

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Recreational Trail Development and Improvement Request

Requests for new trail and public recreational use facilities require management evaluation and environmental review. Some state parks contain forestland managed for timber, all state forests are open for recreational activities and, some state parks and forests have natural preserves and sites of geologic and historic interest

- Request forms must be filled out completely and submitted to the site supervisor
- All projects must incorporate appropriate NH Best Management Practices for Trail Construction & Maintenance
- Attach a topographical map in sufficient detail to show the proposed activity.
- Proposed project must be designed for safe multiple use recreation.

Name of Organization: Central NH NEMBA

Contact Person: Nick Holmes, Matt Bowser, Benjamin Kramer

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Section 1: Project Information *(To be filled out by person initiating the project request)*

Date:

Project Name: Rollins State Park MTB Trail

State Property: Rollins State Park

Project Location: 1066 Kearsarge Mountain Rd, Warner, NH 03278

Anticipated Funding Source: Grants and private donations.

Section 2: Project Description

Project Description: *Describe the purpose and proposed uses of the project and how it will benefit or address operational deficiencies (be as descriptive as possible; discuss alternatives considered, attach photographs, concept sketches, etc.).*

The purpose of this project is to offer an additional passive recreational use for Rollins State Park by creating a multiuse trail or trails from the summit parking area (or nearby) down to the welcome center gate area. The trail(s) would be entered from the existing access road, at the toll road upper lot or at one or more waypoints. We believe this would be a permitted use according to the Warner Zoning ordinance and zoning map which has Rollins State Park in an Open Recreation District. The trail will start about three hundred feet below the top parking lot, accessed by the road. It will end a couple hundred feet from the pit toilets down below, where the walking path extends past the toilets into the state forest. The entirety of the trail will be on state land

How will the project benefit resource protection and/or address operational deficiencies at the site??

The project will use best practices for trail construction and select the areas of lowest resource impact for locations of trails. The operational deficiency at the site is revenues from park admissions are not currently covering costs.

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Today there are no trails from the park toll entrance to the upper end of the toll road. With the dramatic increase of mountain biking over recent years we believe the location and terrain potential of Rollins State Park has the potential to expand visitations significantly. Hikers and snowshoers could also benefit from this trail.

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How will the project be accomplished (contract/volunteer)?

Trail-building would be accomplished by a specialized contractor, expert in creating low-maintenance and low-impact trails. The project and ongoing maintenance would be undertaken by volunteers, specifically engaging regional chapter members of New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) and, as needed, contract-based, expense of which would be underwritten with private funding. To create the trail, trained professionals with chainsaws will enter the forest and clear trees in the trail path as needed. A small tractor with a front shovel will be used to bring in rocks to lay in the trail as a form of “armoring” the surface that which people will be traveling on. As of initial survey there is no need for a bridge. The proposed trail does not go over any flowing water. If the trail finds itself going through land that is water draining, a small low lying wooden platform will be created to allow people to travel without disturbing the dirt and allowing water to flow

Does this project accomplish a goal in a management plan for the property or support a regional recreational plan?

An overarching goal is to frame the Kearsarge Valley area as cycling-friendly, with lots of on and off-road options. This gravity trail could be an important part of meeting that goal. The Friends of the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail is working to build a rail trail from Concord to Newbury. 11.5 miles of rail trail would be in Warner. Road cyclists routinely incorporate trips to downtown Warner which has multiple restaurants and a coffee shop. Adding regular mountain biking trails and a downhill mountain bike trail would complete the mix.

Who do you consider will be the primary users of the trail? *Hikers, bikers, equestrian, other?*

Mostly mountain biking but also hiking and other non-motorized trail use like snowshoeing. Considering the terrain and elevation, the trail will be considered intermediate difficulty. For bikers, while it will be possible to ride uphill, the trail design and intent will likely see zero uphill trail riding. For hikers, they are welcome to walk uphill. There will be plenty of signage in both directions cautioning traffic and to practice safe conduct, and there will be enough visibility for trail users to see others well in advance. Everyone will have access to the trail from either the start or end, but because the trail can be steep at times usage of the trail will likely be restricted to more able-bodied people. Because this is a point to point trail, usage will likely be one of two methods. First method is driving to one end of the trail, traversing the length on the trail, then utilizing either the trail or the auto road to get back to where they are parked. Second method will be coordinating with people to get dropped off at one end and traversing the length while the car and spare driver will use the auto road to travel to the other end. For bikers, it would be an even split of biking up the auto road to the top to ride the trail down or working with a friend in a car to arrange the drop off. They would park at the top. For hikers, they will likely stay on the trail, although those that travel up will want to use the auto road to walk down, as the trail will be very steep at points. Few hikers walk the auto road and there is sufficient parking at the park entrance for those that want to hike this trail as opposed to the dedicated trail on the north side of the mountain. The state can decide if they would want to expand land access to allow parking at the bottom

Does the trail impact any known natural and/or cultural resources?

Central NH Regional Planning produced a wildlife impact map which is attached. Erik Nelson is looking at NH DataCheck for hits. We would design using best practices to select areas of the lowest possible impacts and best erosion and water management. With these maps the vast majority of the trail will be on drier land. For the areas that are in more of the watershed areas, the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) will use best practices. One of these best practices include “armoring” the trail with large slabs of rocks. Once the rocks are set in, they will stay put and weather erosion and wear far better than dirt

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Does the project have infrastructure requiring long-term maintenance? Is there a stewardship proposal for the infrastructure?

Ongoing maintenance would be undertaken by volunteers, specifically engaging regional chapter members of New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) and, as needed, contract-based, expense of which would be underwritten with private funding. Because of NEMBA's expertise and community engagement, NEMBA members regularly checking in with the trail and the park will be the long term maintenance plan. Maintenance will be done by traveling the trail and scheduling regular intervals to clear the trail of forest debris and ensure the forest floor is appropriate for regular usage. Long term maintenance of the trail will be minimal, as with avoiding drainage areas and the armoring as necessary will eliminate most long term wear

Attachments

- 1. Project location map**
- 2. Photographs of existing site**
- 3. Concept Sketches**
- 4. Specifications for installation or construction**