

Kelsey Notch Trail Environmental Compliance Report 2024

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Introduction

The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) is required to submit an environmental compliance report to the New Hampshire Council on Resources and Development (CORD) annually. The Council on Resources and Development provides a forum for interagency cooperation in assuring consistency with established policies relating to the environment, natural resources, and growth management issues under RSA 162-C. This report is a requirement of the conditional approval voted on by CORD on March 11, 2021 (<https://www.nheconomy.com/getmedia/cf511942-6bfb-4a9d-9742-46ccfa945ed9/20210311-minutes.pdf>), and subsequent letter by CORD, dated March 29, 2021 for the Kelsey Notch Trail.

The full motion that was approved by a majority vote at the March 9, 2023 CORD meeting was:

“Department of Natural and Cultural Resources officially recognizes the Kelsey Notch Trail as a designated trail on the condition that monitoring occur twice annually during the riding season and that year-end maintenance work, if needed, be done prior to seasonal trail closure. The first monitoring visit would be conducted in mid-July at/near the peak of riding activity followed by a second visit in late October, just prior to year-end maintenance and close-out. The monitoring team would consist of North Region representatives from the Division of Forests & Lands, Fish & Game, and Bureau of Trails. If any significant erosion or other environmental impacts are observed at any monitoring visit, those conditions would be addressed as promptly as the state contracting process will allow. A comprehensive monitoring report will be submitted to CORD annually. Should monitoring indicate persistent unmitigated issues of soil erosion, water quality violations, or other significant environmental impacts, the status of the trail on Nash Stream Forest will be reassessed by CORD and DNCR. However, the (Fish and Game) Department continues to have concerns on the impact of ATV noise on the high-volume trail use days during the nesting season, particular during spring and early summer month as stated in the 2022 monitoring report. NHFG ask that these concerns remain in the annual monitoring reports until such time that there is an effective strategy or method to evaluate these impacts and determine if trail use should be reduced, restricted, or otherwise managed to reduce impacts if any are found.”

Overview of OHRV Trails in this report

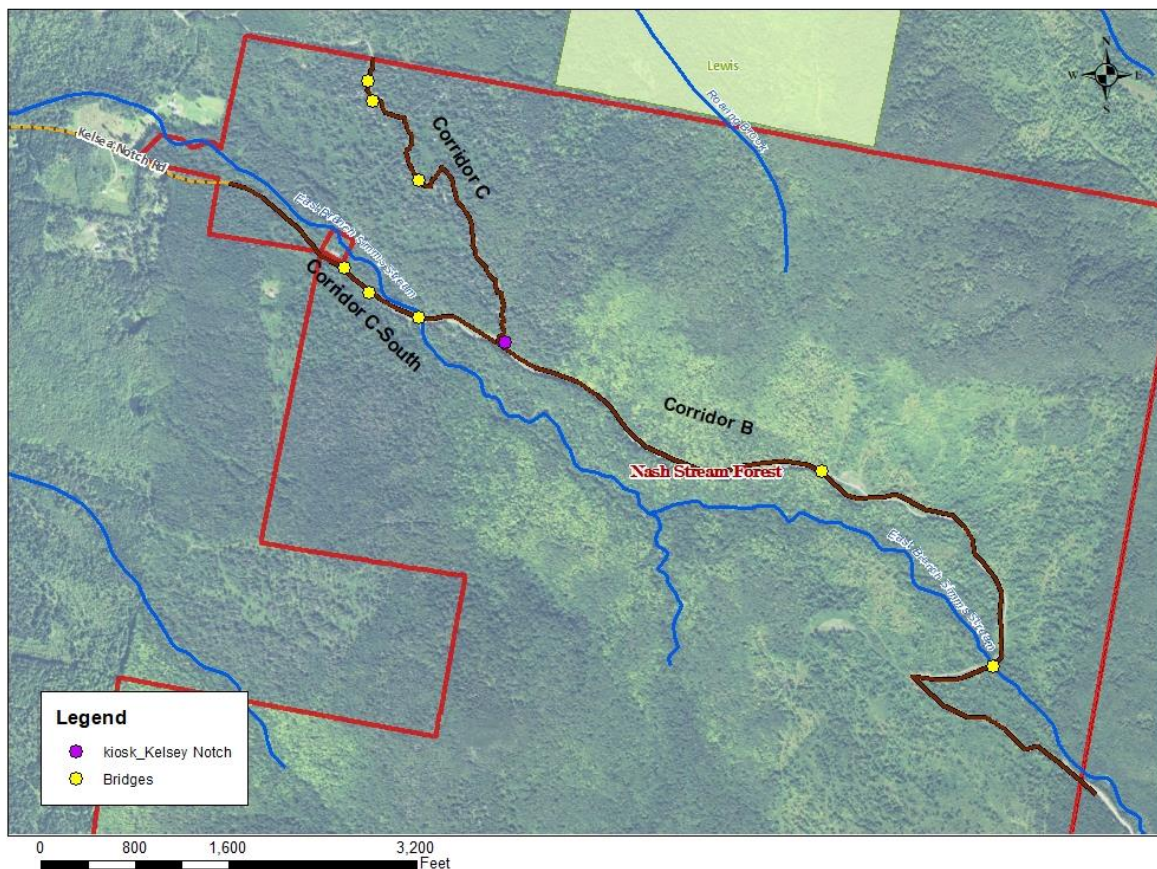


Figure 1- Depicts the trail map

There are three sections of trail that are referred to throughout this document: Corridor B, Corridor C-North and Corridor C-South.

Corridor B – The section of trail known as Corridor B, starts at the kiosk and heads east to the top of the hill and boundary line with Wagner Forest Management. This trail is mostly an old logging road approximately half of it is graveled.

Corridor C – This section of trail heads north from the kiosk toward Diamond Peaks Store and is a major connector to points north such as Colebrook and Pittsburg. This trail was not previously a road and it is more narrow and not graveled like the other trails.

Corridor C-South – This section of trail is the east/west trail from Kelsey Notch Road and Bungy Road and leads to points south. Sections of this trail were existing road and used for logging in the past and most of it is graveled.

Table 1- Depicts the Trail Count Data for 2024 and previous years.

	<u>Nash Stream Trail Count Data</u>			
<u>Trail name</u>	<u>2021 count</u>	<u>2022 count</u>	<u>2023 count</u>	<u>2024 count</u>
Kelsey Corr B	12293	10167	9798	11855
Kelsey Corr C North	counter error	11035	11022	12118
Kelsey Corr C South*	4845	4194	4437	4491

Each year recommendations are made to serve as the action items for the following season or if necessary to be dealt with immediately, if there is a more significant issue. Below are the action items from the 2023 report.

2023 Recommendations

- Continue to monitor and treat the invasive species as needed. It may take many seasons to eradicate the *Phragmites australis* and it should be monitored during the growing season.

- Add an additional straw waddle or other erosion control devices just north of the culvert where sedimentation could occur.

Summary for 2024

Dates of Field Visits- July 12, 2024 and October 24, 2024

Staff in attendance- Jake DeBow (NHFG-Regional Wildlife Biologist), Dalton Courtemarche (NHFG- Fisheries Biologist), Clint Savage (NH Trails Bureau-Regional Supervisor), and Maggie Machinist (NH Forests and Lands-Regional Forester)

The Kelsey Notch Trail opened on May 24, 2024 for the season and closed on October 14, 2024.

The monitoring visit on **July 12, 2024** was immediately following a very large rain event, where 4+ inches of rain was received. Considering the amount of rain that occurred, the trail was in better shape than expected. There were some trouble spots that had minor erosion but there were no major washouts. Some of the drainage ditches had been filled with sediment from the recent storm and needed to be cleaned out.

It was hard to determine how the amount of traffic had impacted the trail surface due to the storm.



Figure 2 & 3- Depicts minor surface erosion after the July storm event



Figure 4 & 5- Depicts filled ditch lines and sediment traps from runoff

On **October 24, 2024**, the second monitoring trip occurred. The trail was being worked on during the site visit. Due to the ongoing maintenance, the trail was in much better condition than the previous monitoring trip in July.

