

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for November 2, 2016

Present: George Clark, Gered Dunne, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskens, Peter Griggs, Doug Hardy, David Hubbard, John Phipps, Gerry Plummer, Liz Russell, Richard Zuckerman

In a committee work session on October 22, one group considered potential alterations of the route of the Blue Ribbon Trail towards its southern end and has proposed changes accordingly. Another group evaluated the western end of the Ballard Trail, where bridge repair work will be needed and improvements made in certain of the drainage crossings. Improvements of those crossings could perhaps be undertaken in June 2017.

Signage in the Brookmead Conservation Area has been greatly improved. Members of the Trails Committee hope to meet with the Upper Valley Land Trust to discuss a proposed coordination of sign configurations both within the Brookmead area and the connecting trails outside that area. Byron Haynes has a catalog of commercially available trail signs which might be a source of ideas for the proposed coordination. It was suggested that reflective signs might be useful. Temporary flagging was noted to have been helpful when used with the posted maps which trail users were reported to have been photographing with cell phones.

Construction on the Gile Mountain Trail has now ended for 2016. Great progress has been made, and a relatively small amount of unfinished work remains towards the upper end of the trail. Costs for the 2016 work have been covered, and special thanks are due to the Upper Valley Trails Alliance for their assistance in covering a portion of those costs.

Waterbars on Gile Mountain need cleaning following leaf drop, and work is needed on the bike route on the side of Gile Mountain towards Turnpike Road. The committee will accordingly hold a work session on Sunday November 13 on the Turnpike Road side of Gile Mountain. Participants are to meet at 8:00 AM in the Gile Mountain Trail parking lot. Please bring work gloves and drinking water. Because this date falls within rifle hunting season, wearing of blaze orange is highly recommended.

There was brief discussion of the possibility for 2017 that the Trails Committee by itself complete the remaining work on the upper end of the Gile Mountain Trail.

Gered Dunne reviewed possibilities for potentially new or modified trails, primarily south of Beaver Meadow Road. Discussions have been underway with landowners in that region. There is still much need for exploration to determine the most favorable specific locations for these proposed trails.

David Hubbard reported that the Land Management Committee supports proposed construction of a multiuse trail roughly paralleling the Ballard Trail but on the opposite side of Charles Brown Brook towards Beaver Meadow Road. The lowest end of the area between the brook and road is not available for a trail, and options in that area remain under discussion.

Peter Griggs reviewed recent discussions about the mud season situation in the region of the Gile Mountain Trail. It is planned to hold a meeting including landowners, a Selectboard liaison,

Dave Ormiston, possibly other town officials, and the Trails Committee. Because the first Wednesday in December is not available for all participants, the next Trails Committee meeting might be rescheduled to another date and possibly another location; watch for subsequent email announcements.

Various possibilities for mud season were discussed. Trail and parking lot closure and notifying road signs along Turnpike Road are actions which should again help the situation in the vicinity of the Gile Mountain Trail.

The Land Management Committee plans to apply for a grant supporting proposed Vermont Youth Conservation Corps work during 2017 along the Ballard Trail to build two new bridges and replace others.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark