



## **MN Rovers Trail Committee meeting, June 3 2004, Ed Solstad's**

In Attendance: John Elliott, Tom Harris, Joanie Johnson, Torsten Muller, Ed Solstad, Tom Suter

### ***Incorporation and 501(c)(3) tax exempt status***

The trail now has its own corporation: "Minnesota Rovers Trails Association". In past meetings, it was agreed that the trail should be under the watch of the "Border Route Trail Association", so John is going to look into a name change with the Secretary of State. While working on the paperwork for the 501(c)(3) status, John discovered that our corporation is automatically considered to be tax exempt as we have "gross receipts of and not more than \$5000" a year.

However, to receive full benefits (lower mailing rates and exemption from sales taxes), we will still file with the IRS, after the name change with the Minnesota Secretary of State has been accomplished. Our incorporation went through on April 30, so John suggested to have our tax year run from May 1 to April 30.

### ***Scouting the Border Route Trail / Trail Clearing***

Tom Harris went on a scouting trip to the Border Route Trail from Clearwater Lake to the South Lake Trail. He found that the part from the South Lake Trail junction east to the second overlook west of Stairway portage "is awful." Tom further discovered from Rock Wood Lodge that the Forest Service is going to burn about a 7000 acre area in that vicinity (roughly a triangle between Rose, Duncan and Daniels Lakes) and he estimates that our trail could be affected on a length of up to 10 miles. Other burns, according to the Lodge, are planned in the area around Saucer Lake on the western end of the Border Route Trail (Gunflint Area).

This spring's clearing, both within and outside the BWCA, went well - Ed mentioned that the Pigeon River Section is almost back up to skiing standards. Tom hiked the cleared section around Clearwater and Gogebic Lakes last weekend and found them to be in excellent shape, and hopefully so for two or three years to come. The improvised trail markers are clearly visible in the woods on the Pigeon River Section.

Tom suggested to have three trail clearing trips into the BWCA this fall, to work on the stretch east of Gogebic Lake to West Pike Lake. This would extend our trail clearing effort from the spring and create a contiguous section of cleared trail. John mentioned the traditional mechanized trip on the weekend of the switch from Daylight Savings Time, and Ed is thinking about a late summer trip. For next Spring, Tom envisioned further work from West Pike Lake to McFarland Lake. This would create a long, contiguous section from the SHT connection on Rengo Road to just west of Clearwater Lake.

We recognized the need to get the dates and start looking for trail coordinators for the upcoming trips soon to get them advertised in the Newsletter of the Superior Hiking Trail Association.

The group discussed the possibility of a trail clearing trip to the Border Route Trail with volunteers from the American Hiking Association. The Kek Club offers such a trip annually, and they are very happy with the results. In order to advertise a week-long trip with the AHS, we would need to join the organization for \$50 annually. However, the group felt we do not currently have the resources to plan and advertise a trip by the AHS deadline in July, but we will keep this option in mind for next year.

### ***Kiosks for the BRT / Re-route of the NCST***

Torsten received the NCTA "Handbook for Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance" for design specifications of Kiosks and trail segments. However, Tom talked to Fred Szarka from the NPS office in Madison and found that we can obtain Kiosks, posts, stickers and signs from the NPS. The Kiosks cost \$1500, the expenses of which would be shared 50/50 by the BRTA and the NPS. We can use volunteer labor (at an hourly rate of roughly \$17) to match our share of the cost. A back-of-the-envelope calculation showed that during a three-day trail clearing trip, an eight-member crew accumulates more than 100 man-hours, which would pay for two kiosks. The NPS would also help with construction materials and clearing equipment, where the financials would be handled exclusively by the NPS.

For the BRT to be part of the NCST, the Forest Service needs to designate the BRT as foot-travel only, We will work with Tom Kaffine in Grand Marais to that effect. Also, the incorporation of the BRT into the NCTA requires approval from all involved land-owners, so we would need to contact the private land owners and the DNR to gain their approval. Gary Carlson was mentioned as a candidate due to his involvement with the DNR in previous BRT projects.

### ***Brochure and Publication of the BRT***

Tom designed a brochure trifold for a section of the trail, which includes a rough, not-for-navigation map and information about resorts that offer services and parking. It was received well by the FS Rangers in Grand Marais and by resort owners (Rock Wood and Clearwater Lodges). Tom will make the changes suggested and will forward a copy of the updated map to Joanie for further work. Printing costs (in color) for 100 two-sided copies is \$178 and \$120 at Kinko's and Office Max, respectively. John called one of his contacts and negotiated a price of 25¢ per copy, unfolded.

It was generally agreed among the group to start with one brochure describing a section of the trail that is in good condition and later expand to up to four maps/brochures which would be distributed along the Gunflint Trail and in the Ranger station in Grand Marais. Since our brochure includes information on businesses, the Rangers cannot display the brochure but will have to hand it out to interested hikers who ask. This was perceived as a plus, as people have a habit of picking up brochures and throwing them in the trash afterwards, unread. The brochure would be distributed among resorts close to the trail heads (South Lake Trail, and Daniels Lake Trail).

### ***Miscellaneous***

- Rock Wood Lodge is under new ownership, and the new owners appear to be very willing to work with us for the trail. They offered bunkhouse space for trail clearing trips and parking for hikers, if they get notified in advance. The owner is also VP of the Gunflint Trail Association and offered to help out with in other ways as well.
- Gary Moore has retired and will move away from the Twin Cities.
- Midwest Mountaineering offered \$5 gift certificates for trip participants on our spring trail clearing trips. Further, their owner agreed to offer free service in obtaining custom-printed water bottles (with the BRT and Midwest Mtn logos) and a 50¢ subsidy per bottle (for 144 bottles, cost is \$5.85 per bottle). We postponed a decision on the water bottle issue until we can get information about the balance in our trail fund.
- The issue of how to recruit more trip leaders and people to the BRTA was discussed again. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rovers was mentioned as a good way to re-connect with people involved in its construction. Tom Harris suggested a financial break for trip coordinators to attract more leaders. The committee thought that a worthwhile idea.
- Setting up of an e-group for the trail was discussed. Joanie will look into steps required to set one up.
- Torsten will contact Melissa to obtain account statements and ask for monthly updates.

**The next trail committee meeting was set for Thursday, July 8<sup>th</sup> 2004 at 7:30pm at Ed Solstad's house.**