



Hiking/biking trails are established in the following towns: Caribou, Stockholm, New Sweden and Van Buren.

What:

Four different towns in northern Maine have created walking and biking trails from existing winter ski trails, making it easier to be physically active year-round. The ski trails, which were once rough brush and mud in the spring, summer and fall are now packed dirt and loose gravel with bridges over wet areas making them enjoyable for walking and biking. They are placed on town-owned land where they will be protected for many years to come and enjoyed by all.

Why:

The trails were established in an effort to increase physical activity for community members. In these four towns there were limited or nonexistent sidewalks or paved shoulders. The primary roads are used by large pulp trucks going at high speeds which makes walking and biking unsafe. To reduce these barriers to physical activity in these towns, converting winter ski trails into seasonal biking and walking trails for public use was a great solution.

Who:

Town officials from each of the four towns collaborated with the Power of Prevention Project Director, Dean Grivois.

- Van Buren:
 - Skip Dumais, Water District Manager
 - Larry Cote, Town Manager
 - Daniel Lapoint, Director of Economic and Community Development
- Caribou:
 - Kathleen A. Mazzuchelli, Parks and Recreation Manager
 - Dick Fortier, Director of Purchasing, Cary Medical Center
- Stockholm:
 - Chairman of Selectman
- New Sweden:
 - Kitty Doar, School Department
- Power of Prevention Project Director:
 - Dean Grivois



How:

Power of Prevention Project Director, Dean Grivois, offers a portion of his grant funding from the Maine Bureau of Health to towns who agree to provide a 50% match to the funding to improve the ski trails for walking and biking. Each town receives a different amount based on their project goals and match available.

Hiking/biking trails are established (continued)

When:

Initial contact between Dean Grivois and the town officials began in March of 2002. Trail work began in most areas as soon as the snow melted in the spring months. Due to a very wet and muddy spring, the trail improvements took longer than anticipated. Signs were posted during late summer and packing shale was applied by early fall. Final packed gravel was applied and trail work was completed in all four towns by late fall 2002. By spring 2003 a kick-off promotional event will take place and local newspapers and television channels will be contacted to help promote the event. Towns offices involved have also agreed to put the trail information on their Web sites.

Resources:

A local community group allocated funds to four different northern Maine towns. They required a 50% match in funding from each town involved. In-kind donations of time and materials from the towns were also counted towards the 50% match in funds required.

Lessons Learned:

Assessment of existing trails and town-owned vs. private land is an essential beginning point. To ensure sustainability, create trails on town-owned lands only. By having a financial investment to back up the project, it is easier to get buy-in, commitments and other donations. Seek out committed individuals to partner with. Approach big businesses for support. Consider the unpredictability of the weather and plan accordingly. Always be patient and appreciate what all workers and volunteers are doing for the trail systems. Create a realistic, detailed timeline and assume it will take double the time you planned.

Key Contacts:

- Van Buren:
 - Skip Dumais, Water District Manager, 868-2285, telephone and fax
- Caribou:
 - Kathleen A. Mazzuchelli, Parks and Recreation Manager, 493-4224, telephone
 - Dick Fortier, Purchasing Department Manager
Cary Medical Center, 498-1103, telephone
- Power of Prevention Project Director:
 - Dean Grivois, PD 868-2796, ext. 3039, telephone



Future Plans:

- To acquire additional funds through other sources such as mini grants which are available to town for such projects.
- Maintain and improve the trail systems by planting trees, building bridges and installing benches for rest breaks.
- Spring 2003 kick-off promotional event.