

PETER SHUMLIN
Governor



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

October 4, 2011

Nick Russo
Federal Coordinating Officer
Joint Field Office
128 Lakeside Ave
Burlington, VT 05401

Dear Mr. Russo,

The Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc (VAST) is a publicly funded, not-for-profit corporation which has been providing an important service for the State of Vermont since 1967. The trail system that they built and maintain has become an important part of the Vermont economy. Now this part of our recreation industry needs help from the Federal Government.

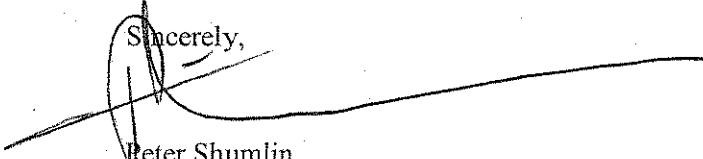
The extensive damage that has been caused by Vermont's back-to-back serious flooding has caused millions of dollars of destruction to these trails. When VAST took over the operation of the statewide trails from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation in 1972, it was never envisioned that storms of such magnitude could come to Vermont. The routine management and upkeep of the more than 4,800 miles of trails have been part of the service that VAST has provided to our state. While there are some small amounts of state dollars that go to help in maintenance, there are no provisions for massive repairs.

Following extensive trail damage due to flash flooding in 1995, VAST received FEMA dollars through the State. I believe that it is necessary and appropriate for VAST to be eligible for assistance under these disasters. In total, more than 50% of the VAST annual budget is funded by public money in the form of snowmobile registrations; trail liability insurance, gas tax revenue and grants through the Vermont Trails Act; and Cooperative Grant Agreements through the US Forest Service.

The Lamoille Valley Rail is a stretch of rail line that is imperative to the expansion of our existing trail network. It is in the interest of the State and VAST that they receive assistance in repairing the extensive damages to the entire trail system. If it were not for VAST, these costs would fall directly to the State.

As a publicly funded not-for-profit corporation, VAST operates a public program for the state of Vermont and I urge you to consider the request for disaster funding. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Peter Shumlin
Governor