

From North Country Council

Hi J.B.,

Thanks for the opportunity to weigh in on this. I have some thoughts on potential rail trails for survey work, as well as few other thoughts generally about rail trails in the North Country and how this type of work might need to be approached:

Rail Trails – I recommend the following 2 rail trails from the NCC region be examined. Our region covers nearly one-third of the state so I don't think it would be unreasonable for 2 trails to be surveyed.

- **Ammonoosuc Rail Trail**
 - **Survey point:** between River Rd in Lisbon and Industrial Park Rd in Littleton (current terminus)
 - **Users:** used for just about anything motorized and non-motorized, including equestrian. Recreation oriented. Might be used by some commuters but likely very few.
 - **Rationale:** this trail is an interesting example of where motorized and non-motorized uses generally co-exist well. ATVs use this route – however; the speed limits are relatively low (10-25 MPH), the trail has frequent road crossings, and the trail does not connect to a larger motorized trail network (unlike the trails in Coos) – so it is not a major destination trail for ATV riders and does not see huge levels of motorized use. The Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail (cycling route) uses most of the rail trail as part of its route: <http://www.xnhat.org/>. I've spoken with the director of the Cross New Hampshire trail and she indicated that trail cyclists and ATV riders seem to get along fine.
 - **FYI:** NH Bureau of Trails is planning to extend the trail north through Littleton and along NH 116/Ammonoosuc River. There is some local concern about ATVs coming into downtown Littleton.
- **Presidential Rail Trail (non-motorized section between Airport Road and US 2 in Gorham)**
 - **Survey point:** Airport Road trailhead in Whitefield
 - **Users:** non-motorized in the summer, xc skiing & snowmobiling in winter. No equestrian. Purely recreational, no commuting activity. Part of Cross New Hampshire Adventure Trail through-cycle route.
 - **Rationale:** this is a true “destination” rail trail as its one of the main hiking routes into Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge, has significant Presidential Range vistas, and is part of the X-NH Adventure Trail. Also **very rural** along its entire length, which may distinguish it from others in the state. Only non-motorized rail trail in the North Country.

Other Thoughts

- If performing intercept surveys along the trails with motorized users, suggest 1) alerting/coordinating with local ATV clubs ahead of time and 2) performing intercepts at trailheads (not along trails).
- Suggest **avoiding** the motorized section of the Presidential Rail Trail north of US Route 2 in Gorham. This trail is the subject of a lawsuit involving the Town and the state regarding the siting of the motorized trailhead along US 2 in a residential neighborhood. Best to stay clear at this time in my opinion. If the committee strongly desires to study the motorized section, suggest performing surveys at the terminus in Berlin.

From Strafford Regional Planning Commission

Thanks J.B.

To start with, here's a list of the three established trails I know get used a lot in our region (and beyond)

Cotton Valley Rail Trail: extends between Wolfeboro and Wakefield – I believe it's exclusively non-motorized except snowmobiles in the winter. Not sure about equestrian. There's also a rail enthusiast club in Wolfeboro that restored the funky little rail cars they run on a section of restored rails.

(<http://www.cottonvalley.org/cvrtc.htm>).

Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail: it's gigantic and I'm sure it's already on their radar. We don't have any user data that I know about, but I know Newmarket is interested in improving the parking and access at the eastern terminus of the trail.

Farmington Recreational Rail Trail Rochester: the official portion goes between Farmington and Rochester along NH Rt11, but there are unofficial pieces that continue along Rt 11 almost all the way to Alton. Lots of snowmobiles and dirt bikes, some runners and walkers/bikers.

The first two are well mapped and used along their whole length, but this is a good reminder for me that we should reach out to folks about the Farmington trail and help with mapping etc. Let me know if there's anything else I can do to help.

Thanks,

Colin

From Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

Hi J. B.,

I know you don't know where this project will lead but I figured I would send these along as it was a good exercise for us to think about and in the event you do need this information it is written down! Thank you for keeping us in the loop.

Here is a list of a few potential sites in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region that are varied and may provide a good overview of data from our region.

- Northern Rail Trail
Data points: Lebanon at trail head; Grafton in Grafton Center behind old meeting house on Route 4; Enfield near Shaker Bridge
Uses: Horseback, Mountain Biking, Cycling, Walking, Cross Country Skiing, Snowmobiling, Dog sledding
- Mascoma River Greenway
Data Points: Lebanon by Alice Peck Day Hospital lot
Uses: Non-motorized; no horses
- Sugar River Rail Trail
Data Points: Claremont by Community Center; Newport near covered bridges

Uses: Horseback, Mountain Biking, Cycling, Walking, Cross Country Skiing, Snowmobiling, Dog sledding

Best,
Meghan

From Lakes Region Planning Commission

Hi JB,

There are two rail-trails in the Lakes Region where trail data could be collected:

Cotton Valley Rail Trail – 12 miles Wolfeboro to Wakefield

There are two potential locations:

1. Wolfeboro RR Depot on Depot Street in downtown Wolfeboro – this is the beginning of the trail; this section is primarily used by walkers
2. Fernald Station on NH 109 (East), not far from Wentworth State Park – this section has more multi-modal use – walkers, bicyclists, x-c skiers, and the occasional rail car

Northern Rail Trail – 58 miles Lebanon to Boscawen

There are two potential locations in the Lakes Region used by hikers, bicyclists, snowmobilers, etc.:

1. Potter Place (US 4) in Andover
2. Highland Inn trailhead (NH 11) in East Andover

Hope this is what you're looking for. Let us know if you need more information.

From Rockingham Planning Commission

Hey J.B.,

Regarding trails in or adjacent to the RPC region I'd suggest considering the following for data collection:

- Salem Bike/Ped Corridor (Manchester & Lawrence Line, part of the Granite State Rail Trail) - We have one automated trail count and plan to do another this summer. I'm not sure if the Salem group has done any surveying of users. Surveying in Windham or Derry would similarly provide information on this corridor. I suspect the use will be somewhat different in Salem given the trail runs immediately parallel to NH28 and has more utilitarian trip opportunities than the same trail does a few miles north in Windham, Derry or Londonderry where I suspect is more heavily weighted toward recreational use. Management is local. The prior count location is just south of Range Road near the Windham Town Line. (Users: ped, bike, commuter, recreational)
- Rockingham Recreation Trail (Newfields to Manchester via Epping and Raymond) – There's an active volunteer and Facebook group for this trail. Management is DRED. We plan to do counts

this spring/summer. I'd suggest count locations at Rockingham Junction, in Epping just west of NH125 near DG Cyclesport, possibly in downtown Raymond at Main Street and at Lake Massabesic in Manchester. Let me check with members of the friends group for more info on potential count sites. (Users: ped, bike, recreational, equestrian, winter snowmobile)

- For the Hampton Branch/East Coast Greenway/NH Seacoast Greenway we won't have the first completed section opened until late 2021/early 2022. However there are completed sections immediately south of the border in Newburyport and Salisbury MA that would be appropriate for surveying as an analog for NH as they will ultimately be connected. I think it's important to consider interstate rail trails as a distinct type for analysis and discussion. We have count data for both Newburyport and Salisbury and the Coastal Trails Coalition has separate data. Count location in Newburyport is at intersection of Washington Street, and in Salisbury at the trailhead just north of Friedenfels Street. (Users: ped, bike, commuter, recreational)

Cheers, Scott

From Central NH Regional Planning Commission

Thanks JB.

Below are two locations on State owned trails in our region that I will nominate.

Name of Trail: Northern Rail Trail

Location of recommended data collection point: Depot St parking area.

Types of users: ped, bike, equestrian, snowmobile, recreation (not open to motorized wheeled vehicles)

Name of Trail: Hillsborough Recreational Rail Trail

Location of data collection: Fish and Game Rd parking area

Types of Users: ped, bike, equestrian, snowmobile, other motorized (OHRVs), recreation

Thanks,
Dean

From Southwest Region Planning Commission

Given that there are only four locations that will be selected for the intercept survey our top recommendation in Southwest New Hampshire is the following:

Name of Trail: Cheshire Rail Trail

Location: Krif Road parking area

Types of users: ped, bike, snowmobile, recreation, commuters

From Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

Hi JB,

Thanks for following up. SNHPC staff suggests the following locations.

- Manchester-Lawrence Rail Trail (aka Windham Rail Trail) at Depot Road in Windham;
- Manchester-Lawrence Rail Trail (aka Londonderry Rail Trail) at Sanborn Road; and
- Rockingham Rail Trail at Lake Massabesic Front Park.

Thanks,

--Nate