4]	TE/State
Profile & Franconia Notch RR	1.5	Profile Rail Trail	1.5	DNCR	DNCR	Unknown
Warren (Blackmount)	4.0	Warren Rail Trail	4.0	DNCR	DNCR	Highway
Conway Branch (Madison)	8.2	Conway Branch Rail Trail	8.2	NHDOT	DNCR	State
Conway Branch (Ossipee/Albany)	13.0	Conway Branch Rail Trail	13.0	NHDOT	DNCR	TE/State
Carroll (Mt. Washington)	0.5			DNCR	DNCR	Unknown
Lakes Region						
Wolfeboro Railroad	11.4	Cotton Valley Rail Trail	11.4	DNCR	DNCR	State
Farmington Branch	6.8	Farmington Recreational Rail Trail	6.8	DNCR	DNCR	TE/State
Concord-Lincoln Branch	2.5	Winnipesauke River Trail	2.5	NHDOT	Tilton & Northfield	FRA,State
Dartmouth - Lake Sunapee Region						
Northern Railroad	2.3	Mascoma River Greenway	2.3	NHDOT	Lebanon	TE/State
Northern Railroad	58.2	Northern Rail Trail	58.2	NHDOT	DNCR	TE/State
Sugar River Railroad	9.5	Sugar River Rail Trail	9.5	DNCR	DNCR	State/LWCF
Monadnock Region						
Ashuelot Branch	21.0	Ashuelot Rail Trail	21.0	NHDOT	DNCR	TE/State
Cheshire Branch	39.9	Cheshire Rail Trail	39.9	NHDOT	DNCR	TE/State
Fort Hill Branch	8.9	Fort Hill Rail Trail	8.9	NHDOT	DNCR	TE/State
Hillsborough Branch (part)	8.0	Hillsborough Rail Trail	8.0	DNCR	DNCR	State
Monadnock Branch	7.2	Monadnock Recreational Rail Trail	7.2	NHDOT	DNCR	TE/State

RAILROAD CORRIDOR	CORRIDOR MILES	RAIL TRAIL	TRAIL MILES	OWNED BY	TRAIL MANAGER[1]	ACQUISITION SOURCE OF FUNDING [2]
Merrimack Valley Region						
Manchester & Lawrence Branch	4.5	Londonderry Rail Trail	4.5	NHDOT	Londonderry	TE/State
Manchester & Lawrence Branch	4.3	Windham Rail Trail	4.3	NHDOT	Windham	State
Manchester & Lawrence Branch	3.9	Salem Bike Ped Corridor	3.9	NHDOT	Salem	TE/State
Manchester & Lawrence Branch	1.2	Salem Bike Ped Corridor	1.2	NHDOT	Salem	Hwy/State
Portsmouth Branch	27.4	Rockingham RRT - Portsmouth Br.	27.4	NHDOT	DNCR	State
Fremont Branch (Fremont to Epping)	4.0	Rockingham RRT - Fremont Br.	4.0	DNCR	DNCR	State
Fremont Branch	14.0	Rockingham RRT - Fremont Br.	14.0	DNCR	DNCR	State Highway/LWCF
Greenville Branch	2.2	Greenville Recreational Rail Trail	2.2	DNCR	DNCR	DRED
Seacoast Region						
Hampton Br. (Seabrook - Hampton)	4.6	NH Seacoast Greenway	4.6 [3]	NHDOT	Municipalities[5]	TE/State
Hampton Br. (Hampton - Portsmouth)	9.6	NH Seacoast Greenway	9.6 [3]	NHDOT	Municipalities[5]	CMAQ/State
Subtotal - Inactive Corridors	**334.0**		**333.6**			

ACTIVE STATE-OWNED CORRIDORS

RAILROAD CORRIDOR	CORRIDOR MILES	RAIL TRAIL	TRAIL MILES	OWNED BY	TRAIL MANAGER[1]	ACQUISITION SOURCE OF FUNDING [2]
Great North Woods						
N Stratford-Beecher Falls	29.1			NHDOT		FRA
White Mountains Region						
Berlin-Groveton (Bethl-Groveton)	29.8			NHDOT		TE/State
Mountain Div.(aband. for freight)	52			NHDOT		TE/State
Mountain Div.(Twin State)	8.4			NHDOT		State
Lakes Region						
Concord-Lincoln Branch	68.2	WOW Trail	2.4	NHDOT	Laconia	FRA,State
		Winnipesaukee River Trail	1.0	NHDOT	Tilton	FRA,State
		Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail	0.6	NHDOT	Belmont	FRA,State
Dartmouth - Lake Sunapee Region						
Northern Railroad (Westboro Yard)	1.8			NHDOT		State
Monadnock Region						
Hillsborough Branch	18			NHDOT		State
Subtotal - Active Corridors	**207.3**		**4.0**			
TOTAL ACTIVE+INACTIVE	**541.3**		**337.6**			

NOTES:

[1] Trail Managers have agreements with NHDOT for NHDOT owned corridors

[2] FRA = Federal Railroad Admin, TE = Transportation Enhancement, CMAQ = Congestion Management Air Quality, LWCF = Land and Water Conservation Fund

[3] Trail is planned but not open

[4] Currently under NHDOT management, however an agreement is in place for DNCR to manage the future trail

[5] Currently under NHDOT management, however agreements are in place for municipalities to manage the future trail

TABLE 1-2: Allowed Uses on State-Owned Rail Trails

RAIL TRAIL	TRAIL MILES	ACQUISITION SOURCE OF FUNDING [1]	Non-Motorized	Equestrians	Snowmobiles	OHRVs
Great North Woods Region						
Upper Coos Rail Trail	9.6	FRA	✓		✓	✓
White Mountains Region						
Presidential Rail Trail	18	State		✓	✓	Winter Only[2]
Presidential, Pondicherry Segment	1.8	TE/State	✓	✓	✓	
Ammonoosuc Rail Trail	19.3	Hwy,State	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Littleton-Bethlehem Section	6.9	TE/State	✓	✓	✓	
Profile Rail Trail	1.5	Unknown	✓	✓	✓	Winter Only[2]
Warren Rail Trail	4.0	Highway	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conway Branch Rail Trail	21.2	TE/State	✓		✓	
Lakes Region						
Cotton Valley Rail Trail	11.4	State	✓		✓	
Farmington Recreational Rail Trail	6.8	TE/State	✓		✓	
Winnipesauke River Trail	3.5	FRA,State	✓	✓		
WOW Trail	2.4	FRA,State	✓			
Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail	0.6	FRA,State	✓			
Dartmouth - Lake Sunapee Region						
Mascoma River Greenway	2.3	TE/State	✓			
Northern Rail Trail	58.2	TE/State	✓	✓	✓	
Sugar River Rail Trail	9.5	State/LWCF	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monadnock Region						
Ashuelot Rail Trail	21	TE/State	✓	✓	✓	
Cheshire Rail Trail	39.9	TE/State	✓	✓	✓	
Fort Hill Rail Trail	8.9	TE/State	✓	✓	✓	
Hillsborough Rail Trail	8	State	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monadnock Recreational Rail Trail	7.2	TE/State	✓	✓	✓	Winter Only[2]
Merrimack Valley Region						
Londonderry Rail Trail	4.5	TE/State	✓			
Windham Rail Trail	4.3	State	✓	✓	✓	
Salem Bike Ped Corridor	5.1	TE/State/Hwy	✓			
Rockingham RRT - Portsmouth Br.	27.4	State	✓	✓	✓	
Rockingham RRT - Fremont Br.	18	State Highway/LWCF	✓	✓	✓	Partial[3]
Greenville Recreational Rail Trail	2.2	DRED	✓		✓	✓

RAIL TRAIL	TRAIL MILES	ACQUISITION SOURCE OF FUNDING [1]	Non-Motorized	Equestrians	Snowmobiles	OHRVs
Seacoast Region						
NH Seacoast Greenway	14.2	TE/State/CMAQ	✓			
TOTAL	**337.7**		**337.7**	**257.4**	**305.1**	**64.6 / 87.3 [4]**

NOTES:

[1] FRA = Federal Railroad Admin, TE = Transportation Enhancement, CMAQ = Congestion Management Air Quality, LWCF = Land and Water Conservation Fund

[2] OHRV use only during the winter with continuous snow cover

[3] OHRVs allowed Epping to Fremont with snowcover, Route 28 in Derry to Route 107 in Fremont in summer

[4] 87.3 miles with snowcover only

These 27 state-owned rail trails are shown on an overall state map in Figure 1-2 and Figures 1-3, 1-4, and 1-5 provide more detailed views of the north, southwest and southeast portions of the state. There are also three larger-scale maps of different regions of the state, with more detailed representations of the rail corridors and the connections that they make.

NON-STATE-OWNED RAIL TRAILS

In addition to the 338 miles of state-owned rail trails, New Hampshire municipalities and other entities own and manage an estimated 92 miles of rail trails (the state does not maintain a database of non-state-owned rail trails, so this number is an estimate.) In general, these trails are generally shorter than the state-owned trails, ranging from one mile to seven miles in length. Non-state-owned rail trails are summarized in Table 1-3.

Some of these non-state-owned rail trails connect to state-owned rail trails or to each other, for example:

- The Androscoggin Trail connects with the Presidential Rail Trail.
- The North Haverhill-Woodsville Rail Trail connects with the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail.
- Segments of the Cheshire and Ashuelot Rail Trails in Keene connect to the state-owned portions of those trails.
- The Derry Rail Trail connects to the Windham Rail Trail and the Londonderry Rail Trail.
- The Mason Railroad Trail connects with the Greenville Recreational Rail Trail.
- The Piscataquog Trail connects with the Goffstown Rail Trail.
- The Potanipo Rail Trail, Brookline Rail Trail, and Granite Town Rail Trails are connected.

At this time municipalities and trail organizations are planning further trail development in non-state-owned rail corridors, including the following:

- Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail – 35 miles
- Merrimack River Greenway Trail – 12 miles
- Bristol Rail Trail – 3 miles
- Belmont Rail Trail – 1.7 miles

FIGURE 1-2:

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE OWNED RAIL TRAILS

LEGEND

State-Owned

- State-Owned Existing Rail Trail
- State-Owned Inactive/Abandoned Railroad (No Rail Trail)
- State-Owned Active Railroad

Non-State Owned

- Non-State-Owned Existing Rail Trail
- Non-State-Owned Inactive/Abandoned Railroad (No Rail Trail)
- Non-State-Owned Active Railroad
- Park / Forest
- Lakes / Streams / Rivers

Population per Square Mile by Census Tract

- Less than 50
- 50 – 1,000
- 1,000 – 5,000
- Greater than 5,000
- **Trail Name**

NOT TO SCALE

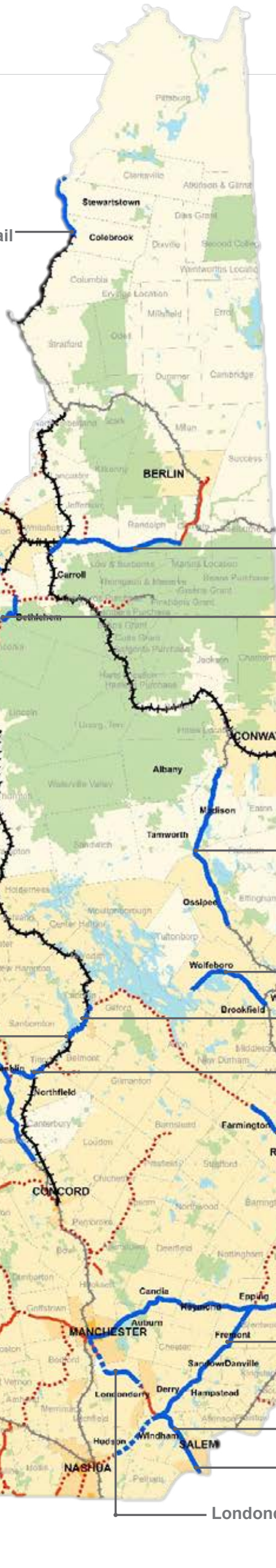


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FIGURE 1-4:
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE OWNED RAIL TRAILS

SOUTHWEST REGION

LEGEND

State Owned

- State-Owned Existing Rail Trail
- State-Owned Inactive/Abandoned Railroad (No Rail Trail)
- State-Owned Active Railroad

Non-State Owned

- Non-State-Owned Existing Rail Trail
- Non-State-Owned Inactive/Abandoned Railroad (No Rail Trail)
- Non-State-Owned Active Railroad
- Park / Forest
- Lakes / Streams / Rivers

Population per Square Mile by Census Tract

- Less than 50
- 50 – 1,000
- 1,000 – 5,000
- Greater than 5,000

Trail Name

NOT TO SCALE

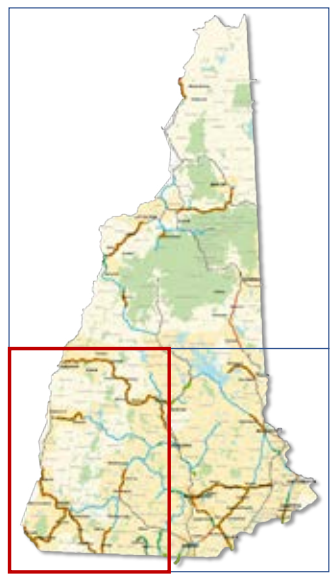

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FIGURE 1-3:

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE OWNED RAIL TRAILS

NORTHERN REGION

LEGEND

State-Owned

- State-Owned Existing Rail Trail
- State-Owned Inactive/Abandoned Railroad (No Rail Trail)
- State-Owned Active Railroad

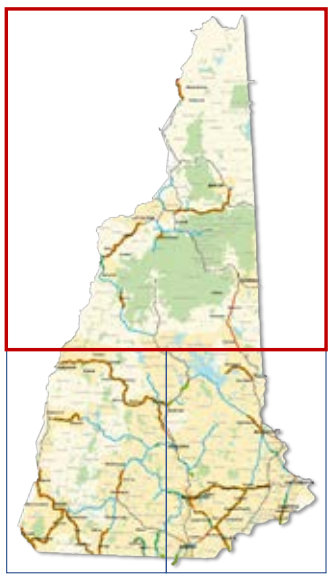
Non-State Owned

- Non-State-Owned Existing Rail Trail
- Non-State-Owned Inactive/Abandoned Railroad (No Rail Trail)
- Non-State-Owned Active Railroad
- Park / Forest
- Lakes / Streams / Rivers

Population per Square Mile by Census Tract

- Less than 50
- 50 – 1,000
- 1,000 – 5,000
- Greater than 5,000
- **Trail Name**

NOT TO SCALE



August 2022

FIGURE 1-5:
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE OWNED RAIL TRAILS

SOUTHEAST REGION

LEGEND

State-Owned

- State-Owned Existing Rail Trail
- State-Owned Inactive/Abandoned Railroad (No Rail Trail)
- State-Owned Active Railroad

Non-State Owned

- Non-State-Owned Existing Rail Trail
- Non-State-Owned Inactive/Abandoned Railroad (No Rail Trail)
- Non-State-Owned Active Railroad
- Park / Forest
- Lakes / Streams / Rivers

Population per Square Mile by Census Tract

- Less than 50
- 50 – 1,000
- 1,000 – 5,000
- Greater than 5,000
- **Trail Name**

N

NOT TO SCALE

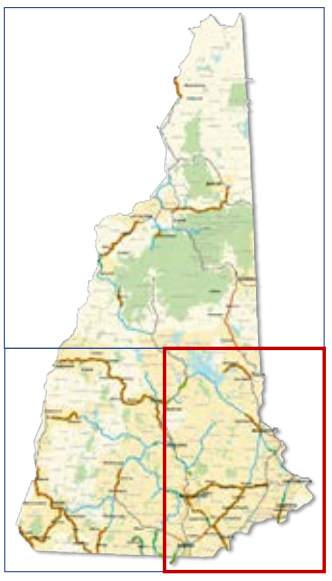


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TABLE 1-3: Non-State-Owned Rail Trails by Region

TRAIL	MILES	OWNED BY
Great North Woods		
Androscoggin Trail	4.0	Great Lakes Hydro
White Mountains Region		
North Haverhill-Woodsville Rail Trail	3.8	Town of Haverhill
Conway Branch Rail Trail	0.2	Silver Lake Station LLC
Cotton Valley Rail Trail	0.4	Town of Wolfeboro
Lakes Region		
Lilac City Greenway	1.2	City of Rochester
Dartmouth Lake Sunapee Region		
Tilley Wheeler Trail[1]	0.5	Bradford
Warner Rail Trail[1]	1.0	Warner
Monadnock Region		
Cheshire Rail Trail	2.0	City of Keene
Ashuelot Rail Trail	0.1	City of Keene
Monadnock Branch Rail Trail	1.5	Town of Jaffrey
Peterborough Trail	6.0	Town of Peterborough, Private Owners
Hancock Rail Trails	2.9	Town of Hancock, Private Owners
Harrisville Rail Trails	5.0	Town of Harrisville, Private Owners
Marlborough Trails	3.0	Town of Marlborough
Mason Railroad Trail	7.4	Town of Mason, Private Owners
Granite Town Rail Trail	2.9	Town of Milford, Private Owners
Merrimack Valley Region		
Mast Yard Rail Trail	1.8	City of Concord, NH Division of Forests and Lands
Concord Lake Sunapee Rail Trail[1]	0.6	Private Owners
Stevens Rail Trail[1]	1.8	Town of Hopkinton, Private Owners
Head's Pond Trail	2.6	Town of Hooksett, Manchester Sand and Gravel
Goffstown Rail Trail	5.5	Town of Goffstown, Private Owners
South Manchester Trailway	3.1	City of Manchester
Piscataquog Trail	1.9	City of Manchester
Manchester Heritage Trail	0.9	City of Manchester
Derry Rail Trail	3.2	Town of Derry
Windham Greenway	4.5	Town of Windham
New Boston Rail Trail	4.9	Town of New Boston, Private Owners
Amherst Rail Trail	1.9	Town of Amherst, Private Owners
Nashua Heritage Rail Trail	1.3	City of Nashua
Nashua River Rail Trail	1.1	City of Nashua
Brookline Rail Trail	4.8	Town of Brookline, Private Owners
Potanipo Rail Trail	6.5	Town of Brookline, Private Owners

TRAIL	MILES	OWNED BY
Seacoast Region		
Dover Community Trail	3.3	City of Dover, Private Owners
TOTAL MILEAGE	**91.6**	

Note: The state does not maintain a database of non-state-owned rail trails, therefore this listing may not account for every non-state-owned rail trail in New Hampshire. Several sources were used to compile this listing including Charles Martin's New Hampshire Rail Trails, Second Edition, 2016, and information provided by the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

[1] Trail is part of the Concord to Lake Sunapee Rail Trail

DEVELOPING TRAIL NETWORKS WITHIN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Within New Hampshire, there are significant areas of existing and developing connected networks of rail trails. These are described as follows moving geographically from north to south:

Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail

The White Mountains area has the significant rail trail corridors of the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail (19.3 miles), a new trail segment in Littleton-Bethlehem that extends and connects with the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail (6.9 miles), and the Presidential Rail Trail (18 miles), combining for a 44-mile run of rail trail through the White Mountains region. The Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail is an 83-mile scenic route that builds on these rail trails to provide a trail across New Hampshire through the White Mountains area, connecting to Vermont and Maine. In addition to the Ammonoosuc and the Presidential Rail Trails, recreation pathways are connected and linked with dirt and paved roads to provide a continuous trail. The largest trail gap is between the Ammonoosuc and Presidential Trails between Bethlehem and Whitefield (Airport Road/Waumbek Junction). The western terminus connects to the Cross Vermont Trail, an envisioned 90-mile trail connecting towns across the State of Vermont from Lake Champlain to the Connecticut River. The eastern terminus connects to the Andover Ride (beginning in Bethel, Maine) which is a 50-mile round trip on quiet paved roads that travel northward alongside the Androscoggin River and the Ellis River into the village of Andover, Maine.

Granite State Rail Trail

The Granite State Rail Trail is planned to be a mostly off-road continuous rail trail route from Lebanon to Salem. Currently, the longest section of the trail is the 60-mile route from Lebanon to Concord (including the Mascoma River Greenway and Northern Rail Trail). The largest gap in the off-road route is from Concord to Manchester where rail corridors are privately owned. South of Manchester much of the route is in place through the Londonderry, Derry, and Windham Rail Trails and the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor, however, there are significant gaps. The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission and the Central New Hampshire Planning Commission have developed a regional trails plan[1] that identifies the critical gaps between Concord and Salem. The plan also envisions the Granite State Rail Trail tying into the Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail and the Goffstown and New Boston Rail Trails. Beyond Salem, the Granite State Rail Trail (specifically the Salem Bike Ped Corridor) connects with the Methuen Rail Trail in Massachusetts.

[1] https://www.snhpc.org/transportation/bicyclepedestrian/pages/regional-trails

Winnipesaukee Regional Rail Trail

The Winnipesaukee Regional Rail Trail is envisioned as a 20-mile trail through Franklin, Tilton, Belmont, and Laconia that would connect the Northern Rail Trail in Franklin to Lake Winnipesauke via the developing Winnipesauke River Trail, the Winnisquam Scenic Trail, and the WOW (Winnipesauke Opechee Winnisquam) Trail. Portions of these trails have been developed, however, there are significant gaps. The gap between the Northern Rail Trail and the Winnipesauke River Trail in Franklin is less than one mile and realization of this connection between the Northern Rail Trail and Lake Winnipesauke would add significant gravity to New Hampshire's rail trail network providing residents and visitors an attractive multi-modal gateway to New Hampshire's Lakes Region and all the activities that it offers.

Monadnock Area Rail Trails

The Monadnock region has 85-miles of state-owned rail trails centered around Keene and extending into developing trail systems in Vermont and Massachusetts. The Hinsdale – Brattleboro Greenway Project will repurpose a vehicle bridge for pedestrian and bicyclist use and connect the two states across the Connecticut River. Developing pathways in Massachusetts nearby the Monadnock area include the planned Ware River Rail Trail, a north south connection between Winchendon and the Mass Central Rail Trail which is itself an east-west connection planned to connect Northampton and Boston. Like the White Mountains, Lakes Region, and Seacoast, the Keene area with Mt. Monadnock is an established visitor destination in New Hampshire. The City of Keene recently worked with the University of New Hampshire to develop connections between the trails and the town to enhance trail user experiences and economic outcomes, and the Southwest RPC has developed detailed improvement plans for the Ashuelot and Cheshire South Rail Trails.

Concord – Lake Sunapee Rail Trail

The Concord – Lake Sunapee Rail Trail is envisioned as a 34-mile trail connecting the communities of Concord, Hopkinton, Warner, Sutton, Bradford, and Newbury along the Concord-Claremont Railroad corridor. This railroad corridor is not a state-owned corridor. The trail is envisioned to connect to the planned Granite State Rail Trail in Concord. Developing the trail involves establishing agreements with public and private owners of the corridor. Segments of the trail have been improved in Concord, Warner, and Bradford.

PLANNED NETWORKS WITHIN THE NORTHEAST

New England Rail Trail Spine Network

The New England Rail Trail Spine Network was developed by the Rails to Trails Conservancy (RTC), in consultation with New Hampshire trail groups, regional planning commissions, and stakeholders to identify a network of connected trails that unite New England's six states – New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Figure 1-2 illustrates the envisioned New England network[2]. The New England Rail Trail Spine Network incorporates

[2] https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/trailnation/collaborative/newengland/

the East Coast Greenway and Granite State Rail Trail (discussed below) as well as the Ammonoosuc Recreational Rail Trail.

East Coast Greenway

The East Coast Greenway is planned to be a continuous 3,000-mile safe walking and bicycling route from Maine to Florida connecting 15 states and Washington D.C. The segment of the East Coast Greenway in New Hampshire is a relatively modest 17-mile stretch through the seacoast known as the New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway. Users following the New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway in New Hampshire currently use an on-road route (Route 1A) paralleling the ocean, however with the NHDOT's purchase of 14.2 miles of the Hampton Branch Railroad Corridor, a large segment of the East Coast Greenway in New Hampshire will be accommodated within a rail trail from the Massachusetts border (connecting with the Border to Boston Trail) to Portsmouth. No miles of the NH segment are constructed and/or available for rail trail use at this time.

Source: Rails to Trails Conservancy

STATE-OWNED RAIL TRAIL INVENTORY

This inventory of rail trails is an update to the corridor inventory provided in the 2005 New Hampshire State Trails Plan. A one-page summary sheet for each of the 26 state-owned rail trails has been prepared. Each sheet lists the following information:

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner
Management Entity
Railroad Corridor Name
Length (miles)
Planning Region (Regional Planning Commission)
Town(s) (in which trail is located)
Permitted Uses
Trail Surface
Typical right-of-way (ROW) widths
Connects to [trail name if any]
Number of rail bridges
Lake(s) abutting railroad (if any)
River(s) crossed by railroad (if any)
Funding Sources (for corridor acquisition)
Year Acquired

Plans for Trail Development

Summary of local, regional, or state plans to improve trail (if applicable)

GREAT NORTH WOODS REGION

Upper Coos Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Upper Coos Railroad – Beecher Falls Branch
Length (mi)	9.6 miles
Regional Planning Commission	North Country Council
Town 1	Colebrook
Town 2	Stewartstown
Permitted Uses	Non- Motorized Uses Snowmobiles OHRVs
Surface	Gravel, Rails
Typical ROW widths	66 feet
Connects to	
Number of rail bridges	1
River 1	Connecticut River
Funding Sources	FRA
Year Acquired	1977

Notes:

- DNCR is considering an option to remove some rails to extend the trail southward

Upper Coos Recreational Rail Trail

Photo: NH Rail Trails Coalition

WHITE MOUNTAINS REGION

Presidential Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Boston and Maine, Berlin Branch
Length (mi)	18 miles
Regional Planning Commission	North Country Council
Town 1	Whitefield
Town 2	Jefferson
Town 3	Randolph
Town 4	Gorham
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses Snowmobiles and OHRVs only with snow cover
Surface	Gravel
Typical ROW widths	99 to 120 ft
Connects to	Androscoggin Trail
Number of rail bridges	14
River 1	Israel River
River 2	Moose River
River 3	Androscoggin River
Funding Sources	State
Year Acquired	1996-1998

Notes:

- Part of the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail

Presidential Rail Trail

Photo: NH Rail Trails Coalition

Boxed Pony Truss Bridge on Rail Trail

Presidential Rail Trail

Presidential Rail Trail - Pondicherry Section

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Jefferson-Whitefield
Length (mi)	1.8 miles
Regional Planning Commission	North Country Council
Town 1	Whitefield
Town 2	Jefferson
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses
Surface	Gravel
Typical ROW widths	
Connects to	Presidential Rail Trail
Number of rail bridges	
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancement (TE), State
Year Acquired	2000

Notes:

- Part of the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail

Pondicherry Section of Presidential Rail Trail

Photo: DNCR

Pondicherry Section of Presidential Rail Trail

Photo: DNCR

Ammonoosuc Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Boston and Maine, Berlin Branch
Length (mi)	19.3 miles
Regional Planning Commission	North Country Council
Town 1	Haverhill
Town 2	Bath
Town 3	Landaff
Town 4	Lisbon
Town 5	Littleton
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses
	Snowmobiles
	OHRVs
Surface	Gravel
Typical ROW widths	66 and 99 ft
Connects to	New Littleton-Bethlehem Trail Segment
Number of rail bridges	14
River 1	Ammonoosuc River
River 2	Gale River
Funding Sources	Highway, State
Year Acquired	1996-1998

Notes:

- Part of the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail

Rail bridge over Ammonoosuc River in Lisbon

Rail trail under covered road bridge in Bath

Ammonoosuc Rail Trail in Woodsville

Ammonoosuc Rail Trail – New Littleton-Bethlehem Section

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Boston and Maine, Berlin Branch
Length (mi)	6.9 miles
Regional Planning Commission	North Country Council
Town 1	Littleton
Town 2	Bethlehem
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses Snowmobiles
Surface	Gravel
Typical ROW widths	66 and 99 ft
Connects to	Ammonoosuc Rail Trail
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancements (TE), State
Year Acquired	1999

Notes:

- Will be part of the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail

Littleton Section

Photo: DNCR

Profile Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Profile and Franconia Notch Railroad
Length (mi)	1.5 miles
Regional Planning Commission	North Country Council
Town 1	Bethlehem
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses Snowmobiles OHRVs with snow cover
Surface	Unimproved
Typical ROW widths	99 feet
Connects to	
Funding Sources	
Year Acquired	1934

Profile Rail Trail in Bethlehem

Profile Rail Trail in Bethlehem

Warren Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Boston, Concord, and Montreal
Length (mi)	4.0 miles
Regional Planning Commission	North Country Council
Town 1	Warren
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized, Snowmobiles (partial) OHRVs (partial)
Surface	Gravel
Typical ROW widths	80 feet
Connects to	Appalachian Trail
Funding Sources	Highway
Year Acquired	1960
Number of Rail Bridges	

Warren Rail Trail in Haverhill

Conway Branch Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Conway Branch
Length (mi)	21.2 miles*
Regional Planning Commission	North Country Council and Lakes Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Ossipee
Town 2	Tamworth
Town 3	Madison
Town 4	Albany
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized**, Snowmobiles, railroad motor cars
Surface	Rail in place, Unimproved
Typical ROW widths	66, 82.5, 100, 130 feet
Connects to	
Number of rail bridges	11
River 1	Beech River
River 2	Dan Hole River
River 3	Lovells River
River 4	Dead River
River 5	Chocorua River
River 6	Davis River
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancement (TE) and State Funds
Year Acquired	1995 and 2001

Notes

Cotton Valley Rail Trail Club operates railroad motorcars on a section from Ossipee to Center Ossipee

- *0.2 miles in Madison is privately owned by Silver Lake, LLC
- **Since the rail is still in place, the only significant non-winter use is walking.

Conway Branch at Silver Lake

Railroad Bridge on Conway Branch

LAKES REGION

Cotton Valley Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Boston and Maine
Length (mi)	11.4 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Lakes Region Planning Commission and Strafford County RPC
Town 1	Wakefield
Town 2	Brookfield
Town 3	Wolfeboro
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses (no horses) Snowmobiles, RR Motorcars (partial) NHDOT
Surface	Hardpack and rails in place
Typical ROW widths	66 ft
Connects to	
Number of rail bridges	3
Lake 1	Wentworth Lake
Funding Sources	State
Year Acquired	1986

Notes

- Town of Wolfeboro owns 0.4 miles
- The railroad's tracks are still in place (and owned by the State of NH). The Wolfeboro Railroad is the only place in New England where old "speeder" cars (antique railroad maintenance vehicles) are allowed to operate. A club helps maintain the tracks.

Rail with trail section in Wolfeboro

Area between rails filled in for trail use

Speeder car of the type that uses the Wolfeboro Railroad

WOW Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	Town of Laconia
Railroad Name	Boston, Concord, and Montreal
Length (mi)	2.4 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Lakes Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Laconia
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized Rail with Trail
Surface	Paved
Typical ROW widths	66 feet
Connects to	Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail
Funding Sources	Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), State
Year Acquired	1975, 1999

Notes:

- There are active rail excursion tours operating along the corridor.

Plans for Trail Development

- Part of the planned Winnipesaukee Trail connecting Franklin to Lake Winnipesaukee incorporating the WOW Trail, Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail, and the Winnipesauke River Trail.

WOW Trail – Rail with Trail near Lake Winnisquam

WOW Trail – Trail crossing of rail

Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	Town of Belmont
Railroad Name	Boston, Concord, and Montreal
Length (mi)	0.6 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Lakes Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Belmont
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized
Surface	Paved
Typical ROW widths	66 feet
Connects to	WOW Trail
Funding Sources	Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), State
Year Acquired	1975, 1999

Notes:

- There are active rail excursion tours operating along the corridor.

