

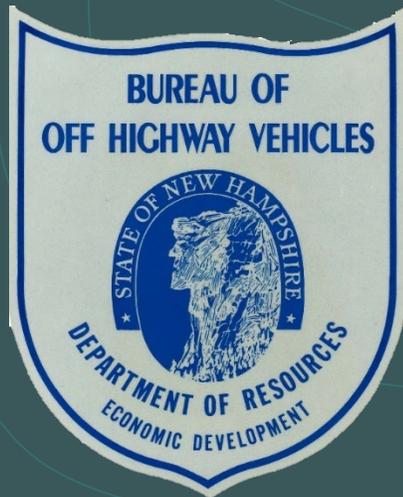
New Hampshire Bureau of Trails

NH Rail Trail Coalition
Conference
October 17, 2025



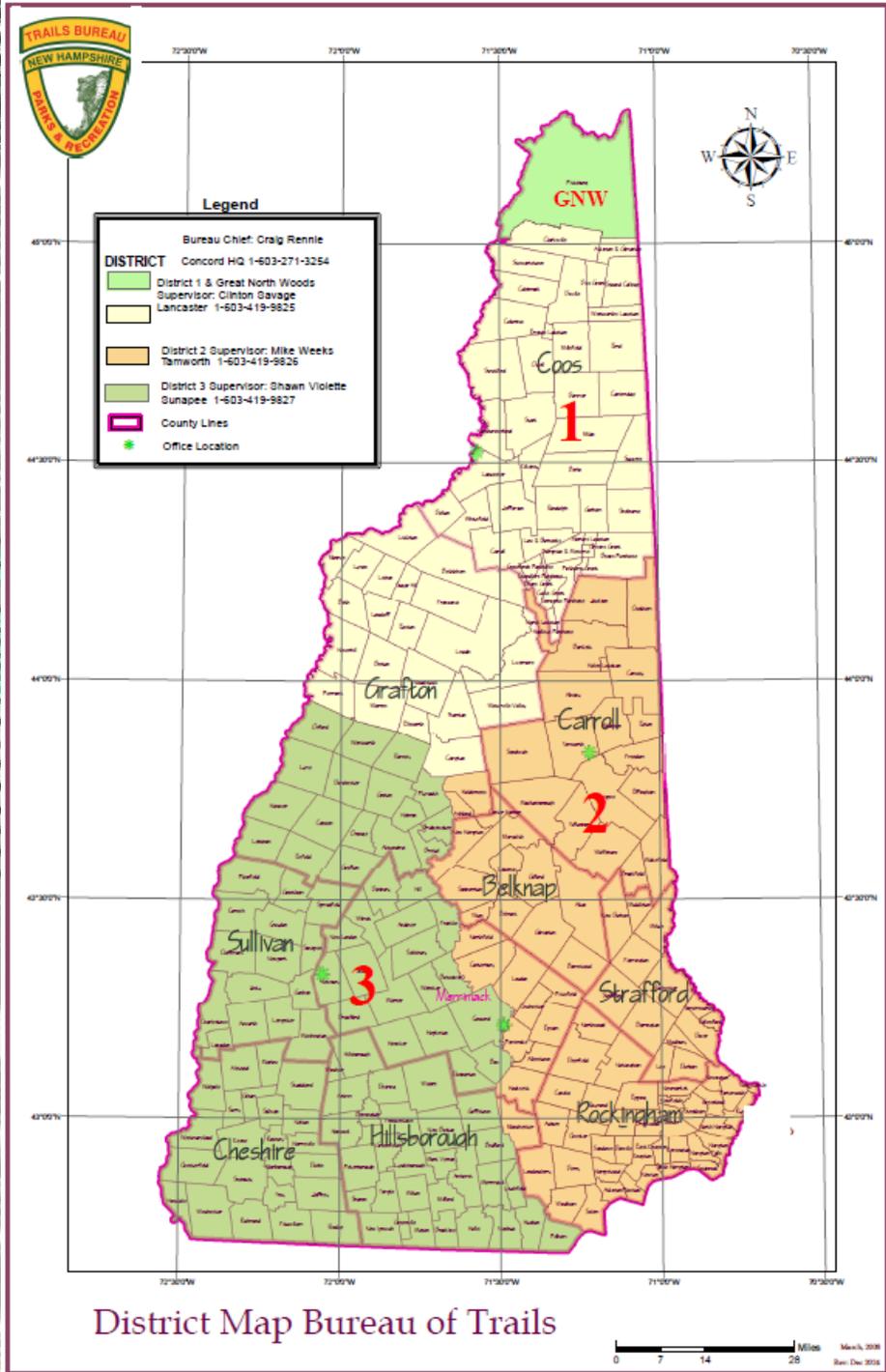
History

- Created in 1973, by HB 10, as the **Bureau of Off-Highway Vehicles** and charged with trying to manage snowmobile & trailbike activities of the time.
- In 1993 name changed to **Bureau of Trails (BOT)** to reflect the expanding role of the Bureau, including non-motorized trails with the addition of the Recreational Trails Program grant.



Who are the Bureau of Trails?





Where do we operate?

- The statewide trail system
- Throughout NH, the Bureau manages 300+ miles of state-owned Recreational Rail Trails, 7,000 miles of snowmobile trails, over 1,000 miles of OHRV trails.
- BOT administers trails on state & federal lands and assists organizations, municipalities and OHRV/snowmobile clubs with trail-related activities on both public and private lands. Approximately 80% of our trail network occurs on private property!
- NH state's trail system is divided into 3 districts for our field staff to cover.

How do we fund it?

- The Trails Bureau is funded *SOLELY* by **OHRV** and **snowmobile** registrations and gas taxes on OHRV vehicle usage.
- The bureau does **NOT** receive general funds or State Park toll booth fees.

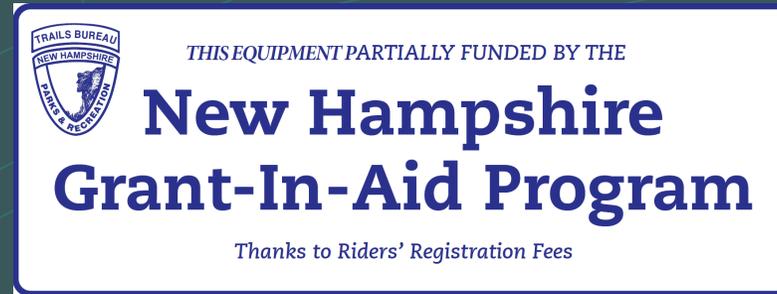


What we do: Bureau Responsibilities

- Plan, develop & maintain the Statewide Trail System (RSA 216-F)
- Coordinate w/ F&G, F&L and DOT on OHRVs and snowmobile use in NH (RSA 215-A)
- Administer funds for trails

Grant In Aid (GIA)

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)



- Obtain easements and ROW for trails, trail facilities and/or property acquisition
- Act as liaison between landowners and OHRV & snowmobile users
- Recommend statutory changes relating to OHRVs/snowmobiles and rail trails
- Receive all requests for OHRV/snowmobile road crossings and connectors
- Participate in studying the effects of OHRV and snowmobile operation in NH
- Promote proper use of trail signs and trail etiquette



What we do: trail maintenance

Our field staff of skilled equipment operators perform various trail maintenance activities



We also work with numerous volunteers through motorized and non-motorized clubs to assist us with this maintenance



BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

For Erosion Control During Trail Maintenance and Construction

NH Trail Construction and Maintenance Manual



Keep trails out of the water; and water out of the Trails

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
Department of Resources and
Economic Development
Division of Parks & Recreation
Bureau of Trails



What we do:
grading &
grooming





What we
do:
Bridge
work





Isreal River Bridge Abutment repairs on Presidential RT





Washout on the Sugar River Rail Trail in Claremont



Bio-engineered bank stabilization using root wads, pilings and plantings

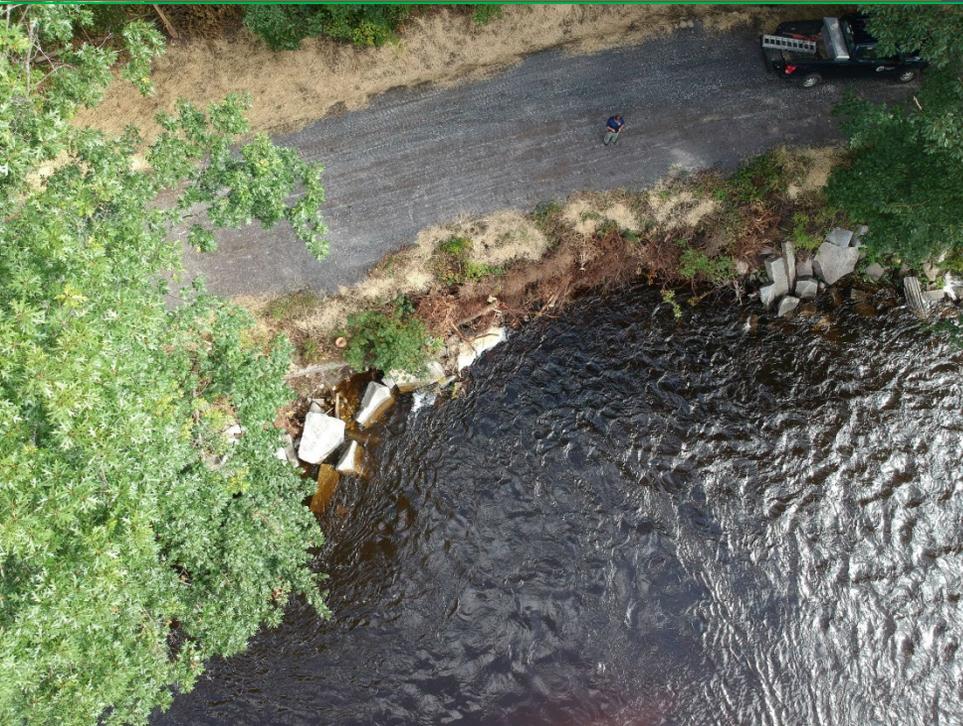




bank plantings added along the top of the bank



After one growing season, the banks have become well established with vegetation and no evidence of erosion



Aerial view showing completed bank stabilization



Bridge Repair on the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail in Woodsville





Washout on the Ammonoosuc Rail Trail in Lisbon





ALL COMPLETE!



OLD 😞 (heavy)



NEW! 😊 (light)

Replaced all
Gates on
Rockingham
Rec Rail Trail
(Freemont
Branch)



Tunnel Paving on Northern Rail Trail

What we do: (unconventional) trail maintenance



Partnerships & Volunteers



Special Events



Rail Trails Throughout NH that DNCR maintains

- **Motorized use with snow cover**

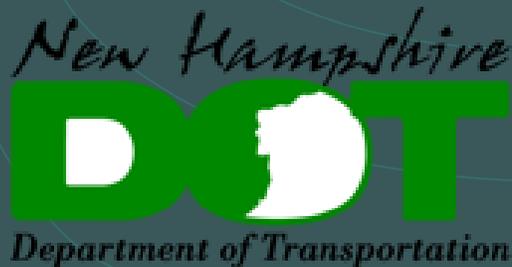
- Cotton Valley Rail Trail (Wolfeboro-Wakefield) 12 miles
- Presidential Recreational Rail Trail (Jefferson-Gorham) 18.3 miles
- Profile Recreational Rail Trail (Bethlehem) 1.5 miles

