



# AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL NORTH MANAGEMENT GROUP

Monday, August 26th  
3:00 - 4:30 PM  
Online via Zoom



# Agenda

**3:00 PM Welcome**

Introductions

**3:10PM Roles and Responsibilities**

CT RC&D and Rec Trails Grant

Interim Chairperson

Interim Secretary

Key Interest Areas

**3:40PM Air Line State Park Trail Website**

Tour of Current Website

Maintenance Contract

ADA Accessibility/Spanish Translation

Updates Needed

**3:55PM Work Plan Review**

**4:05PM Air Line State Park Regional Alliance - Next Meeting in September**

**4:15 PM Q&A**

# Mission of the ALSPT Regional Alliance

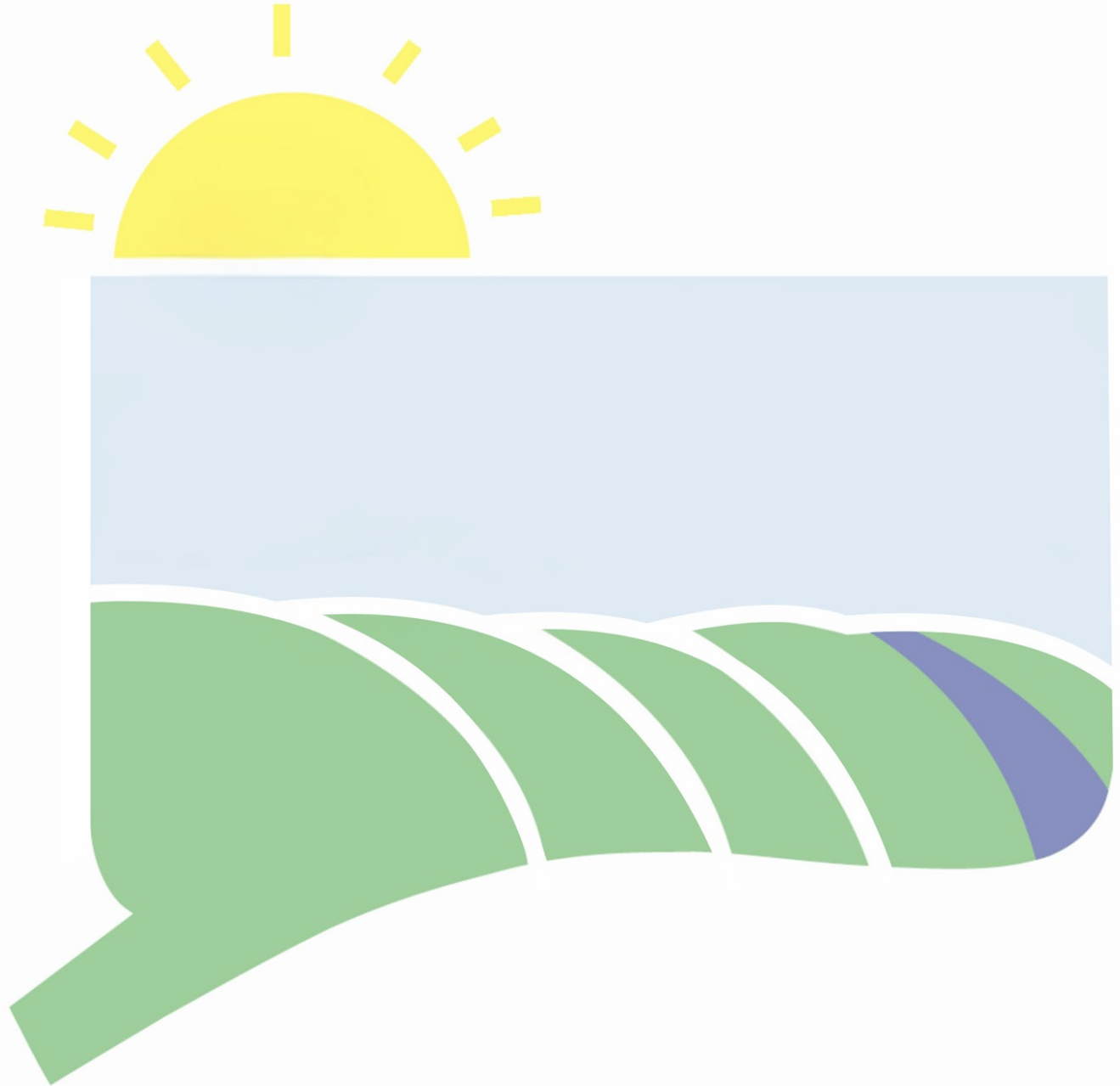


- Establish regular communications, maintenance, and project review meetings with CT DEEP and Alliance members
- Consider mutual aid needs for safety and emergency management
- Develop, review, submit grant applications as a regional collaborative
- Establish consistency in wayfinding signage
- Work with local and federal legislators to put ALSTP on the table for discussion
- Improve trail use experience to improve eco-tourism opportunities
- Speak as one voice for ongoing maintenance agreements with CT DEEP and for marketing the ALSPT region

# Roles and Responsibilities

## CT RC&D

- Facilitator
- Grant Report Writing
- Communications
- Outreach



# Roles and Responsibilities



## STRUCTURE

- Create the new ALSPT Region organization as a Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to leverage the potential for fundraising and grant funding/oversight.
- Establish a communications network between the town departments/officials, trail committees, key stakeholders, and CT DEEP that could be funneled through the new ALSPT Region organization as moderator.
- Host yearly bi-annual meetings to coordinate ongoing strategies for maintenance, park rules, funding, and implementation of this plan's recommendations for signage, infrastructure & emergency management.



## MEMBERSHIP

- The new ALSPT Region organization's membership could be designed to include stakeholders through the organization's bylaws.
- The twelve towns should appoint representatives to a Board of Directors for this new nonprofit organization with the goal of representing and coordinating town support of the trail and addressing issues and concerns in the management and maintenance of the trail.
- CT DEEP and other state agencies would participate in bi-annual meetings as ex-officio representatives.



## GOALS

- Implement the recommendations of the ALSPT Region Master Plan and subsequent studies through coordinated discussion, planning and strategy.
- Work both as a region and one entity to secure funding for larger visionary projects and support grant applications for localized infrastructure projects by towns and partner organizations. Coordinate the economic growth possibilities of the ALSPT Region through land use and grant funding support for the concept of Trail Towns, trail-oriented businesses, the new ALSPT Region website and related marketing strategy.
- Coordinate with CT DEEP to ensure that signage and wayfinding, both virtual and stick-built, improve the trail user experience in the entire twelve-town region.




