Management of the D & H Rail Trail

FPR manages the two sections of nearly equal length as a multiple use trail open to non-motorized use in summer months and to non-motorized and snowmobile use in winter months. The D&H Trail Advisory Council, established in 1996, provides management input. VAST also provides management input and assistance and maintains portions of the trail as a snowmobile corridor trail. Recent major investments in the trail include using funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to rebuild 10 bridges in 2010.

The D & H Rail Trail was created with assistance from the Rails to Trails Conservancy, a 501(c)3 nonprofit devoted to creating a nationwide network of rail trails to promote healthy, connected communities.

Trail Use Guidelines

Stay on the trail: Please respect the private property of adjacent landowners. Leaving the trail may constitute trespassing on private property.

Yield the right-of-way: When approaching oncoming trail users, always move to your right. When overtaking slower moving users, announce your intentions and pass on the left.

Stop at all road crossings: Trail users must stop and yield to traffic at all intersections with public highways. There are 16 intersections with public roads; please use extreme caution when proceeding.

Appropriate gear: Wear clothing and protective equipment matched to the activity you pursue. Helmets are strongly recommended for bicycling, horseback riding and snowmobiling.

Watch for obstacles: You may encounter natural obstructions such as fallen trees, rats, washouts or wildlife.

Trail surface: Care should be taken when approaching bridges as there is normally a small transition between the cinder or gravel trail tread and the bridge abutment. The trail has several different types of tread material; some sections may be softer than others.

Pets: Pets are welcome on the trail but must be under owner’s control at all times. Dogs should be kept on a leash for their own protection as well as other users and wildlife.

Please do not litter.

Welcome to the D & H Rail Trail

The D & H Rail Trail is a 19.8-mile rail trail that traverses two non-contiguous sections of the former Washington Branch of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. The trail is managed and maintained by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation as a multiple-use trail.

History of the Delaware & Hudson Railroad

The Delaware and Hudson Canal Company was incorporated in 1823 in New York and Pennsylvania to construct a canal and towpath system along the Delaware and Hudson Rivers as a means of improving freight movement. As the decades progressed and transportation methods changed, the company built many rail lines in New York and Pennsylvania and eventually became the Delaware and Hudson Company. The rail system connected coal fields in eastern Pennsylvania with the industrial and metropolitan centers in New York and Pennsylvania; the line was also an important connection to the eastern seaboard, being commonly referred to as the “bridge line to New England.” The D & H Rail Trail occupies part of the Washington Branch which ran from Eagle Bridge, New York to Castleton, Vermont. This line was constructed as part of a rail system that connected Albany with Montreal.

The Washington Branch line flourished for a time around the turn of the 20th century, running the “slate picker,”

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