

2 November 2011

MVTR November Meeting

The November meeting was called to order at 19:10. President Tom apologized for running late but most of us were too busy with pizza and bench racing to have noticed the time.

First up was a review of what has been going on in the North Country on the conservation/recreation front. Tom has recently attended several meetings to keep up with any changes and learn how we are to be affected by them. In the northernmost region are some 13 million acres in the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters area, pretty much everything north of Young's Store for those familiar with Pittsburg. Within that area are some 340 miles of "roads" which are under state control for recreational use. It is planned that some of those "roads" will become designated trails for specific user groups, snowmobiles, not surprisingly are allowed pretty much everywhere, trails specifically for equestrians and mountain bikes are on the list, anything open to motorcycles is conspicuously absent. A number of grand fathered lease properties have been "swapped" so that leaseholders still have use of a site but in a less environmentally sensitive spot. DRED is now closely monitoring the gold mining there as it was progressing beyond the 'pan in the stream' point and damage was occurring. On a more positive note, several of the northern counties are looking toward allowing roads to be opened to OHRV use on a town by town basis as has already been done in Berlin. In the end, our access to the North Country is dependant on the land owners, predominantly 5 large paper companies, as long as they don't want us, we are out. If we can become accepted as is slowly happening in the Berlin/Jericho Park area, there is still hope.

There are currently two pieces of legislation up for consideration that would affect OHRVs. First is a proposal to grant reciprocity with VT on acceptance of OHRV registrations. This could financially benefit some North Country businesses and save money for some residents. Currently, NH does not have reciprocity with anyone and stands to lose some registration fees if this passes (editor's note, having watched the state as it was dragged kicking and screaming to be 48th of the contiguous states to accept the federal boat registration system – remember having to put a license plate on any powered boat used in state waters? – I am not holding my breath on this one happening soon). Second is a proposal to change the wheeled OHRV registration to include a club membership requirement. Currently there is an 'extra fee' to register a snowmobile if you are not a member of a 'listed' NH club with that fee split among state agencies involved with snowmobiles. In theory this generates a larger 'pool' of volunteers to maintain and groom the trails, in practice it probably generates another source of income to state agencies, how well it would translate to the smaller number of wheeled vehicle clubs with our much more limited trail systems is hard to project.

Riding

Don told us that the **Russ Henry Memorial**, hosted by the **Sea Coast Trail Riders** was “the best Turkey Run ever”, with a good route sheet and very good arrowing, there were some big puddles and some mud along the way. Also riding it were John, Dave, Ron, Sarah and Doug, not everyone agreed as to whose odometer was correct at the end of the day but none were sorry about riding it.

The **Tri-State Enduro** at Hodges was reportedly more than a little wet.

Our own **Rocky Mountain Enduro** was held last month. Attendance was OK considering that it was sharing the date with 4 other events. We had 62 signed up with 60 actually riding. Many appreciated the format, which looped back to the start for gas (certainly the guy I ‘helped’ (I held the bike up while he worked) change out his toothless countershaft sprocket did, probably the sweepers who did not have to tow him home as well). The great turnout of our club members to make sure everything got done was really appreciated. Since we generally host an enduro every other year Luis is looking at hosting a Turkey Run in 2012 at a new location, stay tuned.

NETRA News

The sanctioning meeting will be coming up on 3 December 2011; anything to be included on the 2012 calendar needs to be submitted by that time. MVTR is looking to host the **New England Classic Charity Trail Ride** on 8,9 & 10 June, the **Rocky Mountain Weekend** Hare Scramble, Jr. Enduro and Pee Wee should happen on 28 & 29 July. The as yet unnamed **Turkey Run** to be co-hosted with (or we help them host, or they help us host it to be decided) would presumably be held on ‘our’ enduro date of 7 October.

We may be looking at some rule changes as well as structure changes coming from NETRA. The current method of funding event insurance is causing a substantial loss in funds. At present the insurance fees paid out by NETRA are based on a flat ‘per event’ fee and have to be paid early in the season. Most HS events have enough entrants to cover the insurance cost. Enduros, along with the Jr Enduro and Pee Wee events held in conjunction with another event are riding close to the balance point of breaking even. Stand-alone Jr Enduros and Pee Wee events are flat losing as far as insurance. The fact that the fees have to be submitted early in the season, before most (sometimes any) events have been held, combined with a limited amount of funds on hand has resulted in some individuals personally fronting the insurance money. Additionally, NETRA has been covering the difference between the club paid ‘scoring fee’ and the actual cost of having the event scored. The industry grants, which previously covered much of this, have evaporated. There has been great reluctance to raise

dues, particularly in the current economy. How this can be all or partially alleviated remains to be seen.

Trail Projects

A few club members ignored the October blizzard and headed north to **Jericho**, where they constructed several bridges and finished cutting the inaugural single-track section. Neal advises that a dozen bikes riding a dozen laps each would be a good start to having it burned in for next season.

6 November (yep, right now as I type this, sorry but 18° when I got up was too depressing for me) is the date for the **Rocky Work Party**. Luis' plan is to join forces with the local snowmobile club (sorry again, I didn't hear the name) and re-deck three bridges that are getting 'past due' on the Bergeron Property in Alton.

Veteran's Weekend will be the date for the final **Hop-Ev Work Party**. Brian plans to coerce Mike to build yet another set of forms on Saturday, the 12th and then on Sunday the 13th, all hands will be mixing and pouring concrete to create some permanent abutments for the River Loop suspension bridge. All the usual cliché's apply, time to 'cowboy up, give back to the trails or just plain come out and help.

Upcoming

The **2011 Landry Ranch – MVTR Challenge** is planned for 26 November. The trails were all cleared prior to the October snowstorm; a crew should be on scene (today, the 6th) trying to get it ready once again. Jeff told us that 'Mom' had recently met with the local conservation commission who were impressed enough with the trail loop to offer a grant to upgrade the bridge. The current loop is 6.2 miles of single-track, the plan is to bring that up to 7 and 'call it good'. Riders are encouraged to bring something to 'throw on the grill' and/or a dish to share. As always, quiet bikes only.

Respectively Submitted
Bruce