# Roles and Responsibilities

- Interim Chairperson
- Interim Secretary
- Appointed Representatives
- Key Interest Areas

# Roles and Responsibilities

CT DEEP	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT
Encourage regional collective planning and communications for 12 ALSPT Towns and partner organizations	Support and sponsor the ALSPT Region organization including representation from town (official or resident) with goal to improve intra town collaboration and with CT DEEP	Include Air Line State Park Trail planning in Unified Planning Work Program update with specific focus on multi-town infrastructure
Plan for and provide an internal planning scope and strategy for CT DEEP management of the trail	Formally appoint 1-2 representatives to the new ALSPT Region organization	Work with new ALSPT Region organization and towns as needed to include infrastructure projects and maintenance in Metropolitan Planning Organization's Statewide Transportation Improvement Plans
Provide clarity on a yearly basis toward Passport to Parks funding toward maintenance allocation and district implementation schedule to regional organization	Review and update zoning regulations and POCDs to identify uses that are incompatible to the ALSPT and ensure that these are located at appropriate distances from the trail with buffers as needed. Consider creating an overlay zoning district along the trail	Assist with CTDOT grant funding programs or special programs for congressionally-directed spending or similar programs to support activities along the ALSPT
Advocate for additional staffing for district offices	Survey local road connections	Participate on 12 Town Regional Trail Committee
Provide single point of contact for town communications related to emergencies and adverse trail conditions	Encourage local transit to extend service or on-demand service to select trailhead parking locations for transit dependent populations	Work with state and federal in support of towns
Streamline permitting and review for infrastructure improvements for connections between town centers and the ALSPT	Consider yearly financial stipend \$1000-\$2000 (or a population-based rate) to ALSPT Region organization to help cover town/regional marketing and website, and overhead costs for meetings	Adopt, where appropriate, the ALSPT Region Master Plan and its recommendations into local Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies
Advocate on behalf of towns with CT DOT for trail to town center connections	Support local economic development commissions and business groups planning and providing information for stay and play options for visitors	Support the ALSPT Region Master Plan and its recommendations through open space planning and regional POCD recommendations to support the efforts to improve the ALSPT
Advocate with other state agencies on permitting for infrastructure projects and marketing campaigns	Evaluate options for ALSPT to be used as a commuter route and plan for land use along the trail that can build upon direct connections to business centers near the trail	Work with local rural transit districts establish connections to ALSPT trailheads for transit-dependent populations

# Roles and Responsibilities

TRAIL COMMITTEES	NEW ALSPT REGION ORGANIZATION	STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATORS
Continue to advocate and plan for improved trails conditions and experiences for trail users at the local level	Coordinate communications with CT DEEP and represent local interests in planning, maintenance and infrastructure improvements on the ALSPT Trail	Support funding for major improvements to the ALSPT and timely completion of the full trail for continuity of experience for trail users
Become active and support the new ALSPT Region organization by attending meetings as ex-officio members or by sending recommendations with representatives	Coordinate with Hop River Trail Alliance on wayfinding, marketing the ALSPT region, and advocacy with the Connecticut Office of Tourism and related agencies	Promote the ALSPT Region website as the primary source of information about the ALSPT and where one can plan for a stay and play visit in one or more of the 12 towns and the surrounding region
Advocate for coordination of events and local conservation of trail resources and scenic protection	Implement the recommendations of the ALSPT Region Master Plan including seeking continuity of experience improvements and wayfinding	Secure bond funding for a complete final buildout of the 64 miles of ALSPT corridor to ensure continuity of surface structure, draining and design
Become active with ALSPT Region website and contribute/promote stories via content and social media sharing.	Support the 12 Towns of the ALSPT Region and economic growth opportunities with updates to the ALSPT website promoting attractions and services with partner stakeholders and state tourism agencies	Learn about investments made in the ALSPT to date and how future investment can help the economy of the ALSPT Region expand
Promote ALSPT to new members to heighten awareness of ALSPT trail use and options	Provide a single point of contact with CT DEEP for arranging the date of the annual or bi-annual roundtable for town staff/officials, trail committees and partner stakeholders	Attend events like ALSPT workshops and ribbon cuttings to be continually informed and aware of new developments within the ALSPT and the ALSPT Region
Participate in training by CT DEEP for appropriate maintenance of the ALSPT and encourage additional volunteers to participate in such training	Support towns in expanding economic growth opportunities located in close proximity to the ALSPT, with a special focus on the Willimantic center hub	
Be the eyes and ear of ongoing conditions and information on the ALSPT and report back to the new ALSPT Region organization, Town Representatives and your local CT DEEP liaison	Promote strategies to increase diversity and inclusion of trail visitors with partner organizations	 Strategize for fundraising to pay for improvements to the ALSPT and to support the work of the new ALSPT Region organization
	Coordinate with events organizers on the trail, starting with Tackle the Trail, the Ghost Run and other organizations	 Work with the ALSPT website designer to expand the stay and play experience planning portion of the website by providing suggested journeys and local events on the ALSPT



# Work Plan – Major Deliverables

- Appoint 1-2 Representatives from each town along the Air Line Trail
- Establish a regular meeting schedule for the ALSPT Alliance as well as North and South Management Groups
- Develop a 2025 Work Plan for the ALSPT Alliance
- Update and maintain online interactive trail mapping, possibly through a special project with UCONN DX Labs
- Hold a public workshop to gather input from the community
- Host a public event in the fall of 2025 bringing all 12 towns together to raise awareness about the benefits of trail use
- Establish bylaws for the ALSPT Alliance

