



# **AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL REGIONAL MEETING**

Tuesday, September 24th

3:00 - 5:00 PM

Windham Town Hall and via Zoom



# Acknowledgments



# Agenda

- 3:00 PM**      **Welcome & Introductions**
- 3:15 PM**      **North and South Management Committees Meetings Summary**
- 3:20 PM**      **ALSPT Alliance Formation**
- 3:30 PM**      **Chapter 4 of the Master Plan: Infrastructure and Maintenance**
- 3:50PM**      **Maintenance Agreements and Maintenance Protocol**
- 4:05 PM**      **Funding Mechanisms for Maintenance and Improvements**
- 4:20 PM**      **Project Updates, Trail Conditions, Closures, Q&A**
- 4:50PM**      **Next Steps**

# North and South Management Committees

## North Management Committee

### Representatives:

Interim Chairperson – Bruce Donald Interim

Secretary – Christian Smutnick

Thompson – Tyra Penn-Gesek (Administrative) &  
Paul Provost (Maintenance)

Putnam – Bruce Fitzback

Pomfret – Maureen Nicholson

Hampton – John Guskowski

Windham – Jordan Lumpkins

Chaplin – No attendees from Chaplin present.

## South Management Committee

### Representatives:

Interim Chairperson – Tom McGrath

Interim Secretary – No Volunteer

Columbia – John Guskowski

Hebron – Craig Bryant

Lebanon – Phil Chester

Colchester – Dan Hickey

East Hampton – Dave Cox

Portland – Dan Bourret

# ALSPT Alliance Formation





CHAPTER 4

**Infrastructure  
and Maintenance**

# INFRASTRUCTURE ALSPT ROLES

A number of stakeholders will play a role in planning and maintaining the infrastructure of the Air Line State Park Trail Region. The information below illustrates the varying levels of involvement and collaboration.



## Trail Bridges

The topography and landscape of the ALSPT has required and will continue to require new bridge infrastructure to ensure ease of passage and safety of trail users. Bridge design and use of historic structures can also create viewsheds of scenery and experience for the trail user. (See Figure 4Q)

While many sections of the trail have been improved with new bridge infrastructure, a focus on key locations for safety is warranted (see Figures 4R and 4S).

FIGURE 4Q

### Bridges Along the ALSPT

From accessibility to safety to history and scenic views, bridges of all types enhance the experience of the trail. The former bridge of the Lyman Viaduct was filled to create a scenic overlook. Small culvert bridges evoke the quaintness of the trail, and bridges over un-negotiable roads provide safe passage to trail users.



## ROADWAY INTERSECTIONS

The Air Line State Park Trail Region contains approximately 62 roadway intersections, and this number is expected to increase as Portland's trail continues to extend west to the Connecticut River and Putnam continues to close the gaps in the park through the downtown business district. These intersections are fairly evenly distributed throughout the ALSPT corridor and include:

- at-grade (level) crossings
- depressed crossings where the trail is below the road
- elevated crossings where the trail is above the road
- crossings where the trail and road are already separated by bridges or culvert crossings.

In a dated but still relevant study for CT DEEP, the University of Connecticut Landscape Architecture Advanced Design Studio assisted CT DEEP in developing an inventory of Trail-Road Crossings and Major/Minor Intersections from Windham to Thompson in the park (see Figures 4G, 4H and 4I).

FIGURE 4G

### UConn Landscape Architecture Program Diagram of Composite Road Crossings for North Section of ALSPT

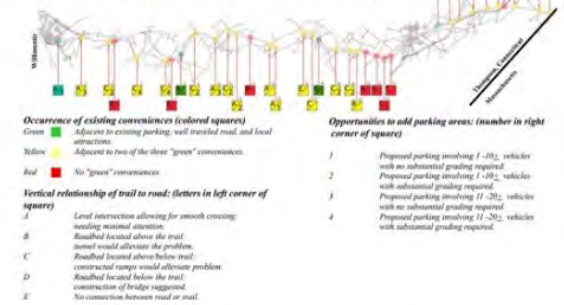
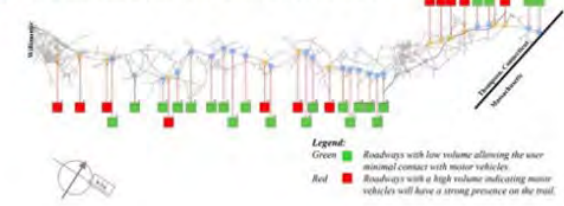


