

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for December 2, 2015

Present: George Clark, Gered Dunne, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fisken, Doug Hardy, Byron Haynes, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, Craig Layne, Liz Russell

Bob Fisken summarized recent discussions and answered questions about the proposal to designate Class IV Illsley Road as a town trail. At a Selectboard hearing scheduled for December 9, Nick Krembs will present the committee's endorsement of this change.

Nick Krembs reported that all materials anticipated to be needed for completion of stone work on the Gile Mountain Trail have now been purchased and moved to locations on Gile Mountain. Clearing of the waterbars, an activity to be done both spring and fall, is to be completed shortly for this fall. Although much-appreciated donations have been received in support of the improvements for the Gile Mountain Trail, additional fund raising is needed and planned. Byron Haynes is to inquire about possibilities for a collection box to be placed at the trailhead so as to publicize financial needs for the trail and to provide for contributions from the trail-using public at large. The previous grant for Gile Mountain Trail work has now been fully spent. A question was raised as to whether student groups affiliated with Dartmouth and using the trail might become more involved with trail improvements; additional inquiry about this point is planned. It is hoped that ongoing stone work on Gile Mountain Trail can be completed during 2016.

Byron Haynes and Gered Dunne reviewed recent discussions concerning the Blue Ribbon Trail which currently remains closed. A strong case can be made for at least a temporary rerouting of that trail, and additional discussions with landowners are anticipated.

Planning is still underway for trails on the "Norwich Farms" parcel and possible additional trail linkages in addition to the link to Parcel 5.

The Norwich Strategic Planning Input from the Trails Committee was discussed. It was pointed out that snowmobilers should be included among users of trails and Class IV roads. Trails have a general benefit in promoting the recognition of undeveloped lands as multiuse areas. Additional discussion of the Strategic Planning Input is to be on the agenda for the Trails Committee meeting on January 6, 2016. It is anticipated that a revised Input will be presented to the Selectboard later that month. Support from a variety of trail users will be helpful at that meeting.

It is hoped to have the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps again participate in a project on Norwich trails during 2016, but no specific project has yet been designated for a proposal which must be submitted by January 15, 2016. Suggestions for project proposals meeting the guidelines will be welcome.

In view of past damage along Turnpike Road during spring mud season from inappropriate vehicle use by visitors to the Gile Mountain Trail, a mud season closure of the parking area and the trail is proposed. Such closure will need to be broadly publicized through road signs, public announcements, and changes in trail information on the web.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark