

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for December 5, 2018

Present: George Clark, Gered Dunne, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskin, Peter Griggs, Doug Hardy, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Cathie Redpath

Doug Hardy reported that the email address for reporting trail blockages is receiving use, though having more reports coming by email would be advantageous.

Trails currently needing clearing of blockages include the Blue Ribbon off Beaver Meadow Road, upper part of the Ballard Trail, and Brownschoolhouse Road. The lack of a bridge over Charles Brown Brook on Brownschoolhouse Road continues to pose difficulties both for access in trail work and for recreational users of the trails.

In response to a request for proposals concerning trail loops to be featured on a planned map/brochure related to the Appalachian Trail (AT) in Hanover and Norwich, the committee by consensus favored a short route in the Norwich nature area, a longer loop including Cossingham Road, and still longer loop involving Burton Woods Road with an approach through Illsley Road.

In a meeting on December 4, under the leadership of Gerry Plummer, a subcommittee of the Trails Committee discussed issues concerning unnamed or ambiguously named trails receiving varied amounts of use in and near the AT corridor. Such trails have historically not been within the purview of the Trails Committee and thus not previously discussed. To facilitate discussion of such trails, this subcommittee has made an effort to propose standardized names. There is now a need to communicate with landowners along the AT corridor to obtain their views about such trails and their wishes for any future changes in the trail network. Such landowners can become better informed about such matters by attending a meeting about AT corridor management to be held at 6:30 to 8 PM on Wednesday December 12 at the Montshire Museum. One suggestion is that certain routes might be designated for winter use only; such routes for skiing or snowshoeing would lack a visible treadway during the warmer months. Initial responses to requests for public input from this region about the corridor have so far indicated a preference for maintaining the status quo with respect to trails.

A joint meeting of the Norwich Conservation Commission and interested members of the Trails Committee has been scheduled for Wednesday January 23. Brie Swenson has volunteered to make a room reservation. That meeting is to be concerned primarily with maps, and the location of trails with respect to areas of conservation concern. Sean Ogle reported that the Upper Valley Trails Alliance has a digital projector and would make it available. Another joint meeting, as yet unscheduled, would cover prospective protocols for approval of new trails.

Liz Russell reported by email that, during recent conditions favorable for skiing at the Cossingham Road Farm Trails, two skiers ignored prohibiting signage, opened a gate, and skied in a field where cows were present. Such improprieties by a few can work to the detriment of trail users in general.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark