

Belmont recreation trail to be finished at end of July

By GAIL OBER, LACONIA DAILY SUN

BELMONT — With the substantial completion date set for July 27, the Belmont Recreation Trail has reached the point where Land Use Technician Rick Ball is almost ready to breathe a sigh of relief.

Fifteen years in the making, this segment of the trail system that runs from the Laconia city line will be 1.6 miles long, 8 feet wide with a 1-foot shoulder on each side, paved, and planted with grass and wildflowers.

And with the Laconia segment from the Belmont town line to the train station set to break ground on July 5, the goal of a 9-mile trail running from Franklin to Meredith is one step closer.

"This will be a nice ride for the Beetles," said WOW Trail Committee Chairman Allan Beetle, who said it is one mile to pedal to Lakeport from his home, 4.5 contiguous miles from Lakeport to Belmont Agway along the trail and the return trip to his home.

Last week, the Belmont Recreational Alternative Trail Team met at the Corner Meeting House and began talking about Phase II, which would connect Belmont at the Winnisquam Bridge to downtown Tilton.

Ball told them there is another pocket of federal money allocated to the state for transportation alternatives trails to be spent over the next five years but said he expects it to be very competitive. He said Belmont's proposed Phase II is in the middle of the Franklin to Meredith and with some planning and engineering, a case could be made for Belmont role for a contiguous trail.

Committee member Donna Hepp said the goal now is to expand the committee membership to get people excited about Phase II. At that meeting, newcomer Dennis Grimes said he would join the board.

Key dates on the upcoming calendar include trail cleanup on Tuesday, June 28, from 6 to 8 p.m. Participants are encouraged to bring latex gloves and, for those who have them, safety vests for the clean up along Route 3. Board members will bring bags.

BRATT is also planning Show Me Days for July 9 and 10, when members will accompany attendees on hikes and explain the processes that went into making the trail.

A volunteer survey is now available on www.surveymonkey.com/r/RSNLYZ8 for people to say what interests them. Hepp said people can fill the survey out online, or print it, fill it out and drop it off at the Land Use Department in Town Hall or at the Recreation Department.





Belmont Land Use Technician Rick Ball (in orange) and Laconia WOW Trail Chairman Allan Beetle walk around a dump truck while viewing the almost completed Belmont Phase I of the recreational trail. (Gail Ober/Laconia Daily Sun)

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