FIGURE 4H

### UConn Landscape Architecture Program of Major and Minor Intersections for North Section of ALSPT



## Trail Surfaces



FIGURE 4L

### Historic Photos of ALSPT Conditions at Acquisition by CT DEEP

- 1- East view near Old Colchester Road
- 2- Bridge over Judd Brook
- 3- West view of Raymond Marsh

## PARKING AND ACCESS

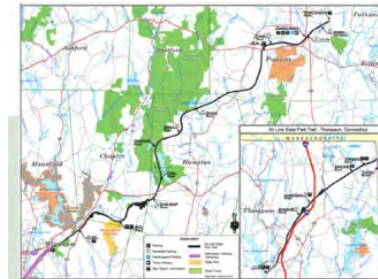


FIGURE 4E

### Northern Section of ALSPT with Official Parking Areas Depicted

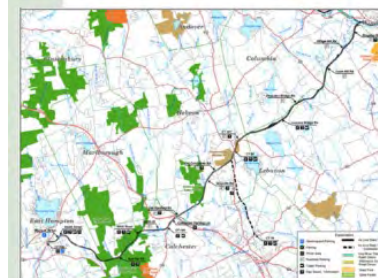


FIGURE 4F

### Southern Section of ALSPT with Official Parking Areas Depicted



## SHORT TERM GOALS

- Initiate bi-annual meetings, led by ALSPT Region Alliance and CTDEEP to review upcoming seasonal maintenance protocols and projects identify funding mechanisms and plans for major infrastructure
- Create a sign manual and standards for sign placement to assist maintenance crews with design and installation
- Develop a standard for mile markers, where is Mile - 0.0 and work closely with Hop River Trail Alliance toward mile marker planning
- Install town boundary markers and clearly denote intersection names or convenience and emergency purposes
- Post consistent signage at all trailheads to inform users of park hours, rules and regulations for pets and their waste, etc.
- Add informational signage to promote features along the trail - such as nearby preserved lands and historic sites (include photographs)
- Consider opportunities for local businesses or civic organizations to sponsor the trail - Similar to Connecticut's 'Adopt a Highway' program
- Improve the trail surface through Hampton to provide continuity for users on Air Line - North
- Complete the removal of hazard trees adjacent to the trail, throughout the corridor
- Install drainage improvements where trailhead parking lots are negatively impacting local roads (Chewink Rd in Chaplin is of particular note)



## MID-TERM GOALS

- Replace gates to make them all uniform and make sure all gates are clearly marked 'No Parking' to allow emergency access at all times
- Provide improved access for persons with disabilities, this includes adding compliant parking spaces and trailhead access
- Improve parking lots including resurfacing, improved drainage, expansion for more vehicles, better sight lines and paved aprons
- Create additional parking areas for large vehicles such as recreational vehicles (RVs) and horse trailers
- Improve intersection signage and trail crossing conditions with better signage and painted crosswalks
- Make meaningful attempts at the state level to close the remaining gaps rather than relying on local advocates and policy makers
- Make funding available at the state level to care for this regional treasure rather than relying on grant funds to improve this state park
- Make connections to urban centers to promote economic development (Hebron & Columbia are of particular note)
- Acquire easements over adjacent properties where trail improvements are anticipated to impact private property (drainage/access/etc.)
- Fund an amenities installation study to secure infrastructure grant where possible for restrooms, cell service, charging stations and emergency utility structures.

## LONG-TERM GOALS

- Pursue the installation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) where the trail crosses roadways with high traffic volumes and/or poor sight lines (the intersections that generated this comment are Rt. 207 & Rt 87 in Lebanon)
- Construct trailhead parking at the Rt. 87 trail crossing in Lebanon
- Complete trail construction to close all remaining gaps (East Hampton, Willimantic & Putnam)
- Work with DEMHS Regions 3 & 4 to determine the trail's capabilities to mitigate the effects of natural or man-made disasters in the region
- Design and install pedestrian bridges over Rt. 203 in Windham and Chewink Rd in Chaplin.
- Establish a protocol for performing annual inspections on all trail infrastructure including bridges, culverts, pipe crossings, hand railings and etc. to prioritize infrastructure spending.
- Consider replacing natural wood decking and railings with engineered wood products or possibly concrete to extend their service life and reduce long-term maintenance costs
- Install paved aprons with proper drainage improvements at all crossing where the trail intersects a paved roadway
- Review the feasibility of paving portions of the trail where the grades are too steep to prevent erosion
- Install public restrooms and potable water filling stations at impactful locations within the corridor



