

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for May 4, 2016

Present: George Clark, Seth Coffey, Eric Dole, Gered Dunne, Bob Fiskin, Peter Griggs, Dave Hardy, Byron Haynes, Rick Kenney, Mollie Klepack, Nick Krembs, Jane Lemasurier, Leah McLaughry, Luke McLaughry, Hawk Metheny, Liz Russell, Alison Scheiderer, Matthew Stevens, Brett Vuyovich, and at least one other person.

Matt Stevens and Hawk Metheny of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy reported on adverse effects of an excessive number of neighborhood trails crossing the Appalachian Trail Corridor. These include the fragmentation of habitats, environmental damage in the immediate area of such trails, and reduced quality of the experience for hikers on the AT.

During the coming summer, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy is to conduct an inventory entirely within the AT Corridor of existing trail crossings and other features along the AT through Norwich and within other nearby Vermont towns. Alison Scheiderer of the Conservancy will be receiving inventory data from the field and anticipates completing her analysis by December 2016. If members of the Trails Committee or others provide informal data about trails crossing the AT Corridor that information can be incorporated with the inventory. The inventory will lead to a determination of which of those trails and roads are legal and which are not. If certain trails or roads across the corridor are not legal, but represent potentially important routes crossing the corridor, application may be made to the Green Mountain National Forest to request approval for legal status. However, corridor crossings are to be relatively few in number. The intent is to channel cross corridor trail traffic into a small number of routes.

To diminish the likelihood of rogue trail building across the corridor and other undesirable activities, a trail ethic is to be promoted and peer pressure encouraged. Dave Hardy will be providing materials on the Vermont Trail Ethic. One site for signage will be a new kiosk to replace the existing one at the Elm Street trailhead of the AT.

The trail ethic should be promoted by discussions in different neighborhoods and in organizations concerned with all forms of trail use in Norwich and Hartford.

The Green Mountain National Forest does not allow biking on the AT or in the AT Corridor except on legal crossings.

The Green Mountain Club is to lead a Norwich AT Trails Day on Sunday May 29, meeting at Dan and Whits at 9:00 AM; the focus will be the trail crossings between Cossingham Road and Griggs Hill.

A reroute of the Blue Ribbon Trail is underway. Signs are to be placed to instruct trail users not to go off the Blue Ribbon Trail onto private trails.

An reopening celebration for the Blue Ribbon Trail is planned for 1:00 PM on Saturday May 21, and landowners whose properties are crossed by the Blue Ribbon Trail are to be invited.

Planning is underway for a connector trail linking the Brookmead Conservation Area with the Blue Ribbon Trail, and community input on that link as it passes through Fire District lands will be most welcome. On Saturday May 14 at 9:00 AM, the Trails Committee will meet at the Beaver Meadow Road pulloff across from the Blue Ribbon trailhead to walk the proposed connector trail from Parcel 3 to the

Brookmead Conservation Area and then onto Parcel 5. Following the celebration ceremony for the reopening of the Blue Ribbon Trail on Saturday May 21, community members can walk the route of the new proposed connector trail.

On Sunday May 22 at 9:00 AM, the Trails Committee will hold a work day to cut and build that connector trail. Participants should bring work gloves, drinking water, and insect repellent.

The Trails Committee supports the Recreation Council in efforts to promote construction of a Huntley Meadow "pump" trail on which children can develop skills in riding mountain bikes.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark