SESSION TITLE : Utilizing Trail Building Contractors

CONVENER(S): Clare Cain

PARTICIPANTS: Tracy (NPS), Wollmer (IATA), Ketchmark (NCTA), Malazhan (IATA), Schmid (USFS), Elkinton (PNTS, NPS), Cain (CFPA)

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Hybrid contracting: integrating volunteers into contractor work projects
    - One recommended method for hybrid work: trail contractors work during the week on specialized projects or w/ specialized equipment, volunteers join on the weekend to accomplish more basic tasks. Allows volunteers to be involved and invested in the project and the outcome w/out having to train or be worried about safety around mechanized equipment
    - Using the Student Conservation Association (SCA) & state conservation corps offer good opportunities to integrate volunteers w/ the crew. These groups are also a good option for larger maintenance projects.

2. Politics of using trail building contractors
    - A number of participants had some experience working w/ a trail contractor. Some experienced confusion/ misunderstandings when a volunteer was hired to work w/ contractors
    - Will volunteers be invested in the trail if they are not engaged in the construction of that portion of trail? Will they be willing to maintain a trail that they haven't built? Generally agreed that yes, there would be investment if the volunteer group was aware of why it was necessary to use the contractor and how they might be integrated into the planning of work for the contractor.
    - Recommend a "sales-pitch" to local volunteer chapter on why to use contractors in certain places, and volunteers in others. Engage the volunteers in the more exciting work and use contractors in areas where it will be difficult to recruit large volunteer crews.

3. Non-profit acting as contractor
    - In many instances the non-profit is actually acting as the contractor w/in state & federal grants. This allows the non-profit to contract out work if necessary. The non-profit is well-positioned to deal w/ the administrative side of the project and to ride herd on compliance issues that the agency or contractor might not necessarily be as motivated/willing to tackle.

4. Using Trail Building Contractors: General Conversation
    - Is there a concern of setting a precedent for mechanized equipment on trails by using contractors? Volunteers often look to the path of least resistance and the trail building machines are tempting but can be a

nightmare for the non-profit in terms of liability & safety & adequate training.

- Generally agreed that contractors can be a great compliment to an all-volunteer trails program. Have to handle it appropriately.
- Suggested writing a 1-year maintenance plan into the contractor's contract to make sure all structures and new trail perform to standard.

5. Recommended Resources for Follow-up

- National Trails Training Partnership website: www.nttp.net
- USFS Enterprise Teams: can be contracted outside of the USFS, expensive but efficient, can navigate the red tape of compliance
- International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) training center in Atlanta
- Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ): 5-year contract opportunity w/ USFS (allows a group to lump projects together)
- Professional Trailbuilders Association: (www.trailbuilders.org) Annual Conference March 13-18, 2011- Asheville, NC

RECOMMENDATION for PNTS ACTION:

- Invite trail contractor to future PNTS meeting
- Invite an agency contract officer to future PNTS meeting
- Compile photos from each NST on trailbuilding/maintenance to display at upcoming meeting