

Dear Ms. Brassard,

Please accept these comments on the Management Plan for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

Forgive me, but the only word I can think of for the concept of applying herbicides to a hiking/biking trail is "ridiculous"! The purpose of the trail is for getting out in the fresh air for healthy exercise. People who exercise generally breathe at least twice as fast as they do when they are not exercising. Small children dart on and off the trail. Horses and dogs snack on the vegetation. Children come into direct contact with pets who may wade through treated vegetation. All of these situations increase the non-target exposure from herbicide applications.

This type of use of herbicides is unprecedented - and it is an extremely bad precedent to establish.

In addition, the proposal to appoint a member of VASA to the LVRT Committee is insulting to the non-motorized trail user community. Property owners abutting the trail and non-motorized trail users turned out in force to public hearings last fall to object to the potential use -and the current illegal use - of the trail by ATVerS. This is VAST's response to those concerns? The management plan states that the committee "shall include motorized and non-motorized USERS of the trail". ATVerS are not allowed to USE the trail, and have no place on the committee. VAST would appoint non-using motorized interests instead of or before it would appoint abutting property users? To be fair, and to represent all interests and uses equitably, there would be 3 non-motorized users, 3 economic development representatives (one from each county), 3 abutting landowners (one from each county), and 2 motorized users. It is fair to have 2 motorized users on the committee because they use the trail only 3 out of 12 months. The rest of the year it is a non-motorized trail.

This committee is charged with "resolving issues & conflicts as they arise". If historic patterns continue, the issues and conflicts that arise will likely be between motorized and non-motorized users and between users and landowners. How fair would any arbitration be that does not include all parties?

It doesn't seem fair to me to have the members of this committee appointed by VAST. VAST's opportunity to appoint VAST members who are also mushers, hikers, bikers or horse riders has been noted.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

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