Plans for Trail Development

- Part of the planned Winnipesaukee Trail connecting Franklin to Lake Winnipesaukee. incorporating the WOW Trail, Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail, and the Winnipesauke River Trail.

The meeting of the Lake Winnisquam and WOW Trails

Winnipesaukee River Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	Town of Northfield, City of Franklin
Railroad Name	Boston, Concord and Montreal
Length (mi)	1 mile
Regional Planning Commission	Lakes Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Franklin
Town 2	Northfield
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized
Surface	Hardpack, Stone Dust
Typical ROW widths	65 feet
Connects to	
Funding Sources	Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), State
Year Acquired	1975, 1999
Number of Rail Bridges	2
River 1	Winnipesauke River

Notes:

Plans for Trail Development

- Part of the planned Winnipesaukee Trail connecting Franklin to Lake Winnipesaukee incorporating the WOW Trail, Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail, and the Winnipesauke River Trail.

Winnipesaukee River Trail

Farmington Recreational Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Cocheco Railroad
Length (mi)	6.8 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Strafford County RPC
Town 1	Farmington
Town 2	Rochester
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized, Snowmobiles
Surface	Gravel, dirt
Typical ROW widths	85 feet
Connects to	
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancements (TE), State
Year Acquired	1997

Farmington Recreational Rail Trail

Photos: DNCR

DARTMOUTH – LAKE SUNAPEE REGION

Mascoma River Greenway

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	City of Lebanon
Railroad Name	Northern Railroad
Length (mi)	2.27 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC
Town 1	Lebanon
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized
Surface	Paved
Typical ROW widths	82.5 and 99 ft
Connects to	Northern Rail Trail
Number of rail bridges	4
Number of tunnels	1
River 1	Mascoma River
Highway 1	I-89
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancements (TE), State
Year Acquired	1995

Notes:

- Part of the Granite State Rail Trail

Plans for Trail Development

- A $3 million structural reinforcement of a tunnel under the City's parking deck was completed in 2021.
- Extension to West Lebanon is a priority.
  Note: There is active railroad activity in West Lebanon. Rail with trail or off corridor connection required.

Mascoma River Greenway, Lebanon

Northern Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Northern Railroad
Length (mi)	58.2 miles
Regional Planning Commissions	Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC, Lakes Region Planning Commission, Central New Hampshire RPC
Town 1	Lebanon
Town 2	Enfield
Town 3	Canaan
Town 4	Orange
Town 5	Grafton
Town 6	Danbury
Town 7	Wilmot
Town 8	Andover
Town 9	Franklin
Town 10	Boscawen
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Snowmobiles
Surface	Hardpack, dirt, gravel
Typical ROW widths	82.5 and 99 ft
Connects to	Mascoma River Greenway
Number of rail bridges	82
Lake 1	Mascoma Lake
River 1	Mascoma River
River 2	Indian River
River 3	Smith River
River 4	Black River
River 5	Merrimack River
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancements (TE), State
Year Acquired	1995

Notes:

- Part of the Granite State Rail Trail

Plans for Trail Development

- Extension through Boscawen to the City of Concord line.

Northern Rail Trail in Enfield

Northern Rail Trail in Boscawen

Northern Rail Trail at Merrimack River

Sugar River Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Concord and Claremont RR
Length (mi)	9.5
Regional Planning Commissions	Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC
Town 1	Newport
Town 2	Claremont
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized* Snowmobiles, OHRVs
Surface	Gravel, sand
Typical ROW widths	66, 80, 110 feet
Connects to	
Number of rail bridges	7
River 1	Sugar River
Funding Sources	State, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
Year Acquired	1980

Kellyville Covered Rail Bridge over Sugar River

Sugar River Truss Bridge

Photo: DNCR

MONADNOCK REGION

Ashuelot Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Ashuelot Railroad
Length (mi)	21 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Southwest Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Hinsdale
Town 2	Winchester
Town 3	Swanzey
Town 4	Keene
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized, Snowmobiles
Surface	Unimproved, Hardpack, Paved
Typical ROW widths	66 feet
Connects to	Cheshire Rail Trail, Fort Hill Rail Trail
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancements (TE), State
Year Acquired	1995
Number of Rail Bridges	8
River 1	Ashuelot River

Notes:

- The City of Keene owns 0.1 miles within the downtown area

Plans for Trail Development

- SWRPC has developed *Plan for Ashuelot Rail Trail* 2020
- The City of Keene worked with UNH Extension to identify strategies to strengthen connections between downtown businesses and the trails *Strengthening Connections, Towns & Trails*, 2022

Ashuelot Rail Trail

Ashuelot Rail Trail

Cheshire Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR, City of Keene
Railroad Name	Cheshire Railroad
Length (mi)	39.9 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Southwest Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Rindge
Town 2	Fitzwilliam
Town 3	Troy
Town 4	Marlborough
Town 5	Swanzey
Town 6	Keene
Town 7	Surry
Town 8	Westmoreland
Town 9	Walpole
Town 10	Surry
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized, snowmobiles
Surface	Paved, Hardpack, Gravel, Unimproved
Typical ROW widths	82.5 and 99 ft
Connects to	Ashuelot Recreational Rail Trail
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancements (TE), State
Year Acquired	1995
Number of Rail Bridges	36
River 1	Ashuelot River

Notes:

- The City of Keene owns 2.0 miles within the downtown area.

Plans for Trail Development

- SWRPC has developed the *Cheshire Rail Trail South Plan* 2021
- The City of Keene worked with UNH Extension to identify strategies to strengthen connections between downtown businesses and the trails *Strengthening Connections, Towns & Trails*, 2022

Fitzwilliam Bridge Cheshire Rail Trai

Cheshire Branch Rail Trail in Keene

Cheshire Branch Rail Trail in Keene

Fort Hill Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Fort Hill Branch
Length (mi)	8.9 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Southwest Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Hinsdale
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized, snowmobiles
Surface	Gravel
Typical ROW widths	66 feet
Connects to	Ashuelot Recreational Rail Trail
Number of rail bridges	8
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancement (TE), State
Year Acquired	1994
Local Maintenance Partners	Pisgah Mountain Trail Riders
Number of Rail Bridges	8
River 1	Ashuelot River
River 2	Connecticut River

Rail bridge over Connecticut River

Fort Hill Recreational Rail Trail

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Hillsborough Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Hillsborough Branch
Length (mi)	8.0 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Southwest Region Planning Commission, Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission
Town 1	Bennington
Town 2	Deering
Town 3	Hillsborough
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized, Snowmobiles
	OHRVs
Surface	Gravel
Typical ROW widths	66 feet
Connects to	
Number of rail bridges	8
	Non-motorized, snowmobiles
Funding Sources	State
Year Acquired	1988
Number of Rail Bridges	3
River 1	Contoocook River

Hillsborough Recreational Rail Trail

Photo: nhstateparks.org

Hillsborough Recreational Rail Trail

Photo: nhstateparks.org

Monadnock Recreational Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Monadnock Railroad
Length (mi)	9 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Southwest Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Rindge
Town 2	Jaffrey
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized, Snowmobiles OHRVs with snow cover
Surface	Stone Dust
Typical ROW widths	80 feet
Connects to	Winchendon, MA
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancements (TE), State
Year Acquired	1999
Number of Rail Bridges	1
River 1	Contoocook River

Notes:

- The Town of Jaffrey owns approximately 1.5 miles within the downtown area

Monadnock Recreational Rail Trail

Photos: DNCR

MERRIMACK VALLEY REGION

Londonderry Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	Town of Londonderry
Railroad Name	Manchester and Lawrence
Length (mi)	4.5 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
Town 1	Londonderry
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses
Surface	Paved, Unimproved
Typical ROW widths	82.5 and 99 ft
Connects to	
Number of rail bridges	
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancement (TE), State
Year Acquired	2003

Notes:

- Part of the Granite State Rail Trail

Plans for Trail Development

- SNHRPC and CNHRPC Regional Trail Plan 2021 identifies gaps from Concord to Salem https://www.snhpc.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif5006/f/news/21-0521_draft_trails_plan_for_public_comment.pdf .

Londonderry Rail Trail

Windham Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	Town of Windham
Railroad Name	Manchester and Lawrence
Length (mi)	4.3 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
Town 1	Windham
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses Snowmobiles
Surface	Paved, hardpack, separate equestrian trail
Typical ROW widths	82.5 and 99 ft
Connects to	Derry Rail Trail, Salem Bike Ped Corridor
Number of rail bridges	
Funding Sources	State
Year Acquired	1988

Notes:

- Part of the Granite State Rail Trail

Manchester Lawrence Recreational Trail at Windham Depot and Freight House

Salem Bike-Ped Corridor

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	NHDOT
Railroad Name	Manchester and Lawrence
Length (mi)	5.1 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Rockingham RPC
Town 1	Salem
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Uses
Surface	Paved
Typical ROW widths	82.5 and 99 ft
Connects to	Methuen (MA) Rail Trail and Windham Rail Trail
Number of rail bridges	
Funding Sources	Transportation Enhancement (TE), State, Highway
Year Acquired	2002-2005

Notes:

- Part of the Granite State Rail Trail

Plans for Trail Development

- SNHRPC and CNHRPC Regional Trail Plan 2021 identifies gaps from Concord to Salem. https://www.snhpc.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif5006/f/news/21-0521_draft_trails_plan_for_public_comment.pdf

Salem Bike Ped Corridor

Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail, Portsmouth Branch

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Portsmouth Branch
Length (mi)	27.3 miles
Regional Planning Commissions	Rockingham RPC, Southern New Hampshire RPC
Town 1	Newfields
Town 2	Epping
Town 3	Raymond
Town 4	Candia
Town 5	Auburn
Town 6	Manchester
Permitted Uses	Non-Motorized Snowmobiles
Surface	Hardpack, unimproved
Typical ROW widths	66 feet
Connects to	Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail, Fremont Branch
Number of rail bridges	11
Funding Sources	State
Year Acquired	1988
River 1	Pawtuckaway River
River 2	Lamprey River
River 3	Scribner's River

Rail Bridge over Lamprey River

Rockingham Trail between Epping and Raymond

Rockingham Trail at Raymond Station

Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail, Fremont Branch

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Fremont Branch
Length (mi)	18 miles
Regional Planning Commissions	Rockingham RPC
Town 1	Fremont
Town 2	Danville
Town 3	Sandown
Town 4	Hampstead
Town 5	Derry
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized uses, snowmobiles
	All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) permitted in non-snow seasons on segment of Fremont Branch from Route 28 (Derry) to Route 107 (Fremont) and when snow covered from Route 107 to Epping
Surface	Gravel, Sand
Typical ROW widths	82.5 and 99 ft
Connects to	Windham Rail Trail, Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail, Portsmouth Branch
Number of rail bridges	8
Funding Sources	State Highway, Land and Water Conservation Fund
Year Acquired	1941, 1988
River 1	Exeter River
	Piscassic River

Junction of Fremont and Portsmouth Branch rail trails in Epping

Fremont Branch looking north approaching junction with Rockingham Trail in Epping

Greenville Recreational Rail Trail

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	DNCR
Management Entity	DNCR
Railroad Name	Greenville Branch
Length (mi)	2.2 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Southwest Region Planning Commission, Nashua Region Planning Commission
Town 1	Wilton
Town 2	Greenville
Permitted Uses	Non-motorized, Snowmobiles OHRVs
Surface	Gravel
Typical ROW widths	80 feet
Connects to	
Funding Sources	State DNCR Funds
Year Acquired	1999

Greenville Recreational Rail Trail

SEACOAST REGION

New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway

Trail Data and Conditions

Owner	NHDOT
Management Entity	NHDOT
Railroad Name	Hampton Branch
Length (mi)	14.2 miles
Regional Planning Commission	Rockingham RPC
Town 1	Seabrook
Town 2	Hampton Falls
Town 3	Hampton
Town 4	North Hampton
Town 5	Greenland
Town 6	Rye
Town 7	Portsmouth
Permitted Uses	None at this time (non-motorized when open)
Surface	Unimproved
Typical ROW widths	82 feet
Connects to	Border to Boston (MA)
Number of rail bridges	5
Funding Sources	CMAQ, TE, Toll Credits
Year Acquired	1996, 1999, 2019
River 1	Mill Creek
River 2	Browns River
River 3	Hampton Falls River
River 4	Taylor River

Plans for Trail Development

- Will be a segment of the East Coast Greenway
- Improvement plans are in design. Three segments are included in the 2023-2032 Ten-Year Plan (Hampton-Portsmouth, Seabrook, and Hampton Falls-Hampton
- As of 2022, 0 miles are available for rail trail use

Hampton Branch corridor

Hampton Branch corridor through wetlands as seen from Route 1

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SUGAR RIVER RAIL TRAIL, NORTHERN RAIL TRAIL, MASCOMA RIVER GREENWAY

2. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RAIL TRAILS

INTRODUCTION

Senate Bill 185 of the 2019 legislative session (SB 185) directed the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to develop a state rail trail plan, with an emphasis on state-owned rail trails. Within the provisions of this bill, there was also an item to "include a statewide economic-impact analysis on the value of rail trails." This document describes the process of designing, implementing, and analyzing the results of an economic impact analysis for New Hampshire's state-owned rails trails. In addition to the quantitative analysis, this chapter also discusses qualitative insight on the broader benefits of rail trails and opportunities to increase these benefits.

An economic impact study of this nature, one that estimates the value of the rail trails to various users, is broadly considered in the realm of understanding tourism impact. This methodology is described in more detail later in the report.

New Hampshire residents also benefit from and value the state-owned rail trails, so the team calculated the economic contribution of local spending related to rail trail use. Visitors tend to spend more money and bring "net new" spending to the state. Residents also contribute to the economic activity but don't necessarily create new spending the state wouldn't see otherwise. However, residents do signal their value for certain activities with their local spending and vote with those dollars. Analyzing New Hampshire residents' contribution to economic activity related to the state-owned rail trails gives important insight into the value the trails bring to the State's economy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & STUDY DESIGN

Collecting direct data in person greatly increases the level of confidence in economic impact studies. In collaboration with NHDOT, GPI, and the Advisory Committee, a methodology that focused on in-person data collection at seven different rail trails across the state was designed. This subset was selected to be representative of the diversity of state-owned rail trails across New Hampshire based on geography, allowable uses, and trail length. The rail trails used for in-person survey data collection are listed in Table 2-1. The trail user intercept survey can be found in the Appendix.

In-person surveying began in earnest in February of 2020, but the surveying season was stymied by low snowfall and then was cut short by the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April of 2020, the research team ran an online survey that received a significant number of responses. This survey was used as comparison data. The online survey was not randomly sampled and was not given in person, so it was decided to add another year to the data collection process with the objective of collecting more robust in-person data in 2021.

After careful and detailed research and coordination, an updated study protocol was approved by the UNH Internal Review Board, and the modified, in-person intercept survey approach began in February 2021. As implied by the title, an Intercept Survey is a survey method that involves "intercepting" individuals in person to collect responses as they are participating in the activity being studied. In this case, individuals were asked to briefly stop their use of the rail trail to answer questions about rail trail-related spending and use. To maintain social distancing and to make individuals feel more comfortable participating in the survey, various methods to provide survey responses were offered. Respondents could fill out a paper survey and give it to the surveyor, scan a unique QR code to fill out the survey online via their smartphone, or fill out the survey on an iPad provided by the surveyor. QR codes were provided on an A-frame sign at the collection spot and on postcards (Figure 2-1) that were available at the survey site. The postcard allowed rail trail users to take the survey later in the day at their convenience. Most people either answered in person at the survey collection site or took a postcard to complete later in the day. A few dozen respondents utilized the paper survey. All survey responses were combined and analyzed together regardless of the collection method utilized.

TABLE 2-1: Rail Trails Selected for Surveying

RAIL TRAIL	SURVEY LOCATION	TRAIL USES (IN ADDITION TO WALKING)	LENGTH (MILES)	COUNTY
Great North Woods Region				
Upper Coos	Colebrook, Stewartstown	XC-skiing, horseback riding, mtn. biking, mushing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, OHRV	9.6	Coos
White Mountains Region				
Presidential Rail Trail	Gorham	XC-skiing, horseback riding, mtn. biking, mushing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, OHRV[1]	18	Coos
Lakes Region				
Cotton Valley Rail Trail	Wolfeboro	XC-skiing, mtn. biking, mushing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, rail cars	11.4	Carroll
Dartmouth-Lake Sunapee Region				
Northern Rail Trail	Boscawen, Andover, Lebanon	XC-skiing, horseback riding, mtn biking, mushing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing	58.2	Merrimack, Grafton
Monadnock Region				
Cheshire Rail Trail	Keene	XC-skiing, horseback riding, mtn. biking, mushing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing	42	Cheshire
Merrimack Valley Region				
Windham Rail Trail, Derry Rail Trail	Windham, Derry	XC-skiing, bicycling, snowshoeing	9	Rockingham
Seacoast, Merrimack Valley Regions				
Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail (Portsmouth & Fremont Branch)	Newfields, Raymond, Fremont	XC-skiing, horseback riding, mtn. biking, mushing, snowmobiling, OHRV, snowshoeing	25; 18	Hillsborough, Rockingham

Notes:

1: OHRVs are allowed only on a short segment (0.5 miles) of the Presidential Rail Trail

A total of 40 in-person collection days, spread across weekends and weekdays and at various morning and afternoon hours, were conducted between February 2021 and October 2021 on the rail trails listed in Table 2-1. The collection times, days of the week, and date range ensured

data was obtained in various seasons, times of the day, and from various trail user groups. At all survey collection sites survey collection staff were available to answer questions and offer survey participation options.

FIGURE 2-1: Postcards with QR Code Survey Link

The results of the intercept survey data provided key inputs to the economic modeling: average resident and visitor spending associated with state-owned rail trails and the proportion of resident versus visitor use of the rail trails. The mix of resident versus visitor use was fairly consistent across the sampled rail trails indicating that there was no trail that was significantly more heavily used by visitors than the other rail trails.

Conducting a Visitor Economic Impact Analysis

Two of the analyses conducted by the research team are based on a tourism impact model. The "net new" value added by visitors who come to a region for a specific purpose is an accepted method for showing the value of certain natural resources. Figure 2-2 illustrates the steps to estimating the economic impact of visitor spending. This process is developed from a well-respected resource on estimating the economic impact of park and recreation services (Crompton 2010). In its most basic form, visitor economic impact is a simple equation of the number of visitors multiplied by the average spending per visitor and then by a multiplier that captures the ripple effect of spending. However, within each of those categories, decisions and assumptions about the available data need to be made. This section provides details on the approach taken in this study. To complete the first step of a tourism impact study, one needs to determine the number of visitors participating in the specific activity. As noted above, typically, tourism impact studies are done on visitors only to capture the "net new" spending.

FIGURE 2-2: Steps to Estimating Economic Impact of Visitor Spending

The research team was able to collect 250 surveys over the 40 survey days in 2021. Of those, 246 completed the economic information questions. Eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents were residents of New Hampshire and 15% were visiting from outside of New Hampshire. While 18 residents indicated that they spent overnight time in conjunction with their trip to the trail, they were more accurately characterized as short-term residents (i.e., second homeowners, long-term visitors, etc.); thus, the team did not analyze them separately from the residents.

Multipliers

The final piece of an economic impact study is determining the ripple effects of spending in certain categories. A well-respected economic input-output modeling software called IMPLAN (http://www.implan.com/) was used to determine the ripple effects of spending by visitors to the state-owned rail trails.

An economic input-output model takes direct spending in one sector and models how that spending may impact another sector of the regional economy through either spending in the supply chain (e.g., spending at hotels can lead to spending on paper supplies and cleaning products) and through wages that are paid to employees of the sector. IMPLAN's modeling can show the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of a change in the regional economy. Table 2-2 explains the definition of each effect type.

TABLE 2-2: IMPLAN Effect Definitions

Type of Effect	Definition
Direct	The set of expenditures is applied to the predictive model (i.e., I/O multipliers) for impact analysis. It is a series (or single) of production changes or expenditures made by producers/consumers as a result of an activity or policy. These initial changes are determined by an analyst to be a result of this activity or policy. Applying these initial changes to the multipliers in an IMPLAN model will then display how the region will respond economically to these initial changes. https://implanhelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115009668548-Direct-effects
Indirect	The impact of local industries buying goods and services from other local industries. The cycle of spending works its way backward through the supply chain until all money leaks from the local economy, either through imports or by payments to value added. The impacts are calculated by applying Direct Effects to the Type I Multipliers. https://implanhelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115009499547-Indirect-effects
Induced	The response by an economy to an initial change (direct effect) that occurs through re-spending of income received by a component of value added. IMPLAN's default multiplier recognizes that labor income (employee compensation and proprietor income components of value added) is not a leakage to the regional economy. This money is recirculated through the household spending patterns causing further local economic activity. https://implanhelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115009668568-Induced-effects

In order to model the economic impacts, visitor spending must be connected to a specific sector of the economy. Table 2-3 below details the IMPLAN sector number and corresponding NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) classification for the business (note these codes are listed in the order in which the spending questions were asked rather than alphabetical or numerical order).

TABLE 2-3: Spending Categories by NAICS Business Sector

IMPLAN Sector	NAICS Business Sector
408	Retail gasoline stores
509	Full-service restaurants
398	Wholesale grocery
507	Hotels & motels
411	Retail
504	Amusement and recreation
512	Auto repair and maintenance

Table 2-4 and Table 2-5 show the average amount of money spent per person, per rail trail visit, for seven spending categories that were included in the survey for residents and visitors (non-NH residents), respectively. In the survey the terms that are included the Spending Category column were utilized and for the purposes of the input-output model the team associated the Spending Categories with the corresponding IMPLAN Sector.

TABLE 2-4: NH Residents' Average Spend per Person per Rail Trail Trip

Spending Category	IMPLAN Sector	Average Spending Per Person Per Visit to Rail Trail
Transportation	408	$2.38
Food & Drink (restaurants)	509	$5.54
Food & Drink (convenience stores)	398	$3.00
Overnight accommodations	507	$1.08
Gifts/Souvenirs	411	$0.40
Spending on recreation and other activities	504	$1.05
Snowmobile/OHRV Maintenance & Fuel	512	$0.86
Other		$0.00
TOTAL		**$14.31**

TABLE 2-5: Visitor (Non-NH Resident) Average Spend per Person per Rail Trail Trip

Spending Category	IMPLAN Sector	Average Spending Per Person Per Visit to Rail Trail
Transportation	408	$2.86
Food & Drink (restaurants)	509	$11.82
Food & Drink (convenience stores)	398	$3.28
Overnight accommodations	507	$18.82
Gifts/Souvenirs	411	$2.38
Spending on recreation and other activities	504	$0.30
Snowmobile/OHRV Maintenance & Fuel	512	$1.25
Other		$0.00
TOTAL		**$40.71**

The intercept survey also asked about equipment purchased in New Hampshire that was used on the trip to the rail trail. While the team did receive some quantitative data on purchases, some respondents seemed to include larger purchases that could be used on multiple rail trail trips and other outings, not just their rail trail use on the survey date. Thus, it was decided to take the most conservative approach and remove equipment purchases from the quantitative analysis (average spend tables). However, it is also important to note that rail trail users,

especially New Hampshire residents, indicated that they purchased their equipment in New Hampshire, which is another positive impact of rail trails on New Hampshire's economy.

Trail Usage Estimates

Annual trail usage counts are necessary to estimate the economic output of the rail trails. New Hampshire does not have a centralized system or methodology for counting users of rail trails, which made finding estimates of annual trail usage quite challenging. With assistance from the Advisory Committee, the research team was able to obtain trail count information for nine of the 27 state-owned rail trails, and these trails were used for the economic analysis. It should be noted that all of the counts are estimates whether from a digital counter or an estimate from local sources (planning commissions, municipalities, etc.), and are not exact measures of every user, but rather the best estimates that could be found for this effort. The trail count estimates can be found in the Appendix.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

To estimate resident contributions and visitor economic impact, the research team ran two separate models for the nine rail trails for which trail count estimates were obtained. The following section summarizes the results of the analysis and provides an example of the analysis for one rail trail. The remaining results are detailed at the end of the report. The total spending, jobs, and taxes generated by each rail trail are summarized in detail in the Appendix.

TABLE 2-6: Summary of Estimated Economic Activity of Nine Rail Trails, 2021[1]

RAIL TRAIL	RESIDENT CONTRIBUTION OUTPUT	JOBS	TAXES	VISITOR IMPACT OUTPUT	JOBS	TAXES
White Mountains Region						
Ammonoosuc	$ 887,000	8	$ 121,000	$ 517,000	4	$ 85,000
Presidential	$ 741,000	7	$ 99,000	$ 426,000	3.5	$ 70,000
Lakes Region						
Cotton Valley	$ 436,000	4	$ 59,000	$ 254,000	2	$ 42,000
Winnipesaukee River	$ 574,000	5	$ 78,000	$ 349,000	3	$ 58,000
WOW Trail	$ 812,000	**7**	$ 110,000	$ 466,000	**4**	$ 77,000
Dartmouth Lake Sunapee Region						
Northern	$ 2,180,000	20	$ 296,000	$ 1,271,000	10	$ 210,000
Monadnock Region						
Ashuelot	$ 1,402,000	13	$ 190,000	$ 818,000	7	$ 135,000
Merrimack Valley Region						
Londonderry	$ 2,368,000	22	$ 322,000	$ 1,381,000	11	$ 229,000
Windham/Derry	$ 2,345,000	22	$ 329,000	$ 1,419,000	11	$ 234,000
TOTAL	**$ 11,835,000**	**108**	**$ 1,604,000**	**$ 6,901,000**	**56**	**$ 1,140,000**

Notes: 1: Includes combined totals of direct spending, and indirect and induced effects

The nine trails studied combined to provide an annual economic contribution from residents of $11,835,000, tax revenue of $1,604,000, and support for 108 jobs. Visitors to these rail trails provided an estimated $6,901,000 of economic impact (both direct and indirect/induced effects), tax revenue of $1,140,000, and 56 jobs supported.

Example Rail Trail Economic Output Calculation

Ashuelot Rail Trail

Approximately 97,000 users visited the Ashuelot Recreational Rail Trail during the year of 2018 (Source: Southwest Regional Planning Commission). Using this annual trip count and the percentage of visitors vs. residents (85% residents, 15% visitors) identified in the broader New Hampshire rail trail sample, the team estimated 14,478 visitors and 82,039 residents for this analysis. It should be noted that this resident to visitor split is similar to data collected in communities that participated in UNH Cooperative Extension's Downtowns & Trails program (https://extension.unh.edu/resource/strengthening-connections-downtowns-trails-keene-nh-2022-final-report).

The IMPLAN tax information is based on taxes (and in some cases fees) that are collected in the region under question. Taxes relevant to New Hampshire are property taxes, motor vehicle licenses, severance taxes, special assessments, excise taxes, rooms and meals taxes, etc.

Tables 2-7 and 2-8 summarize the economic contribution of residents who visited the Ashuelot Rail Trail, and Tables 2-9 and 2-10 summarize the economic impact of visitors to the trail.

TABLE 2-7: Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the Ashuelot Rail Trail

Impact	Jobs	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
1 - Direct	9.37	$378,000	$495,000	$791,000
2 - Indirect	1.44	$86,000	$137,000	$259,000
3 - Induced	2.15	$121,000	$215,000	$352,000
TOTAL	**12.96**	**$585,000**	**$847,000**	**$1,402,000**

TABLE 2-8: Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, Ashuelot Rail Trail

Impact	Total
1 - Direct	$115,000
2 - Indirect	$29,000
3 - Induced	$46,000
TOTAL	**$190,000**

TABLE 2-9: Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to Ashuelot Rail Trail

Impact	Jobs	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
1 - Direct	4.79	$194,000	$329,000	$493,000
2 - Indirect	0.82	$49,000	$77,000	$141,000
3 - Induced	1.12	$63,000	$112,000	$184,000
TOTAL	**6.74**	**$306,000**	**$518,000**	**$818,000**

TABLE 2-10: Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to Ashuelot Rail Trail

Impact	Total
1 - Direct	$95,000
2 - Indirect	$16,000
3 - Induced	$24,000
TOTAL	**$135,000**

A Note on Sample Size

While 200 responses is considered an acceptable sample size to be used in an analysis of this nature, a larger sample size is better, to a degree. As previously detailed, due to the challenges of data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic, the research team had to modify some of the survey efforts, but a total of 250 in-person surveys were collected. Of additional note, in the Spring of 2020, during the stay-at-home order, the team also administered an online survey that yielded over 1,800 responses. This online survey data has been useful for qualitative and comparison purposes rather than as an input for the economic modeling. Overall, the online survey instrument (questions asked) was not the same as the in-person intercept surveys and did not ask about a specific rail trail use experience at a specific time but was rather open-ended. In addition, the online survey was widely shared among rail trail modal user and advocacy groups who responded based on their overall rail trail experiences rather than a specific rail trail experience. These factors (a set of respondents that is not a representative random sample of all trail users and using more open-ended questions) provided data that appeared to be skewed in favor of promoting the paths or a particular modal user. This dynamic was also encountered in a similar study done in Massachusetts (MassTrails, 2021). As such, the research team opted to reconvene in-person surveying to collect from a random sample of representative trail users and ask questions about the user's specific rail trail experience at the time of the survey to provide the most reliable data for the modeling.

As an example, the in-person survey data determined an average visitor spent $40.71 per day which is significantly lower than the results from the online survey which indicated that visitors spent $75 per person. In addition, the team found that the in-person survey sample, while small, is in line with results from other studies and is more realistic compared to an unguided online survey (VT Greenways, 2016). Similarly, in the case of residents, the online survey data provided an average of $35.95 spent per person per trip while the in-person survey results yielded an average of $14.31 spent per resident per trip. Ultimately, the estimates used for the

modeling represent a more conservative approach. It should be noted that all models involve estimates, and this analysis is based off estimates which rely on the truth and accuracy of respondent's answers to survey questions.

Other Survey Findings

Residents

Rail trail users that are New Hampshire residents represented all age groups, with the 55-64 years age group and the 65-74 years age groups being most represented in this sample (28.7% and 19.6% of the total responses, respectively). The rail trails are also enjoyed evenly across genders, with a nearly 50/50 split between male and female users. Most commonly, resident rail trail users had two adults in their party and no children. For the majority of users, the rail trail they visited was in the community of their primary residence. Alternatively, about 20% of users spent less than 6 hours on their trip to use the rail trail. About 25% of users said that the use of the rail trail was the primary reason for their trip to this region of the state. Once on the rail trail, most users spent less than 6 hours there, and their primary reason for using the trail was for recreation. Hiking, trail running, or walking, which were all in one combined use category, was the most popular activity for users to participate in, while bicycling and dog walking were the second and third most popular activities. An equal number of rail trail users said they use the rail trail in the summer, spring, and fall seasons with winter falling behind in usage.

The average amount spent by a New Hampshire resident rail trail user on their trip was $14.31 The highest spending categories for rail trail users were Transportation and Food & Drink at Restaurants. Most users (86%) said that they did not change their spending habits on their trip due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eighty-three percent (83%) of users did not pay membership fees (i.e., to a trails group, OHRV/snowmobile club, etc.) for rail trail maintenance, and those that did pay fees paid an average of $86.

Visitors (Non-NH Residents)

Rail trail users that are visitors to New Hampshire represented all age groups, with the 55-64 years age group and the 65-74 years age groups being most represented in this sample. Most commonly, trail users had two adults in their party and no children. Almost half of the visitors had an overnight stay associated with their reported rail trail use. The average number of nights a user stayed was 2.5 nights. A little less than a third of visitors stayed in New Hampshire for less than 6 hours. Most users spent less than 6 hours on the rail trail. Almost all users said recreation was their primary reason for using the rail trail and they used the rail trails to hike, walk, and bike. Users said that they use the trails in summer, spring, and fall with fewer users saying that they use the rail trails in the winter.