- **Non-Motorized except for snowmobile use**

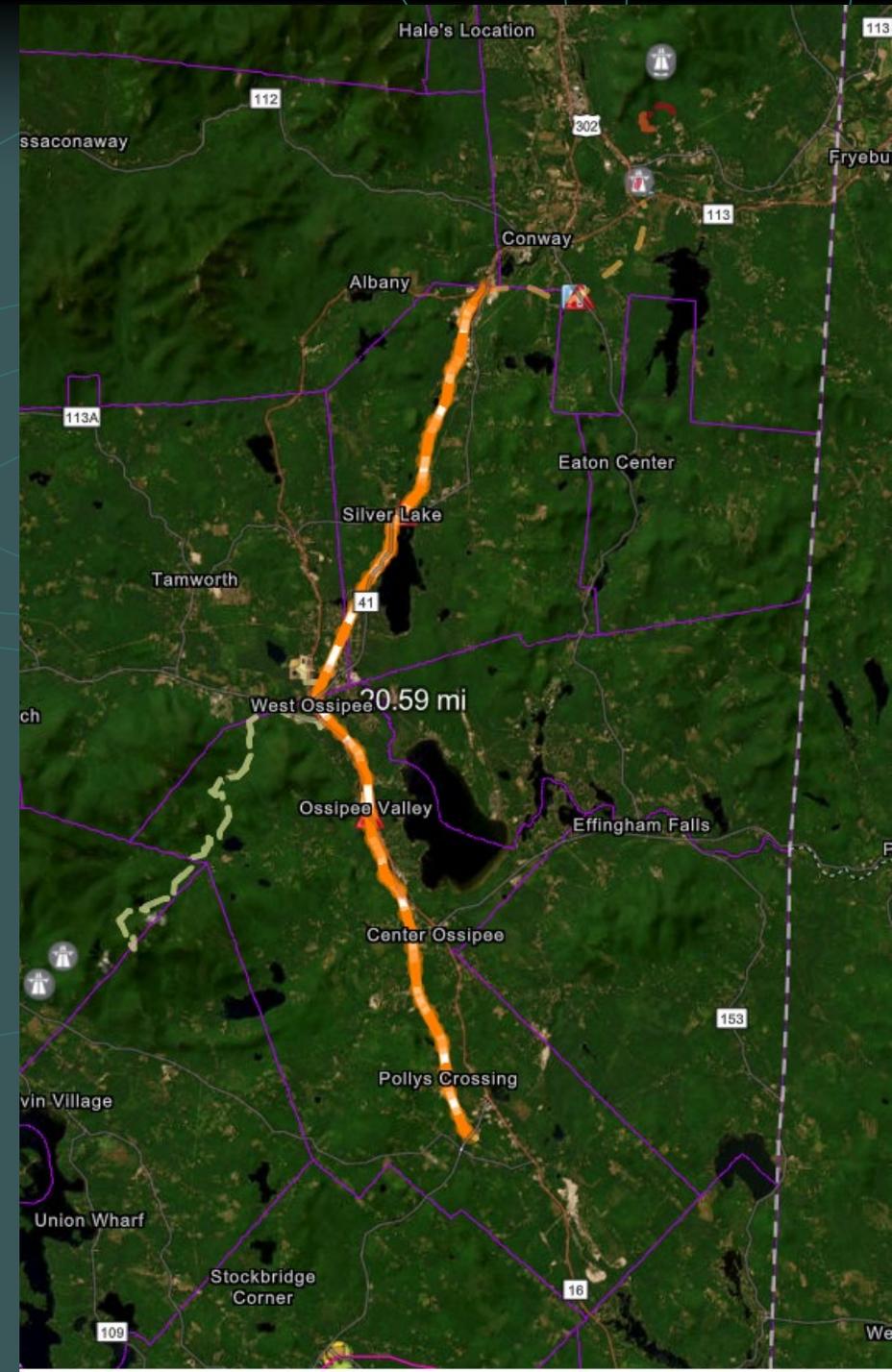
- Ashuelot Recreational Rail Trail (Keene-Winchester) 21 miles
- Cheshire Recreational Rail Trail (North Walpole-Fitzwilliam) 42 miles
- Conway Branch Recreational Rail Trail (Ossipee-Conway) 21 miles
- Farmington Recreational Rail Trail (Farmington-Rochester) 6 miles
- Fort Hill Recreational Rail Trail (Hinsdale) 8.9 miles
- Monadnock Recreational Rail Trail (Mass line-Jaffrey) 7.2 miles
- Northern Recreational Rail Trail (Boscawen-Lebanon) 59.3 miles
- Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail, Portsmouth Branch (Manchester-Newfields) -25.3 miles

Conway Branch Rail Line

- Proposal from HB 1468 study committee to transfer rail from DOT to DNCR management for future recreational rail trail
- Roughly 21 miles from Rt 28 in Ossipee to Albany town border
- 700' section that is privately owned just north of Silver Lake
- Currently being used as an existing snowmobile trail (Corridor 19, major north/south corridor)
- Conway Branch Rail Trail Advisory Committee was formed in June 2025 to gather public input for DNCR Commissioner for future use of this line.



New Hampshire
Department of
Transportation



State Rail Trails Plan



- Completed by DOT in 2022
- Senate Bill 185 stated to update the 2005 State Trails Plan by DOT to guide the preservation and investment in NH's state-owned rail corridors.
- Inventoried the state-owned rail trails
 - Owner can be DOT or DNCR with *management* or *maintenance* responsibilities
 - DNCR maintains any state-owned Rail Trail allowing snowmobile or OHRV use
 - (ex: Presidential, Ammonoosuc, Cheshire, Ashuelot, etc.)
 - In some cases, this includes property management (ex: dealing with encroachments) for the line in addition to maintenance
 - (ex: Sugar River, Rock Rec Freemont, Warren, Cotton Valley, Conway)
 - DOT managed state owned rail trails without snowmobile or OHRV use, but usually form sub-agreements with local municipalities to delegate these tasks
 - (Ex: Salem, Windham, WOW, etc.)



State Rail Trails Plan

What can YOU do?

- **Join a local club (non-motorized, snowmobile, OHRV, etc.)**
 - Good opportunity to make friends! Attend the club/county meetings
 - Clubs usually need help with labor and administrative tasks
 - Clubs are good contacts for problems on trails (tree down) and can elevate to Trails Bureau if needed
- **Assist with volunteer days**
 - NH State Parks has a volunteer coordinator that can assist finding local clubs in your area and interest
- **Donate to your local club (or the Trails Bureau or NHRTC)**
 - Local clubs use donations to match grants

Questions?

