

Minutes

Norwich Trails Committee and volunteers monthly meeting

7 pm, January 5, 2022

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82651305884>

Attendees: (all by Zoom)

Norwich Trails Committee (NTC) members present: Craig Layne and David Hubbard, and Cody Williams.

Volunteers and members of the public: George Clark, Cam Cross, Stephen Flanders (scribe), Jim Faughnan, Bob Fisken, Peter Griggs, Elisabeth Hammer, Byron Haynes, Nick Krembs (facilitator), John McCormick, Sean Ogle, and Cathie Redpath

AGENDA

- 1. Approval of agenda:** Krembs called the Zoom meeting to order at 7 pm. Mention was made of Parcel 5 to be discussed under item 4.
- 2. Comments from those present:**
There were no comments, regarding things not on the agenda.

Trail infrastructure

3. Update from the UVTA:

Ogle reported a bridge with a broken deck on the King Arthur Baking trail system. UVTA staff will repair deck members in a few days and replace the bridge in the spring.

4. Reports on recent trail blockages and actions taken or planned:

Parcel 5: Fisken reported vandals leaving ruts in the connector trail from the parking lot, between the two loops of the Parcel 5 trail system and into the outlet of the eastern loop. In places the ruts are six to ten inches deep. The damage occurred on or about New Year's Eve, or soon thereafter. It has been reported to the police. Haynes, Faughnan and Fisken each offered perspectives on what would be required to effect repairs. After determining that the trail groomer could do its work, this winter, it was decided to leave the determination of repairs until spring as an action of the Land Management Council of the Norwich Fire District.

Ballard Trail: Fisken recommended that some capable volunteers take down an overarching tree that spans the trail, lest it fall suddenly on passersby.

5. Trail kiosks

- Locations for: Burton Woods Road, Cossingham Trail, Tucker Trail: Flanders solicited input on locations, noting that nothing would occur until spring. No specifics were offered.

6. Trail kiosk signage

- Approve material to be shown for Burton Woods Road, Cossingham Trail, Tucker Trail: Flanders offered draft examples in the packet for review and comment of signage for the three locations. The Cossingham and Tucker Trail signage will be identical, except for the "You are here" arrow. A brief discussion ensued on the inclusion of advisory material, relating to dogs. No changes were made. The final content awaits the action of the USFS in approving trails in the Appalachian Trail Corridor. Krembs recommended deferring this topic until April and noted that, in the meantime, Jason Berard, of the Upper Valley Land Trust, would like to comment on the sign content.

7. **Appalachian Trail Corridor: Report status**

Layne reported on the following:

- a. Communications with landowners—He met with Doug Hardy and those landowners, whose properties abut certain trail crossings, to discuss their support of the identified crossings that were requested in a petition by a group of trail users, noting that doing so required agreeing to USFS criteria for such crossings. Chief among the additional requests made were for crossings at the “Five Points/Meadow Junction” intersection, Griggs Mountain ridge, and for equestrian use of the Dothan Brook Trail. It was noted that a gate is planned at the intersection of Joshua Road and the Dothan Brook Trail to exclude incursions from motorized vehicles.
- b. Communication with USFS—The Norwich Conservation Commission (NCC) authorized a letter that made the above requests and spoke to the question of the Joshua/Barred Owl Trail crossing. The NCC-approved letter is at:
<https://norwichtrails.files.wordpress.com/2022/01/ntcncc-addendum-to-usfs-rfc-on-at-corridor.pdf>

Financial

8. **Planning for FY 2022-23 budget: Parking—Status of NCC proposal to Norwich selectboard**

Gile Mountain Trail parking: Layne reported that the selectboard is unwilling to fund expanded parking at Gile Mountain, even as a separate article, until the Planning Department executes a study that includes public outreach. The board was reminded that such a study had already occurred and that the board had allocated funds for an engineering study, but no contract had been let. The earliest revisitation of funding the expansion would be in the discussion of the FY 2023-24 budget.

Happy Hill Road turnaround: Additionally, mention was made of the status of reconfiguring the parking at the Happy Hill turnaround. Layne reported that it was favorably received, but not yet implemented. He promised to follow up on the matter.

Other

9. **Trail maps for sale at Dan & Whit’s**

Flanders reported selling ten maps via the Norwich Lists for \$5 each. He said that he would await the USFS decision on trails in the AT corridor, before selling more. Discussion on sales at Dan & Whit’s emphasized providing a price markup for the store above the cost of production and shipping. The consensus was to phase out the existing stock of trail maps, before doing so.

10. **Options for next-generation mapping for website**

This topic was deferred until Gerry Plummer can lead the discussion with proposed material.

11. **Items for February meeting**

Krembs suggested that the agenda include proposed trail work and a report on how trails-related items fared in the town budget.

12. **Adjourn** Krembs adjourned the meeting at 7:50 pm.