BELMONT — Phase I of the Winnisquam Scenic Trail has gone out for construction bids after nearly 15 years of planning, fund-raising and wrangling with engineers and state officials over location, length and archeology.

The complete bid package was posted on the town of Belmont Website Friday afternoon. Bids shall be taken until 1 p.m. Tuesday, August 11 when they will be opened and read aloud at the Corner Meeting House.

When the Federal Transportation Enhancement Grant first became available in 2002 and 2003, Belmont initially looked at three portions of a trail that was supposed to go from downtown Franklin to Meredith. This phase that will be built first, runs from the Agway store on Rte. 2, near the Mosquito Bridge, to the Robert's Town Beach. Phase 2, said Land Use Technician Rick Ball in June, is slated to go to Jefferson Road. However, with the Federal Enhancement Grant set to expire at the end of this federal fiscal year (Oct. 1) it would have to be re-approved by Congress.
Since its initial design, there have been a few changes and a number of speed bumps — most notably a redesign near the Belknap Mall, a requirement for a fence along the railroad, and an archeological study last year that threatened to hold up the project to the point where it appeared the money would run out before it could be finalized.

The entire length of the trail, approximately 8,000 linear feet, will be paved with hot mix asphalt. Work includes but is not limited to the following: constructing 1.5 mile of trail including sub-base and hot mix asphalt pavement, drainage culverts, timber guard rail and fencing.

Copies of the contract may be obtained from The Louis Berger Group, Inc., 100 Commercial Street, 2nd Floor North, Manchester, NH 03101 upon payment of a non-refundable check in the amount of $100, payable to The Louis Berger Group, Inc.