# Work Plan – End of 2024

Wayfinding/signage presentation will now be virtual

Task	Task Description	Timeline
Task B	<p><u>ALSPT Regional Meeting:</u> Announce interim co-chairs. Review maintenance protocols, maintenance agreements &amp; mutual aid agreements. Site visit on Hop River Trail to view and discuss wayfinding/signage. Invite UCONN DX Labs and UCONN CT Trails Team to discuss opportunities for ALSPT.</p>	September 2024
Task B	<p><u>ALSPT North Subcommittee Meeting:</u> Discuss the North's primary goals for the trail, legislative objectives for the State to support the trail financially with special funding, and strategies to meet the northern region's needs.</p>	October 2024
Task B	<p><u>ALSPT South Subcommittee Meeting:</u> Discuss the South's primary goals for the trail, legislative objectives for the State to support the trail financially with special funding, and strategies to meet the southern region's needs</p>	October 2024
Task B	<p><u>CT Trails Symposium:</u></p>	October 2024
Reporting	<p><u>Quarterly Progress Report #3</u></p>	November 15, 2024
Task B	<p><u>ALSPT Regional Meeting(Bi-Annual Meeting with DEEP 2 of 4):</u> Meeting with ALSPT stakeholders, representatives, and regional businesses to synthesize and prioritize the overall region's needs with the purpose of establishing a special project for the ALSPT. Establish an Events Subcommittee to begin planning for a 12 Town ALSPT event centered in Willimantic to promote the towns, trail, increase trail use diversity and inclusion, and raise funds for the special project. Discuss the publication of a newsletter in 2025.</p>	Early December 2024

# Work Plan – Early 2025

Task	Description	Timeline
Task B	<u>ALSPT North Subcommittee Meeting:</u> Synthesize December 2024 meeting priorities into a ALSPT North 2025 Work Plan, including maintenance & agreements, projects anticipated from towns, new guidance, legislative initiatives. Begin coordination for 12 Town ALSPT event.	January 2025
Reporting	<u>Quarterly Progress Report #4</u>	January 15, 2025
Task B	<u>ALSPT South Subcommittee Meeting:</u> Synthesize December 2024 meeting priorities into a ALSPT South 2025 Work Plan, including maintenance & agreements, projects anticipated from towns, new guidance, legislative initiatives. Begin coordination for 12 Town ALSPT event.	February 2025
Task B	<u>ALSPT Regional Meeting (Bi-Annual Meeting with DEEP 3 of 4):</u> Major planning and coordination for 12 Town ALSPT event; marketing and outreach efforts, towns specific involvement, vendors, fundraising, etc. Select videographer to take trail promo footage and film additional 3 minute promotional video. CT Trails Day events planning. Special project check-in.	March 2025
Reporting	<u>Quarterly Progress Report #5</u>	April 15, 2025
Task C	<u>ALSPT North Subcommittee Meeting:</u> Public workshop to gather input from the community on ALSPT North.	April 2025
Task C	<u>ALSPT South Subcommittee Meeting:</u> Public workshop to gather input from the community on ALSPT South.	May 2025
Task B	CT Trails Day: ALSPT Trail Events	June 1, 2025

# Website and Communications

## MARKETING THE AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL IN STAGES, TO DIFFERENT AUDIENCES



### Local Residents

Initially focus on regional residents who live near the trail and can use it daily or weekly. What are their needs and expectations year round? Work with partner organizations, elected officials, and government agencies to build synergy with constituents and business community through a targeted marketing campaign. Based on interviews, keep the trail system dynamic for all types of visitors.



### Connecticut Residents

As conditions on the trail become more reliable for extended sections of the trail for all uses, extend the existing marketing campaign statewide to residents and visitors to the state. Create trail journey examples for the ALSPT Region website to showcase options for trail use and local visits.



### Out of State Visitors

Coordinate with the Connecticut Office of Tourism, Influence Areas of the ALSPT Region, the East Coast Greenway and neighboring states to promote the connections and the whole journey experience whether it is a larger state loop or an interstate journey. Conditions of the trail and wayfinding would require optimal improvements prior to this type of marketing campaign.

- Brand Awareness
- Expected Conditions
- New Infrastructure
- Maps
- Events
- Trail Stories/Trail Journeys
- Reporting/Feedback
- Visitor Surveys

# Website and Communications



# Next Meeting

## September ALSPT Regional Alliance Meeting

- Announce representatives
- Review maintenance protocols, maintenance agreements, and mutual aid agreements
- Discuss wayfinding/signage

**Questions?**