There were two bridges that had broken pieces on the edge where the “wheel curb” is located. None of these broken pieces affect the integrity or functionality of the bridge but should be fixed for safety reasons at some point in the next season.



Figure 6 & 7- Depicts sections of broken bridges that need repair



Figure 8 & 9- Shows the condition of the trail surface

In 2020, *Phragmites australis* was found onsite. These areas were treated on September 3, 2021, with glyphosate by Fish and Game staff who are licensed pesticide applicators. During our 2022 visit no plants were found., However in 2023 a new site was located. This will continue to be monitored by Forests and Lands and Fish and Game staff. The *phragmites australis* was not treated in 2024.



Figure 10 & 11- Pictures of the new locations of phragmites that was found during the monitoring trip.

A new location of *phragmites australis* was found during the October 2024 inspection. It was flagged so that it can be continually monitored. Hopefully, the new sites can be treated during the summer of 2025 while the leaves are on.



A recommendation of the 2023 report was to add additional erosion control devices around one of the larger culverts that has water running continuously. There was one previously added upslope.

Figure 12- Depicts straw waddle added after the trail maintenance work to minimize erosion.

Work Completed -Trail maintenance was completed collaboratively by the Metallak ATV Club and the NH Bureau of Trails. The Metallak ATV club received \$6,000 in Grant in Aid funds for 40 hours of work using a mower with a brontosaurus head to remove overgrown vegetation from the edges of the trails. Corridor B and C- South had bronto work completed on them this year.

The Trails Bureau staff also utilized the tractor with rock crusher attachment to re-process the surface material on the entire trail. The trail was graded afterward by Trails Bureau staff.



Figure 13 & 14- Illustrates the mowing along the trail with the Brontosaurus mulching head



Figure 15 & 16- Depicts the rock crusher re-surfacing the road and existing conditions of trail.

The Trails Bureau staff also utilized the tractor with rock crusher attachment to re-process the material on the entire trail. The trail was graded afterward by Trails Bureau staff.



Figure 17- Depicts the culvert that was damaged during trail maintenance.

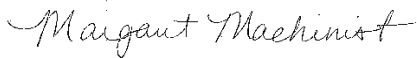
During construction, a culvert was damaged. The Trails Bureau went in and replaced the culvert while they had equipment on site.

2024 Recommendations

- Make sure the ditches and culverts are cleaned out and there are no obstructions following large rain events like the one in July, 2024.
- Treat the australis phragmites and continue to monitor the invasive species so that it does not spread.
- Repair bridges that had broken railings (see photos above)
- Repair broken culverts from maintenance work.

Fish and Game continues to have concern regarding wildlife impact of ATV noise during high volume trail use days. This is of particular concern during spring and early summer months (May/June) when song birds are nesting/ fledging and mammals are in the early days of raising young. For example, based on trip counter data Saturday May 28th and Sunday May 29th of 2022 saw 427 and 629 trips respectfully on the Corridor C North trail. It is conceivable that >1000 trips of ATV's during a two-day period could be disruptive during the calving period for animals like deer and moose. The overall season numbers were even higher this year, which could correlate to more trips on busy weekends like Memorial Day but that data was not teased out for this year.

The trail is currently closed for the season until the spring of 2025, when conditions allow, after May 25.



Margaret Machinist, Regional Forester



Clint Savage, Trails Bureau District Supervisor



Jake DeBow, Regional Wildlife Biologist

Dalton had left state service before this report was completed

Dalton Courtemarche, Fisheries Biologist

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

Intra-Department Communication

TO: Nash Stream Forest Citizens Committee
Council on Resources and Development

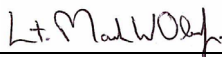
FROM: Lt. Mark W. Ober, Jr.
District One Chief

DATE: October 18, 2024

SUBJECT: 2024 NASH STREAM ENFORCEMENT MEMO

As of this date there were no documented OHRV enforcement actions on the Kelsey Notch Trail and West Side Trail of the Nash Stream Forest during the 2024 OHRV riding season. In addition, there were no documented crashes or other emergency calls for service on these trail systems.

No other law enforcement activity was relayed to me by the conservation officers whose patrols include the Nash Stream Forest.



Lt. Mark W. Ober, Jr.
District One Chief