

ASLPT Protects 25 Acres Along the Rail Trail

JD McLeod Company donates the land

Press release

The Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation (ASLPT) is pleased to announce the closing on the McLeod Property off of Currier Road in East Andover. On January 21, the JD McLeod Company donated a 24.7-acre parcel of land in fee to ASLPT. The McLeod land donation is the fourth property that ASLPT owns.

This 24.7 acres, south of the Rail Trail in East Andover, is listed in the new Wildlife Action Plan. Because of its significance to Andover, the Andover Conservation Commission voted to provide the funding for the stewardship of this easement. In the future, the Andover public and others will be able to enjoy this protected land.

Not only is this property a valuable addition of protected land, but it also has nearly 900 feet of frontage on the scenic Northern Rail Trail. This mostly forested property is highly ranked for wildlife habitat and also has extensive water resources, including a perennial stream that flows through a wetlands area along the west-

ern boundary of the acreage.

The McLeod property was protected with the assistance of the Town of Andover Conservation Commission, and the acreage was given to ASLPT by the JD McLeod Company with no restrictions. It will be managed for the public benefit, as is the intention of the ASLPT mission.

With the addition of the McLeod property, ASLPT now protects 138 properties comprising 11,091 acres in its 12-town area of operation. 



The Northern Rail Trail runs past ASLPT's latest protected property in Andover, donated by JD McLeod Company.

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail Minutes, January 20, 2016

Condensed from draft minutes

Board Attendees: Alex Bernhard, Steve Darling, Heather Deardorff, Tom Frantz, George Heaton, Myra Mayman, Steve Rayno, Nita Tomaszewski, Jack Shields

Guests: Ralph Jesseman, Ricker Miller, Chris Norris, Prescott Towle

Three major issues absorbed most of the meeting's discussion:

- the budget for the coming year
- an application to the New Hampshire RTP (Recreational Trails Program) a grant for maintenance
- vegetation control on the Trail in Franklin

These discussions are summarized immediately below; a report on other issues and routine items of business follows.

Alex Bernhard led the discussion of a proposed budget for 2016, which intersected with the Treasurer's Report on current cash position (Steve Darling), as well as potential income and expenditures associated with an RTP grant.

Currently, the organization has more than \$37,000 in unrestricted assets. Almost \$10,000 is projected as 2016 income – largely from contributions – which are running somewhat ahead of prior years.

On the expense side of the ledger, some \$4,700 is budgeted for various non-maintenance expenses; and a maintenance-expense budget is projected at almost \$26,000 – the largest items of which are Chance Pond ramps paving and an FNRT-MC cash match in the case of an RTP grant award.

As the discussion of the budget suggested modifications to various items, Alex Bernhard will prepare a revised version for submission and approval at the February meeting.

Consideration of an RTP Grant Application led to the conclusion – so moved and unanimously approved – that FNRT-MC should apply this year. Nita Tomaszewski will lead the application process, in consultation with Alex Bernhard and assisted by other members as necessary. The application is due around June 1 (date not yet announced). The exact form of the RTP application remains to be determined and will be worked on in the coming weeks by Nita and others.

It is possible to submit two applications, which may be a viable approach, given the nature of potential maintenance projects, which fall into two groups:

- a list of various items on the trail itself – ditching, culvert cleaning,

washouts, trail surface, etc.

- the repair/replacement of bridge railings in Andover

This second project could become quite costly – projected up to \$40,000 – depending on design choices and numbers of bridges involved. In addition, it could involve the efforts of snowmobile clubs, who have maintained railings in the past, as well as FNRT-MC. A railings project might therefore warrant a separate grant application.

The issue of vegetation control for a six-mile portion of the trail in Franklin – also discussed at the last meeting – came to a decision. Jack Shields presented two new proposals from companies in Massachusetts, and Prescott Towle again discussed, and modified, his proposal.

Since parts of the Trail are becoming seriously overgrown, action this year is considered imperative. All three contractors propose the application of pre-emergent treatment, and Prescott Towle's proposal also included a later treatment against invasive species.

Given the similarity of cost for pre-emergent treatment alone, a unanimous vote in favor of a contract for \$2,500 with Prescott Towle was cast. The work should be completed by May, and Jack Shields will monitor progress. A decision on whether to make additional treatment will be deferred until later in the year.

The following items of business, notifications, and other commitments were also achieved:

Notification to Chris Gamache of the Trails Bureau that the Northern Pass proposal erroneously lists the town of Franklin as proprietor of the trail, therefore avoiding notice to Trails Bureau of their plans. Nita Tomaszewski will do this.

Liaison with Hannaford's in Franklin as to FNRT-MC as a participant in the bag purchase-donation program. Lindy Heim will make contact.

Endorsement of Heather Deardorff's efforts to organize a volunteer work day – in the fall of 2016 – to clean and maintain the trail after the fall of leaves and before the snow.

Future dates of note include:

Next meeting: February 17, 7 PM, Danbury Community Center

Wednesday, April 6: Annual Appeal stuffing/ mailing party at the Highland Lake Inn

Thursday, April 14: Thursday's Child dinner at the New London Inn for FNRT-MC. All are encouraged to attend and bring friends. 

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