# CTDEEP TRAIL MANAGEMENT & COORDINATION

**Presented by: Kimberly Bradley – Trails & Greenways Coordinator  
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation**

# CTDEEP - CONNECTICUT GREENWAYS & TRAILS PROGRAM

- - Serves as DEEP's liaison to The CT Greenways Council (CGC) and Equine Advisory Council, other agencies, municipalities, non-profits and volunteers including: CT DOT Bike/Ped Plan Update Advisory Committee, CT DOT TAP, CT Forest & Park Association, New England Mountain Biking, CT Off Road Enthusiasts (COREC), and national organizations such as Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and American Trails.
- Review and/or advise on public recreation rules and regulations as it relates to programs under purview. Advises and/or instruct Park and Recreation Supervisors on programs, policies and regulations involving recreational resource management, trail use, design, construction, and maintenance.
- - Administers DEEP's state and federal grants associated with trails and greenways.





# MANAGING TRAILS ON CONNECTICUT DEEP STATE LANDS

- Limited land, dense population, high recreational demand.
- [DEEP Policy #310](#)
  - Provides structure for review of new trails, trail authorizations, and trail re-routes
  - Brings in Bureau of Natural Resources & Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Representatives for Review
- Land & recreational uses balanced with natural resource conservation and protection with land as a limiting resource
- Agency internal coordination with Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Bureau of Natural Resources (Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries), Office of Land Acquisition and Management, Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse, etc.

# MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS FOR TRAILS ON CONNECTICUT DEEP STATE MANAGED LANDS

There are a range of agreements for CT DEEP Managed Lands.

- Formal Agreements developed through CT DEEP Office of Land Acquisition and Management (LAM) directly with municipalities, often associated with project.
- Volunteer-based organization Cooperative Trail Maintenance Agreement with CT DEEP Division of State Parks
  - [DEEP Policy #310](#)
  - **Appendix of Policy**
- CT DEEP collaboration between LAM and Division of State Parks as requested through the Hop River Trail Alliance to develop a standard Trail Maintenance Agreement for our CT DEEP linear trails to provide a mechanism for municipal maintenance support.

**Appendix C**  
**Cooperative Trail Maintenance Agreement**

Name of State Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Contact Name:**

Name:	Title:
Address:	Town:
Phone:	Email:

**State Contact Name:**

Name:	Title:
Address:	Town:
Phone:	Email:

**Permitted uses of trail (check all that apply):** Hiking \_\_\_ Mountain Biking \_\_\_ Equestrian \_\_\_  
Snowmobiling \_\_\_ Cross-country skiing \_\_\_ Interpretive \_\_\_ Motorcycle \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Trail will be open:** Year Round \_\_\_ Seasonal \_\_\_ Explain \_\_\_\_\_

**Access points:** Existing trail \_\_\_ DEEP Parking Lot \_\_\_ DEEP Road \_\_\_ Town/State Highway \_\_\_

**Trail will be marked by:** Paint color \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Work on trail will be performed:** Monthly \_\_\_ Annually \_\_\_ As Needed \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

DEEP contact person should be notified at least twenty-four hours prior to any work being performed. This notification should include a specific date, time, type and location of work to be performed.

**Group Insurance renewal date:** Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

**The volunteers associated with this agreement will be expected to perform the following duties:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**DEEP will be expected to perform the following duties:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# PURPOSE OF MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS

- The intention of the Maintenance Agreements are to formalize and develop an understanding of the process required to maintenance of CT DEEP Land and Trails.
- CT DEEP and the Division of State Parks must follow policy and regulation when managing State Parks and Trails. Examples include:
  - Multi-use Trail Policy
  - Signage Policy
- Agreements provide the ability of cooperation between CT DEEP and Municipalities or Trail Organizations. Examples:
  - Approved signage on trails
  - CT DEEP State Parks provide stone dust materials, town provide resurfacing labor.
- Activities or projects conducted on CT DEEP Managed Lands that have NOT been approved by CT DEEP can be considered an encroachment based upon CT Gen Stat § 52-560a.
- Trail Agreements with CT Department of Transportation CANNOT be substituted for CT DEEP Agreements.



# AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL - PROJECTS

CT DEEP Recreational Trails Grants:

- 2015
  - Colchester Link to Air Line State Park Trail - \$43,200
  - East Hampton Air Line State Park Trail Phase 2 – \$583,800
  - Church St. Park – Air Line State Park Trail Connection (Hebron) – \$62,000
  - Portland Air Line State Park Trail Extension - \$685,932
- 2016-17
  - Improving Trail Access for All Abilities (LGV HETAP) - \$15,330
- 2018-19
  - **CT DEEP - Air Line State Park Trail - Twelve Towns Task Force & Master Plan - \$100,000**
  - Air Line State Park Trail Enhancement NE CT (CT Audubon Pomfret) -\$53,491
  - Hebron Center Air Line State Park Trail Connector – \$228,320
  - Putnam Air Line Trail Gap Connection Analysis - \$64,200
- 2020-21
  - Thompson, CT – More Than Just a Train Wreck! - \$16,000
  - Windham Air Line Trail Enhancement – \$86,525
- 2022-23
  - **CT DEEP - Air Line State Park Trail - Twelve Town Regional Association Formation & Marketing - \$100,000**
  - Mono Pond State Park – TPL ~\$77,000 to develop a multiuse trail system plan for the expanded Mono Pond State Park.
  - Putnam Air Line Trail Connection & Improvements Project – \$175,000
  - Air Line Trail Gap Phase 1 (East Hampton) - \$404,800
  - Thompson, CT – STILL More Than Just a Train Wreck – \$457,500
- 2024
  - Windham - Windham Air Line Trail and Willimantic River Blueway Enhancements - \$155,143

**Over \$3,371,763 from CT Recreational Trails Grant for Air Line State Park Trail**



# QUESTIONS???

## **Kimberly Bradley**

CT Trails and Greenways Program Coordinator

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation / Division of State Parks and Public Outreach

Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

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**Connecticut**  
Department of Energy &  
Environmental Protection

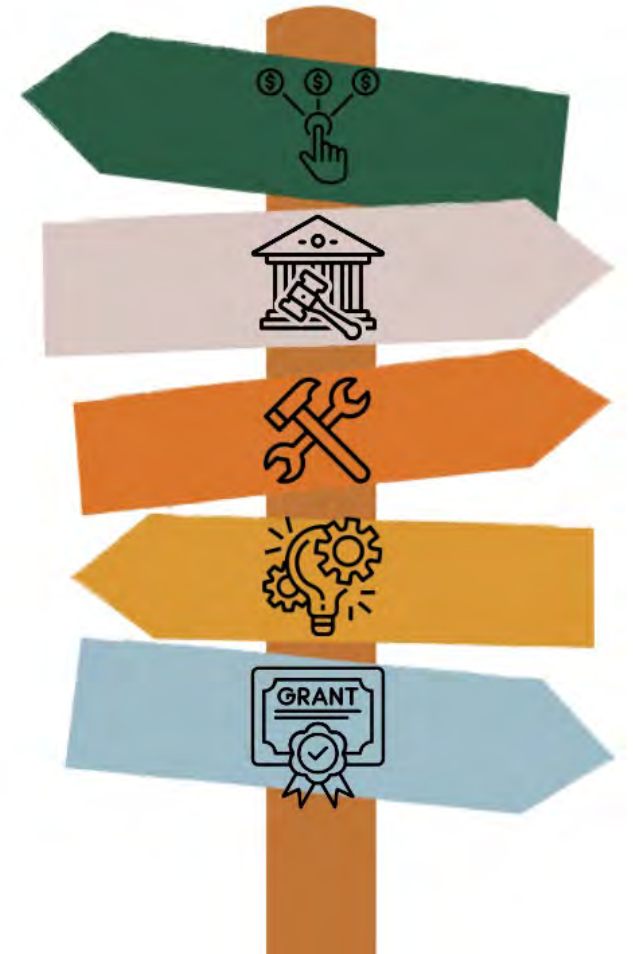
*Conserving, improving, and protecting our natural resources and environment;  
Ensuring a clean, affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy supply.*

[CT Recreational Trails](#)

[Connecticut Greenways Council](#)



# Funding Mechanisms for Maintenance and Improvements



# Project Updates, Trail Conditions, Closures, Q&A



Photo credit: Stan Malcom