

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for December 6, 2017

Present: James Allen, George Clark, Gered Dunne, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin, Peter Griggs, Doug Hardy, Nick Krembs, Bill Mlacak, Gerry Plummer, Cathy Redpath, Brie Swenson, Liz Russell

A reroute of the Blue Ribbon Trail, related drainage work, and work on the Gile Mountain bike trail were all completed in a November 4 work session. In work completed since the November 1 meeting, the Ballard Trail and the trail along Brownschoolhouse Road have been cleared of numerous fallen trees. The Ballard Trail presently has extensive muddy sections. Bridges on the Ballard Trail can be very slippery when wet, a condition also to be found on the Schmidt Bog boardwalk. Hikers should use care on such wooden surfaces as well as on the long stone stairs on the southern part of the Ballard Trail.

There was a brief discussion about leaves on bridges with the suggestion that leaves where present be removed at least once per year.

The Cossingham Road Farm Trails were reported to be in good condition as were Parcel 5 trail and most of the Burton Woods Road trail.

A report from Doug Brown noted that the Tails on Trails fundraising event at Brookmead on November 25 raised over \$500 for the purchase of dog waste stations and bags. The stations have been ordered, and it is hoped that they can be installed soon.

Sean Ogle provided counter data from the Gile Mountain Trail showing heavy use in June followed by much reduced, but then unauthorized, use in subsequent months. The Gile Mountain Trail remains closed until further notice, and the unpaved part of Turnpike Road remains closed to all except local residents.

At last report, four locations on the Blue Ribbon Trail were blocked by fallen trees needing chain saw work.

Gerry Plummer reported on the latest meeting, immediately before the Trails Committee meeting, of the signage subcommittee. Among priority tasks is an inventory of signage. Trail users are invited to submit photographs of existing signs and kiosks at identified sites either to Gerry Plummer or other members of the signage subcommittee. Suggestions as to locations needing new signs or trailhead kiosks will be welcome. The subcommittee will consider the kinds of signs needed with a uniformity in appearance as one objective. The subcommittee will also consider other sign-related matters including how to standardize agreements with landowners.

At a Selectboard meeting on November 29, Brie Swenson discussed the trail now being prepared from Main Street towards the Dresden playing fields. This work was subsequently discussed in an article in the Valley News and on Vermont Public Radio. At the present meeting, she provided additional details on the progress on that trail.

Brie Swenson reported that a "lantern walk" is to be held at the Milton Frye Nature Area from 4:30 to 5:30 PM on December 7. This is to be followed by a film on outdoor education for kindergarten at 6 PM in the Marion Cross School.

Committee members in turn commented on the activities of the committee during 2017 with suggestions for matters needing future attention. Included were suggestions for additional trails, upgrading of certain existing trails, and improved communications with land owners.

Bill Mlacak of the Hanover Trails Committee gave an excellent presentation on the organization and activities of that group. He answered numerous questions enabling a useful comparison of trail procedures in Hanover with those of Norwich. The Norwich Trails Committee very much appreciated his presentation.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark