4-11-2013
+
3-14-2013
CORD meetings

Kelsey Notch ATV Connector Tra
Nash Stream Forest– Columbia Comp

Response to CORD Management Conce
Pursuant to RSA 162-C:6

Concern: Thanks for the information you provided for CORD's April 11 meeting on the Nash Stream State Forest ATV trail proposal. Meredith Hatfield, Tracey Boisvert and I have reviewed it and we think CORD members need additional information in order to make an informed, well reasoned decision, and fulfill our statutory obligations.

Response: It remains unsure as to the role of CORD regarding LCIP-fund purchased properties. Can CORD stop a project after an agency has spent months sifting it through various levels of review?, or advise where a 'loose end" may need further attention without delay. We intend to have staff from the Trails Bureau, as well as a representative of the local club at the CORD meeting. They can further elaborate on items if CORD members have questions.

Concern: We think the proposal should address the factors mentioned in RSA 162-C:6, II and III, which is the legal basis for CORD's oversight of LCIP properties, and how the proposed ATV trail relates to maintaining natural beauty, protecting natural resources, maintaining public access, and is in the best interests of conservation and protection of the values listed in that statute.

Response: Nash Stream Forest (the Forest) might today be 40,000 acres of private camp lots and homes with snow machines, ATV, dirt bikes, golf carts and the like running amuck across the entire landscape, or poor forest management practices being used to decimate the forest. Fortunately, today the Forest is a well managed special public holding where the balance between maintaining natural beauty and protecting natural resources and the harvesting of forest products and providing for public outdoor recreation is evaluated on a daily basis by DRED and its partners – F&G, USFS and others. As presented to CORD on March 14th, ATV use was established in 2002 along the 8-mile (approximately 29 acres of 30'-wide corridor) "West Side" trail in the Stratford component of the Forest. The subject request for public ATV use is for a 2.5 mile (approximately 9 acres) trail connector across the northern tip of the Forest. Both OHRV corridors occur at the outer fringe of the Forest and directly impact only 0.1% of the Forest acreage (39,169 total acres).

Concern: We also think the proposal should explain how the proposed ATV trail fits, or does not fit, within the context of the amended Nash Stream Master Plan, as well as to the evaluation process required by RSA 215-A:43 through 45. Some description of how the proposed trail complies with the coarse and fine filter criteria listed in that statute

northwest of the Forest corridor. Second priority is CORD's acquiescence to the "spur" leading from Kelsey Notch Connector Trail to the terminus of Kelsey Notch Road (Class VI), in the event that said private land owner permission is lost. Use of Kelsey Notch Road is dependant upon approval by the Columbia Board of Selectmen for public ATV use on specific Class V roads. DRED is actively pursuing the Kelsey Notch Connector Trail option. The local club is actively working with the Town of Columbia for the designation of Kelsey Notch Road as an OHRV route at this time also. If successful they will request the 500' of existing road from the Kelsey Notch Connector to Kelsey Notch Road (priority 2). The spur to Kelsey Notch Road would be needed to complete the loop trail to the south.

Concern: The maps you provided reference Sheets 1, 2 and 3. It looks as if Sheet 3 involves the Stark Connection (southern route), which you have withdrawn from consideration. Perhaps Sheet 2 can be eliminated, while Sheet 1 can be used to illustrate your overall plan (including future trail proposals) and Sheet 3 can be renumbered and used to illustrate the two Kelsey Notch options.

Response: Yes, DRED requests that the "Stark Connector" be withdrawn from the table while DRED continues to process this segment of the "Ride the Wild" system. The Stark Connector will be discussed later this year when the agency starts the update process of its management plan. Plan numbers have been revised as requested for clarity purposes.

Concern: Also, we think it would be helpful for the proposal to provide some information about the ways in which the public and other state agencies have had input into the discussions of the various trail proposals, what concerns were raised and how they've been addressed.

Response: The OHRV trail proposal has been walked through and/or reviewed by staff from the following public agencies:

Bureau of Forest Management, Division of Forests & Lands
Bureau of Trails, Division of Parks & Recreation
Division of Wildlife, Fish & Game Department
Wetlands Bureau, Department of Environmental Services
Natural Heritage Bureau, Division of Forests and Lands
Division of Historical Resources
Office of Energy and Planning

As presented to CORD at the last meeting, the proposal has been reviewed, and approved, by the Nash Stream Citizens Advisory Committee, DRED Land Management Team (DLMT), State Lands Management Team (SLMT), and the Cooperative Lands Administrators Committee (CLAC). The Nash Stream Citizens Advisory Committee meeting was open to the public and the agenda of the meeting was duly noticed in local and statewide media. Comments are on file at DRED.