The average amount spent by a visitor (non-NH resident) rail trail user on their trip was $40.71. The highest spending categories were Overnight Lodging, Food & Drink at Restaurants, and Food & Drink at a Grocery Store. Seventy-three percent (73%) of users said that the COVID-19 pandemic did not impact the spending on their trip, while 24% said that the pandemic caused

them to spend less. About 90% of users did not pay membership fees (i.e., to a trails group, OHRV/snowmobile club, etc.) for trail maintenance.

Table 2-11: Summary Statistics New Hampshire Residents - 2021

Number of Responses	209
Monthly Breakdown	**Number (% of Total 209 Respondents)**
February	28 (13.4%)
March	15 (7.2%)
April	24 (11.5%)
May	32 (15.3%)
June	39 (18.7%)
July	35 (16.7%)
August	16 (7.7%)
September	0 (0)
October	10 (4.8%)
November	10 (4.8%)
*Note There was no surveying in January or December of 2021	
Number of Adults in Party	
Mean	1.7
Median	2
Number of Children (under 18) in Party	
Mean	0.3
Median	0
Time Spent in NH	**Number (% of Total 181 Responses)**
The trail is in the Community of Residence	139 (76.8%)
Less than 6 Hours	36 (19.9%)
6-12 Hours	6 (3.3%)
Overnight	0 (0%)
Time Spent on the Rail Trail	**Number (% of Total 204 Responses)**
Less than 6 Hours	196 (96.1%)
6-12 Hours	8 (3.9%)
12 – 24 Hours	0 (0%)
Primary Reason for using Rail Trail	**Number (% of Total 198 Responses**
Recreation	170 (85.9%)
Commuting	2 (1%)
Traveling to School	0 (0%)
Traveling to Friends/Family	1 (0.5%)
Other	25 (14.1%)
Primary Reason for Coming to this Region of the State	**Number (% of Total 205 Responses)**
Use of the rail trail is the primary reason I was there	55 (26.8%)
I was in the region for many reasons, one of which was the rail trail	13 (6.3%)
I was already in the region (or liver here) and decided to come to the rail trail	132 (64.4%)
I moved to the region of NH because of access to the rail trail(s)	5 (2.4%)

Table 2-11: Summary Statistics New Hampshire Residents – 2021 (Cont.)

Activity Participating In	Number of Responses
Hiking / Trail-running / Walking	109
Snowshoeing	2
Bicycling	65
Horseback Riding	0
Cross Country Skiing	2
Off-Highway Recreational Vehicles (OHRV)	3
Snowmobiling	13
Dog Walking	33
Commuting to School or Work	3
Other	9
Did the current COVID-19 pandemic impact your trip-related spending in any way?	**Number (% of Total 203 Responses)**
Yes, Spent More	9 (4.4%)
Yes, Spent Less	20 (9.9%)
No, Spent the Same	174 (85.7%)
Seasons the Trail is Used	**Number of Responses**
Winter	104
Spring	166
Summer	179
Fall	164
Do you pay member fees to a trails group, OHRV/snowmobile club, etc.?	**Number (% of Total 197 Responses)**
Yes*	33 (16.8%)
No	164 (83.2%)
***Average Fees Pad = $ 86.32** ***Median Fees Paid = $ 60.00**	

Table 2-12: Summary Statistics Trail Visitors (Non-NH Residents) - 2021

A respondent was considered a visitor (non-NH residents) when the respondent listed a zip code not starting with 03 (denoting New Hampshire zip codes) as the primary zip code

Number of Responses	37

Monthly Breakdown	Number (% of Total 37Respondents)
February	4 (10.8%)
March	0 (0%)
April	1 (2.7%)
May	7 (18.9%)
June	6 (16.2%)
July	9 (24.3%)
August	6 (16.2%)
September	0 (0%)
October	0 (0%)
November	4 (10.8%)

***Note There was no surveying in January or December of 2021**

Number of Adults in Party	
Mean	2.7
Median	2

Number of Children (under 18) in Party	
Mean	0.2
Median	0

Time Spent in NH	Number (% of Total 33 Responses)
The trail is in the Community of Residence	5 (15.2%)
Less than 6 Hours	10 (30.3%)
6-12 Hours	4 (12.1%)
Overnight*	14 (42.4%
***Average Number of Nights Spent = 7.6**	

Time Spent on the Rail Trail	Number (% of Total 37 Responses)
Less than 6 Hours	33 (89.2%)
6-12 Hours	4 (10.8%)
12 – 24 Hours	0 (0%)

Primary Reason for using Rail Trail	Number (% of Total 34 Responses
Recreation	33 (97%)
Commuting	0 (0%)
Traveling to School	0 (0%)
Traveling to Friends/Family	1 (3%)
Other	0 (0%)

Primary Reason for Coming to this Region of the State	Number (% of Total 37 Responses)
Use of the rail trail is the primary reason I was there	13 (35.1%)
I was in the region for many reasons, one of which was the rail trail	9 (24.3%)
I was already in the region (or liver here) and decided to come to the rail trail	15 (40.5%)
I moved to the region of NH because of access to the rail trail(s)	0 (0%)

Table 2-12: Summary Statistics Trail Visitors (Non-NH Residents) – 2021 (Cont.)

Activity Participating In	Number of Responses
Hiking / Trail-running / Walking	18
Snowshoeing	0
Bicycling	18
Horseback Riding	0
Cross Country Skiing	0
Off-Highway Recreational Vehicles (OHRV)	0
Snowmobiling	1
Dog Walking	0
Commuting to School or Work	0
Other	2
Overnight Accommodations	**Number of Responses**
Motel / Hotel	6
Bed & Breakfast	4
Friend or Relative's House	9
Campground	4
Second Home	6
Vacation Rental	3
AirBnb	6
Other	3
Did the current COVID-19 pandemic impact your trip-related spending in any way?	**Number (% of Total 37 Responses)**
Yes, Spent More	1 (2.7%)
Yes, Spent Less	9 (24.3%)
No, Spent the Same	27 (73%)
Seasons the Trail is Used	**Number of Responses**
Winter	12
Spring	29
Summer	29
Fall	25
Do you pay member fees to a trails group, OHRV/snowmobile club, etc.?	**Number (% of Total 37 Responses)**
Yes*	3 (8.1%)
No	34 (91.9%)
***Average Fees Pad = $ 65.00** ***Median Fees Paid = $ 65.00**	

Qualitative Feedback - Residents

Common Themes

Residents are grateful that trails are close to their residences.
Residents say that the rail trails are important to their community.
Residents enjoy the trails because they are safe places to walk or ride bicycles.
Many residents expressed a desire for expanded and more interconnected rail trails.
Residents note that trails are well-maintained.
Many residents use the rail trails several times a week.
Some residents enjoy the paved aspect of some of the trails.
Residents say the trails provide a positive impact on their mental and physical health.

GENERAL POSITIVE COMMENTS

- *"We love our rail trail!"*
- *"The trail is a great resource for the community."*
- *"Beautiful way to visit NH."*
- *"Love that is a free, fun way to spend family time."*
- *"Delightful trail to use all year round."*
- *"The Northern Rail Trail is an important part of our community connection."*

TRAIL MANAGEMENT COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

- *"We love rail trails, especially paved."*
- *"Keep trail open and make it longer. Pave trail between Derry and Londonderry."*
- *"More trails please!"*
- *"The trail has been cleaned up nicely and the addition of lights is great at night."*
- *"Well maintained trails."*
- *"I hope the trail system continues to expand and marketed better to draw more tourists."*
- *"Great trail. Need more. Biking on the road is very hazardous." (another comment in agreement)*
- *"I have lived in Windham for 21 years and love the rail trail. However I do find it frustrating that as a resident it is at times difficult to find parking."*
- *"More trails! I love the whole network and use it weekly for a variety of activities in all seasons"*
- *"I hope the unpaved section between Derry & Londonderry will be completed soon."*
- *"The Rail Trail is one of the most prized assets in NH. Would like to see the state invest in it more."*
- *"Beautiful aside from motorized vehicles."*
- *"The trails are great - the Piscassic reserve off of rail trail is great and there should be others like that. Also should put donation boxes around frequently used places and some history plaques."*
- *"Continue trail to Portsmouth."*
- *"No motorized vehicles."*
- *"I wish there were more."*

COMMENTS REGARDING ACTIVITIES DONE ON THE TRAIL

- *"Love the trails for my exercise program."*
- *"Rail trails serve as a great spot for me to meet with friends of different ages. We can be active and talk and catch up!"*
- *"The rail trails I [use] Derry, Windham, and Londonderry are a safe and beautiful place to walk, run, bike, and walk w/ dog. We use the trails several times per week and appreciate the beauty and peace of exercising on the trails."*
- *"One of the things we most like about living in this area is the trail which is a perfect place for us to walk. We appreciate the level surface and beauty of surrounding area."*
- *"The rail trail is extremely important to my mental and physical health."*
- *"Love the trails, we use them all the time for biking and walking."*
- *"I appreciate this trail as a commuting path and a daily recreation path. I had no idea that it extends far enough to be used for long excursions!"*
- *"Amazing trail, heard about it online and from friends that live in town. It connects their residence with where they shop."*
- *"The rail trails are a great resource for walking, biking, snowshoeing, etc."*
- *"Use very frequently for running/walking, almost every day."*
- *"I ride rail trails all over NE."*
- *"We love the rail trail and use it often to get out of the house for a safe place to walk."*
- *"I walk the dog or run there several times per week."*
- *"We use the RRT for running, biking, walking, dog walking, and transportation by bike. Rail trails are a fantastic community resource and should be expanded. My wife and I use Rail Trails for bicycle touring vacations because it is safer being off roads and the sights are better. We love Rail Trails."*
- *"Love these rail trails. Would love to do more bike touring on Rail trails. Need to connect more. We spend more money on food and lodging the longer the trail/trip as well as gear to do it:)."*
- *"Just enjoy the trail-walking & also the woodland trails."*
- *"I love this trail come here to walk my dog from Madison live in the area."*

COMMENTS REGARDING TRAIL USAGE FREQUENCY

- *"I loved the Windham Derry rail trail it was my first time on it. I ride the Nashua rail trail 2 or 3 times a week. Rail trails are wonderful thank you for all you do to support them!"*
- *"I use the trail anywhere from 1-4 times a week year-round, except when too icy."*
- *"I use the trail all the time and access it from Rockingham, Route 87, and Neal Mill Road. Use has skyrocketed since the pandemic."*

COMMENTS REGARDING TRAIL ECONOMIC IMPACT

- *"The Derry/Windham Rail trail is vital to our area for economic reasons and beyond!"*
- *"The rail trail system is a wonderful asset. I know people who travel from MA just to use the rail trail."*
- *"We stayed in Wolfeboro at least 20 nights and spent a lot of money while house hunting from Connecticut. The Cotton (Valley) Trail was a key reason to move to Wolfeboro and build a home on Crescent Lake (near the trail)."*
- *"I walk on this trail almost every day. There's no other good walking route from my house to downtown Keene. I would likely patronize downtown shops far less frequently if I had to get in my car and drive."*
- *"I don't come to the trail very often but I appreciate being able to use it and would gladly donate to the appropriate organization."*
- *"We conduct multiple events on this trail, with hundreds of runners, this brings runners from all over New England to stay locally."*

Qualitative Feedback – Visitors

Common Themes

Visitors would like more trails and large networks of interconnected trails.
Visitors use the trails frequently.
Visitors appreciate that the trails are groomed in the winter.
Visitors note that the trails are well-maintained.

GENERAL POSITIVE COMMENTS

- *"Love this trail, come here often."*
- *"Great area."*

TRAIL MANAGEMENT COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

- *"Rail Trails are the greatest idea ever. We need more and need them connected to larger networks."*
- *"Love the trail, it has changed the way I've been able to exercise especially during COVID. Would love to see it extended to white river junction."*
- *"Well maintained."*
- *"Amazing trail, well maintained, love the expansion they opened up, donated to the trail in the past."*
- *"Love how you mark the miles."*
- *"The Cotton Valley Rail trail is amazing. I love that it is also accessible in the winter because it's groomed. This was a nice surprise. I live near the Bruce Freeman Trail in MA and there is so much snow you can't walk without snowshoes."*

COMMENTS REGARDING ACTIVITIES DONE ON THE TRAIL

- *"Best trail to run/train on, I love it and use it all the time!"*
- *"We are so thankful for the trails! We love snowmobiling and have a great time with friends and relatives who come up with us. We will be glad when the pandemic is over to be able to stop at restaurants and pubs along the trails."*
- *"Love to walk these trails."*

Other Economic Benefits of Rail Trails

As evidenced from the qualitative feedback received and described above, rail trails provide many benefits to individuals and communities in New Hampshire that are not easily calculated in an economic impact study. Some of these quality-of-life benefits include health and wellness as rail trails provide an opportunity to exercise and recreate in a corridor that is generally separated from the roadway. In addition to the health and quality of life benefits derived from the preponderance of recreational use of rail trails, there are some users that complete everyday transportation trips (e.g., commute, errands, school trips) via rail trails, which may save those users or their families money in comparison to completing those trips via another mode or on the highway network. Social connections and closer connections to nature and the environment are additional public health benefits. For some, rail trails can also reduce transportation costs and provide opportunities for connecting to places of commerce without an automobile. Residential properties that are close to well-maintained rail trails often garner a higher sales price, supporting the community through increased tax revenue. The presence of rail trails in a community can support businesses that are looking to recruit and retain workers in addition to providing those businesses with the opportunity to attract rail trail users. Access to recreational assets, such as a rail trail, is considered a plus when a potential worker is considering a new job or a move. Headwaters Economics, an independent, nonprofit research group, has a trail benefits library with over 140 studies that support the qualitative statements above and can be accessed online (https://headwaterseconomics.org/trail).

Other Studies of Interest Pertaining to Users of The State-Owned Rail Trails

Okrant, M. and D. Lee. 2012. *The Economic Impact of Spending by Snowmobilers on New Hampshire's Economy*. Institute for New Hampshire Studies, Plymouth State University.

- https://headwaterseconomics.org/trail/59-new-hampshire-snowmobiling/
- This study found that snowmobilers in New Hampshire spend $203 million per year in the state and spend more per day than other travelers. However, winter sports like alpine and Nordic skiing have a greater proportion of spending from out-of-state residents, generating greater economic impact state-wide.

New Hampshire Horse Council (NHHC), *Rail Trail Survey, 2020-2021*. The NHHC completed a survey regarding the use of rail trails in 2020 and 2021. Some key findings include:

- The results of the survey can be found here: http://nhhorsecouncil.org/
- Rail trails most used by equestrian respondents include the Rockingham, Cheshire, and Northern Rail Trails.
- 72% of equestrians access the rail trails by horse trailer, 12% riding from a barn, and 16% access trails by both horse trailer and barn.

CONCLUSIONS / FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **The estimated economic output from New Hampshire residents using nine of the 27 state-owned rail trails equated to an economic contribution of $11,835,000, tax revenue of $1,604,000, and support for 108 jobs. Nearly seven million dollars ($6,901,000) of economic impact (both direct and indirect/induced) from visitor spending was generated by the use of nine rail trails, with over $1 million in taxes ($1,140,000) and support for 56 jobs.**

- **Based on the survey collection completed for this study, New Hampshire residents make up the majority of rail trail users (85%) in New Hampshire, and their spending related to trail visits contributes to economic vibrancy in and around the communities that have rail trails.**

- **Visitors are a much smaller portion of New Hampshire's current rail trail users (15%) but represent a significant opportunity for further economic growth and development.** ***Visitors spend three times as much as residents each time they visit a rail trail. Visitor spending represents 'net new' spending in New Hampshire.*** Visitors bring new spending that may not come to New Hampshire without the visit to the rail trail. They also increase their spending and spend time in New Hampshire because of the activities they can partake in on the rail trails.

- **A coordinated and easy-to-follow plan for conducting and analyzing rail trail counts is crucial to understanding the economic impact of New Hampshire's state-owned rail trails.** Trail counts are necessary to make accurate estimates of economic impact and contribution from the use of rail trails. This economic impact analysis was limited to nine trails due to a lack of trail counts. Further research in this area would benefit from coordinated trail count data.

- **Rail trail visits not only bring spending to communities and regions, but they also contribute positively to tax accounts at all levels.** The IMPLAN tax information is based on taxes (and in some cases fees) that are collected in the region under question. In this analysis, the tax calculations were related to the State of New Hampshire. Taxes relevant to New Hampshire are property taxes, motor vehicle licenses, severance taxes, special assessments, excise taxes, rooms and meals taxes, etc.

- **The impacts of COVID-19 on both spending and rail trail usage over the past two years are still being understood.** There were strong statements from the majority of survey respondents (both residents and visitors) that the spending they reported was not impacted by COVID-19, e.g., they did not spend more or less because of the pandemic. However, the team was unable to gauge whether the rail trail utilization rate or the split of resident vs. visitors was impacted by COVID-19.

- **There is a substantial direct economic benefit to the state from the presence of rail trails in New Hampshire.** Greater economic benefits accrue from trail systems that have the length and connectivity to attract visitors for multi-day trips. If the state wishes to increase economic impact from rail trails the following steps should be taken:

- Coordinated marketing of New Hampshire's rail trails.
- Focus on connecting rail trails and completing gaps to develop longer experiences.
- Encourage trip planning to support overnight visits.
- Steward, maintain, and improve trail infrastructure as economic infrastructure.
- Engage local communities as partners via economic development committees, recreation departments, downtown business groups, and conservation commissions.
- Consider providing facilities -- such as parking, restrooms, and connections to economic assets such as downtown retail, restaurants, and lodging -- to support longer stays at rail trail locations.

WORKS CITED

Headwaters Economics. Trails Benefits Library. https://headwaterseconomics.org/trail/

Keene Downtowns & Trails. 2022. https://extension.unh.edu/resource/strengthening-connections-downtowns-trails-keene-nh-2022-final-report

Vermont Trails & Greenways Council. 2016. Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Members. https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Recreation/Learn_More/Library/Final%20Report-%20Impact%20Analysis%20-%20VT%20Trails%20and%20Greenways.pdf

MassTrails. 2021. Impacts of Shared Use Paths. https://www.mass.gov/doc/masstrails-shared-use-path-impacts-study/download#:~:text=The%20shared%20use%20paths%20contributed,%243%2C600%20on%20a%20weekend%20day.

SUGAR RIVER RAIL TRAIL

3. FUNDING RAIL TRAILS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the plan discusses:

- Categories of costs associated with rail trail development and maintenance;
- Current sources of funding for rail trails in New Hampshire;
- Approaches that other states have for funding trails, with a focus on rail trails;
- Options for a state funding mechanism for rail trails in New Hampshire; and
- Recommendation for managing rail trails and funding by state agencies in New Hampshire.

The economic impact study (Chapter 2) has identified substantial direct economic benefits to the state from the presence of rail trails in New Hampshire. While most rail trail users today are residents, visitor spending related to rail trails is nearly triple that of resident spending and represents “net new” spending in the state. This is a clear economic growth opportunity for New Hampshire, which offers both outstanding outdoor destinations and historic towns and villages that are, in many cases, accessible via a rail trail. By filling gaps in the existing network, the

state can provide longer connected corridors that attract visitors for multi-day trips. Rail trails in New Hampshire are on railroad corridors that were developed primarily in the latter half of the 1800s and feature relatively level topography, access to water bodies and natural open space features as well as historic town centers; these features appeal to a wide variety of trail users and generally add to the New Hampshire rail trail experience.

While there are economic benefits in terms of direct spending associated with visiting and using rail trails, it is acknowledged that rail trails offer other significant benefits as well, including improved quality of life associated with the wide range of recreational activities accommodated on rail trails, community health and wellness related to walking and bicycling, improved transportation connections, and environmental benefits associated with non-motorized transportation.

New Hampshire's 338 miles of state-owned rail trail corridors are a statewide asset as they are distributed across the state, providing New Hampshire residents and visitors access to the benefits of the rail trail network.

COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH RAIL TRAIL DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Although costs associated with rail trail development and management are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, Improvement, Management and Maintenance of Rail Trails, this section summarizes costs associated with funding rail trails to provide context related to the discussion of trail funding.

1. **Acquisition**. The initial step in developing rail trails often, although not always, involves the purchase of rail corridors from private entities. As described in Chapter 1, in New Hampshire many, but not all, rail trails are within abandoned rail corridors purchased by the state. NHDOT purchases railroad corridors, both active and abandoned, with the objective of protecting them for rail and transportation uses and, in the case of abandoned corridors, allows them to be used on an interim basis for recreational purposes. From a funding point of view, acquisition is a one-time cost that is generally understood by local trails groups that may help to raise funds, NHDOT who seeks to program funds and purchase the corridor, and approving bodies, such as the New Hampshire Governor & Executive Council, that review and consider the expenditure of funds, including the acquisition of railroad corridors. It should also be noted that some non-state-owned rail trails are on easements along former rail corridors, which is an option for providing trails on rail corridors that may have reverted to underlying property owners.

2. **Improvement**. Improvement costs and tasks vary depending on whether the rail trail is going to be on an abandoned railroad corridor or within an active railroad corridor (rail with trail). Costs associated with rehabilitating an abandoned corridor for rail trail use typically include removal and disposal of rails and ties, clearing brush and vegetation, improving drainage, providing bridge decks and railings, providing signage, providing trailhead parking and amenities, and treatment of the surfaces for intended rail trail uses.

Many of the abandoned rail corridors purchased by NHDOT for future transportation use are improved and managed for interim trail use by either the DNCR Trails Bureau or municipalities. For abandoned corridors owned by NHDOT, interim trail use and improvement must not unreasonably limit the ability to restore rail service over the right-of-way, at minimum cost, if such service were to be restored in the future. Rail trails to be installed within an active railroad right-of-way would include costs associated with safe separation from the active railroad tracks, drainage improvements, clearing brush and vegetation, installing signage, and developing or seeking possible off-corridor sections in areas in which the railroad right-of-way cannot safely accommodate both railroad and trail usage. From a funding point of view, trail improvement is a one-time cost that is generally understood by potential funders, such as municipalities, local trail organizations, and the DNCR Trails Bureau, and is funded by said entities through a variety of funding sources.

3. **Management and Maintenance**. This category of costs addresses ongoing capital and routine maintenance that is integral to the long-term preservation of the rail trail corridor and the safe operation of the rail trail. Maintenance is an ongoing cost that is less understood by funders and is not eligible for some funding programs, as discussed in the following section. For rail trails in New Hampshire, management and maintenance responsibilities and costs are generally shared between the property owner and trail manager. Typical maintenance costs involve routine tasks such as mowing, resurfacing, clearing ditches and culverts, storm clean-up, litter clean-up, signage, as well as maintaining or replacing larger infrastructure such as bridges and retaining walls. In addition to management and maintenance of the trail facility itself, there are other management activities and costs, such as promotion and marketing of the trail. This topic is discussed in-depth in Chapter 5 Improvement, Management, and Maintenance of Rail Trails.

4. **Rail Corridor Preservation and Enforcement**. Preservation of the rail corridor right-of-way from encroachments by adjoining properties or others is a critical subset of maintenance for rail corridors (not just rail trails). Preservation and enforcement ensure that the public investment in the state's rail corridor assets is preserved from encroachment by others. This topic is discussed in Chapter 5 in more detail but requires both involvement of the railroad property owner and trail manager in order to be successful and efficient.

CURRENT RAIL TRAIL FUNDING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

The system of state-owned and non-state-owned rail trails in New Hampshire is supported through a combination of funding from federal, state, municipal, and non-profit sources. The following analysis regarding rail trail funding includes all rail trails in New Hampshire, whether they are state-owned or not.

Most appropriations for rail trails stem from federal funding programs for transportation alternatives and in New Hampshire, several state agencies, including NHDOT and DNCR, administer and distribute federal monies consistent with federal guidelines and make federal funding available to municipalities and local trail organizations through competitive, published grant programs.

New Hampshire's state revenue sources are currently limited in comparison to other states that invest in rail trails and public access to recreation. New Hampshire, unlike most other states, does not have a state income or sales tax. Funds derived from registration fees for off-highway recreational vehicles (OHRVs) and snowmobiles are currently the only consistent state source of funds directed to rail trails, and these funds are dedicated to the enhancement of OHRV and snowmobile trails in accordance with state statutes. In addition, the New Hampshire State Parks System is operationally self-funded through user fees and other sources of income and does not receive general funds for operations, administration, and ongoing maintenance.

Municipalities and non-profit organizations, such as trail groups and recreational clubs, also provide funding for rail trails. Examples include local match funds for federal grants administered by the state or funding for "non-participating" elements of trail improvements such as lighting or other improvements outside the scope of improvements allowed by the grant program. Also noteworthy is that non-profit trail groups and recreational clubs often provide significant volunteer labor to manage and maintain the state's rail trails, thus offsetting the need for additional cash-based maintenance funds.

Current Federal Funding Programs used for NH Rail Trails

Funding through federal transportation programs provides most of the funding for rail trails in New Hampshire. From the fiscal year 2014 through 2021, New Hampshire programmed $14,880,940 of federal funds for rail trail acquisitions, improvements, and maintenance through three Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) programs: the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP); the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program; and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). These are competitive programs, in which rail trail projects compete with other eligible projects for funding, are Federal-Aid Highway Programs distributed through the NHDOT and DNCR. Table 5-1 provides a summary of federal funding granted to rail trail projects in New Hampshire by program from 2014 through 2021. These programs were within the FAST (Fixing America's Surface Transportation) Act that was authorized for five years, beginning in 2015, and was reauthorized in 2020 and 2021, extending through September 30, 2022. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law" or "BIL", was enacted by Congress and signed into law in November 2021. It retains these three programs and will provide federal funding for transportation infrastructure in federal fiscal years 2022 through 2026. Requirements for these three programs may change under IIJA, and future program solicitations will conform with new requirements. Also, additional funding opportunities, including those for rail trails, may be availed under other IIJA programs and will be addressed in a later section.

TABLE 5-1: FHWA Funding for New Hampshire Rail Trails by Program: 2014-2021

Program	Funding for Rail Trails [(a)]	Percent of Federal Funding	Number of Projects	Average Award
Transportation Alternatives (TAP)	$ 5,970,490	40%	11	$ 542,772
Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ)	$ 6,679,760	45%	3	$2,226,587[1]
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	$ 2,230,690	15%	25	$ 36,598
TOTAL	$ 14,880,940	100%		

Source: NHDOT

Notes: (a). Includes federal awards only, excluding local matches.

1. *It should be noted CMAQ awards in this time frame are skewed by the $5 million acquisition cost for 9.6 miles of the Hampton Branch Railroad Corridor. Removing this project provides an average award of $840,000 per rail trail improvement project funded through CMAQ.*

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). TAP has been one of the most consistent sources of federal funding for New Hampshire's rail trails. TAP is funded by the FHWA and consolidated many stand-alone programs (Safe Routes to School, Recreational Trails, Transportation Enhancement, and Scenic & Cultural Byways) into a single, more flexible program. TAP provides federal funds for transportation projects to meet non-motorized needs in the state through the design and construction of bike lanes, sidewalks, and on and off-road multi-use paths, including abandoned rail corridors, for non-motorized forms of transportation. Projects may be located on any public road in the state and can be used to develop off-roadway trails that serve a transportation purpose. The TAP program is administered through NHDOT's Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance. Awards have been made on a biennial basis but are now going to be on a four-year cycle. TAP projects typically require a 20% local match. For the most recent round of grants, NHDOT set the project cost budget at a minimum of $400,000 and a maximum of $1.25 million. With these project funding guidelines, TAP is suited for larger-scale improvement projects. TAP funds may not be used for maintenance.

TABLE 5-2: Transportation Alternatives (TAP) Program Funding of Rail Trails in New Hampshire: 2014-2021

Fiscal Year	TAP Award to Rail Trails (a)	Activities Funded	Total TAP Program	Rail Trail % of Total TAP Program	Eligible / Unfunded Projects
2014	$ 2,093,210	Construction	$ 5,352,760	39%	
2016	$ 800,000	Construction	$ 6,900,000	12%	$ 1,218,120
2018	$ 1,912,000	Construction	$ 5,386,790	35%	$ 2,470,400
2021	$ 1,165,280	Construction	$10,538,080	11%	$ 2,560,630
TOTAL	$ 5,970,490		$ 28,177,630	21%	$ 6,249,150

Source: NHDOT

Notes: (a) Includes federal awards only, excluding local matches.

TAP awards to rail trail projects in New Hampshire by year are summarized in Table 5-2. Projects include improvements within rail corridors as well as connectivity enhancements such as bike lanes and sidewalks connecting to both state-owned and non-state-owned rail trails. Between 2014 and 2021, TAP funds were used for improvements to rail trails in Salem (2), Claremont, Manchester, Dover, Keene (2), Londonderry, Swanzey, Derry, and Franklin. Eleven projects received TAP awards ranging from $320,000 to $800,000. Rail trail improvement projects (including connectivity projects) accounted for an average of 20% of total TAP awards in New Hampshire during the 2014 to 2021 period. Finally, it is worth noting that TAP projects are highly competitive, and while approximately $6 million in federal TAP funding was awarded to rail trail projects in New Hampshire from 2014 to 2021, another $6 million of eligible rail trail improvement project applications did not receive funding because the funding requested exceeded available funding.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. The CMAQ program is another federal funding program through the FHWA and provides funding to state and local governments for transportation projects that improve air quality and reduce congestion. The primary goal of the program is to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. CMAQ funds may be used on any class of roadway as well as on sidewalks, bike paths, park and ride lots, transit services, and rail infrastructure that meet the program objectives of reducing congestion and improving air quality. The CMAQ program is administered through NHDOT's Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance. Like TAP, CMAQ allocations will be made on a four-year cycle going forward. The maximum project cost budget for the last round of CMAQ projects was set at $1.2 million. CMAQ projects typically require a 20% local match.

TABLE 5-3: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Funding of Rail Trails in New Hampshire: 2017-2021[a]

Fiscal Year	CMAQ Awards[b] to Rail Trails	Purpose of Funding	Total CMAQ Program	Rail Trail % of Total CMAQ Program
2017	$ 879,760	Construction	$ 13,298,790	7%
2019	$ 5,800,000 [c]	Acquisition and Construction	$ 14,739,040	39%
TOTAL	$ 6,679,760		$ 28,037,830	24%

Source: NHDOT

Notes: (a). There were no selection rounds for CMAQ projects between 2010 and 2017 due to over-programming of projects and project changes.

(b). Includes Federal CMAQ award only and excludes 20% local match.

(c). Represents two projects.

CMAQ awards to rail trail projects for the last two rounds are summarized in Table 5-3. As the CMAQ Program specifically provides assistance for air quality improvement and congestion mitigation projects, there would be a smaller pool of potential rail trail projects that could be funded under this program as they need to prove an air quality benefit and be transportation-focused (not primarily recreational). Even with these limitations, there were some significant CMAQ awards made to rail trail projects in these two rounds of funding. Three projects were funded in Nashua, Salem, and on the New Hampshire Seacoast. The majority of the CMAQ funding awarded, $5 million[1], went to the acquisition of 9.6 miles of the Hampton Branch Railroad Corridor on the seacoast. This award, however, was an atypical occurrence that was awarded outside of the typical CMAQ solicitation and skews the averages higher. Projects located in Nashua and Salem in the range of $800,000 to $900,000 were funded in 2017 and 2019 and represent a more typical CMAQ rail trail grant.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP). RTP is another source of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding for rail trails in New Hampshire. Eligible project types include maintenance and restoration of existing trails, development of trailhead/trailside facilities, purchase of trail maintenance equipment (Buy America provisions apply), construction of new trails, and educational projects for trail safety and environmental protection. Funding may be used for motorized, non-motorized, and diversified (both motorized and non-motorized) trails. The RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from non-highway recreational fuel use: fuel used for off-highway recreation by snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off-highway motorcycles, and off-highway light trucks.

[1] The total cost of acquiring the Hampton Branch corridor was $5 million, including $4 million (80%) from CMAQ funding and $1 million (20%) from turnpike toll credits. The toll credits reduced New Hampshire's available CMAQ funding by $1 million, so in essence the full $5 million was CMAQ funding.

