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12/12/09 | 33 comments

## Millinocket prepares bridge, hiking trail

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BDN Staff

MILLINOCKET, Maine — Separate efforts to build a multiuse recreational bridge over the Penobscot River and a \$625,000 walking and biking trail along Millinocket Stream are progressing nicely, Town Manager Eugene Conlogue said Thursday.

Located on Route 11 just west of town, the bridge is almost finished. Town officials are due Tuesday to receive answers to their requests for qualifications of architectural or engineering firms who seek to design the trail, Conlogue told the Town Council during its meeting.

“The good news is that the bridge will be available for this year’s snowmobile season,” Conlogue said.

Construction crews have finished building the span and just have to finish areas near the bridge’s entrance ramps, Conlogue said.

The bridge will be used by hikers, snowmobilers, bicyclists and other outdoor enthusiasts, and it is crucial to efforts to build an ATV trail network in the Katahdin region, proponents have said.

The area’s first ATV network trail, which is due to go on line in about 1½ years, “opens up a whole new market for us,” Conlogue said.

Officials, business owners and recreation enthusiasts from East Millinocket, Medway and Millinocket have long believed that all-terrain-vehicle use in the Katahdin region would inject millions of dollars into the regional economy during spring, summer and fall, much the way snowmobiling does during winter.

Town Councilor John Raymond, former Katahdin Area Chamber of Commerce President Brian Wiley and resident Paul Sannicandro have been working for three years as volunteers to create a 35-mile multiuse trail for ATV riders, bicyclists, bird-watchers, campers, hikers, snowmobilers and others.

Construction began three months ago on Phase I, a 13-mile section of trail from the snowmobile club over a recreation trail bridge at the Penobscot River to South Twin Lake. Phase II would continue from South Twin to the Seboeis Lake region, where it would connect to trail networks that run throughout southern Maine.

Councilors thanked the trio for their efforts.

The Millinocket Stream trail, meanwhile, should be built by late fall 2010.

The town has contracted with the Maine Department of Transportation to build the trail, which will run about eight-tenths of a mile along both sides of the stream between Stearns High and Granite Street schools.

The town's plan calls for spending \$500,000 in federal grants, \$80,625 in DOT funds and \$44,375 in town funds, of which some will be in-kind work done by town workers, the council's order states.