



THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Victoria F. Sheehan
Commissioner

William Cass, P.E.
Assistant Commissioner

April 25, 2019

Town of Colebrook (via email: info@colebrooknh.org)
Board of Selectmen
17 Bridge Street
Colebrook, NH 03576

Town of Columbia (via email: towncolumbia@myfairpoint.net)
Board of Selectmen
PO Box 157
Colebrook, NH 03576

Re: State-owned railroad & request for ATV access
Sims Stream in Columbia – NH Route 26/Bridge Street in Colebrook

Dear Selectboards,

The Department is in receipt of your respective letters, both of which express an interest in exploring the use of approximately 2.5 miles of the state-owned railroad corridor from Sims Stream in Columbia north to the NH Route 26/Bridge Street intersection in Colebrook, and has had cursory internal discussions relative to said request. Also, please be advised that as the New Hampshire Central Railroad (NHCR) currently has the Federal operating rights for this trackage and this section is included in NHCR's Operating Agreement with the Department, we need to be mindful of impacts and implications that your request may have on NHCR.

That being said, we have had initial discussions with NHCR and the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources' Bureau of Trails and both State agencies concur that we are at a point that we can meet with officials of the Towns of Colebrook and Columbia and a representative from the Metallak ATV Club and NHCR to discuss this request in more detail. Currently the Department is not in the position to give immediate approval for the use of the railroad corridor for ATVs but does remain considerate of the request and looks forward to an informed discussion about the subject.

As time is of the essence and the outcome of the meeting may require additional time, steps, and research, I would suggest that we convene this kickoff meeting by mid-May. Since a site visit to portions of the 2.5 miles of railroad corridor may be worthwhile, I would suggest that we schedule the meeting during the day in either Colebrook or Columbia. Based on a quick review of the schedules of State staff who would likely attend, May 8th or May 10th might be viable dates, but we remain open to alternative dates proposed by the Towns. I would also ask that the Towns coordinate availability with the representative of the Metallak ATV Club.

Sincerely,

Shelley Winters
Administrator, Bureau of Rail & Transit

Cc: Phil Beaulieu (DOT-District 1)
Chris Gamache (DNCR-Trails Bureau)