TABLE 5-4: Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Funding for Rail Trails in New Hampshire: 2014-2021

Fiscal Year	RTP Awards[(a)] to Rail Trails	Purpose of Funding	Total RTP Program	Rail Trail % of Total RTP Program
2014	$ 453,280	Construction and Maintenance	$ 1,222,530	22%
2015	$ 310,400	Construction and Maintenance	$ 1,255,265	9%
2017	$ 209,500	Construction and Maintenance	$ 1,255,265	6%
2018	$ 364,480	Construction and Maintenance	$ 1,255,265	13%
2019	$ 275,520	Construction and Maintenance	$ 1,255,265	15%
2020	$ 259,460	Construction and Maintenance	$ 1,255,265	2%
2021	$ 358,050	Construction and Maintenance	$ 1,255,265	7%
TOTAL	$ 2,230,690		$ 8,754,120	10%

Source: DNCR

Note: (a) Includes federal awards only and excludes local matches

RTP grants are administered annually by the DNCR Bureau of Trails. The current funding model allocates approximately 70% of funds to local projects and 30% to state projects. Approximately 30% of funds go to motorized projects, 30% to non-motorized projects, and 40% to diversified projects. Total RTP funding is limited to $80,000 per applicant and a 20% local match is required. It is New Hampshire's policy to not dedicate RTP funds to paved trails.

RTP awards to rail trail projects in New Hampshire from 2014 to 2021 are summarized in Table 5-4. This listing includes projects that improve or maintain rail trails as well as connectivity improvements on adjoining streets. During this timeframe, 25 projects were funded, ranging in cost from $7,000 to $80,000, and encompassing both state-owned and non-state-owned rail trails. Projects associated with rail trails accounted for an average of 10% of RTP awards during this timeframe.

Rail Trail Funding Limitations of TAP, CMAQ, and RTP

In looking at the federal funding programs and the application of these funds in New Hampshire, as described above, it is recognized that these programs provide the most significant and reliable source of funding for rail trail projects, however, the funding limitations, both in terms of available dollars and scope, don't address all the funding needs related to New Hampshire rail trails. For example, based on current program guidelines (min-max funding and restrictions), there is no funding for moderate rail trail improvement projects, between $80,000 - $400,000, or smaller paved trail projects ($80,000 or less). While these three funding programs are appreciated and valued by all, and at times oversubscribed, they alone cannot meet all the

funding needs of New Hampshire's rail trail network, and other sources should be considered, including those described in sections that follow.

Other Federal Funding Programs for NH Rail Trails

The three programs described above provide the majority of federal funding for state-owned rail trails in New Hampshire. The following funding programs have also been used to fund rail trails under special circumstances.

Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC). The Northern Border Regional Commission is a Federal-State partnership for economic and community development in Northern Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Each year the NBRC provides Federal funds for a variety of economic and community development projects. The objective of these projects is to stimulate job creation and leverage substantial private sector investments. Within New Hampshire, the NBRC can invest in economic and infrastructure projects in Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, and Sullivan Counties. Economic infrastructure grants include projects such as water and wastewater infrastructure, broadband, job training centers, health centers, affordable housing construction, and trail projects that would support economic development through tourism and/or community reinvestment. The percentage of federal funding for projects depends on the level of economic and demographic distress in each county and is generally much lower than the 80% provided by TAP, CMAQ, and RTP programs. For the six-year period 2016 to 2021, five rail trail-related projects in New Hampshire were awarded $872,326, leveraging matches of $927,995, for an average award of 50% of the project cost. The federal funding level ranged from 33% for a project in Littleton to 80% for a project in Berlin. NBRC grant funds were recently used for improvements to a new rail trail in Littleton / Bethlehem.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Established by the LWCF Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578) and enacted as positive law at 54 U.S.C. § 200301 et seq., the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program provides reimbursement based 50/50 matching grants to state and local governments for the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities, including rail trails. LWCF monies are derived from federal offshore oil and gas leases, not from taxes, and are apportioned to the states by the US Department of the Interior-National Park Service (NPS). In New Hampshire, the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program is managed by the DNCR Division of Parks and Recreation. Approximately 40% of New Hampshire's apportionments are granted toward state projects. The remaining percentage, approximately 60%, is sub-granted towards local government projects through an annual competitive application process.

A critical provision within the LWCF Act of 1965 requires that properties acquired and/or developed with LWCF assistance remain in public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. For properties that are converted to other than public outdoor recreation use(s) the project sponsor must provide adequate substitute property as approved by the US Secretary of the Interior. Because of this encumbrance (not easement) the application of LWCF towards many state-owned rail trails may be in conflict with the original acquisition intent of these corridors, which were acquired for restoration of rail or other transportation use. Therefore, LWCF may not be an appropriate funding source for select rail trails. Such LWCF encumbrances typically cover

the entirety of subject properties. Encroachments by abutting landowners, which are a common management challenge of a rail trail facility, present potential issues for stewardship compliance under the law. However, LWCF assistance has been applied to various state and local public rail trails within New Hampshire and is worthy of consideration.

State-owned rail trails that have been funded in whole or in part with LWCF funds include the Sugar River Trail from Newport to Claremont and a portion of the Rockingham Recreational Trail/Fremont Branch from Windham to Fremont.

Municipal-owned rail trails that have been funded in whole or in part with LWCF funds include, but are not limited to, the Mason Recreational Rail Trail within the Town of Mason, the New Boston Rail Trail within the Town of New Boston, and the Potanipo Rail Trail (at Nissitissit River Park) within the Town of Brookline.

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). The FLAP program is a Federal-Aid Highway Program open to state and local governments to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are within federal lands. Funding is intended for capital improvements such as roads, bridges, multiuse trails, enhancements (trailheads, signage, kiosks, etc.), surface preservation, transit, planning, research, and certain types of safety improvements. This program typically required a 20% match, however, with the November 2021 passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the match requirement has been removed. Significant federal lands in New Hampshire include the White Mountains National Forest and Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. The Presidential Rail Trail, including the Pondicherry section of the Presidential Rail Trail, and the Profile Rail Trail are located within the White Mountains Nation Forest. Two-hundred and fifty million dollars ($250M) is available nationally and is apportioned annually based on the amount of federal acreage within the various states. New Hampshire's allocation is approximately $360,000 and, with the passage of IIJA, FLAP grants will not require a match. For the six-year period of 2013 to 2018, $1.8 million was programmed for improvements in New Hampshire through the FLAP program including the resurfacing and rehabilitation of the Presidential Rail Trail.

State Funding Programs

New Hampshire does not currently have a dedicated state revenue source that is used to fund rail trails, and no state agency currently allocates funds in its operating budget, nor requests funds in the capital budget, specifically for rail trails. There is currently one program at the state level that provides funds for rail trails.

Grant in Aid Program (GIA). The only consistent source of funding for rail trails from the state is the Grant in Aid (GIA) program, which is administered by DNCR Trails Bureau. GIA funds are derived from state registration fees for OHRVs (off-highway recreational vehicles) and snowmobiles and un-refunded gas taxes. As such, they are not available to rail trails that do not accommodate motorized users. GIA grants assist non-profit organizations, such as off-highway recreational vehicle (OHRV) clubs, snowmobile clubs, and political subdivisions (such as towns and municipalities), on projects that will benefit OHRV and snowmobile users. Examples of projects funded by the GIA program include trail construction and maintenance, trail grooming for snowmobile use, purchase of trail grooming equipment, parking lot snow removal, and

provision of trail signage. Uses of GIA funds and percentages of funds by type of project are defined in the New Hampshire state statutes.[2]

GIA awards to rail trail projects for the years 2017 to 2020 are summarized in Table 5-5. The annual budget for the GIA program is significant, approximately twice the size of the RTP program. From 2017-2020, GIA funds were awarded to eight clubs for 16 projects on rail trails. The average project award was $11,978. Ten of the eleven projects were undertaken by OHRV clubs to improve rail trails or address OHRV wear and tear on a trail, and one project was undertaken by a snowmobile club to improve a trail. Approximately 60% of the GIA funds are used to support trail grooming by snowmobile clubs. We note that other winter trail users benefit from trails groomed for snowmobiles, including Nordic skiers, mushers, and fat bikers.

TABLE 5-5: Grant in Aid (GIA) Funding of Rail Trails: 2017-2020

Year	GIA Award to Rail Trails	Purpose of Funding	Total GIA Program Awards	% of Total GIA Awards
2017	$ 14,380	Maintenance	$ 2,322,990	1%
2018	$ 55,980	Maintenance	$ 2,909,000	2%
2019	$ 60,620	Maintenance	$ 3,635,390	2%
2020	$ 60,670	Maintenance	$ 2,122,620	3%
TOTAL	$ 191,650		$ 10,990,000	2%

Source: New Hampshire State Parks website: https://www.nhstateparks.org/about-us/trails-bureau/grants/grant-in-aid

Municipalities and Non-Profit Organizations

Municipalities and non-profit organizations are vital to the support of rail trails in New Hampshire. These organizations support rail trails through direct funding and/or the provision of volunteers to maintain and improve rail trails. Municipalities and non-profit organizations may sponsor acquisition, improvement, or maintenance projects, apply for grant funding, provide the local match, and provide volunteer labor. Non-profit trail organizations, such as “friends” groups or trail coalitions and recreational clubs (i.e., snowmobile or OHRV clubs), are typically composed of trail users and often focus on rail trails within a specific geographic area and form partnerships with trail management entities. These organizations collect funds via private donations, local business sponsorships, and private grants and also hold fundraising events. Collated information on this funding stream is not readily available. A list of local trail groups working on New Hampshire rail trails can be found in the Appendix.

[2] For more information see: http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/state_agencies/res8100-8500.html

Overall Rail Trail Funding Limitations

As evidenced from the previous sections, even with all the previously utilized funding sources (detailed above), there are funding gaps and not enough funding to adequately address all the rail trail funding needs in New Hampshire. Currently, a mix of federal, state, and local funds and resources are being utilized for targeted rail trail investments, but the funding level is not sufficient to maintain, improve, and expand the New Hampshire rail trail network. Other funding sources, at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as the management and stewardship of those funds, need to be considered. It is likely that through concerted efforts, employment of prioritization strategies, and dedicated resources (funding and people), rail trail management in New Hampshire can be improved and efficiencies created to better maintain and improve the network. Approaches, as implemented in other states and raised during the public input process, are further explored in the following section as are options, strategies, and additional steps that the State of New Hampshire can consider taking.

POTENTIAL STATE FUNDING MECHANISM

SB 185 requires that the plan "…develop recommendations for a state funding mechanism to support rail trail projects and the management structure of such funds..." The following section discusses approaches other states have taken to fund rail trails and presents options for consideration in New Hampshire.

The options for funding from state governments fall into three possible categories:

- Dedicating money from the state's operating or capital budget for rail trails;
- Establishing a user fee; or
- Issuing a general obligation bond which would require authorization by law and ratification by state voters.

Public Input Themes

Through the public outreach undertaken for the Plan, the following suggestions for funding rail trails were offered:

- **Maximize Federal Funding**. Are there procedures that could be undertaken to ensure the most successful outcomes when applying for federal funding?
- **Dedicated Funding Source in State Budget**. Suggestions included allocating a percentage of NHDOT's overall construction budget to rail trails or having a dedicated capital budget for rail trail projects.
- **User Fees**. A voluntary rail trail user fee was suggested as was a specialty rail trail license plate fee. (User fees are discussed further below.)
- **Donations/Fundraising Events/Volunteer Maintenance**. All these approaches to raising private capital are active in New Hampshire through various rail trail organizations. There are numerous rail trail and recreation non-profits that sponsor fundraising events, collect donations, and organize volunteers to maintain trails. Innovative approaches such as QR codes along the trails linking to a donation site,

selling merchandise, selling trail guides, corporate rail trail sponsorships, or other fundraising efforts should be explored by trail groups and others.

Practices from Other States

In this section we briefly consider how New Hampshire funding approaches for rail trails compare with other the northeastern states of Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, and New York, and note approaches in other states as well. The funding options discussed below describe programs that address funding for trail development, with rail trails being a subset of all trails developed by the various states. We did not find any state funding programs dedicated exclusively to rail trails.

Using State Funds for Trail Development

In reviewing practices in other states, we found funding approaches very similar to New Hampshire, specifically utilizing federal funding, particularly through the TAP and RTP programs, to acquire, construct and maintain trail systems, including rail trails. Vermont, Maine, and New York have provided a dedicated level of state funding to (1) develop prominent trails that are important, from a statewide perspective, and (2) match or leverage federal funds to accelerate investment in the specific state's "destination" trail corridors. These states were examined because they are adjacent to or in proximity to New Hampshire and have similarities in terms of the recreational and transportation activities accommodated on their rail trails.

Vermont. New Hampshire's neighbor to the west is very similar in terms of land area, however, Vermont has approximately half the population, half the state budget, and roughly one-third the mileage of rail trails, with 148 miles, compared to New Hampshire's approximately 338 miles of state-owned rail trails. Like New Hampshire, Vermont is an established destination for outdoor and trail-oriented recreation. The State of Vermont is currently finishing up improvements to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT), which, at 93 miles in length, will be the longest rail trail in New England when completed in 2023. The trail runs between Swanton, Vermont near Lake Champlain and the Three Rivers Path in St. Johnsbury, running nearly the width of the state. The trail has been decades in the making. The state acquired the corridor in 1973 and railroad operations ceased in 1994.[3] In 2006 the state partnered with the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) to manage the conversion of the rail corridor to a trail. The first segment of the trail opened in 2015. The initial 33 miles utilized funds from federal, state, and local governments, private donations, and significant funding from VAST. The array of federal funding applied to the LVRT through the years has included TAP funds administered by the Vermont Agency of Transportation, an earmark, and funding from the Northern Border Regional Commission. After the initial segment of rail trail opened in 2015, the state recognized the economic development and recreational potential of the full length of the trail and supplemented federal funding with state funds to accelerate the completion of the 93-mile corridor. In 2020 the Vermont state legislature approved $2.8

[3] https://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/lvrt

million to match $11.3 million in federal funding to accelerate the completion of the trail by the summer of 2022.[4] The current completion date is estimated to be 2023.

Maine. While Maine has more than 3.5 times the land area of New Hampshire, the population and state budget are very similar between the two states. Maine's rail trail mileage, at 400 miles, is similar to New Hampshire's approximately 424 miles of rail trails (state and non-state owned). Planning for a connected trail network utilizing the state's rail trails is currently very active in Maine. In 2020 the Maine Trails Coalition developed a ten-year rail trail plan with a specific vision for a connected trail system of off-road trails through the state and identified specific improvement projects for the next decade. In 2021 the state legislature passed "An Act to Establish Trail until Rail Corridors," which calls for the adoption of an Active Transportation Plan for the state. In recent years the state of Maine has supported the development of key trail corridors in Maine, including the Eastern Trail, which will be a part of the East Coast Greenway, but is not exclusively a rail trail. In 2018 the state budget for bicycle and pedestrian capital projects was $4.7 million and comprised of $1.5 million provided by the State of Maine, $2.8 million from the TAP program, and $400,000 from towns and cities. A significant segment of the Eastern Trail was funded in 2018. The structure of the partnerships promoting the Eastern Trail is somewhat unique. The Eastern Trail Management District is a non-profit organization dedicated to the construction and upkeep of the trail and includes representatives from each town along the trail and representatives from the Eastern Trail Alliance, a non-profit established to build, construct, and promote the trail.

Massachusetts. Massachusetts is much larger than New Hampshire in terms of population and economy with a population five times larger than New Hampshire and a state budget that is more than three times New Hampshire's state budget. It is relatively similar in terms of land area and very similar in terms of miles of rail trails with 408 miles of rail tails compared with New Hampshire's 424 miles. Massachusetts is very active in the development of its overall state trail system, including many major rail trails, and has a dedicated state funding source for trails through its state capital budget. The state has established a noteworthy interagency partnership, MassTrails, a collaboration between the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. MassTrails oversees the annual trail grant program which includes trail funding from the state capital budget and federal RTP grants. In 2021, the MassTrails grant program provided $5.4M in grant funding (excluding local matches) for 52 trail projects including nearly $1.8 M for rail trail projects (including connectivity projects) for project development, design, permitting, engineering, and construction.[5] In addition to funding provided through the MassTrails grant program, MassDOT also constructs rail trails that have been identified in the regional TIPs (Transportation Improvement Programs) and through the statewide capital program. MassDOT-funded projects often utilize CMAQ funding as many rail trails connect through developed communities, are typically paved, and carry high numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists.[6]

[4] https://governor.vermont.gov/press-release/governor-phil-scott-announces-funding-complete-lamoille-valley-rail-trail

[5] https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants

[6] MassDOT has set up permanent counters to collect pedestrian and bicycle volumes in several locations: https://www.mass.gov/guides/bicycle-and-pedestrian-counts#-trail-counter-primer-appendix-

New York. With roughly five times the land area of New Hampshire, 14 times the population and budget, and 1,271 miles of rail trails[7], New York state is much larger than New Hampshire in every metric. Like Vermont, New York recently placed a priority on completing a cross-state "destination" trail system. In 2020 the State of New York completed the Empire State Trail which is a 750-mile multi-use trail, the largest in the country, that traverses the state, end to end, from New York City to the Canadian border and from Albany to Buffalo. Along its route, it connects with major destinations including the Appalachian Trail, the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, the Great Lakes Seaway Trail, and the Erie Canalway Trail and incorporates a segment of the East Coast Greenway. The Empire State Trail linked together segments of existing trail systems to create a continuous connected system composed of rail trails, shared use paths, and on-road segments – approximately 75% of the trail is off-road and the on-road segments are primarily on roadways with low levels of vehicle traffic. Initially proposed in 2017, the Empire State Trail involved 40 construction projects to close gaps in existing segments and was completed in 2020. The state dedicated $200 million of state funds to complete the project, the largest trail investment that has occurred in the United States to date.[8]

User Fees

User Fees represent another option for providing funds for rail trails at the state level. As discussed above, one example of a user fee-funded program in New Hampshire is the Grant in Aid (GIA) program, which is supported by the registration fees collected for OHRVs and snowmobiles. Hunting and Fishing licenses are another New Hampshire user fee that supports the programs of New Hampshire's Fish and Game Department. Another user fee established by NH Fish and Game in 2015 is the voluntary Hike Safe Card, which enables users of New Hampshire's outdoor recreation resources to support search and rescue operations while potentially reducing their liability for rescue costs should the user require rescuing. The Hike Safe Card costs $25 per person and $35 per family and is valid from the date of purchase until December 31st of the year of purchase. The target user of the Hike Safe Card is one that participates in outdoor recreation activities in New Hampshire but does not already possess a current New Hampshire hunting or fishing license, current OHRV or snowmobile registration, or current boat registration, all of which include the same benefits as the Hike Safe card. This program raised an average of $118,956 per year between 2015 to 2019. Through the public input process on the rail trail plan, concerns expressed relative to voluntary user fees included administrative burden/cost of collection, enforcement, safety of collection, and the possible loss of liability protection through recreational use statutes.

Wisconsin. In Wisconsin a state trail pass is required for all people aged 16 or older that are biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, or in-line skating on certain trails in the state. A trail pass is not required for walking or hiking. Snowmobilers and OHRV users are exempted from the requirement as they pay for trails through their vehicle registration fees and gas taxes. State trail pass fees are $25 for an annual pass or $5 for a day use pass. In 2019 the state collected a total of approximately $1.4 million through the sale of state trail passes.

[7] Rails to Trails Conservancy, https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/united-states/new-york/#state

[8] Alexander, Jessica, 'Why Your Next Trip to New York Should Include Riding the Empire State Trail,' in Bicycling, January 11, 2001.

Options for New Hampshire

Maximizing Federal Funding

The following actions would promote maximizing federal funding for rail trail improvement projects.

Pre-Engineering Feasibility. One difficulty that many DOTs face with federal programs they administer for local projects (such as TAP) revolve around recipients successfully obtaining an award grant only to find that it isn't enough funding to complete the project. In addition, some municipalities and rail trail groups are wary of requirements associated with federal funding. Project readiness is typically a factor that is considered in competitive funding programs, however, there may be opportunities to provide assistance to project proponents to achieve more successful project outcomes. As an example, Vermont and Massachusetts set aside funding for project development or feasibility studies that allow towns or trail groups to obtain engineering assistance to develop conceptual plans, provide a "desktop" assessment of potential project compliance considerations such as historic or wetland assessments, provide public engagement, and develop engineer's estimates of probable costs based on current pricing, using appropriate contingencies and allowances for design and construction inspection. The resulting scoping or feasibility study in turn provides the basis for a project construction application. Under this process, both the state and the local partners begin the project with a better understanding of the project, public support, and the project cost.

Target Rail Trails Eligible for FLAP and Northern Borders Funding. The Presidential, and Profile Rail Trails are eligible for funding through FLAP and several trails, including the Upper Coos, Ammonoosuc, Woodsville, Warren, Conway Branch, Cotton Valley, and Sugar River Rail Trails are eligible for Northern Borders Funding. New Hampshire should look strategically at the rail trails, needed improvements, and potential connections to support economic development (for Northern Borders grants) and access to federal land (for FLAP funding) and pursue projects through these programs. The results of the economic impact study of rail trails contained within this plan would further bolster initiatives like improvements to the rail trails that are a part of the Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail with connections to communities and would be well suited for the Northern Borders Regional Commission grants. Planning support and capacity building through the RPCs, state agencies, and trail organizations can assist smaller communities in pursuing funding through these grant programs.

Consider Other Federal Funding Sources

Federal Highway Funding Programs. In addition to the TAP, CMAQ, and RTP programs there are several other funding sources administered by State DOTs, including NHDOT, that can fund rail trail projects. Those programs have many eligible project types and uses that State DOTs must consider when programming funds and supporting their state's entire transportation network. NHDOT, like its counterparts, must carefully review and consider all eligible uses and needs when preparing planning documents and

budgets. While not widely utilized for rail trail projects, these federal funding programs can fund rail trail projects and are noteworthy:

- **Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program.** These are flexible funds that may be used for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals. Certain types of recreational rail trail projects are also eligible for STBG funding.
- **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).** With the IIJA (discussed below) project eligibility rules for federal funding programs are changing. With a new emphasis on safety for vulnerable users, a rail trail project may be eligible for HSIP funding if it provides an alternative to a public road that is associated with serious injury and fatal crashes.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). In November 2021 the IIJA was signed into law, which substantially increased funding for transportation infrastructure in New Hampshire. Increased funding for transportation will generally be made available to states: (1) through increased formula funding (such as TAP and CMAQ), and (2) through competitive discretionary programs. The following funding programs provide opportunities for rail trail projects that meet the transportation goals of the respective programs:

- **Transportation Alternatives (TAP).** Funding for the TAP program will increase by 70% on average. New conditions have been established to limit the transferring of TAP funds to other programs.
- **Carbon Reduction Program.** This program provides funding to projects that reduce carbon emissions from on-road highway sources. The program provides funding for planning, designing, and constructing facilities, including on and off-road trails that are a part of a state's carbon reduction strategy. This is formula funding that is apportioned to each state.
- **RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) Program**: RAISE grants support muti-modal surface transportation projects of local and/or regional significance that are difficult to support through traditional DOT programs. RAISE grants can provide capital funding directly to any public entity, including municipalities, counties, port authorities, tribal governments, MPOs, or others.
- **Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program:** This is a new competitive grant program that will improve and expand surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas, increasing connectivity, improving safety and reliability of the movement of people and freight, generating regional economic growth, and improving quality of life. This competitive grant program is open to state and regional governments, regional transportation planning organizations, and local and tribal governments.
- **Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program.** A new planning and construction program is designed to remove barriers to connectivity created by transportation facilities such as roads, streets, parkway, or rail lines that create a barrier to mobility, access, or economic development due to high speeds, grade

separation, or other design factors. This grant program is open to state, local and tribal governments, MPOs, and non-profit organizations.

Congressionally Directed Spending. Congressionally directed spending is a specified amount of funding allocated to a project outside of formula or competitive award funding processes that benefit local communities. Congressionally directed spending is requested by members of Congress and inserted into proposed legislative bills in Congress. Some rail trail improvements may be suited to congressionally directed spending. Local communities and advocates must work to build support and develop plans sufficient to support a spending request when a member of congress requests project submissions.

Consider New Funding Strategies

Advance Design of Rail Trail Projects. Every year the FHWA conducts an "August redistribution" of federal funding due to programmed projects that are not on course to use allocated funding on schedule. These monies are redistributed by FHWA to state recipients that are ready to use the funding. To the extent that rail trail improvement project plans are advanced and ready to advertise, they can take advantage of these opportunities which occur at the end of every fiscal year.

Develop a Statewide Inventory of Rail Trail Gaps and Corridor Improvement Needs. As summarized below, funding opportunities for rail trails (and other infrastructure projects) will increase with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). While funding for trails was not expanded, rail trails are unique in that they also serve a transportation purpose (depending on context) and can address several key objectives of the legislation to improve safety for all modes of transportation; address climate change by promoting sustainable modes of transportation; and improve equity by ensuring that the benefits of transportation systems are equitably distributed through communities. To best take advantage of these funding opportunities, projects and improvements need to be identified. As a starting point, a statewide inventory of rail trail gaps should be identified along with an assessment of improvement needs for rail trail corridors to understand the statewide backlog of rail trail improvement projects. With this inventory, specific projects can be targeted to the various funding opportunities. The inventory would provide the basis to set aside funding to close critical gaps and improve connected corridors.

State Actions to Consider

Evaluate a Voluntary Non-Motorized Rail Trail User Fee. Evaluate establishing a voluntary state rail trail user fee for non-motorized users. If pursued, this fee should be developed in consideration of other fees that are already collected (ex: OHRV and snowmobile registration fees, parking fees, and the NH Hike Safe card) as well as the enforcement of the established user fee. This user fee approach would allow individual rail trail users to support the overall New Hampshire rail trail network at their convenience and at whatever financial level of support they desire.

Replacing a bridge deck on the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail in Haverhill.

This approach would be consistent with the feedback received when “user fees” were discussed at meetings and public hearings. Many supported the user fee concept, but OHRV/snowmobile users noted that they already pay fees through vehicle registrations and therefore should be exempt. Additionally, many questioned how user fees for all modal users, including walkers, joggers, equestrians, cross-country skiers, etc. would be collected and enforced. To respond to these issues, a voluntary user fee for non-motorized users became a more supported approach.

It should also be noted that a rail trail user fee, even if voluntary, would require administrative support. Consideration should be given as to whether the administrative cost would be deducted from collected fees or paid by another funding source. New dedicated state rail trails staff, if created, could manage these user fees, otherwise DNCR may be the most appropriate agency to evaluate a voluntary non-motorized rail trail user fee as well as implement the fee if pursued. DNCR already has experience with implementing and managing user fees.

Evaluate Implementing Rail Trail Parking Fees. Evaluate implementing parking fees for rail trail parking areas with resultant fees being used to support the New Hampshire rail trail network and, more specifically, rail trail parking areas. Sufficient and dedicated rail trail parking was a need that was identified at meetings and public hearings, but the need for parking was also balanced by discussions relative to the cost to establish and maintain dedicated parking areas. Parking fees are well understood by users and would not overlap with other established fees. Consideration should be given to (1) the upfront

The finished bridge deck on the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail in Haverhill.

and renewal cost of the collection infrastructure; (2) the type of collection system (locked collection boxes, parking meters, technology-based applications, etc.); and (3) the

administrative cost of collecting and administering the funds. Of note, DNCR, through its Division of Parks & Recreation, which includes the Bureau of Trails, already collects parking fees at several state park locations and may have the resources necessary to take the lead on this effort.

State General Fund Appropriation through State Operating Budget. Consider appropriating State General Funds for rail trail projects. A dedicated source of revenue would allow advanced planning, scheduling, and forecasting, which is more akin to how other state assets and infrastructure are managed. Additionally, consideration should be given to unique opportunities by which the voluntary non-motorized rail trail user fees could be matched (dollar-for-dollar, but with an annual cap) with general funds for a period of 3-5 years. This state matching contribution scenario would strengthen the partnership and synergy between the state and rail trail constituents and allow time for the state to consider the value of rail trails, the continued benefits of this approach, other funding alternatives, and the size and financial support of rail trail constituents.

Creation of the "NH Special Rail Trail Fund". The State could consider establishing a non-lapsing special fund, suggested to be called the "NH Rail Trails Fund", or something similar, into which revenues could be deposited. This fund could be used for rail trail grant solicitations or rail trail expenditures including the maintenance, improvement, and expansion of New Hampshire rail trails. Funds could be administered in accordance with

the prioritization criteria suggested in Chapter 4 *Prioritizing State Investments*. Revenue sources that could be deposited into the "NH Rail Trail Fund" may include those realized through the aforementioned revenue sources (User Fees, Parking Fees, and General Funds appropriations) as well as other sources identified after the completion of this plan.

Consideration of Dedicated State Rail Trail Staffing. The State should also consider whether new, dedicated, positions that would be responsible for the management of all state-owned rail trails and any dedicated revenue sources should be created. Rail trails are unique features that provide economic benefits to New Hampshire and allow residents and visitors to use them for recreational and transportation purposes. The rail trail corridors represent a substantial public asset that has unique management challenges that currently involve the expertise, time, and staffing of several state agencies, predominantly NHDOT and DNCR, and, to a lesser degree, NH Fish and Game (enforcement).

Currently, there are no state positions dedicated to rail trails and as identified through the plan development, having state-owned rail trails owned and/or managed by two agencies (NHDOT & DNCR) creates inefficient and overlapping responsibilities by NHDOT and DNCR staff and creates an abundance of confusion for the public (municipalities, trails groups, users, etc.) that help to support, maintain, or use state-owned rail trails. The public is unsure which agency owns, manages, and is responsible for day-to-day activities or approvals for specific corridors. While some of these questions will be addressed by the creation of ownership and management tables contained within the inventory chapter of this plan, there will still be pervasive confusion, the need for cross-agency consultation and coordination, and time delays because of dual agency ownership and management.

In recognition of the unique cross-agency attributes of rail trails, consideration of future dedicated state staffing, and funding for the staffing, responsibility could be appropriated to one agency to establish an adequately staffed rail trail office. If established, the rail trail office's duties would be all-encompassing for state-owned rail trails and would include the management of dedicated rail trail revenue/funding as mentioned in the previous section. Additionally, this new rail trail office could be responsible for all day-to-day ownership and management responsibilities related to rail trails and interface with municipalities, trail groups, and users. This dedicated rail trail office would also liaise with other state agencies, as appropriate, and be the central point of contact for rail trail management within the state government. This new rail trail office could develop and employ recommendations regarding state funding and manage dedicated rail trail funding as previously noted. If established, consideration should also be given as to whether the new rail trail office should establish a state rail trail commission to improve coordination between the state, municipalities, and non-profit organizations for the planning and management of rail trails in New Hampshire.

Consideration of Redefining Existing State Staffing Resources for Rail Trail Ownership and Management. If dedicated rail trail staffing housed within one state agency is not feasible in the near term or longer term, another approach would be to attribute ownership and management of each specific corridor based on its predominant current and near-term use to one agency. In this scenario, the rail trails that are

primarily recreational would become the overall responsibility of DNCR, whereas those with more everyday transportation use/potential, or those constructed within an active state-owned railroad corridor, would be NHDOT's responsibility. While this approach would still require two state agencies to have rail trail management and oversight responsibilities, it would remove some barriers and allow for clearer communication to the public regarding each specific corridor. To effectuate this "corridor purpose" management approach, each corridor should be reviewed by DOT and DNCR leadership to determine the primary use of the corridor. Once this list is compiled, it is suggested that the two agencies jointly pursue action through the Governor and Executive Council so that DNCR is the listed owner of those corridors with primarily recreational use and NHDOT remains the property owner of those with transportation uses, including active railroad corridors. Having each state agency listed as the "owner" would allow the agency to employ its specific rules, practices, agreements, etc., and would not require substantial cross-agency consultation on matters, such as maintenance work, property management issues, and updates to agency-specific rules and RSA. This interim step would streamline rail trail management processes for both agencies and lessen confusion amongst the public. Additionally, with ownership defined by use, each agency could focus on a defined set of rail trails, and work with rail trail constituents that are more aligned with their respective agency's missions.

Conclusions

Several resources, programs, and strategies have been identified above and could be considered to allocate additional resources to New Hampshire rail trails. In addition to CMAQ, TAP, RTP, and GIA funds, rail trails in the North Country are eligible for FLAP and Northern Borders Grants; the economic study undertaken as a part of this plan supports the economic development benefits of a well-maintained rail trail system that is attractive to visitors. Additionally, the IIJA is increasing funding to TAP and CMAQ, which may provide opportunities for increased rail trail funding. Furthermore, new funding opportunities through the IIJA could be pursued for rail trails that serve a transportation purpose.

At the state level, there is a range of dedicated rail trail revenue sources that could be considered, including establishing a voluntary non-motorized user fee, a rail trail parking fee, and perhaps even a general fund appropriation through the state operating budget. Dedicated revenue sources would allow advanced planning, scheduling, and forecasting, which is more akin to how other state assets and infrastructure are managed.

Consideration of dedicated state rail trail staffing, or redefining existing state staffing for rail trail ownership and management, seems to have merit and could help to address the confusion and inefficiencies that stem from the existing staffing, management, and ownership system. Streamlined roles, responsibilities, and ownership could provide benefits to multiple state agencies as well as the public.

There are numerous opportunities, as identified above, worthy of consideration that could result in increased efficiencies, additional funding, and more strategic targeting of resources (people and funding) for New Hampshire's rail trail network.

CHESHIRE RAIL TRAIL, MASCOMA RIVER GREENWAY, PRESIDENTIAL RAIL TRAIL

4. PRIORITIZING STATE INVESTMENTS

INTRODUCTION

SB 185 directs the New Hampshire State Rail Trails Plan to "…Establish a tier system for prioritizing state investments in rail trail projects based on criteria such as geography, connectivity to other rail trails, proximity to population centers and natural attractions, and other criteria as deemed appropriate…" This prioritization of state investments in rail trails would be applicable to new state sources of revenue for rail trails. Priorities and criteria for other sources of revenue (i.e., federal, local) are set by those funders. This chapter of the plan discusses:

- A summary of public input regarding state investment priorities; and
- Recommended criteria for prioritizing state investments.

Public meetings on the New Hampshire Rail Trails Plan were held in Concord, Keene, Littleton and online in August 2021.

PUBLIC INPUT THEMES

During the four public hearings on the plan, the public provided input on criteria that should be used to prioritize investments in State rail trails. The common themes of the public input are summarized below, and a summary of feedback can be found in the Appendix:

Connectivity. Perhaps the most common theme from the public emphasized the benefits of developing a connected system that provides opportunities for multi-day trips, on a single rail trail or several connected rail trails. Many testified that they believe return on investment (ROI) in rail trails increases with longer trails that attract overnight trips.

Proximity of Historic / Natural Attractions. Many members of the public identified proximity to historic and natural attractions as an important criterion in considering prioritizing rail trail investments. Many rail trails, themselves, because they are on former active railroad lines, have historic railroad features such as railroad bridges, turntables, switch stands, telltales, mile posts and are in proximity to natural waterbodies including rivers, wetlands, and lakes. Rail trails often pass through historic town centers, some of which have former railroad depot structures, in an environment that is separated from car and truck traffic. These features provide an attractive way for a variety of users to experience New Hampshire's natural and historic resources.

Direct Contributions to the Local Economy. Some members of the public identified the potential for supporting local businesses as an important consideration for prioritizing rail trail investments. Businesses in proximity to rail trails, such as restaurants, hotels,

convenience stores, gas stations, and recreational equipment rentals and retailers, may benefit from use of nearby rail trails. Increased use of rail trails that are connected to towns can bolster local businesses particularly if towns welcome users with wayfinding signage, places to linger, points of interest, visitor information, parking, and restrooms.

Potential for Transportation and Everyday Trips. Some stated that rail trails may accommodate everyday transportation trips (e.g., commutes, errands, school trips) and thus reduce carbon emissions by accommodating walking and bicycling trips and therefore should be prioritized. Some rail trail corridors are located within dense and developed communities that may present opportunities for everyday trips while other rail trails may not be suitable at this time. As key gaps are constructed in the rail trail, network opportunities for non-recreational trips on rail trails may increase.

Equitable Geographic Distribution. Some members of the public expressed a desire for rail trail investments to be equitably distributed (to the extent possible) throughout the state to ensure that people living in all regions have access to a rail trail. In addition, there was a sense that financial support for trails in rural and economically disadvantaged communities should not be penalized if local economic benefits were not as robust as in urban and more dense communities and their trails.

Other suggested criteria included proximity to population centers, the volume of users on a trail, consideration of the trail life cycle (maintaining existing trails before constructing new trails), the availability of public access and parking facilities, safety, surface type, and variety of modal users accommodated.

CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZING STATE INVESTMENTS

The proposed rail trail state investment prioritization criteria have been developed for new sources of state funding that might be made available specifically for rail trail projects. These criteria are not intended to be applied to existing funding programs (i.e., TAP, CMAQ, RTP, GIA), even if those programs have traditionally funded rail trail projects, as those funding programs already have established scoring criteria and rail trail projects are just one of many eligible project types. These prioritization criteria are recommended to be used for rail trail improvement and maintenance projects that apply for new rail trail-specific funding programs, or rail trail funding set-asides, and would be prioritized based on the following criteria:

1. **Connectivity with Existing Rail Trails**. Would the proposed project fill gaps in rail trail networks that contribute to a longer connected system of rail trails in New Hampshire? Does the project improve access to existing connected networks?

   Possible Metrics: Filling an identified gap in a rail trail network; Length of trail associated with the project; improved access to existing rail trail networks; maintenance of existing connected networks.

2. **Project Readiness**. Can the proposed project move ahead if funded?

Possible Metrics – Construction: Is there support from corridor owner(s)? Is there a design with a recent cost estimate and permitting needs identified? Is a required match available? Is there public support for this project? Is this project identified in state, regional, or local plans?

Possible Metrics – Planning/Conceptual Design: Is there support from corridor owner(s)? Is there community support for this project? Is there a local sponsor (e.g., RPC, municipality, trail group) for this project?

3. **Connectivity to Community Assets, Natural and Cultural Resources**. Does the project improve a facility that has the potential to attract/boost visitor and resident spending in nearby communities? Would the project provide access to cultural resource attractions? Would the project improve a facility that provides access to natural resource attractions? Are there adequate facilities to accommodate increased resident and visitor usage?

   Possible Metrics: Identify trail/town linkages associated with the project; identify how the proposed project would improve trail visitation; identify the destination(s) and activity center(s) linked to the project trail; are destinations and activity centers conveniently linked to the trail (i.e., within 1/2 mile)? Is the linkage between the facility and businesses a low-stress route for pedestrians and bicyclists? Would the project provide access to scenic natural landscapes, historic features, or other natural or cultural features? Are there public access points to connect to the rail trail, such as public roadway crossings, and public parking area(s)?

4. **Potential for Everyday Transportation**. Does the proposed project provide an alternative to driving for residents and visitors? Does the project provide an alternative route to a roadway that improves safety for pedestrians and bicyclists?

   Possible Metrics: Does the project connect homes and businesses? Does the project improve access to a town center(s)? Does the project improve a facility that is within ¼ mile of a school(s), senior center(s), library, park, food store, restaurant(s)/café(s), employment center, or tourist destination?

5. **Social Equity and Environmental Justice**. Would the project serve communities that have been traditionally underserved, including isolated rural communities, lower-income, minority, and/or households that lack English language proficiency? Would the project be accessible to persons with disabilities? Does the project have the potential to foster economic development in a disadvantaged community?

   Possible Metrics: Does the project improve a facility that is within 1 mile of a census tract(s) identified as having lower income (50 percentile or above), minority or linguistically isolated households? Does the design meet standards for accessibility? Does the project support a community or regional economic development strategy for a disadvantaged community?

6. **Maintaining Existing Rail Trails**. Does the project improve safety for rail trail users? Does the project address infrastructure issues (surface, drainage, bridges, crossings) on an existing rail trail? Does the project address or enhance an identified environmental issue(s) impacted or caused by the rail trail? Would the proposed project provide

improvements that would diversify trail usage? Would the project, or does the rail trail, provide or improve public access points that accommodate a variety of trail users?

Possible Metrics: Does this project address an infrastructure deficiency (culvert, bridge, drainage, surface condition, etc.) that will better maintain and preserve an existing rail trail? Does the project address an identified safety concern, such as an unimproved intersection crossing or higher volume roadway, by providing an alternative for pedestrians and bicyclists? Does the project create a safer environment on the rail trail for various user groups? Do the proposed improvements diversify rail trail usage? Does the project provide public access accommodations for a variety of rail trail users in a known high-need area?

The six criteria identified above are consistent with the feedback received via the four public hearings, from the Advisory Committee, and the two state agencies (NHDOT and NHDNCR) that currently own and/or manage rail trails and funding sources that have been used for rail trail projects. This proposed rail trail state investment criteria can be applied to new rail trail funding sources, and the entity soliciting the projects can assign a weighting to each criterion in advance of project solicitation. Clearly defining the overall scoring criteria and assigned weighting for each criterion will help municipalities, advocates, and trails groups prepare and develop applications and garner appropriate support for their projects.

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MASCOMA RIVER GREENWAY, CHESHIRE RAIL TRAIL

5. IMPROVEMENT, MANAGEMENT, AND MAINTENANCE OF RAIL TRAILS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the plan provides guidance for the improvement, management, and maintenance of state-owned rail trails. More specifically the following topics are discussed:

- Improving rail corridors to accommodate rail trails;
- Rail trail improvement costs and design guidelines;
- Typical rail trail maintenance needs, costs, and responsibilities;
- Recommendations for rail trail right-of-way (ROW) preservation; and
- Recommendations for rail trail branding and promotion.

ACQUISITION, IMPROVEMENT, MAINTENANCE, AND MANAGEMENT OF STATE-OWNED RAIL TRAIL CORRIDORS

Development and stewardship of the state-owned rail trail network involves the concerted efforts of several partners, including state agencies, municipalities, and rail trail groups, all of whom

play different roles in the development and maintenance of rail trails. Overall, there are approximately currently 338 miles of state-owned rail trails, including 249 miles of rail trails within corridors owned by NHDOT and another 89 miles within corridors owned by DNCR. Abandoned railroad corridors owned by NHDOT were purchased with the purpose of preserving the corridors for current or future transportation (i.e., rail) use. NHDOT allows others to develop, maintain, and manage rail trails as an **interim** use within the corridors that it owns pursuant to legal agreements regarding management and maintenance of the corridor. Currently, NHDOT has agreements with DNCR to manage 212 miles of rail trails for recreational use and agreements with various cities and towns to manage rail trails on 37 miles of railroad corridors. DNCR is the primary trail manager for the majority of state-owned rail trails - approximately 301 miles of the 338 miles of state-owned rail trails are managed for recreational use by DNCR.

New Hampshire's Regional Planning Commissions provide planning and assistance to rail trail groups on planning and project development. Rail trail managers (i.e., DNCR and various municipalities), in turn, rely on numerous local non-profit trail groups to assist with funding, managing, and maintaining rail trails. These local non-profits, often "friends" groups or recreational clubs, raise funds, apply for grants, oversee improvements, and marshal volunteers to improve and maintain rail trails. New Hampshire's network of rail trails would not be possible without the efforts of all the owners, managers, and local rail trail organizations that work to develop, improve, and maintain the rail trail network.

Acquisition of Railroad Corridors

State-owned rail trails have been developed within railroad corridors that have been purchased by the state after being recognized as abandoned by the US Surface Transportation Board (STB). The STB recognizes all railroad corridors as either "active" or abandoned." "Abandonment" is a legal proceeding through which the STB relieves a railroad of its obligation to provide freight rail service. The steps in the acquisition of abandoned railroad corridors in New Hampshire are typically led by NHDOT and carried out in accordance with RSA 228:60-a, 228:60-b, and 228:60-c. Generally, NHDOT purchases and holds railroad corridors for future potential rail transportation purposes. In a few cases, NHDOT has acquired abandoned railroad corridors and deeded them to DNCR or municipalities. In other cases, DNCR and municipalities have purchased abandoned railroad corridors in New Hampshire. Identification of funding to acquire a railroad corridor may be undertaken jointly with a rail trail management entity if the acquisition is primarily oriented to interim recreational use. The funding sources used to acquire railroad corridors are an important consideration because many funding sources have rules and restrictions which could impact interim uses, such as rail trails.

Improvement of Rail Trails

Once a railroad corridor is acquired, improvements are necessary to make the corridor usable as a rail trail. Acquired railroad corridors may have tracks and ties in place, may be surfaced with ballast, overgrown with vegetation, and have poor drainage. Generally, rail bridge railings do not meet standards for use by bicyclists and pedestrians, and rail bridge decks often need improvement to accommodate rail trail users. All these conditions, at a minimum, need to be addressed to convert a railroad corridor for rail trail purposes.

The primary responsibility for decisions regarding rail trail improvements on state-owned corridors rests with the rail trail manager responsible for funding and maintaining the rail trails. For corridors owned by NHDOT, trail use is subject to a sponsoring entity/trail manager securing a Rail Trail Agreement (discussed below) from NHDOT. Rail trail managers determine the level of rail trail improvements based on the anticipated user, available funding for construction, and maintenance and user needs as determined by the trail manager.

Various modal users prefer certain trail surface types. General preferences for surface types by modal users are summarized in Table 5-1. Paved surfaces are generally preferred by bicyclists, in-line skaters, wheelchair users, pedestrians, and those with baby carriages, but are generally less desirable for motorized users, equestrians, and joggers who prefer unpaved surfaces. Stone dust paths, which are compacted earth paths with a stone dust surface, can be accessible and accommodate road bikes. Pedestrians can use either paved or unpaved surfaces. Mountain bikes can use paved or most unpaved surfaces. Snowmobiles and ATVs can be accommodated on rocky, sandy paths that can be difficult for most other users. In general, a rail trail that primarily serves a transportation purpose will be paved.

TABLE 5-1: General Preferences of Rail Trail Surface Type by User

User	Paved	Unpaved
Pedestrians	✓	✓
Joggers		✓
Road Bicyclists	✓	
Mountain Bicyclists	✓	✓
In-Line Skaters	✓	
Wheelchair Users	✓	
Baby-Carriage Users	✓	
Snowmobile Riders		✓
ATV Riders		✓
Equestrians		✓
X-C Skiers		✓
Snowshoers		✓

Rail Trail Improvement Guidelines

The following guidance is applicable to the improvement of state-owned rail trails.

1. Municipalities, Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), local user groups, and other trail proponents should work with the rail trail property owner, NHDOT or DNCR, to pursue trail improvements.

2. Facilities should be designed to safely accommodate all users that are permitted on the trail. Recommended references for safe and appropriate design guidelines include, but are not limited to, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guidelines for Design of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities*, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) *Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access*,

and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) *Accessibility Guidebook for Outdoor Recreation and Trails.* The East Coast Greenway also has a *Design Guide* for the development of trail facilities that has useful information for rail trails and the segment of the East Coast Greenway in New Hampshire (NH Seacoast Greenway). In addition, DNCR's Trails Bureau publishes Best Management Practices for erosion control during trail construction and maintenance.

3. Rail-with-trail may be requested and will be considered on active state-owned railroad corridors in appropriate circumstances (e.g., where rail traffic is light and adequate corridor width is available to safely accommodate rail and trail activity). Developing rail-with-trail requires the permission of, and close coordination with, NHDOT. NHDOT will provide detailed requirements for such projects with input from the railroad(s) operating on the specific railroad corridor. Sponsors of these projects must address issues such as safe clearance and separation between railroad operations and trail users, railroad maintenance requirements that may include temporary trail closure, maintenance and policing of trails, reimbursement of added railroad costs, and insurance, bonding, and indemnification of the state and operating railroads. A typical cross-section for rail-with-trail is provided in Figure 5-4, but the dimensions and topography of railroad corridors vary, and designs must be adjusted accordingly.

4. Maintenance of the facility must be a key component of any design as well as a review of the existing infrastructure.

5. NHDOT and DNCR may provide technical and institutional support for development and improvement of multi-use rail trails. This report proposes design guidance for development and improvement of multi-use rail trails, including typical cross-sections addressing differing corridor conditions, rail trail requirements, user requirements, and constraints. Typical cross-sections have been included for several general cases, which are shown in Figures 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3. These typical cross-sections address the critical design issues discussed below.

Rail Trail Typical Cross-Sections

The following are some of the key issues and design considerations for shared-use paths. All facilities are assumed to support two-way travel. These guidelines are based principally on the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) *Guidelines for Design of Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities*, however recommended design standards are provided for motorized users and equestrians as well.

- Rail trail width
    - 12-feet minimum is necessary to accommodate snow grooming and is the recommended minimum width for stone dust rail trails. If snowmobiles are not proposed, 10-foot minimum width may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis.
    - 12 – 14 feet is recommended in areas of high demand.
    - In areas where an unpaved path is parallel to a paved path, the unpaved path should be a minimum of 5-feet to accommodate equestrian users; 8-feet is recommended for two-way travel.

- Vertical clearance
    - 12-feet minimum is recommended to accommodate snow grooming and is preferred by equestrian users. In constrained areas, or on paved trails which are not used by snowmobiles, a 10-foot minimum may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis.
    - Other uses may require higher clearances – local conditions and uses should be evaluated for vertical clearance requirements.
    - 8 feet could be considered in constrained areas but will limit modal users.

- Rail trail foundation design
    - A 12-inch gravel foundation is recommended in areas where there will be frequent access by motor vehicles, such as maintenance vehicles, park patrols, and/or emergency vehicles, or where soil conditions are poor.

    - A minimum gravel foundation range of 4-inches to 8-inches is acceptable and should be based on the subsurface conditions. Should subsurface conditions necessitate, additional gravel foundation should be installed.

- Rail trail surface
    - Unpaved
        - Hard (Crushed Stone) Surface – 4-inch-thick compacted stone dust (typically 3/8-inch maximum diameter prior to compaction)
        - Soft Surface – Grass or packed dirt
    - Paved – 3-inch-thick bituminous concrete

- Trail shoulders
    - Width
        - 2 feet minimum
        - 3 feet recommended
        - 3 feet minimum to horizontal obstruction (e.g., sign, fence, tree
        - 5 feet minimum to vertical hazard (i.e., vertical drop of 2.5 feet or more, top of vertical slope exceeding 3:1) – if less than 5 feet is available, a fence is recommended (with a 3-foot clearance)

    - Slope
        - 20:1 (run: rise) recommended
        - 12:1 acceptable for limited rail trail segments
        - 6:1 maximum
        - 3 feet minimum to horizontal obstruction (e.g., sign, fence, tree)
        - 5 feet minimum to vertical hazard (i.e., vertical drop of 2.5 feet or more, top of vertical slope exceeding 3:1) – if less than 5 feet is available, a railing is recommended (with a 3-foot clearance)

    - Cross Slope
        - 1% recommended
        - Not to exceed 2%

    - Sight Distance
        - Minimum of 150-feet for bike use
        - Minimum of 100-feet for equestrian use

- Minimum of 400-feet for motorized use

Typical rail trail design sections which incorporate the design standards shown above are shown in Figures 5-1, 5-2, 5-3 and 5-4 as follows:

- Paved Path – A rail trail with a bituminous asphalt surface.
- Unpaved Path – A rail trail with a stone dust / crushed stone surface.
- Rail with Trail – A rail trail that runs parallel to an active railroad line but has physical width constraints that reduce the buffer between the railroad line and the path to a minimum width (20 feet between the track center line and the edge of the rail trail shoulder).
- Separate Path Rail Trail – A rail trail with two parallel surfaces: a hard surface (pavement) for users such as bicyclists and wheelchair users, and a soft surface (grass or compacted soil) for users such as horseback riders and joggers. It is desirable to provide separate paths where there is user demand for an alternate surface, and where width is available.

Rail Trail Improvement Costs

Rail trail improvement costs vary widely based on several variables that are involved, including trail surface, the number of bridges, rail trail width, extent of clearing, grade adjustments, the number of intersections and their treatment, location, signage, amenities, and perhaps most of all, method of project delivery, all affect total construction cost. Recent rail trail improvement project costs per mile for projects that involve trail clubs providing volunteer labor and/or working directly with a contractor range from $26,000 to $40,000 per mile.[1] More complex projects funded through federal sources (i.e., TAP) which require engineered bid plans and compliance with other grant requirements are more costly, with recent costs and cost estimates ranging from $150,000 to $1,500,000 per mile, excluding amenities, bridge reconstruction, replacement of large culverts, survey, right of way mapping, preliminary engineering, and construction inspection. As shown in Table 5-2, recent rail trail improvement costs per mile in New Hampshire have been in the range of $500,000 per mile for a stone dust path and $610,000 per mile for an asphalt paved path.

TABLE 5-2: Recent Rail Trail Improvement Costs in New Hampshire

Year	Path Width and Surface	Cost
2021	10-foot-wide stone dust path	$495,000 per mile
2018	10-foot-wide asphalt path	$610,000 per mile
2015	10-foot-wide asphalt path	$612,000 per mile

Source: Bids for rail trail improvement projects on the Cheshire, Salem, and Windham Rail Trails.

[1] Costs per mile provided by Abby Evankow, May 2022 and Alex Bernhard, Friends of the Northern Rail Trail, May 19, 2022.

FIGURES 5-1 AND 5-2: Typical Sections – Paved Rail Trail and Unpaved Rail Trail

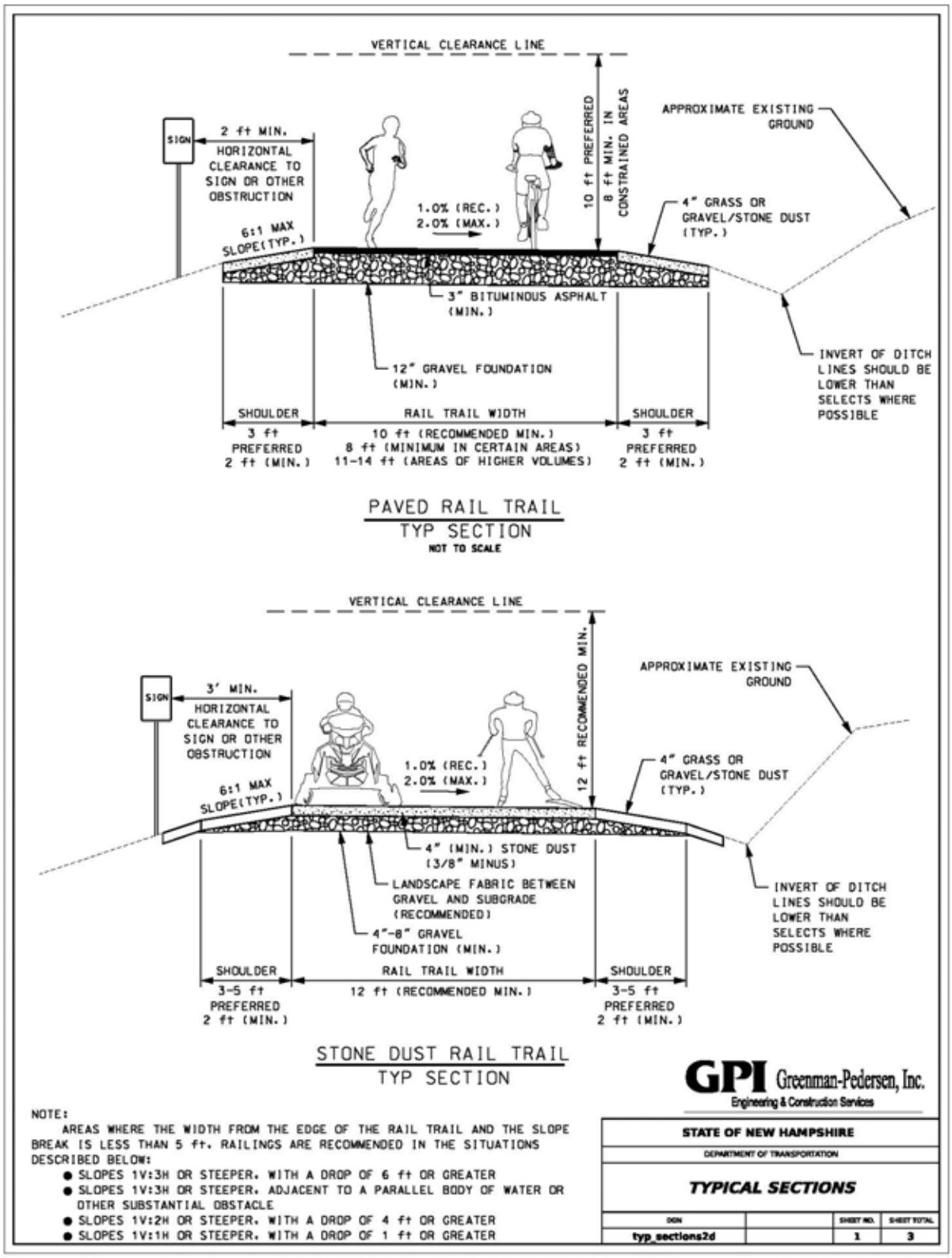


FIGURE 5-3: Typical Section – Rail Trail with Active Railroad

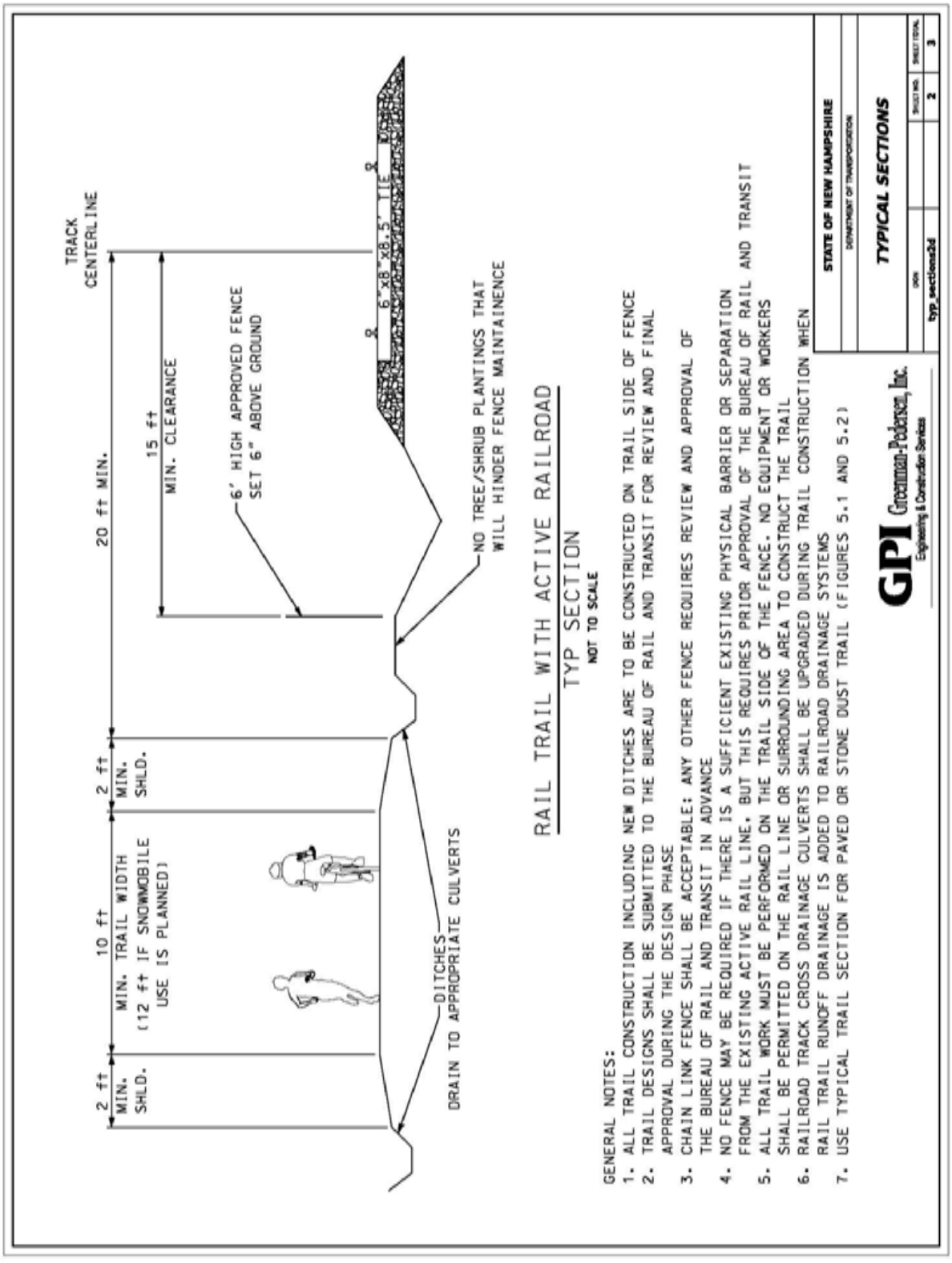
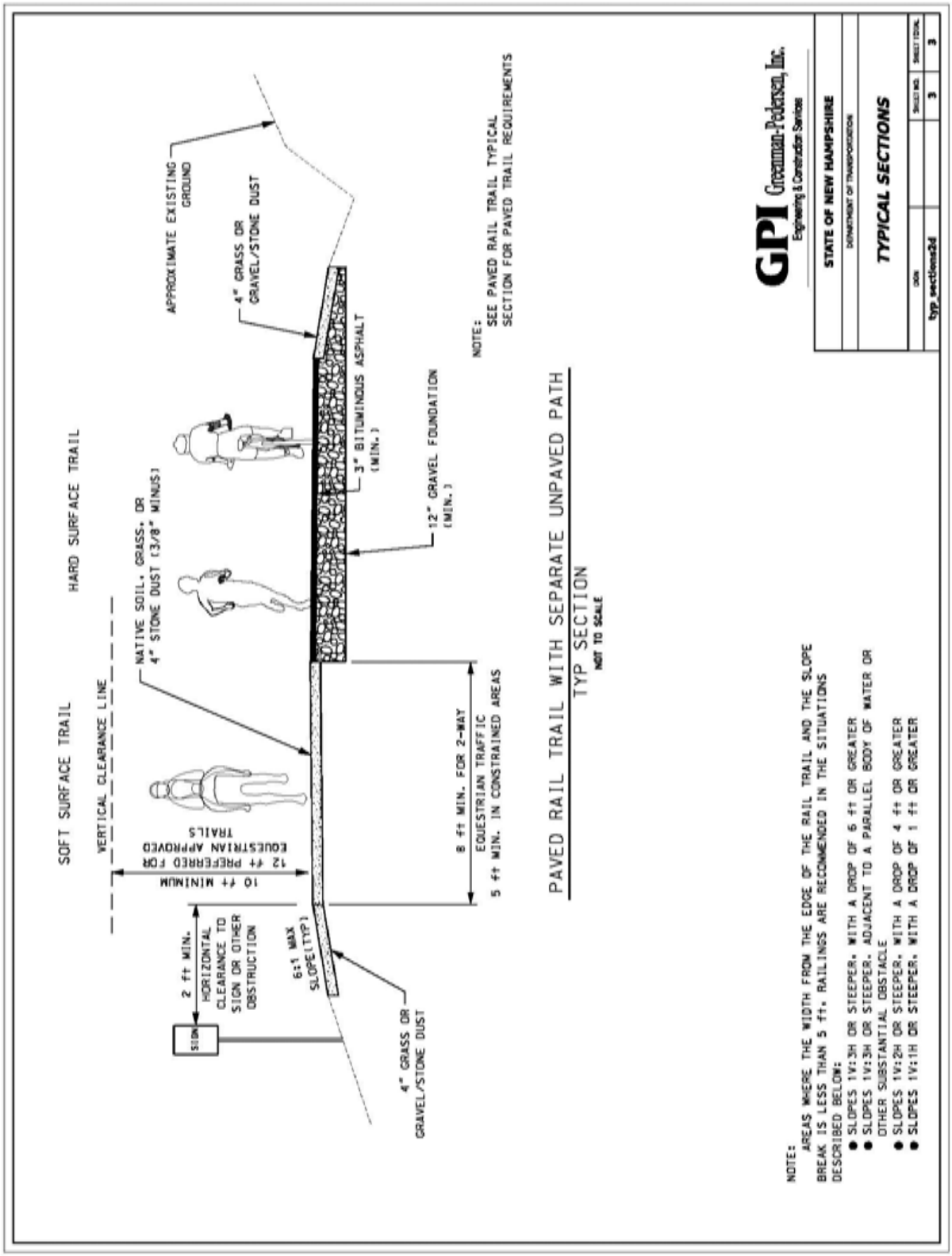


FIGURE 5-4: Paved Rail Trail with Separate Unpaved Path



Rails and ties being removed on the Northern Rail Trail in Boscawen.

Maintaining State-Owned Rail Trails

Trail Management Entities in New Hampshire.

DNCR manages 301 miles of state-owned rail trails, some of those under the terms of a Cooperative Agreement with NHDOT (railroad corridor owner). In addition to a Cooperative Agreement with DNCR for rail trail management, NHDOT has Rail Trail Agreements with the following municipalities, to manage the remaining 37 miles of state-owned rail trails:

1. Keene
2. Lebanon
3. Laconia
4. Belmont
5. Tilton
6. Northfield
7. Manchester
8. Londonderry
9. Windham
10. Salem
11. Portsmouth*
12. Greenland*
13. Rye*
14. North Hampton*
15. Hampton*

*Towns have executed RTAs with NHDOT which will go into effect when the rail trail improvements are completed.

The Wow Trail in Laconia is an example of a rail trail with active rail.

DNCR and the municipalities are generally assisted by non-profit “friend” groups and recreational clubs (i.e., snowmobile clubs, ATV clubs) that fundraise, apply for grants, and manage or provide volunteers to help maintain the rail trails. A current listing of rail trail groups by trail is listed and is provided in the Appendix. It is noted that the trail management groups will continue to change over time and this list is, therefore, a snapshot in time.

Maintenance Definitions.

Once a railroad corridor is improved for rail trail use, ongoing maintenance is required to keep the rail trail and the corridor in a safe condition for rail trail use as well as future potential transportation use. Rail trail and corridor maintenance tasks fall into two broad categories – capital and routine maintenance – defined as follows:

Capital Maintenance: Capital maintenance describes work that is not routine or regular but is required to restore the transportation system to a functional state of operation. It differs from capital improvements in that it involves the rehabilitation or restoration of existing facilities, not additional improvements to existing facilities or the construction of new facilities. NHDOT provides capital maintenance for all state-maintained overpasses and other state-maintained structures that are an integral part of the State-maintained highway system. Typical ranges of capital costs are displayed in Table 5-1.

Routine Maintenance: Routine maintenance describes work that is performed to maintain the condition of the transportation system or to respond to specific conditions or events that restore

Removing fallen trees is a common routine maintenance task (Northern Rail Trail, Enfield).

the transportation facility to a functional state of operation. Routine maintenance is defined in accordance with FHWA guidance. Typical examples of routine maintenance for rail trails include:

- Trail surfacing (i.e., rutting and re-grading)
- Weed and brush control
- Cleaning ditches
- Unblocking and maintaining culverts
- Cleaning graffiti
- Providing and maintaining trail signage
- Trash and debris removal

Maintenance Responsibilities.

Capital maintenance is generally the responsibility of the owner, specifically for state-owned railroad corridors, NHDOT or DNCR, whereas routine maintenance is generally the responsibility of the rail trail manager.

Capital and Routine Maintenance Costs.

Typical capital and routine maintenance tasks and associated cost ranges for railroad corridors are provided in Tables 5-2 and 5-3. The costs are provided to provide an illustrative estimate for public understanding. Per mile rail trail reconstruction costs vary greatly based on several variables including rail trail surfacing, width, amount of clearing, grade adjustments, location, signage, intersection crossings, etc. The most common routine maintenance tasks that occur annually include mowing, vegetation management, litter pick up, and cleaning up after storms.

TABLE 5-3: Rail Trail Capital Maintenance Costs

TASK	COST (in 2022 dollars)
Rail trail bridge reconstruction	$50 to $250 per square foot
Retaining wall reconstruction	$5 to $50 per foot
Small culvert (less than 60" dia.) replacement	$1,000 to $10,000 each
Large culvert (more than 60" dia.) replacement	$10,000 to $200,000 each
Access control	$0 to $3,000 per mile

Source: Rails to Trail Conservancy, "Maintenance Practices and Costs of Rail-Trails," 2015. Costs adjusted to 2022. Input from NH Rail Trail Plan Advisory Committee, 2020-2021.

TABLE 5-4: Rail Trail Routine Maintenance Tasks and Costs

TASK	ANNUAL COST (in 2022 dollars)
Annual mowing for mostly wooded rail trail	$100 to $500 per mile
Annual mowing for mostly grassy rail trail	$500 to $1,200 per mile
Vegetation management / removal of invasives	$50 to $500 per mile
Tree removal	$2,000 per mile
Crushed stone surface maintenance	$100 per mile
Asphalt surface maintenance	$100 to $2,000 per mile
Pavement markings	$20 to $200 per mile
Clearing of ditch lines, swales, and culverts	$100 to $400 per mile
Maintenance of trailhead amenities	$500 to $3,000 per mile
Litter clean-up / Cleaning graffiti	$500 to $3,000 per mile
Signage maintenance	$0 to $600 per mile

Source: Rails to Trail Conservancy, "Maintenance Practices and Costs of Rail-Trails," 2015. Costs adjusted to 2022. Input from NH Rail Trail Plan Advisory Committee, 2020-2021.

Retrofitting rail bridges for trail use is a typical rail trail improvement. (Sugar River Rail Trail, Claremont)

Rail Trail Agreements

Rail trails established on railroad corridors owned by NHDOT are permitted via agreements between NHDOT and a designated rail trail manager, specifically DNCR or a municipality, that has agreed to take on the responsibility of rail trail development, management, and routine maintenance. Through these agreements, NHDOT allows its property to be used on an interim basis for rail trails subject to stipulations regarding the overall management, maintenance, and use of the railroad corridor. Since 1998, NHDOT has executed rail trail agreements with 15 municipalities and a Cooperative Agreement with DNCR which covers another 15 railroad corridors.

The bulk of a rail trail agreement specifies management and maintenance responsibilities between the corridor owner (NHDOT) and the rail trail manager as generally outlined above. Other provisions of the agreement carry forward stipulations that originate in the federal funding that was used to purchase the railroad corridor, such as restrictions on motorized users and the acknowledgment that rail trail uses must be relinquished with 180 days' written notice from NHDOT should the corridor be needed for transportation purposes.

Storm damage on the Cheshire Rail Trail.

Insurance. Insurance is a major component of the Rail Trail Agreements. Rail Trail managers are required to obtain and maintain liability insurance for the life of the rail trail. All of NHDOT's Rail Trail Agreements are with public agencies which are typically covered by their own umbrella insurance policies that protect agency/municipal activities and facilities.

With respect to maintenance activities by trail groups, DNCR, in turn, requires agreements for volunteer trail groups and holds a general liability insurance policy. In 2010, DNCR established a statewide volunteer program that supports volunteer activities including maintenance of trails on state property. The volunteer program has covered liability insurance requirements for approved volunteer activities for a limited number of smaller non-profit groups and non-motorized trail maintenance organizations that would not be able to obtain insurance for themselves. Insurance practices and requirements will continue to be updated and consistent with state statutory requirements.

Through this rail trail planning effort, an updated NHDOT rail trail template agreement has been developed, which outlines responsibilities for railroad corridor maintenance and improvement for municipalities that will enter into an agreement directly with NHDOT; this is provided in the Appendix. DOT and DNCR also plan to update the cooperative agreement. Entities that would need to enter into an agreement with DNCR, if DNCR is either the property owner or trail manager for DOT property that it wants to subdelegate duties to another entity, would enter into a template agreement provided by DNCR; the current DNCR agreement is also provided in the Appendix, but it is currently undergoing revisions and is subject to change.

Slope erosion on the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail in Lisbon.

Right of Way (ROW) Preservation and Enforcement

Right-of-way (ROW) preservation is a specialized rail trail concern. With several hundred miles of railroad corridors crossing the state it is not feasible (nor desirable) to provide continuous fencing or boundary markers to delineate property boundaries. Without clearly marked boundaries, however, occurrences of intentional and unintentional encroachment into the state-owned ROW have occurred. Protection of the state's publicly owned railroad corridors is a considerable concern for their use as rail trails and to ensure the integrity of state-owned property and infrastructure. Sometimes encroachments into the right-of-way have safety implications. The following recommendations are intended to address encroachment issues:

Obtain Aerial Photography of Railroad Corridors. Surveying and marking over 1,000 miles of rail property boundaries (the State owns 527 miles of active and inactive railroad corridors, and both sides of each corridor need to be addressed) would be an expensive and time-consuming task. However, collecting high-resolution aerial photography through the use of UAS (unmanned aircraft systems) of the state-owned railroad corridors would provide information that would be useful for property management purposes. Aerial photography collected via UAS is relatively inexpensive and can generally be overlain with available GIS parcel data to provide both an overview of the railroad corridors and a snapshot in time. Although GIS parcel data is not fully accurate, this information overlaid with a high-resolution aerial would provide a good basis for understanding property limits through much of the state and help target areas where more detailed information would be needed. Aerial images would be useful for

identifying property boundaries and for other property management tasks (i.e., asset management, conceptual planning) as well. The more costly tasks of surveying boundaries and constructing fencing may be necessary for specifically identified problem areas. Consideration should be given to which railroad corridors or rail trails should be prioritized if this UAS approach is employed and whether that prioritization should be based on safety concerns, pending rail trail projects, ROW litigation, or other factors. Additional consideration should be given as to whether entities planning rail trail developments should obtain this aerial photography during the rail trail planning process in order to identify impediments to their trail development project.

Establish Procedures for Reporting Encroachments. A consistent process to report and respond to ROW encroachment issues should be established to maintain the integrity of the state-owned rail trail corridors. Responding to encroachments is currently complicated by several factors, including:

- Corridors are owned and managed by two different state agencies (NHDOT and DNCR);
- Both state agencies have very limited staff resources (none dedicated solely to managing rail trails);
- Many encroachment issues require property research, legal consultation, and a field visit; and
- The need to balance the investigation of encroachments with other duties, which include consideration of the purported encroachments' impact on the safety of the rail trail or the long-term preservation of the state's property and infrastructure.

While maintaining the integrity of the state-owned property is ultimately an owner's responsibility, state agency staff are generally office-based and not out on the rail trails. Assistance from trail managers, municipal resources, and trail groups could prove beneficial in identifying, documenting, and assisting with ROW encroachments. This approach may require some level of training or the development of templates or procedures to ensure that those other than NHDOT or DNCR staff have the information and a standard approach to provide assistance with rail trail encroachments to the respective state agencies. A consistent intake procedure for reporting possible rail trail encroachments regardless of state agency ownership should be established.

State Promotion and Branding

As New Hampshire's rail trail network offers a wide variety of experiences through a growing connected system, the state should consider actions to promote New Hampshire rail trails. As described in the inventory and economic impact chapters, connected corridors which provide the opportunity for overnight trips that attract visitors add to the rail trails' return on investment. In addition to visitors, New Hampshire residents frequent the state's rail trails and would benefit

A brand identity and signage program has been developed for the Mascoma River Greenway in Lebanon.

from additional information as well. New Hampshire's rail trails traverse iconic New Hampshire landscapes, including the White Mountains, the Lakes Region, Mt. Monadnock area, and the Seacoast, which are established attractions for residents and visitors alike. Other rail trails offer the opportunity to explore lesser-known areas of the state. Currently, recreational rail trails are identified on the *Visit NH* website with links to the Recreational Rail Trails page on the New Hampshire State Parks website. As a byproduct of this plan, a new, user-friendly, and marketing-friendly website has been established (RailTrails.nh.gov). This new domain name will be included on the pamphlet, created under this plan, that provides high-level, marketing information for New Hampshire's state-owned rail trails. This pamphlet will be distributed in the New Hampshire welcome centers. To further improve the public awareness of New Hampshire's rail trails the following state-centric activities could be considered:

> **Brand Identity.** Consideration of the development of a brand identity or logo for New Hampshire's rail trails. The brand identity could be used on print and digital information and on rail trail signage to orient trail users to the state's rail trails. DNCR is working on this approach for state-owned rail trails. This state-level branding would be separate from the local branding of rail trails.

Print Materials. Print materials help rail trail users plan trips and serve as a reference for rail trail users. Print materials include maps and information related to rail trail visitation. Due to the

Signage and maps support trail users on the Cheshire Rail Trail.

number of rail trails and the size of the state, a primary decision would need to be made regarding how to best provide rail trail information, whether by region, by trail, and/or statewide. If developed, maps should provide enough detail to identify parking areas, trailheads, street names at the parking areas, allowable rail trail uses, directions, and connections to other trails. Consideration should be given as to what state agency or statewide entity would be the most appropriate to take the lead on developing, maintaining, and distributing printed materials such as the suggested map. If new, dedicated rail trail staff positions are established, it would likely be appropriate for that staff/office to take the lead on this effort.

Digital Marketing. Currently, recreational rail trails managed by DNCR have a page on the New Hampshire State Parks website which provides helpful information for trail users. The website provides a statewide map of trails and a webpage for each rail trail with allowed users, trail mileage, parking areas, and links to state parks information. Information could be enhanced by providing maps of the rail trails. It is anticipated that with the establishment of the new domain name (RailTrails.nh.gov) that additional rail trail information will be readily available via that site.

In addition to websites, rail trails can be promoted through social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Consideration should be given, again, to which state agency or statewide entity would be the most appropriate to oversee this activity for state-owned rail trails. If new, dedicated rail trail staff positions are established, it would likely be appropriate for that staff/office to take the lead on this effort.

Non-State Promotion Considerations

The marketing and promotion of rail trails in NH should not be the sole responsibility of state agencies. Rail trails, whether state-owned or privately-owned, are considered by many to be community assets and therefore locals (municipalities, trail groups/clubs, etc.) should play a role in marketing the unique benefits, experiences and attributes that trails in their community or region offer to residents and visitors. To further promote specific or local rail trails, the following local or regional activities could be considered:

Print Materials. There is a role for non-state entities (municipalities, trail groups/clubs, private sector, etc.) to promote rail trails as well. These groups can provide trip planning materials and information regarding overnight accommodations, ranging from campgrounds to inns, as well as food stops, and other area visitor attractions (i.e., recreational equipment rental and purchase shops, breweries, farm stands, restaurants, and other points of interest) that are of interest to rail trail users. This work would most appropriately be undertaken by local trail advocates or municipalities in concert with business groups such as chambers of commerce.

Digital Marketing. Similar to print materials, there is a role for non-state entities (municipalities, trail groups/clubs, private sector, etc.) to provide digital marketing regarding information of interest to trail users as described above. This information can be promoted through various social media channels. Consideration should also be given on the municipal level as to whether municipal websites have information on their local rail trails, or at the least, have a link to a regional or statewide rail trail website.

Community Events

Rail Trail Friendly Communities. To build recognition and return on investment while serving rail trail users, communities along rail trails may want to provide services and facilities that cater to rail trail users. This may include parking areas, wayfinding signage, benches and picnic areas, bicycle repair stations, water fountains, and other supporting services. UNH Cooperative Extension has worked with the City of Keene and the Town of Bristol to identify ways to better connect their downtowns with nearby rail trails to benefit both the downtown businesses and trail users. Consideration should be given to the initial and ongoing costs of these rail trail-friendly amenities that would need to be maintained and, in some cases, insured or have a separate prevailing agreement for their installation or placement. A few resources for New Hampshire municipalities interested in leveraging nearby rail trails for economic development are available as follows:

UNH Cooperative Extension, https://extension.unh.edu/economic-dev/nature-economy/downtowns-trails

The Progress Fund, *The Trail Town Guide, Revitalizing Rural Communities with Bike Trail Tourism*

https://www.trailtowns.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/TrailGuidev2.pdf

Other Local Events. To further solidify the community's support and recognition of a rail trail within their community, consideration could be given to hosting events on the rail trail itself (fun runs, 5ks, school field day events, community clean-up days, etc.) or within proximity and accessible from the rail trail (farmer's markets, old home days, etc.). A special use permit, or other permission, may need to be obtained from the Trail Owner for some of these community events.

APPENDICES

A. SB 185 (2019)
B. TRAIL USER SURVEY, ECONOMIC STUDY
C. RAIL TRAIL COUNTS/ESTIMATES OF ANNUAL TRIPS
D. IMPLAN RAIL TRAIL FINDINGS
E. RAIL TRAIL GROUPS
F. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT
G. NHDOT RAIL TRAIL TEMPLATE AGREEMENT
H. NHDOT RAIL TRAIL TEMPLATE AGREEMENT, RAIL WITH TRAIL
I. CURRENT DNCR RAIL TRAIL AGREEMENT

APPENDIX A

SB 185 (2019)

CHAPTER 240
SB 185-FN-A - FINAL VERSION

02/14/2019 0209s
8May2019... 1618h

2019 SESSION

19-0277
05/10

SENATE BILL ***185-FN-A***

AN ACT **relative to development of the New Hampshire state rail trails plan by the department of transportation and making an appropriation therefor.**

SPONSORS: **Sen. Kahn, Dist 10; Sen. Feltes, Dist 15; Sen. Carson, Dist 14; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19; Sen. Hennessey, Dist 5; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Rep. Gould, Hills. 7; Rep. Beaulieu, Hills. 45; Rep. Fenton, Ches. 8; Rep. Hennessey, Graf. 1**

COMMITTEE: **Transportation**

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill directs the department of transportation to develop a New Hampshire state rail trails plan based in part on the 2005 state trails plan, and makes an appropriation to the department for this purpose.

\- -

Explanation: **Matter added to current law appears in *bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

CHAPTER 240
SB 185-FN-A - FINAL VERSION

02/14/2019 0209s
8May2019... 1618h

19-0277
05/10

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Nineteen

AN ACT **relative to development of the New Hampshire state rail trails plan by the department of transportation and making an appropriation therefor.**

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

240:1 Statement of Purpose. The state of New Hampshire owns 500 miles of rail corridors. Use of these trails for biking and non-motorized recreation provides valuable low-impact uses. This act requires the development of a plan for the state rail-trail system to ensure the preservation and integrity of these assets and to provide direction for future development. In addition to defining the role of the department of transportation in preservation of rail corridors, the plan will determine the best way to maximize the return on investment from, and leverage future investment in, the state's rail corridor assets. Additionally, this plan will determine how to engage towns, cities, and private rail-trail organizations in these efforts.

240:2 New Sections; New Hampshire State Rail Trails Plan; Advisory Committee. Amend RSA 21-L by inserting after section 12-b the following new sections:

21-L:12-c New Hampshire State Rail Trails Plan. The department of transportation shall update the 2005 state trails plan and document the best means to maintain and develop state-owned rail trail corridors. The updated plan shall be entitled the state rail trails plan and shall be completed on or before June 30, 2021. In developing the state rail trails plan, the department of transportation shall:

I. Update the 2005 rail corridor inventory through state records, statewide trail organizations, and regional planning commissions, including, by trail, the funding sources, and permitted uses.

II. Hire a qualified consulting firm to complete and disseminate the plan.

III. Include a statewide economic-impact analysis on the value of rail trails.

IV. Consider maintenance and cost of maintenance for rail trails, including state responsibility for the underlying structural integrity of abandoned rail corridors, while permitting trail organizations and towns to perform routine maintenance of trail surfaces and other amenities.

V. Establish a tier system for prioritizing state investments in rail trail projects, based on criteria such as geography, connectivity to other rail trails, proximity to population centers and natural attractions, and other criteria as deemed appropriate.

VI. Develop recommendations for a state funding mechanism to support rail trail projects and the management structure of such funds.

VII. Develop a template trail management agreement outlining responsibilities of state, local, and private organizations involved with management of state-owned trails.

VIII. Compile and maintain a list of trail organizations and the areas of the state each serves.

IX. Identify best practices for acquiring insurance for volunteer trail management groups.

X. Document state commitment and support for the development of rail trails for their transportation, recreation, tourism, and other economic value.

XI. Determine how to ensure the integrity of publicly owned rail trail corridors. This may include reestablishing property lines with abutting private property owners.

XII. Hold a minimum of 3 public hearings, each in a different area of the state, to solicit public comment to shape the plan and make the final plan available on the department of transportation website.

XIII. Provide a pamphlet at state information centers regarding the state trails plan.

21-L:12-d Rail Trail Advisory Stakeholders Committee. The department of transportation shall establish a rail trail advisory stakeholders committee to advise the department in the development of the state rail trails plan under RSA 21-L:12-c.

240:3 Appropriation; Department of Transportation; State Rail Trails Plan. The sum of $200,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 is hereby appropriated to the department of transportation for the purpose of updating the New Hampshire state rail trails plan under RSA 21-L:12-c. This appropriation shall be in addition to any other funds appropriated to the department of transportation. The governor is authorized to draw a warrant for said sum out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated.

240:4 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Approved: July 12, 2019
Effective Date: July 12, 2019

APPENDIX B

TRAIL USER INTERCEPT SURVEY

Extension

Name of Rail Trail: _____ **Date:** _____

Surveyor's Name: _____

Introduction script for surveyors to say to individuals:

"Hello, my name is_____. I am a student from UNH and we are trying to better understand how New Hampshire's trails are being used. I was wondering if you 5 minutes to answer some questions?"

"This work is being done in partnership with UNH Cooperative Extension and NHDOT to better understand who uses our rail trails and how that impacts our economy. We expect about 500 people at trails around the State to participate in the survey. By agreeing to answer these survey questions, you are consenting to participate in research that has been approved by UNH. We will not ask your name and we will keep your responses confidential. We have business cards with the contact information of the research director and UNH's research integrity services should you have additional questions. While we are not offering any rewards for participating, please know that your input is vital to planning for the future of Rail Trails in New Hampshire."

Please fill out one survey per party and do not fill this survey out more than once. Thank you.

1. What is the zip code of your primary residence? _____

2. Age (✓)

a. _____18-29 **b.** _____30-39 **c.**_____40-49 **d.** _____50-59 **e.** _____60-69 **f.** _____70-79 **g.** 80+_____

3. Gender (✓)

a. _____ Male **b.** _____ Female **c.** _____ Choose Not to Respond

4. How many people are in your party (including yourself)?

a. _____Adults **b.** _____Children (18 and under)

5. How long will you be in this part of the State of NH (including travel time)?

a. _____ This community is my primary residence
b. _____ < 6 hours
c. _____ 6-12 hours
d. _____ Overnight: Number of nights _____

6. How long will you be on the trail?

a. _____ <6 hrs **b.** _____ 6-12 hrs **c.** _____ 12-24 hrs

7. How would you describe your primary reason for coming to this part of the State?

a. _____ Use of this trail is the primary reason I am here
b. _____ I am in the region for many reasons, one of which is the trail
c. _____ I was already in the region (or live here) and decided to come to the trail
d. _____ I moved to this region of NH because of access to the trail(s)

8. What activity are you participating in today?

a. _____ Hiking/Trail Running
b. _____ Snowshoeing
c. _____ Bicycling
d. _____ Backcountry Skiing/Snowboarding
e. _____ Cross Country Skiing
f. _____ OHRV
g. _____ Snowmobiling
h. _____ Horseback riding
i. _____ Other_____

9. Did this visit to the trail involve an overnight stay in one of the following types of accommodations? *Please indicate the number of nights.*

a. _____ Motel/Hotel
b. _____ Bed and Breakfast
c. _____ Friend or Relative's Home
d. _____ Campground
e. _____ Second Home
f. _____Vacation Rental
g. _____ Air B&B
h. _____ Other _____

10. Please estimate the total amount your party will spend during your entire visit to this part of NH (only report on this visit) in each of the following categories: Place a zero if you will not spend money in that particular category.

a. Transportation (including parking and gas for personal vehicle) $_____
b. Food & Drink (restaurants) $_____
c. Food & Drink (grocery or convenience stores) $_____
d. Overnight lodging $_____
e. Gifts/souvenirs and other shopping $_____
f. Recreation (such as admission fees, rentals, tours, etc.) $_____
g. Equipment purchases (purchased in NH) $_____
h. OHRV or snowmobile vehicle maintenance $_____
i. OHRV or snowmobile fuel $_____
j. Other – please describe:_____ $_____

11. Did the current COVID-19 pandemic impact your trip related spending in any way?

_____ No, I spent the same as I would pre-pandemic
_____ Yes, I spent less than I would pre-pandemic
_____ Yes, I spent more than I would pre-pandemic

12. Do you pay any user/membership fees to any trail organizations within the state of New Hampshire?

_____ Yes _____ No

13. Are there any other comments you would like to share?

APPENDIX C

TRAIL USER COUNTS / ESTIMATES OF ANNUAL TRIPS

RAIL TRAIL	LENGTH (MILES)	ESTIMATED ANNUAL TRIPS	ESTIMATE YEAR
White Mountains Region			
Ammonoosuc Rail Trail	19.3	61,000[1]	2021
Presidential Rail Trail	22	50,200[2]	2021
Lakes Region			
Cotton Valley Rail Trail	12	30,000[3]	2021
Winnipesaukee River Trail	2.5	41,850[4]	2021
WOW Trail	2.4	55,000[5]	2021
Dartmouth – Lake Sunapee Region			
Northern Rail Trail	58	150,000[6]	2021
Monadnock Region			
Ashuelot Rail Trail	21	96,500[7]	2018
Merrimack Valley Region			
Londonderry Rail Trail	4.5	163,000[8]	2020
Windham Rail Trail	4.3	241,500[9]	2021

Sources:

1. Bob Holdsworth (Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail).

2. Steve Agius, Refuge Manager, USFWS, 2021 trail counter data (Pondicherry section).

3. Bruce Stuart, Club President, Cotton Valley Rail Trail.

4. Winnipesauke River Trail Association

5. Lakes Region Planning Commission 2015 counts via infrared counter. Seasonal adjustment factor and annual growth rates applied.

6. Don Moyer, Friends of the Northern Rail Trail.

7. Southwest Regional Planning Commission annual estimate from a central point along the trail

8. Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission counts from October 2020 via Eco Counter device. Seasonal adjustment applied.

9. Southern New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission counts from 2019, 2020, 2021 via Eco Counter device. Seasonal adjustment applied.

APPENDIX D

IMPLAN RAIL TRAIL FINDINGS

IMPLAN RAIL TRAIL FINDINGS

Winnipesaukee River Trail

Estimate of Usage	Number of Trips
Residents	35,572.5
Visitors	6,277.5
TOTAL	**41,850.0**

Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to Winnipesaukee River Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	2.04	$83,000	$140,000	$210,000
2 - Indirect	0.35	$21,000	$33,000	$60,000
3 - Induced	0.48	$27,000	$48,000	$78,000
TOTAL	**2.87**	**$131,000**	**$221,000**	**$349,000**

Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to Winnipesaukee River Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$41,000
2 - Indirect	$7,000
3 - Induced	$10,000
TOTAL	**$58,000**

Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the Winnipesaukee River Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	3.84	$155,000	$202,000	$324,000
2 - Indirect	0.59	$35,000	$56,000	$106,000
3 - Induced	0.88	$50,000	$88,000	$144,000
TOTAL	**5.3**	**$240,000**	**$346,000**	**$574,000**

Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, Winnipesaukee River Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$47,000
2 - Indirect	$12,000
3 - Induced	$19,000
TOTAL	**$78,000**

Londonderry Rail Trail

Estimate of Usage	Number of Trips
Residents	138,550
Visitors	24,450
TOTAL	**163,000**

Yearly Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the Londonderry Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	15.83	638,000	835,000	1,336,000
2 - Indirect	2.43	145,000	232,000	438,000
3 - Induced	3.62	205,000	364,000	594,000
TOTAL	**21.9**	**$988,000**	**$1,431,000**	**$2,368,000**

Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, Londonderry Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$195,000
2 - Indirect	$49,000
3 - Induced	$78,000
TOTAL	**$322,000**

Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to Londonderry Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	8.10	327,000	556,000	833,000
2 - Indirect	1.39	83,000	129,000	238,000
3 - Induced	1.89	107,000	190,000	310,000
TOTAL	11	**$517,000**	**$875,000**	**$1,381,000**

Trail Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to Londonderry Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	160,000
2 - Indirect	28,000
3 - Induced	41,000
TOTAL	**$229,000**

Presidential Rail Trail (Pondicherry Section)

Estimate of Usage	Number of Trips
Residents	42,677
Visitors	7,531
TOTAL	**50,208**

Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to Presidential Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	2.49	$101,000	$171,000	$257,000
2 - Indirect	0.43	$25,000	$40,000	$73,000
3 - Induced	0.58	$33,000	$59,000	$96,000
TOTAL	**3.5**	**$159,000**	**$270,000**	**$426,000**

Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to Presidential Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$49,000
2 - Indirect	$9,000
3 - Induced	$12,000
TOTAL	**$70,000**

Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the Presidential Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	4.88	$200,000	$262,000	$419,000
2 - Indirect	0.75	$45,000	$72,000	$136,000
3 - Induced	1.12	$64,000	$114,000	$185,000
TOTAL	**6.74**	**$309,000**	**$448,000**	**$741,000**

Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, Presidential Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$60,000
2 - Indirect	$15,000
3 - Induced	$24,000
TOTAL	**$99,000**

WOW Trail

Estimate of Usage	Number of Trips
Residents	46,750
Visitors	8,250
TOTAL	**55,000**

Yearly Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the WOW Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	5.34	$219,000	$287,000	$459,000
2 - Indirect	0.82	$49,000	$80,000	$150,000
3 - Induced	1.22	$70,000	$124,000	$203,000
TOTAL	7	$338,000	$491,000	$812,000

Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, WOW Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$67,000
2 - Indirect	$17,000
3 - Induced	$26,000
TOTAL	**$110,000**

Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to WOW Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	2.73	$110,367.45	$187,000	$281,000
2 - Indirect	0.64	$36,116.14	$64,000	$105,000
3 - Induced	0.47	$27,897.04	$44,000	$80,000
TOTAL	**4**	**$174,000**	**$295,000**	**$466,000**

Trail Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to WOW Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$54,000
2 - Indirect	$9,000
3 - Induced	$14,000
TOTAL	**$77,000**

Windham Rail Trail

Estimate of Usage	Number of Trips
Residents	140,250
Visitors	24,750
TOTAL	**165,000**

Yearly Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the Windham Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	16.02	$658,000	$861,000	$1,378,000
2 - Indirect	2.46	$148,000	$238,000	$448,000
3 - Induced	3.67	$210,000	$373,000	$609,000
TOTAL	22	$1,016,000	$1,472,000	$2,435,000

Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, Windham Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$199,000
2 - Indirect	$50,000
3 - Induced	$80,000
TOTAL	$329,000

Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to Windham Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	8.20	$336,000	$571,000	$857,000
2 - Indirect	1.41	$85,000	$133,000	$244,000
3 - Induced	1.92	$110,000	$195,000	$318,000
TOTAL	11	$531,000	$899,000	$1,419,000

Trail Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to Windham Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$164,000
2 - Indirect	$28,000
3 - Induced	$42,000
TOTAL	$234,000

Northern Rail Trail (Boscawen to Lebanon)

Estimate of Usage	Number of Trips
Residents	127,500
Visitors	22,500
TOTAL	**150,000**

Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to Northern Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	7.45	$301,000	$511,000	$766,000
2 - Indirect	1.28	$76,000	$119,000	$219,000
3 - Induced	1.74	$99,000	$175,000	$286,000
TOTAL	**10.47**	**$476,000**	**$805,000**	**$1,271,000**

Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to Northern Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$147,000
2 - Indirect	$26,000
3 - Induced	$37,000
TOTAL	**$210,000**

Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the Northern Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	14.57	$587,000	$769,000	$1,300,000
2 - Indirect	2.24	$133,000	$214,000	$403,000
3 - Induced	3.33	$189,000	$335,000	$547,000
TOTAL	**20.14**	**$909,000**	**$1,318,000**	**$2,180,000**

Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, Northern Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$179,000
2 - Indirect	$45,000
3 - Induced	$72,000
TOTAL	**$296,000**

Cotton Valley Rail Trail

Estimate of Usage	Number of Trips
Residents	25,500
Visitors	4,500
TOTAL	**30,000**

Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to Cotton Valley Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	1.49	$60,000	$102,000	$153,000
2 - Indirect	0.26	$15,000	$24,000	$44,000
3 - Induced	0.35	$20,000	$35,000	$57,000
TOTAL	2.09	$95,000	$161,000	$254,000

Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to Cotton Valley Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$29,000
2 - Indirect	$5,000
3 - Induced	$8,000
TOTAL	**$42,000**

Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the Cotton Valley Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	2.91	$117,000	$154,000	$246,000
2 - Indirect	0.45	$27,000	$43,000	$81,000
3 - Induced	0.67	$38,000	$67,000	$109,000
TOTAL	**4.03**	**$182,000**	**$263,000**	**$436,000**

Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, Cotton Valley Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$36,000
2 - Indirect	$9,000
3 - Induced	$14,000
TOTAL	**$59,000**

Ammonoosuc Rail Trail

Estimate of Usage	Number of Trips
Residents	51,850
Visitors	9,150
TOTAL	**61,000**

Yearly Economic Impact of Spending by Visitors to Ammonoosuc Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	3.03	$122,000	$208,000	$312,000
2 - Indirect	0.52	$31,000	$48,000	$89,000
3 - Induced	0.71	$40,000	$71,000	$116,000
TOTAL	**4.26**	**$193,000**	**$327,000**	**$517,000**

Tax Revenue Generated from Spending by Visitors to Ammonoosuc Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$60,000
2 - Indirect	$10,000
3 - Induced	$15,000
TOTAL	**$85,000**

Economic Contribution by NH Residents who Visited the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail

IMPACT	JOBS	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED	OUTPUT
1 - Direct	5.92	$239,000	$313,000	$500,000
2 - Indirect	0.91	$54,000	$87,000	$164,000
3 - Induced	1.36	$77,000	$136,000	$223,000
TOTAL	**8.19**	**$370,000**	**$536,000**	**$887,000**

Tax Revenue from Resident Spending Contributions to the Economy, Ammonoosuc Rail Trail

IMPACT	TOTAL
1 - Direct	$73,000
2 - Indirect	$18,000
3 - Induced	$29,000
TOTAL	**$121,000**

APPENDIX E

RAIL TRAIL GROUPS

RAIL TRAIL	TRAIL MANAGER	TRAIL MANAGEMENT PARTNERS
Great North Woods		
Upper Coos Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Colebrook Ski Bees SMC Connecticut River Rail Club
White Mountains Region		
Presidential Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Friends of the Presidential Rail Trail Friends of Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge Whitefield Sno-Kings Jefferson Hilanders SMC Presidential Range Riders
Ammonoosuc Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Littleton Off Road Riders Ammonoosuc ATV Club Lisbon Stump Jumpers SMC Connecticut Valley SMC
New Trail (Littleton-Bethlehem)	DNCR	
Profile Recreational Trail	DNCR	Mt Agassiz SMC
Warren Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Asquamchumauke Valley Snowmobile
Conway Branch Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Cotton Valley Rail Trail Club Mountain Meadows SMC Ossipee Valley SMC Scrub Oak Scramblers
Lakes Region		
Cotton Valley Rail Trail	DNCR	Wentworth Economic Development Corporation Cotton Valley Trail Committee Cotton Valley Rail Trail Club Wolfeboro SMC Seven Lakes SMC
WOW Trail	City of Laconia	The WOW Trail Organization
Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail	Town of Belmont	
Winnipesauke River Trail	Town of Tilton Town of Northfield	Winnipesauke River Trail Association
Farmington Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Powder Mill SMC
Dartmouth - Lake Sunapee Region		
Mascoma River Greenway	City of Lebanon	Mascoma River Greenway Coalition
Northern Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Friends of the Northern Rail Trail Andover SMC Bike the Northern Rail Trail
Sugar River Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Crescent Lake Regional Sno-Riders Shugah Valley Snow Riders, Inc.
Monadnock Region		
Ashuelot Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Pathways for Keene Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative Town of Swanzey Winchester Trail Riders Keene Sno-Riders
Cheshire Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR City of Keene	Pathways for Keene Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative Monadnock Conservancy Town of Swanzey Monadnock Sno-Miles Westmoreland Sno-Belters Hooper Hill Hoppers

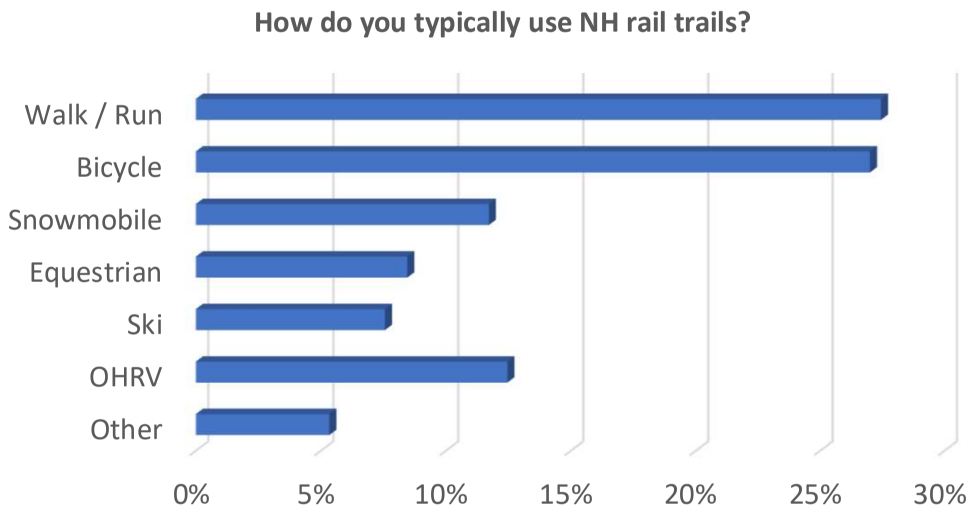
RAIL TRAIL	TRAIL MANAGER	TRAIL MANAGEMENT PARTNERS
Fort Hill Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Pathways for Keene Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative Pisgah Mountain Trail Riders
Hillsborough Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Pathways for Keene Pisgah Mountain Trail Riders
Monadnock Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Monadnock Sno-Moles Monadnock Trail Breakers
Merrimack Valley Region		
Londonderry Rail Trail	Town of Londonderry	Londonderry Trailways
Manchester Lawrence Rail Trail	DNCR	Town of Windham Windham Rail Trail Alliance Derry Rail Trails Londonderry Trailways
Salem Bike Ped Corridor	Town of Salem	Friends of the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor
Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail, Portsmouth Branch	DNCR	Rockingham Tecreational Trail Association Friends of Massabesic Bicycling Association Newfields Sno-Raiders NH Mushers Association Epping Trail Dusters
Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail, Fremont Branch	DNCR	NH ATV Club Derry Pathfinders SMC
Greenville Recreational Rail Trail	DNCR	Wilton Lyndeboro Winter Wanderers
Seacoast Region		
New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway	Town of Rye Town of Greenland Town of Hampton Town of North Hampton City of Portsmouth	New Hampshire Seacoast Greenway Alliance East Coast Greenway Alliance Friends of the Seabrook Rail Trail North Hampton Rail Trail Committee

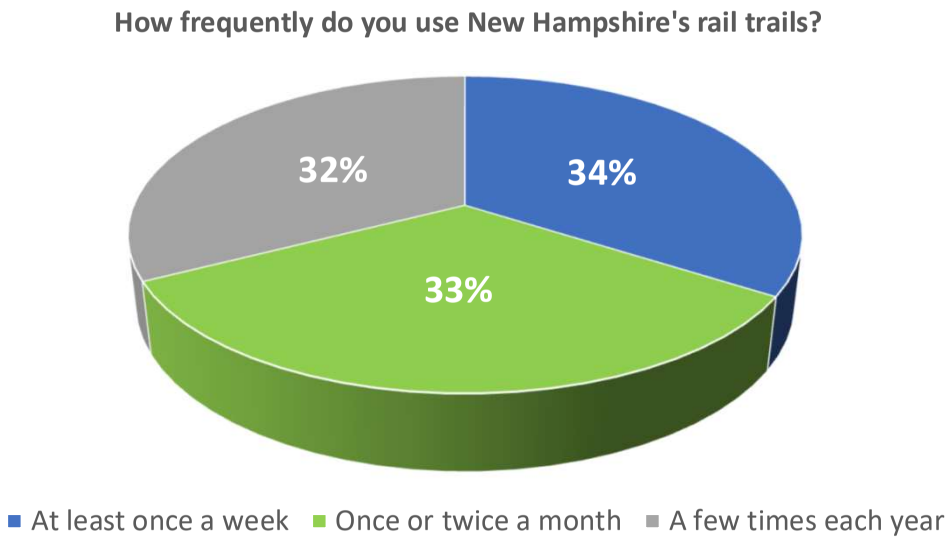
Source: Trail Managers have signed agreements with NHDOT for trails owned by NHDOT. Trail Management Partners are recognized on DNCR's website or have been awarded grants, or have raised funding for trails. Maintenance partners change often.

APPENDIX F

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

User Feedback





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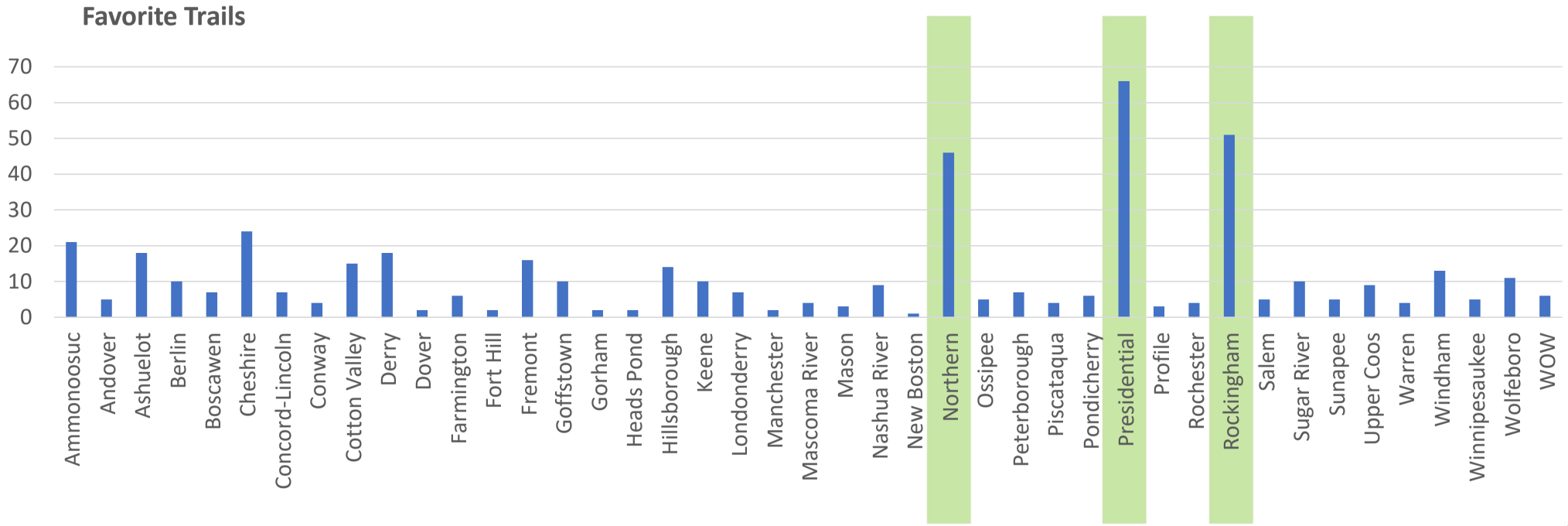
User Feedback



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User Feedback

Economic Impact Analysis of the Value of Rail Trails

- People concerned there's not enough collection and diversity of collection going on to accurately reflect user group spending – **team is collecting additional trails**
- Other economic analyses to **reference – NHOHVA, NHSA**
- Desire for data to be broken up by geography/usage etc.
- Coordination with **tourism**
- Greater economic benefit to come with the **connection** of trails
- **ALWAYS LOOKING FOR MORE TRAIL COUNTS**

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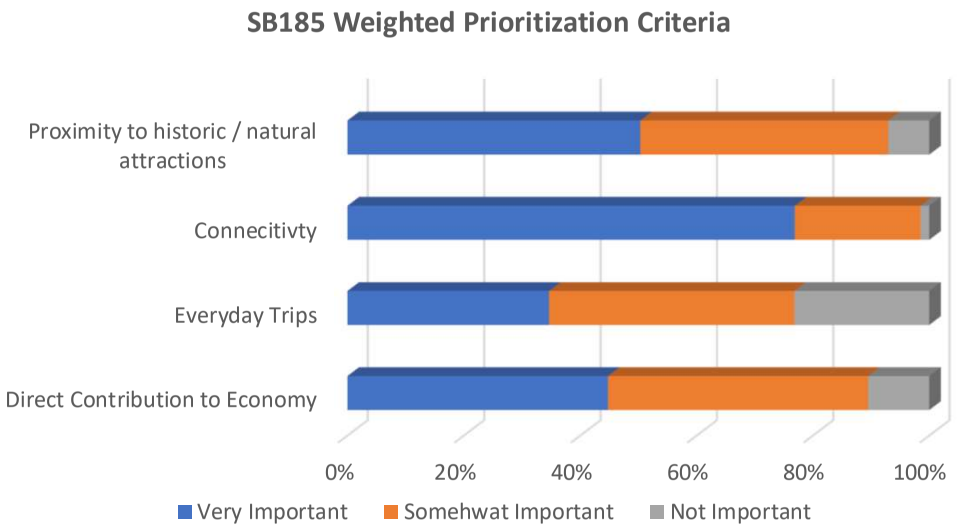
User Feedback

Tier System for Prioritizing State Investments in Rail Trail Projects



Other Criteria…

- Accessibility / Parking
- Alternative Transportation
- Level of Maintenance (Trail Lifecycle)
- Natural Preservation (Attention to Climate Issues)
- Proximity to Population Centers
- ROI
- Safety
- Surface Type
- Usage Type (Level of Stress)
- User Feedback
- Volume

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User Feedback

Recommendations for a State Funding Mechanism

What do you think about user fees to fund rail trail development, maintenance, and operations?

- There is value in user fees, and they are **part of the solution rather than the one solution.**
- **Motorized vs. Non-Motorized Conflict** – Motorized Users want discount because they already do maintenance. Other users need to be paying. Be wary of utilizing funds with usage restrictions.
- How would you collect user fees given no collection booths/ multiple points of access etc.?
- Is there liability incurred if a fee is collected?

What feedback do you have on the management structure of state funding mechanisms? Should an existing state agency or new entity manage these funds?

- Needs to be **one agency** allocating funding to avoid confusion

New Hampshire DOT Department of Transportation

User Feedback

Recommendations for a State Funding Mechanism

Do you have ideas for a funding mechanism?

- Specialty license plates
- Private Donations (Online App, Amazon Charity)
- Corporate Sponsorship
- Fundraising Events
- QR Code System

- Federal Infrastructure Bill Funding
- Tax Source / Tolling
- Municipal Funding
- Dedicating money from utility leases to rail trails
- 1% of NHDOT's annual construction budget allocated to rail trails.

- Overall broad support for additional funding for rail trails

State funded system like Massachusetts - *We also encourage the project team to look into the interagency (MassDOT, Energy and Environmental Affairs, and Department of Conservation and Recreation) MassTrails program who meet bi-monthly in regard to grant and state funding.*

The current structure of DNCR being supported by ATV registrations unfairly biases DNCR towards motorized use, even though it appears there is far more public support for non-motorized or winter only motorized use. ***Broad based funding support is needed.***

Establish statewide or region specific 501c3 status "friends of" trails groups to seek grants and donations for maintenance and development of trails *(partnering with arts, conservation, economic development and other relevant organizations on these efforts).* ***Leverage infrastructure funds as an alternative to vehicular travel.***

Ensuring that federal funds (TA, RTP & CMAQ) allocated to NH are ***fully utilized and not allocated elsewhere.***

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User Feedback

Rail Trail Maintenance Definitions, Costs, Insurance, and Template Agreement

State Agency Cooperation / Coordination

- There is **not much cooperation between the three main agencies dealing with rail trails** (NHDOT Bureau of Rail and Transit, DNCR Bureau of Trails, and Fish and Game). Moving forward there needs to be more cooperation regarding the state's rail corridor assets regardless of jurisdiction or ownership/management, etc.
- **Confusion over managing entity** which is currently resulting in planning and construction delays, etc. due to lack of template agreement and consistency

House Bill 311

- Establish committee to **study rail trail best management practices to reduce or limit exposure of possible contamination to users.**

Non-Profit Maintenance / Insurance

- Non-profit organizations working on trail maintenance efforts are concerned that contractors provide services at a higher rate than they would to the state. **Is there anyway the state can aid in those efforts to reduce cost?**
- There is an insurance program available to insure state-associated groups who maintain trails. **Recently, non-profits are looked at more favorably by insurance agencies.**

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User Feedback

Recommendations on Ensuring the Integrity of Publicly Owned Rail Trail Corridors

Develop an understanding of encroachment issues

Abutters – Concerned with noise, pollution, trash, trespassing

- Implement barriers via vegetation, fences, signage, etc.
- Implement amenities such as public restrooms, access points and proper parking, trash receptacles
- Enforcement (security cameras) regarding speed limits, times, etc. for motorized uses

Users – Concerned with trail blockage (lack of connectivity), safety, aesthetic concerns

- Identify and remove any encroachments for safety purposes

Recommendations to address trail encroachment

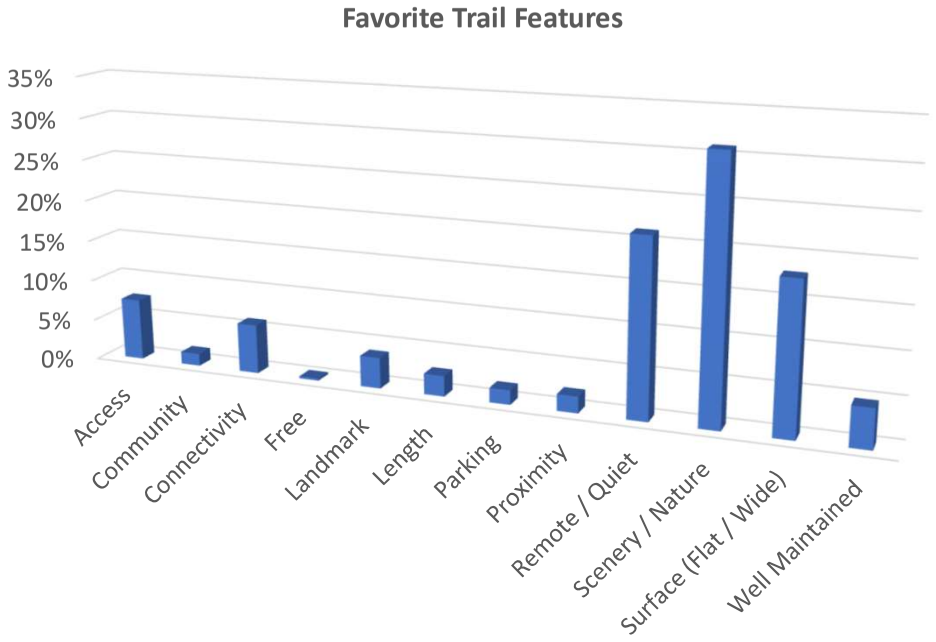
- **There is a general lack of knowledge as to where the actual property line is.**
- Need to delineate, notify and enforce
  - How to **delineate?**
  - How to **notify?**
  - Who and how to **enforce?**

New Hampshire DOT Department of Transportation

User Feedback

Rail Trail Design Standards

- **Surface** considerations may prohibit certain user groups from enjoying a trail
- Multiuse trails and **usage consideration**
- **Safety** must be considered.
- **Amenities desired** (benches, trash, public restrooms, parking, access, physical barriers/vegetation/signage etc.)
- Look at East Coast Greenway Design Standards



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APPENDIX G

NHDOT RAIL TRAIL AGREEMENT – GENERAL

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

&

[*Municipality Name*]

RAIL TRAIL AGREEMENT

This Agreement ("Agreement") is between the State of New Hampshire, by and through the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (the "Department") Bureau of Rail and Transit (the "Bureau"), and [*Municipality /Organization Name*] (the "Permittee"), both collectively referred to as the "Parties".

WHEREAS, the Department/State is the owner of a railroad corridor in the Town/City of [*Name*], County of [*Name*], State of New Hampshire.

WHEREAS, the [Department/Permittee proposes that the Permittee *plan/design/manage/maintain/construct* the public Rail Trail to be *planned/designed/managed/maintained/constructed* by the Department that will serve *non-motorized transportation and recreational* purposes, along and across the State Owned [*Location Name*] Railroad corridor from [*Boundary Station*] to [*Boundary Station*];

WHEREAS, the Permittee may in the future propose to plan, design, construct and maintain further improvements to said public Rail Trail;

NOW THEREFORE, subject to and conditioned upon the performance by the Permittee of all the covenants as set forth below, the Department grants to the Permittee responsibility to manage and maintain the Department-constructed Rail Trail. Further, if jointly desired by the Permittee and the Department, the Department grants the Permittee permission to *plan/design/construct/manage/use/maintain/occupy/create* potential future improvements to the Rail Trail subject to the covenants set forth below.

1. General Overview

1.1 The Permittee agrees that all work on planning/design/construction/maintenance/ repair/reconstruction of said Rail Trail shall be performed at a time and under conditions acceptable to the Bureau, including construction plans to be submitted for approval to the State prior to construction, and a Prosecution of Trail Work to be prepared by the State following approval of construction plans (the "Prosecution of Work"), for this project. The Permittee agrees that all work on maintenance, repair, and reconstruction of said Rail Trail shall be performed at a time and under conditions acceptable to the Bureau. At no time shall any work interfere with uses of the property by the State, its lessees or assigns. The Permittee is solely responsible for its own equipment, contractors, and personnel along the State-owned railroad corridor.

1.2 The Permittee agrees that it is responsible for the cost of all work required to construct/manage/maintain/repair/reconstruct/use said Rail Trail. Such liability will include, but not be limited to, the cost of all on-site inspectors, or other representatives of the State to monitor construction and maintenance when such individuals are necessary in the sole judgment of the Bureau.

1.3 The Permittee's Contractor selected to construct this project must obtain a Temporary Use Agreement from the Bureau at a cost of $400.00 and must provide evidence of required insurance coverage as specified in Section 4 prior to beginning any work on this project.

1.4 In the event that the State of New Hampshire or Department determines that the Corridor is needed for railroad or other transportation purposes, and a Rail with Trail design for the Corridor is determined infeasible, the Department retains the right to

require the closure or removal of the Rail Trail.

1.5 The Permittee will assume the cost of removal, restoration, relocation and adjustment of the Rail Trail in the event the State determines that the rail corridor is needed for railroad purposes. The Permittee agrees that the State will not be responsible for replacing the Rail Trail in the event of a return to rail, and the Permittee will assume the cost of relocation of the Rail Trail.

1.6 Subject to the provisions of this Agreement, the Permittee shall be the legal occupant of the Rail Trail, having concurrent authority with the Department to control access to the Rail Trail, including access for special municipal events, such as volunteer clean-up days, walking and running events and comparable uses. The Bureau will consider approving other uses that are generally consistent with the corridor's intended use as a public trail upon the request of the Permittee. Assent to any particular recreational use may be withdrawn by the State or the Permittee by sending such written withdrawal to the other party to this Agreement. Nothing herein is intended to create third party beneficiary rights in any party.

2. Rail Trail Construction

2.1 The Permittee is required to obtain, before construction activities proposed by the Permittee may begin, any and all other permissions, permits, easements and licenses required for said Rail Trail by any federal, state, county, or local governments, and their agencies or boards, or any other political subdivision thereof.

2.2 The Permittee agrees that all work requested, authorized or managed by or under the direction of the Permittee on the construction, maintenance, repair and reconstruction of said Rail-Trail shall be performed at a time and under conditions acceptable to the Bureau. The Permittee shall submit construction plans for approval to the Bureau prior to construction. The Bureau shall, during the design phase, prepare a sample preliminary Prosecution of Work (POW) for the project.

2.3 The Permittee and its Contractor must abide by the Prosecution of Work during all phases of the Rail Trail construction. Failure to do so will be considered an Event of Default under the terms of Section 7

2.4 At no time shall any work interfere with uses of the property by the Department, its lessees or assigns.

2.5 The Permittee shall notify the NHDOT Bureau of Rail and Transit at (603) 271-2468 a minimum of seven days in advance of commencement of work on the State railroad corridor.

2.6 The Permittee shall obtain, install and manage at its expense all signage along the Trail to the specifications shown on the Final Plans and included in the Prosecution of Work. The initial Signage Plan and any subsequent revisions to the Plan shall be submitted by the Permittee to the Bureau for approval prior to installation. Any revenue generated through sponsorship of mile marker signage along the Rail Trail shall be paid to the Department and shall be appropriately apportioned to communities along the Rail Trail.

2.7 The Permittee shall construct, at its expense, all improvements required at existing private or vehicular grade crossings for abutting landowners licensed by the Bureau. These may include drainage, ditching, curbing, paving, fencing, gates, signage, retaining walls and any other work required by the Final Plans and Prosecution of Work for the existing Trail crossing. The Permittee shall not interfere with the use of any existing licensed crossings during construction of the Rail Trail. The Permittee shall request and be provided a list of licensed crossings in the area of proposed trail improvements.

2.8 The Permittee and its Contractor shall protect and leave undisturbed all underground and overhead utilities on the Corridor during Rail Trail construction. At the time of construction, the Permittee shall request and be provided a list of all underground and overhead utilities by the Department.

2.9 Upon completion of any construction of work requested, authorized, managed by or under the direction of the Permittee, the Permittee shall provide the Bureau with a complete set of as-built plans.

3. Rail Trail Maintenance

3.1 The Permittee shall be responsible for the management and operation of the Rail Trail, including enforcement of rules governing its use. The Permittee must obtain the written approval of the Bureau for said rules, which shall not violate other terms and conditions of the Agreement. Obligations required of the Permittee regarding management, maintenance, and operations shall only be applicable to areas on the Rail Trail which have improvements approved by the Department (as required herein), where the Rail Trail is under construction, or where the Rail Trail has been constructed.

3.2 The Permittee shall make regular inspections of the Rail Trail and maintain the Rail Trail in conformance with the Final Plans and the Prosecution of Work.

3.3 The Department will be responsible for the maintenance of all state-maintained paved surfaces of public grade crossings as well as maintenance of all state-maintained overpasses and other state-maintained structures that are an integral part of the State-maintained highway system.

3.4 The Permittee shall be responsible for the routine maintenance of all existing and new drainage, culverts, ditches, walls, crossings, bridges and other structures that are integral to the long-term preservation of the Corridor and safe operation of the Rail Trail.

3.5 The Permittee shall protect and leave undisturbed all underground and overhead utilities on the Corridor after Rail Trail construction, including new utility lines authorized by the Department.

3.6 The Permittee shall be responsible for the maintenance of all existing and new drainage, culverts, ditches, walls, crossings, bridges, and other structures that are integral to the long-term preservation of the Corridor and safe operation of the Rail Trail.

Routine Trail Maintenance shall include:

- Trail surfacing (i.e. rutting and re-grading)
- Weed and brush control
- Cleaning ditches
- Unblocking and maintaining culverts
- Cleaning graffiti
- Trail signage
- Trash and debris removal

(Note: routine maintenance is defined in accordance with FHWA guidance.)

3.7 The Permittee shall be responsible for the clearing of all downed trees across the Rail

Trail. All cleared trees shall be removed from the State property and disposed of offsite, except with written approval from the Bureau.

3.8 If drainage, runoff, or any other problems caused by the presence of the Rail Trail are encountered after the Rail Trail is complete, the Permittee shall at its expense (including all Bureau costs) make all repairs and alterations required by the Bureau. The Bureau will provide the Permittee with the required Scope of Work, insurance coverage requirements, the need for inspectors, and all other requirements to perform the needed work.

3.9 Permittee shall be responsible for maintaining clean ditches and culverts so drainage will work properly.

3.10 The Department retains the authority to approve additional utility services of all kinds to cross over, under and within the Corridor. The Department will notify the Permittee as to any such new utility easements on the Rail Trail. In the event the Department approves additional utility services that disturb the Rail Trail, the Department shall stipulate in any utility agreement(s) that the utility shall restore all trail facilities disturbed during utility construction to their original condition. At the request of the Permittee, the Department will share copies of associated plans or as-builts resulting from the installation of additional utility services.

4 Indemnification and Insurance

4.1. The Permittee acknowledges that the installation and use of the Rail Trail may expose the State to additional liability to which it would not otherwise be exposed. Accordingly, the Permittee agrees that it shall not hold the State liable for injury or death of the Permittee or agent of the Permittee or for loss or destruction of or damage to any property of the Permittee or any agent of the Permittee while upon, or about, or in the use of the Rail Trail. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing herein contained shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of sovereign immunity of the State, which immunity is hereby reserved to the State. This covenant shall survive the termination of this Agreement. In addition, the Permittee or its Contractor shall pay the premiums on a policy or policies of insurance covering the following during the Rail Trail construction activities proposed by the Permittee, designating the State of New Hampshire as an additional insured:

4.1.1. Worker’s Compensation Insurance or Pooled Risk Management Coverage in the amount as required by current State Statute.

4.1.2. Comprehensive automobile liability insurance or pooled risk management coverage covering all motor vehicles, including owned, hired, borrowed and non-owned vehicles, for all claims or bodily injury, death, or property damage: $500,000.00 combined single limit.

In addition, the Permittee or its Contractor shall pay the premiums on a policy or policies of insurance covering the following during the construction of said Rail Trail, designating the State as an additional Covered Party.

4.1.3. Commercial General Liability or Pooled Risk Management Coverage: $2,000,000.00 each occurrence

4.2. The Permittee further agrees to obtain and keep in force after construction, for the life of the Rail Trail, a policy or policies of insurance or pooled risk management coverage covering said Rail Trail, providing Comprehensive General Liability or Comprehensive Personal Liability with a minimum of one million ($1,000,000.00) dollars per occurrence/two million ($2,000,000.00) dollars aggregate covering bodily injury and property damage designating the State of New Hampshire as an additional insured.

4.3. The Permittee shall provide to the Department annually and maintain in force a certificate of insurance or coverage respectively demonstrating that their required coverage has been obtained. Such insurance or coverage is a condition precedent to the effectiveness of this Agreement. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as a waiver of sovereign immunity. Failure to comply with the terms of this Section 4 shall constitute an Event of Default as provided in Section 7.

5. Bonding

5.1. For any construction undertaken by the Permittee, the Permittee shall post with the Bureau proof of a Performance Bond for the total cost of the Permittee's Rail Trail construction contract prior to the beginning of any construction work. The Bond must be held in force for a period of 12 months after the Permittee receives written notification from the Bureau of the acceptable completion of the work contemplated in the Final Plans and the Scope of Work, in the judgment of the Bureau.

6. Term

6.1. There is no expiration date for this Agreement. However, the Parties may terminate this Agreement as specified in Section 7 for default. If the area occupied by the Rail Trail is needed by the Department for additional rail lines or services, or for other future transportation needs, then this Agreement may be cancelled as per Section 7.3.

7. Default and Removal

7.1. Failure of the Permittee or its Contractor to abide by all construction requirements in this Agreement shall result in the Bureau issuing a notice to the Permittee to suspend all construction work immediately until the Event of Default is resolved.

7.2. Failure of the Permittee to comply with any of the above-specified covenants shall authorize the Department to close the Rail Trail after fourteen (14) days written notice to Permittee. The Rail Trail will remain closed until all provisions of this Agreement are met and the Event of Default is resolved. The Bureau may direct the Permittee to close the Rail Trail at their sole expense including installation of physical barricades at public access points and installation of appropriate signage such as "Rail Trail Closed" or "No Trespassing."

7.3. The State has the right to revoke this Rail Trail Agreement at any time upon one hundred eighty (180) days written notice to the Permittee to cease use of the Rail Trail.

7.4. In the event of the Permittee's breach of any of the provisions of the Agreement the Permittee shall compensate the Department for its damages, including all consequential damages which arise out of the breach, and attorney's fees and costs incurred in connection with undertaking such an action.

7.5. If the Permittee does not provide the required notice of work within the State railroad corridor to the State, the State may after fourteen (14) calendar days written notice to Permittee, cancel this Rail Trail Agreement.

8. Non-Assignment and Amendment; No Third-Party Beneficiaries

8.1. This Agreement may not be assigned or transferred. Until terminated, this Agreement shall inure to the sole benefit of and be binding upon the Parties hereto.

8.2. This Agreement may be amended only by an instrument in writing, signed by the Parties hereto, with the NH Attorney General's Office being the final signatory.

8.3. Nothing herein is intended to create any third-party beneficiaries of this Agreement.

APPENDIX H

NHDOT RAIL TRAIL TEMPLATE AGREEMENT – RAIL WITH TRAIL

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

&

[*Municipality Name*]

RAIL TRAIL AGREEMENT (Rail with Trail)

This Agreement ("Agreement") is between the State of New Hampshire, by and through the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (the "Department") Bureau of Rail and Transit (the "Bureau"), and [*Municipality /Organization Name*] (the "Permittee"), both collectively referred to as the "Parties".

WHEREAS, the Department/State is the owner of a railroad corridor in the Town/City of [*Name*], County of [*Name*], State of New Hampshire, operated by [Railroad Operator].

WHEREAS, the [Department/Permittee proposes that the Permittee *plan/design/manage/maintain/construct* the public Rail Trail to be *planned/designed/managed/maintained/constructed* by the Department that will serve *non-motorized transportation and recreational* purposes, along and across the State Owned [*Location Name*] Railroad corridor from [*Boundary Station*] to [*Boundary Station*];

WHEREAS, the Permittee may in the future propose to plan, design, construct and maintain further improvements to said public Rail Trail;

NOW THEREFORE, subject to and conditioned upon the performance by the Permittee of all the covenants as set forth below, the Department grants to the Permittee responsibility to manage and maintain the Department-constructed Rail Trail. Further, if jointly desired by the Permittee and the Department, the Department grants the Permittee permission to *plan/design/construct/manage/use/maintain/occupy/create* potential future improvements to the Rail Trail subject to the covenants set forth below.

1. General Overview

1.1 The Permittee agrees that all work on planning/design/construction/maintenance/ repair/reconstruction of said Rail Trail shall be performed at a time and under conditions acceptable to the Bureau, including construction plans to be submitted for approval to the State prior to construction, and a Prosecution of Trail Work to be prepared by the State following approval of construction plans (the "Prosecution of Work"), for this project. The Permittee agrees that all work on maintenance, repair, and reconstruction of said Rail Trail shall be performed at a time and under conditions acceptable to the Bureau. At no time shall any work interfere with uses of the property by the State, its lessees or assigns. The Permittee is solely responsible for its own equipment, contractors, and personnel along the State-owned railroad corridor. All Rail Trail Construction work must be completed from the trail and not from any portion of the railroad track structure.

1.2 The Permittee agrees that it is responsible for the cost of all work required to construct/manage/maintain/repair/reconstruct/use said Rail Trail. Such liability will include, but not be limited to, the cost of all on-site inspectors, rail flagmen, or other

representatives of the State to monitor construction and maintenance when such individuals are necessary in the sole judgment of the Bureau.

1.3 The Permittee's Contractor selected to construct this project must obtain a Temporary Use Agreement from the Bureau at a cost of $400.00 and must provide evidence of required insurance coverage as specified in Section 4 prior to beginning any work on this project.

1.4 In the event that the State of New Hampshire or Department determines that the Corridor is needed for railroad or other transportation purposes, and a Rail with Trail design for the Corridor is determined infeasible, the Department retains the right to require the closure or removal of the Rail Trail.

1.5 The Permittee will assume the cost of removal, restoration, relocation and adjustment of the Rail Trail in the event the State determines that the rail corridor is needed for railroad purposes. The Permittee agrees that the State will not be responsible for replacing the Rail Trail in the event of a return to rail, and the Permittee will assume the cost of relocation of the Rail Trail. Permittee will also assume the cost of temporary removal, restoration, relocation and adjustment of the Rail Trail in the event track repairs or additional track installations require such modifications.

1.6 Subject to the provisions of this Agreement, the Permittee shall be the legal occupant of the Rail Trail, having concurrent authority with the Department to control access to the Rail Trail, including access for special municipal events, such as volunteer clean-up days, walking and running events and comparable uses. The Bureau will consider approving other uses that are generally consistent with the corridor's intended use as a public trail upon the request of the Permittee. Assent to any particular recreational use may be withdrawn by the State or the Permittee by sending such written withdrawal to the other party to this Agreement. Nothing herein is intended to create third party beneficiary rights in any party.

2. Rail Trail Construction

2.1 The Permittee is required to obtain, before construction activities proposed by the Permittee may begin, any and all other permissions, permits, easements and licenses required for said Rail Trail by any federal, state, county, or local governments, and their agencies or boards, or any other political subdivision thereof.

2.2 The Permittee agrees that all work requested, authorized or managed by or under the direction of the Permittee on the construction, maintenance, repair and reconstruction of said Rail-Trail shall be performed at a time and under conditions acceptable to the Bureau. The Permittee shall submit construction plans for approval to the Bureau prior to construction. The Bureau shall, during the design phase, prepare a sample preliminary Prosecution of Work (POW) for the project.

2.3 The Permittee and its Contractor must abide by the Prosecution of Work during all phases of the Rail Trail construction. Failure to do so will be considered an Event of Default under the terms of Section 7

2.4 At no time shall any work interfere with uses of the property by the Department, its lessees or assigns.

2.5 The Permittee shall notify the NHDOT Bureau of Rail and Transit at (603) 271-2468 and [Railroad Company Name and Phone Number] a minimum of seven days in advance of commencement of work on the State railroad corridor. If the Bureau or the [Railroad Company] at its sole and exclusive discretion determines that the presence of a rai1road flagman is required, the Permittee shall be required to contact [Railroad Company] to obtain a railroad flagman at the Permittee's expense.

2.6 A chain-link fence or other similar barrier acceptable to the Bureau shall be constructed along the edge of the trail a minimum of 15 feet from the tracks in all areas required by the Bureau. This fencing is required to ensure the safety of the trail users by providing a barrier that separates the trail from the active rail line.

2.7 The Permittee shall obtain, install and manage at its expense all signage along the Trail to the specifications shown on the Final Plans and included in the Prosecution of Work. This includes any agreed upon signage warning trail users that the trail is on an active railroad corridor. The initial Signage Plan and any subsequent revisions to the Plan shall be submitted by the Permittee to the Bureau for approval prior to installation. Any revenue generated through sponsorship of mile marker signage along the Rail Trail shall be paid to the Department and shall be appropriately apportioned to communities along the Rail Trail.

2.8 The Permittee shall construct, at its expense, all improvements required at existing private or vehicular grade crossings for abutting landowners licensed by the Bureau. These may include drainage, ditching, curbing, paving, fencing, gates, signage, retaining walls and any other work required by the Final Plans and Prosecution of Work for the existing Trail crossing. The Permittee shall not interfere with the use of any existing licensed crossings during construction of the Rail Trail. The Permittee shall request and be provided a list of licensed crossings in the area of proposed trail improvements.

2.9 The Permittee and its Contractor shall protect and leave undisturbed all underground and overhead utilities on the Corridor during Rail Trail construction. At the time of construction, the Permittee shall request and be provided a list of all underground and overhead utilities by the Department.

2.10 Upon completion of any construction of work requested, authorized, managed by or under the direction of the Permittee, the Permittee shall provide the Bureau with a complete set of as-built plans.

3. Rail Trail Maintenance

3.1 The Permittee shall be responsible for the management and operation of the Rail Trail, including enforcement of rules governing its use. The Permittee must obtain the written approval of the Bureau for said rules, which shall not violate other terms and conditions of the Agreement. Obligations required of the Permittee regarding management, maintenance, and operations shall only be applicable to areas on the Rail Trail which have improvements approved by the Department (as required herein), where the Rail Trail is under construction, or where the Rail Trail has been constructed.

3.2 The Permittee shall make regular inspections of the Rail Trail and maintain the Rail Trail in conformance with the Final Plans and the Prosecution of Work. Without limiting the foregoing, Permittee shall maintain the fencing separating the Rail trail and the active rail is in good condition at all times and shall make repairs to the fencing as soon as damage is noticed.

3.3 The Department will be responsible for the maintenance of all state-maintained paved surfaces of public grade crossings as well as maintenance of all state-maintained overpasses and other state-maintained structures that are an integral part of the State-maintained highway system.

3.4 The Permittee shall be responsible for the routine maintenance of all existing and new drainage, culverts, ditches, walls, crossings, bridges and other structures that are integral to the long-term preservation of the Corridor and safe operation of the Rail Trail.

3.5 The Permittee shall protect and leave undisturbed all underground and overhead utilities on the Corridor after Rail Trail construction, including new utility lines authorized by the Department.

3.6 The Permittee shall be responsible for the maintenance of all existing and new drainage, culverts, ditches, walls, crossings, bridges, and other structures that are integral to the long-term preservation of the Corridor and safe operation of the Rail Trail.

Routine Trail Maintenance shall include:

- Trail surfacing (i.e., rutting and re-grading)
- Weed and brush control
- Cleaning ditches
- Unblocking and maintaining culverts
- Cleaning graffiti
- Trail signage
- Trash and debris removal

(Note: routine maintenance is defined in accordance with FHWA guidance.)

3.7 The Permittee shall be responsible for the clearing of all downed trees across the Rail Trail [or fencing]. All cleared trees shall be removed from the State property and disposed of offsite, except with written approval from the Bureau. At no time shall trees, brush, leaves or other waste materials from the Trail be deposited on the track side of the fence.

3.8 If drainage, runoff, or any other problems caused by the presence of the Rail Trail are encountered after the Rail Trail is complete, the Permittee shall at its expense (including all Railroad Operator and Bureau costs) make all repairs and alterations required by the Bureau. The Bureau will provide the Permittee with the required Scope of Work, insurance coverage requirements, the need for flagmen and inspectors, and all other requirements to perform the needed work.

3.9 Permittee shall be responsible for maintaining clean ditches and culverts so drainage will work properly and not flow onto the track Structure.

3.10 The Department retains the authority to approve additional utility services of all kinds to cross over, under and within the Corridor. The Department will notify the Permittee as to any such new utility easements on the Rail Trail. In the event the Department approves additional utility services that disturb the Rail Trail, the Department shall stipulate in any utility agreement(s) that the utility shall restore all trail facilities disturbed during utility construction to their original condition. At the request of the Permittee, the Department will share copies of associated plans or as-builts resulting from the installation of additional utility services.

3.11 The Permittee shall be responsible for notifying the public and enforcing temporary closure of the Rail Trail should it be necessary during maintenance or repair of the railroad line that could compromise the safety of Rail Trail users in the judgement of The Bureau. Such maintained operations could include brush clearing, weed spraying, snow removal, ballast regulation, ditching, and any other required railroad maintenance.

3.12 Any snow removed from or around the Rail Trail by the Permittee shall not be

deposited on the trackside of the fence if it could impede railroad operations or drainage flow.

3.13 If maintenance work is required on the trackside of the fence because of damage caused by the presence of the Rail Trail, then the Permittee shall coordinate all cleanup work with the Bureau and the Railroad Operator before performing any work. If it becomes necessary for the Railroad Operator to perform the work, then the cost of the repairs will be billed to the Permittee.

4. Indemnification and Insurance

4.1 The Permittee acknowledges that the installation and use of the Rail Trail may expose the State to additional liability to which it would not otherwise be exposed. Accordingly, the Permittee agrees that it shall not hold the State liable for injury or death of the Permittee or agent of the Permittee or for loss or destruction of or damage to any property of the Permittee or any agent of the Permittee while upon, or about, or in the use of the Rail Trail. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing herein contained shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of sovereign immunity of the State, which immunity is hereby reserved to the State. This covenant shall survive the termination of this Agreement. In addition, the Permittee or its Contractor shall pay the premiums on a policy or policies of insurance covering the following during the Rail Trail construction activities proposed by the Permittee, designating the State of New Hampshire and the Railroad Operator as an additional insured:

4.1.1 Worker's Compensation Insurance or Pooled Risk Management Coverage in the amount as required by current State Statute.

4.1.2 Comprehensive automobile liability insurance or pooled risk management coverage covering all motor vehicles, including owned, hired, borrowed and non-owned vehicles, for all claims or bodily injury, death, or property damage: $500,000.00 combined single limit.
In addition, the Permittee or its Contractor shall pay the premiums on a policy or policies of insurance covering the following during the construction of said Rail Trail, designating the State as an additional Covered Party.

4.1.3 Commercial General Liability or Pooled Risk Management Coverage: $2,000,000.00 each occurrence.

4.1.4 Railroad Protective Public and Property Damage Liability: $1,000,000.00 each occurrence.

4.2 The Permittee further agrees to obtain and keep in force after construction, for the life of the Rail Trail, a policy or policies of insurance or pooled risk management coverage covering said Rail Trail, providing Comprehensive General Liability or Comprehensive Personal Liability with a minimum of one million ($1,000,000.00) dollars per occurrence/two million ($2,000,000.00) dollars aggregate covering bodily injury and property damage designating the State of New Hampshire and the Railroad Operator as an additional insured.

4.3 The Permittee shall provide to the Department annually and maintain in force a certificate of insurance or coverage respectively demonstrating that their required coverage has been obtained. Such insurance or coverage is a condition precedent to the effectiveness of this Agreement. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as a waiver of sovereign immunity. Failure to comply with the terms of this Section 4 shall constitute an Event of Default as provided in Section 7.

5. Bonding

5.1 For any construction undertaken by the Permittee, the Permittee shall post with the Bureau proof of a Performance Bond for the total cost of the Permittee's Rail Trail construction contract prior to the beginning of any construction work. The Bond must be held in force for a period of 12 months after the Permittee receives written notification from the Bureau of the acceptable completion of the work contemplated in the Final Plans and the Scope of Work, in the judgment of the Bureau.

6. Term

6.1 There is no expiration date for this Agreement. However, the Parties may terminate this Agreement as specified in Section 7 for default. If the area occupied by the Rail Trail is needed by the Department for additional rail lines or services, or for other future transportation needs, then this Agreement may be cancelled as per Section 7.3.

7. Default and Removal

7.1 Failure of the Permittee or its Contractor to abide by all construction requirements in this Agreement shall result in the Bureau issuing a notice to the Permittee to suspend all construction work immediately until the Event of Default is resolved.

7.2 Failure of the Permittee to comply with any of the above-specified covenants shall authorize the Department to close the Rail Trail after fourteen (14) days written notice to Permittee. The Rail Trail will remain closed until all provisions of this Agreement are met and the Event of Default is resolved. The Bureau may direct the Permittee to close the Rail Trail at their sole expense including installation of physical barricades at public access points and installation of appropriate signage such as "Rail Trail Closed" or "No Trespassing."

7.3 The State has the right to revoke this Rail Trail Agreement at any time upon one hundred eighty (180) days written notice to the Permittee to cease use of the Rail Trail.

7.4 In the event of the Permittee's breach of any of the provisions of the Agreement the Permittee shall compensate the Department for its damages, including all consequential damages which arise out of the breach, and attorney's fees and costs incurred in connection with undertaking such an action.

7.5 If the Permittee does not provide the required notice of work within the State railroad corridor to the State or the Railroad Operator, or does not obtain a railroad flagman, or pay the cost of their service when required, the State may after fourteen (14) calendar days written notice to Permittee, cancel this Rail Trail Agreement.

8. Non-Assignment and Amendment; No Third-Party Beneficiaries

8.1 This Agreement may not be assigned or transferred. Until terminated, this Agreement shall inure to the sole benefit of and be binding upon the Parties hereto.

8.2 This Agreement may be amended only by an instrument in writing, signed by the Parties hereto, with the NH Attorney General's Office being the final signatory.

8.3 Nothing herein is intended to create any third-party beneficiaries of this Agreement.

APPENDIX I

DNCR RAIL TRAIL AGREEMENT

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
for
TOWN OF NAME
at
NAME RECREATIONAL RAIL TRAIL

This Memorandum of Agreement (the MOA) is entered into between the **New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**, (the STATE and DNCR), with a principal mailing address of 172 Pembroke Road, Concord, NH 03301, and the **Town of Name,** (the TOWN), TOWN ADDRESS, for the purpose of having a maintenance agreement on public recreational rail trails owned by the STATE on property known as **NAME Rail Trail** in **Town** NH, (the PROPERTY), as agreed to herein.

WHEREAS, the **NAME** Recreational Rail Trail, property owned by the State of NH, and under the administration of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR), is open to public use and managed for multiple uses and resource values, pursuant to trail-related State laws and regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Forests and Lands, pursuant to RSA 227-G, has the responsibility for the management of all state-owned forestlands, and to cooperate with the Division of Parks and Recreation in promoting recreational use of state-owned forestlands; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Parks and Recreation, pursuant to RSA 216-A, has the responsibility for recreation, development and management of state-owned parks and forests, and to cooperate with the Division of Forests and Lands in the joint promotion of forest recreation and forest management of state-owned forestlands; and

WHEREAS, the TOWN is a subdivision of government of the State of New Hampshire and has requested to maintain and monitor designated recreational rail trails on behalf of the State to protect and preserve the landscape;

WHEREAS, the TOWN has requested permission to maintain specific trails on the PROPERTY for public recreational use:

NOW THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

1) TRAIL. The parties agree to work cooperatively in providing and maintaining, through environmentally sound action, safe, functional, attractive and user-friendly recreational rail trails (the TRAIL) over existing ways on the PROPERTY(s), as depicted on the attached map(s).

2) TERM. The term of this MOA shall be for five (5) years from the date of Governor and Council approval through **DATE XX/XX/XXXX** (the TERM).

3) RIGHTS GRANTED. During the TERM, the STATE grants to the TOWN, in cooperation and coordination with the STATE, **non-exclusive** rights to maintain and use the TRAIL; and to honor the public right to use the TRAIL. The TRAIL shall be open to the public for snowmobile use as defined in RSA 215-C, and for other non-motorized uses, and shall not be limited to use by residents of the TOWN only.

"Non-exclusive" access and use granted herein, or by any other permit or agreement between the parties, is a privilege for access to and use of said PROPERTY and TRAIL; and does not represent nor imply a real property interest in the PROPERTY and TRAIL for which the STATE shall reserve for itself control and all rights and privileges.

4) COMPLIANCE WITH TRAIL-RELATED LAWS AND REGULATIONS. This MOA and the recreational use on the PROPERTY shall be in accordance with New Hampshire laws and State rules, regulations and policies pertaining to such use, as may be amended.

5) RESOURCE AND USE PROTECTION. The TOWN shall work cooperatively with the STATE to mitigate the impact of the TRAIL on natural, historical and cultural resources, and other uses of the PROPERTY, as authorized by the STATE.

6) STATE OPERATIONS AND NOTIFICATION. The STATE, and its agents, reserves its right to enter the PROPERTY with persons and equipment for purposes of maintaining the TRAIL and PROPERTY at any time, at its discretion.

   a. The STATE, through its regional forester, agrees to provide written notification to the TOWN, no less than one week in advance of any proposed maintenance, management, and forestry activities that will occur on or within close proximity to the TRAIL, and impact its use or maintenance, in order to coordinate a temporary reroute or closure of the TRAIL and notification to the public of said reroute or closure.

   b. In a non-emergency situation, the STATE shall notify the TOWN in writing no less than one (1) month in advance, prior to a permanent planned closure or relocation of the TRAIL.

7) EMERGENCY TRAIL CLOSURE. The STATE maintains its right to close or relocate the TRAIL, or portions thereof, during an emergency situation such as, but not limited to, any of the conditions listed below. The STATE shall inform the TOWN of an emergency TRAIL closure or relocation, as soon as practicable.

   a. Weather conditions that make the TRAIL unsuitable for recreational use;

   b. Public safety that is endangered due to TRAIL conditions;

   c. Use of the TRAIL that is resulting in significant degradation of surface waters;

   d. Damage to the TRAIL that may occur due to heavy rain, mud, or other condition;

   e. Use of the TRAIL that is resulting in significant unauthorized use on the remaining PROPERTY; or

   f. Any other reason that would cause public safety or environmental concerns that is sufficient to close the TRAIL to recreational use, as determined by the STATE.

8) TRAIL MAINTENANCE. The TOWN agrees to assist the STATE with the maintenance of the TRAIL. Maintenance shall include, but not be limited to, routine inspection, removal of rocks, placement of gravel and natural fill, smoothing the trail surface, installation of broad based dips, water bars and ditches, removal of fallen trees and cutting back vegetation encroaching on the TRAIL to assist with safe winter use.

a. The TOWN may apply for Grant-In-Aid (GIA) and/or Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant funds in order to complete maintenance of the TRAIL. The TOWN is also permitted to solicit and receive donations on behalf of, and for use in, the maintenance of the PROPERTY. Third party donations shall not constitute a claim or interest within the PROPERTY. The TOWN shall notify all donor(s) of this policy in writing.

b. The STATE agrees that the TOWN is a maintenance partner of the STATE, and as such, the STATE agrees that the TOWN shall not be responsible for providing repairs on the PROPERTY caused by unexpected catastrophic events, natural or otherwise, damages caused by others, major TRAIL damages, or impacts caused by the public use of the TRAILS. Such significant repairs would be done in partnership between the parties, including, but not limited to, shared labor, materials, and expenses.

c. The TOWN agrees to maintain all necessary safeguards for the safety of the public and TOWN volunteers. The TOWN shall not be liable for personal injury or property damage from construction, maintenance, or trail improvements for public recreational use, pursuant to RSA 508:14, II, in the absence of gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

d. The TOWN agrees to maintain a record of all persons involved in volunteer work on the PROPERTY. Said record will contain the volunteer's full name, dates and hours of volunteer work, and type of volunteer work performed to enable the protections under RSA 508:17.

e. The TOWN agrees to maintain all equipment, to include but not be limited to, chainsaws, handsaws, limb saws, and other hand tools utilized for trail work on the PROPERTY, in proper operating condition with all safety devices functioning.

f. The TOWN agrees that volunteers must use, at a minimum, the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when utilizing a chainsaw for trail work: Hardhat, Ear protection, Leather gloves, Eye or face screen protection, Long sleeve tops, Long pants and cut resistant chaps that extend from waist to top of boot, and Non-skid boots with lug soles and steel toe or composite toe protection.

g. All TRAIL maintenance activities done by the TOWN, other than routine trail brushing, shall be pre-approved by the STATE through its district supervisor. Any and all structural improvements fixed or permanently installed on the PROPERTY by the TOWN or its subcontractors, shall vest, free and clear and without cost, to the STATE upon project completion. The STATE reserves the right to terminate this MOA if the TOWN carries out any unauthorized work on the PROPERTY.

h. The TOWN agrees to maintain the TRAIL in a litter-free condition and shall promptly dispose of all litter, trash, and manmade debris associated with rail trail use in a proper manner and offsite.

9) CHAINSAW CERTIFICATION. Beginning on December 1, 2022, and continuing through the full term of this MOA, no TOWN volunteer may operate a chainsaw while engaged in trail work on the PROPERTY unless the volunteer first:

a. Completes a DNCR chainsaw safety course and receives certification therefor; or

b. Provides a copy of such certification from another acceptable trainer to the TOWN. The TOWN will provide DNCR with a list of every volunteer so certified as part of its End of Year Report.

Information on DNCR chainsaw training is available from the Bureau of Trails.

10) MONITORING TRAIL USE. In cooperation and consultation with the STATE, the TOWN shall monitor recreational usage on the TRAIL to ensure that the ecological conditions are not substantially diminished or degraded by recreational use and that recreational use is limited to the designated TRAIL and is done in compliance with current State laws, administrative rules and this MOA. The STATE and the TOWN agree to meet at least annually, before November 15, and more often at the request of either party, to discuss recreational use issues that may develop and to consider TRAIL management options.

11) END OF YEAR REPORT. The TOWN shall submit an End of Year Report (the REPORT) to the STATE, due by each May 1st. The REPORT shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

    a. Record of the previous year's maintenance activities, including hours of contracted and volunteer work, materials and maintenance costs, and funding sources, both State grant-funded and other funding source; and

    b. The STATE shall review the REPORT and shall, within thirty (30) days of submission, either approve the REPORT or request revision and resubmission of the REPORT for final approval by the STATE. The REPORT shall not be considered approved until it is signed by the STATE Issues, if any, rendering the REPORT unacceptable to the STATE, shall be resolved between the STATE and the TOWN. In the event the parties cannot agree on a final REPORT that is acceptable to the STATE, the TRAIL may be closed by the STATE, at its discretion.

12) INSURANCE. The TOWN shall, at its sole expense, obtain and continuously maintain in full force general liability insurance against all claims of bodily injury, death or property damage, in amounts of not less than $1,000,000 per occurrence and $2,000,000 aggregate or excess. The TOWN shall list the STATE as additional insured and as a certificate holder, and shall provide the STATE with a certificate(s) of insurance for all insurance required under this MOA.

13) INDEMNIFICATION / LIMITATION OF LIABILITY. Unless otherwise exempted by law, the TOWN shall indemnify and hold harmless the STATE, its officers and employees, from and against any and all claims, liabilities and costs for any personal injury or property damages, patent or copyright infringement, or other claims asserted against the STATE, its officers or employees, which arise out of (or which may be claimed to arise out of) the acts or omission of the TOWN, or subcontractors, including but not limited to the negligence, reckless or intentional conduct. The STATE shall not be liable for any costs incurred by the TOWN arising under this paragraph. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing herein contained shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of the sovereign immunity of the STATE, which immunity is hereby reserved to the STATE. This covenant shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

    The STATE and TOWN are entitled to the protections of RSA 508:14, RSA 508:17, and RSA 215-C: 55, and RSA 212:34, and any other statutory liability protections. The TOWN shall defend and indemnify and save the State of New Hampshire harmless for any liability, damage, loss, cost or expense caused by the TOWN and/or its agents for injury to persons or property arising out of, or incidental to, the use of the TRAIL, as herein permitted.

14) TOWN'S RELATION TO THE STATE. In the performance of this MOA the TOWN is in all respects an independent contractor, and is neither an agent nor an employee of the STATE. Neither the TOWN nor any of its officers, employees, agents or members shall have authority to bind the

STATE or receive any benefits, workers' compensation or other emoluments provided by the STATE to its employees.

15) The TOWN understands and accepts the risks, hazards, and dangers inherent in carrying out any duties and responsibilities of volunteer activities hosted by the TOWN. The TOWN agrees for itself, its officers, agents, employees, members, volunteers and its heirs and assigns, to release and hold harmless, defend and indemnify the State of New Hampshire and DNCR, its officers, employees, and volunteers, from and against all claims, demands, actions, and causes of action as a result of personal injury, death, or property damage sustained by the TOWN or by others due to the TOWN's volunteer activities.

16) The TOWN shall be solely responsible and liable for its officers, staff, members, volunteers, subcontractors, guests, and its operations, programs, and all other associated activities conducted on the TRAIL and within the PROPERTY. The TOWN shall ensure that its officers, staff, members and volunteers are properly trained, certified and licensed to carry out all TOWN activities, in accordance with current safety and operating standards, practices and conduct necessary for the proper execution of its activities. The TOWN shall comply with any additional or specialized training required by DNCR, as specified in the REPORT, Special Use Permit(s), or any other agreement between the parties.

17) CONDITIONAL NATURE OF AGREEMENTS. Notwithstanding any provision of this MOA to the contrary, all obligations of the STATE herein, including, without limitation, the continuance of payments herein, are contingent upon the availability and continued appropriation of funds affected by any state or federal legislative or executive action that reduces, eliminates or otherwise modifies the appropriation or availability of funding for this MOA and any associated REPORT(s), in whole or in part. In no event shall the STATE be liable for any payments hereunder in excess of such available appropriated funds. In the event of a reduction or termination of appropriated funds, the STATE shall have the right to withhold payment until such funds become available, if ever, and shall have the right to reduce or terminate the activities under this MOA immediately upon giving the TOWN notice of such reduction or termination. The STATE shall not be required to transfer funds from any other account or source to TOWN in the event funds earmarked under this MOA are reduced or unavailable.

18) DISPUTES. Prior to the filing of any formal proceedings with respect to a dispute, the party believing itself aggrieved shall call for progressive management involvement in the dispute negotiation by written notice to the other party. The parties shall use all reasonable efforts to arrange personal meetings and/or telephone conferences as needed.

19) FINAL AUTHORITY. The TOWN shall comply with all reasonable requests made by the STATE. The decision of the DNCR Commissioner relative to the proper performance of the conditions of this MOA shall be final and conclusive as to each matter not covered in the MOA, and questions that may arise in connection with the privileges granted, and also as to each matter which is not clearly covered herein.

20) AMENDMENTS. This MOA may be amended in writing through mutual agreement by the STATE and the TOWN.

21) TRANSFERABILITY. In the event that the TOWN terminates its duties under this MOA and this MOA is not transferred to another party that is approved by the STATE, the DNCR Commissioner shall make the final determination as to whether to continue or not continue recreational use on the PROPERTY.

22) TERMINATION. The TOWN may terminate the MOA with a 30-day written notice to the STATE. The DNCR Commissioner may terminate the MOA at his/her discretion, with 30 days' written notice to the TOWN at any time.

23) CHOICE OF LAW AND FORUM. This MOA shall be governed, interpreted and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New Hampshire, and is binding upon and inures to the benefit of the parties and their respective successors and assigns. The wording used in the MOA is the wording chosen by the parties to express their mutual intent, and no rule of construction shall be applied against or in favor of any party. Any actions arising out of this MOA shall be brought and maintained in New Hampshire Superior Court, which shall have exclusive jurisdiction thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hands on the date herein written.

TOWN – Town of NAME

By: _____ _____
Duly Authorized Date
designated town official name, Title

STATE – New Hampshire Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

By: _____ _____
NAME, Commissioner Date
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

By: _____ _____
NAME, Director Date
Division of Parks and Recreation

By: _____ _____
NAME, Director Date
Division of Forests and Lands

Approved as form, substance and execution:

_____
NAME, Attorney Date
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Approved by the Governor and Council on: _____, Item #: _____

All notices pursuant to this MOA should be provided to the following parties:

Designated town official, title
Name of Town/City
address
Town, NH zip

NAME, Director
Division of Forests and Lands
172 Pembroke Road
Concord, NH 03301

NAME, South Regional Forester
Division of Forests and Lands
172 Pembroke Road
Concord, NH 03301

NAME, Director
Division of Parks and Recreation
172 Pembroke Road
Concord, NH 03301

NAME, Chief
Bureau of Trails
172 Pembroke Road
Concord, NH 03301

Name of District Supervisor, District # Supervisor
Bureau of Trails
C: 603-419-####
Email: