

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for May 2, 2018

Present: George Clark, Gered Dunne, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fisken, Peter Griggs, Doug Hardy, Nick Krembs, Gerry Plummer, Brie Swenson, Rich Zimmerman

Jim Faughnan led a brief review of recent conversations held with several landowners concerning their wishes with regard to trail mapping.

Brie Swenson mentioned points of uncertainty regarding legal issues associated with trail mapping. Peter Griggs volunteered to contact Sherry Winnie of the Vermont Recreation Trails Program to seek clarification on these legal points.

Since the April meeting, committee members have cleared trail blockages in the nature area and on the Hazen Trail. Other blockages remain to be cleared in the nature area and on Blue Ribbon Trail, as well as on the Appalachian Trail (which is not maintained by this committee). A blockage on Parcel 5 has either already been cleared or soon will be.

Trail markers are to be installed along the Blue Ribbon Trail, parts of which have been difficult to follow in winter.

A walk to inspect the Heyl Trail was held on April 28. The intent of the committee is to keep vegetation cut back in two areas on eastern part of that trail and to have a slight reroute to avoid a wet area near the Elm Street trailhead. Bob Fisken and Jonathan Smolin are to be leaders in this work on the Heyl Trail.

It is hoped that a proposed trail link from the western part of the Heyl Trail to Cossingham Road can be completed.

Certain trails maintained by the Norwich Trails Committee are to reopen on Saturday May 5 after mud season closures, but the Gile Mountain Trail, the Blue Ribbon Trail, and the Cossingham Road Farm Trails will remain closed for mud season until later notice.

Peg Merrens of the Upper Valley Land Trust is soon to check the Betty Booth Trail to ascertain that trail has needed easement protections.

Trails needing additional work were discussed, including the Gile Mountain bike trail, the Blue Ribbon Trail, an upper section of the Gile Mountain Trail, and bridge work on the Ballard Trail and on the connector trail between Brookmead and the Blue Ribbon Trail..

Also discussed was a proposed bike trail along the northern side of Charles Brown Brook. Such a route would have a section of the lower end of the Ballard Trail open to both pedestrians and bikes, with a bridge for bikes to cross the brook. An engineer's recent evaluation of the proposed bridge site indicates that a such bridge would necessarily be expensive. Private fund raising would be needed to build such a bridge. It was also pointed out that the Brownschoolhouse Road bridge is in poor condition and would ideally be rebuilt.

Drainage improvements are needed in the northern part of the Betty Booth Trail, and stepping stones are to be installed across Blood Brook.

Eight volunteers are tentatively to participate in a course in use of chain saws, and three volunteers are prospective participants in a course for wilderness first aid responders. Brie Swenson is coordinating arrangements for these courses.

On May 20 a work session is to be held on the southern of the Blue Ribbon Trail; details are to be provided in a later notice. A work session is also to be held on June 24 at a site not yet specified.

A grant application recently submitted by the committee would, if approved, cover costs associated with mapping and for materials to be used in trailhead kiosks.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark