

Rail Trail Planning Initiative Open House

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(KEENE) - Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) will hold an Open House to discuss a planning initiative focused on understanding existing conditions along the Ashuelot Rail Trail and developing a shared vision for its future. The roughly 21.5 mile trail extends from Emerald Street in Keene south through Swanzey, Winchester, and Hinsdale. This planning initiative arose from discussion among local, regional, and statewide trail stakeholders about the need for better communication and coordination on trail management and improvements. SWRPC, under the guidance of a project advisory committee of key trail stakeholders, will develop a trail plan and vision over the course of a 12-18 month process that began in May of 2018.

The Open House will include activities aimed at providing attendees with information about the Ashuelot Rail Trail and encouraging them to share how they think the trail could be improved and/or managed. Attendees will be invited to help identify specific assets and opportunities along the trail's route as well as assist in developing big-picture goals. Historical maps will be displayed to share the trail's rich past as an important railroad corridor. A photo slideshow will provide examples of other rail trails in rural areas around the country.

"We hope that the Open House attracts a wide variety of trail users and people interested in the future of the trail," said Henry Underwood, SWRPC's project lead. "It promises to be a fun and productive morning. People that attend will help us all realize the Ashuelot Rail Trail's full potential."

The Open House is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 17th. It will be held at Whitcomb Hall, 17 Main Street in Swanzey. Light refreshments will be served. There is no charge to attend, however, advance registration is requested at tinyurl.com/y98h6rqu. Those unable to attend are encouraged to share their trail-related experiences, thoughts, and priorities by taking an online survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/ashuelot-rail-trail.

For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of Southwest Region Planning Commission at (603) 357-0557 or visit www.swrpc.org/plan-for-ashuelot-rail-trail.