

The Norwich Trails Committee is to hold its monthly meeting at 7:00 PM on Wednesday June 5, 2019, at the Norwich Historical Society (corner of Main and Elm Streets)..

Potential agenda items include

- 1) trails in the Town Plan -- discussion with Steve Thoms of the Planning Commission
- 2) recent or current trail blockages and actions taken or planned, including brief summary of numerous trail maintenance activities in May
- 3) planning for work session on **Sunday June 16**
- 4) **Ballard Park**
- 5) Appalachian Trail Corridor topics including a) brochure for visitors, b) Trails Committee proposal concerning corridor crossings as submitted in May to the Forest Service, c) field trip to inspect crossing sites, and associated meetings, and d) recent communications with abutting land owners
- 6) engineering site visit for bridge replacement at Brown School House Road crossing of Charles Brown Brook
- 7) recently submitted grant applications for a) bridge planning and b) Gile Mountain Trail signage and seasonal barrier for parking lot
- 8) quarterly report status and proposed website for the committee
- 9) brief review of discussion of trail protocols at the Conservation Commission meeting on May 21
- 10) old business
- 11) new business

The Norwich Trails Committee provides review, planning, and work for the construction, maintenance, use, and mapping of Norwich Trails open to the public. Members of the public are cordially invited to attend and participate in the meetings and trail work sessions of the committee.

Please report new blockages of town trails to [<norwichtrails@gmail.com>](mailto:norwichtrails@gmail.com).

George Clark for the Norwich Trails Committee

Memorandum

Input for Norwich Town Plan

May 24, 2019



To: Norwich Planning Commission

The Norwich Trails Committee has discussed and supports the text that was in the narrative sections of the 2018 proposed town plan, found in Appendix A.

The following text reflects goals that the Norwich Trails Committee has discussed and would like to have captured appropriately in the next Norwich town plan:

Norwich Trails Committee goals:

*From the 2018 Town Plan:*¹

Goal G: Plan, maintain and provide for safe, efficient, sustainable, and multi-modal transportation facilities that serve existing and planned land uses throughout the town and region and are consistent with the character of Norwich and the region.

- Promote the development and use of a system of trails, greenways, sidewalks, bicycle paths, and commuter parking lots as safe and viable transportation components.

Goal J: Identify, protect and preserve the important natural and historic features that create Norwich's scenic landscapes and community character and enhance public access to these resources. Identify and map existing trails and greenways.

- Enhance public access to Norwich's rivers, streams and natural areas via an interconnected greenway system and trails network.
 - Identify existing trails and Class 4 roads, and interconnect as possible and maintain them for public use.
 - ~~Identify and map "unidentified corridors" as defined in the state's Ancient Roads statute, and re-classify those that can be delineated to town highways or trails as appropriate based on the long-term interests of town residents.~~
 - Identify potential trail corridors to link existing trails and greenways with each other and with trail systems in neighboring towns.
 - Create public trails to access natural and scenic resource areas where feasible and appropriate. Schedule regular maintenance of town trails by Conservation Commission/Trails Committee.

¹ <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Norwich-Plan-Draft-6-12-18-text.pdf> Pp. 9-11 & 11-27

Memorandum

New:

- Assess and secure rights of way for Norwich trails that promote connectivity in a manner that encourages landowner participation and promotes the good behavior of users. Coordinate such efforts with such entities as the Upper Valley Land Trust, the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, and the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association.
- Employ a trail development protocol that addresses both private and public lands that helps achieve connectivity, while avoiding negative effects on natural resources.
- Develop an overall plan that identifies and promotes appropriate routes for different trail users, including those on foot, on bicycles and horseback.
- Develop the information sources that help different types of users to enjoy the trails provided for them, appropriately, in all seasons.
- Identify and promote trails that relieve the burden on such popular trails as Gile Mountain, including good information sources and sufficient parking.

Nick Krembs, Chair
Norwich Trails Committee
Tracy Hall, 300 Main Street
PO Box 376 Norwich VT 05055

Memorandum

Appendix A:

From the 2018 Town Plan:

Transportation

Roads In Norwich²

Class 4 Roads. Class 4 roads are town highways that are not maintained for year-round travel. The town must replace larger culverts and repair bridges on Class 4 roads, but they are not otherwise maintained. A landowner whose property is accessible by a Class 4 road may maintain the road privately with permission from the Town Manager.

Class 4 roads form a part of a long-standing network of trails/tracks used for recreational purposes. In the future, some Class 4 roads could be upgraded to Class 3 to increase the efficiency and safety of the town's road system or to allow development in suitable areas. Many areas along the western and northern boundaries of Norwich are inaccessible from each other without first traveling back to the center of the town. Upgrading of some existing Class 4 roads to Class 3 would create alternative routes for emergency vehicles and allow detours if roads are closed in major storms. In some cases, Class 4 roads provide the only access to individual properties. Careful consideration should be given to the value of Class 4 roads and how they may contribute to the quality of life of Norwich's residents.

Legal Trails. A legal trail is a public right-of-way that may previously have been a town road and is open to the public for recreational use, but from which the town may exclude motor vehicles. It may be the same width as the town highway, or a lesser width if so designated. The Selectboard may also create a new trail with a designated width. The Selectboard adopted an ordinance in 2001 to regulate the use of its legal trails. Most of the 3.5 miles of legal trails in Norwich are designated for recreational use and were converted from Class 4 town highways within the last 10 years. The town's ordinance prohibits the use of motor vehicles, other than vehicles being used for farming and snowmobiles, on trails unless a special permit is approved by the Selectboard. A legal trail may be upgraded to a Class 4 or Class 3 town road in the future.

Ancient Roads. Ancient roads refer to old public rights-of-way created in the early days of Norwich that are no longer used as roads or trails. Some of these roads, although long forgotten, may have never been legally discontinued and may still be town rights-of-way, creating an unanticipated cloud on the title of property. These forgotten roads could be considered an asset of the town providing recreational trails and access. In 2006, the state legislature passed Act 178 in order to resolve this issue by requiring towns to find "unidentified corridors" by July 2010 and to reclassify them to trails or roads, or to discontinue them by 2015.

The Norwich Ancient Roads Committee has been working to identify potential "unidentified corridors" to present to the Selectboard for re-classification or discontinuance.

² <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2018-Plan.pdf> P. 9-10

Memorandum

Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths³

Safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle paths connecting the Norwich village area, Hanover, playing fields and recreation areas, and outlying population centers would provide for alternative modes of transportation. Although portions of the village area have sidewalks and there are some existing trails and Class 4 roadways, generally pedestrians and bicyclists share the roads with cars. U.S. Route 5 North has become a major regional bicycle route. Ideally, bicycle lanes should be available along roads for experienced and faster riders, and on separate paths for inexperienced or casual riders and pedestrians.

The Trails and Transportation Committee has been identifying potential bicycle paths and trails, and sources of funding. It has also been working with groups from other towns within the region to coordinate a network of regional trails and bicycle paths. A path connecting Huntley Meadow with the town Green has been a high priority. An Upper Valley Loop Trail connecting Norwich, Hanover, Lebanon and Hartford is a long-term project supported by the towns and the Upper Valley Trails Alliance. A connection from Dothan Brook School in Hartford to Route 10A in Norwich is a significant gap that needs to be planned and completed.

Trails and Greenways⁴

Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail, a 2,178-mile, continuous hiking trail from Mt. Katahdin, Maine to Springer Mountain, Georgia travels more than five miles through Norwich. The National Park Service owns 697 acres around the trail in Norwich. After traversing about two miles by roadway from natural and historic resources

Ledyard Bridge via Main Street to the trail entrance near the top of Elm Street, the trail generally follows the ridgelines that define the southern part of the Blood Brook watershed. The Dartmouth Outing Club maintains this segment of the trail.

The Appalachian Trail Conference and Upper Valley Land Trust worked to acquire and hold conservation easements on abutting lands to create a buffer for the trail. In Norwich, 556 acres adjacent to the trail corridor have been conserved in addition to the lands owned by the National Park Service. Altogether, this protected greenway corridor represents four percent of Norwich's land area.

This major open space corridor serves as a backbone of protected recreational land and has been a driving force to develop an interconnected trail system throughout the town. Connections currently exist from the Appalachian Trail to the following town trails and roads: Cossingham Trail, Tucker Trail, Happy Hill Road, Burton Woods Road, Brown School House Road, Ballard Trail, Gile Mountain Ridge Trail, Heyl Trail, Elm Street, Bragg Hill Road, Hopson Road and the informal trail under the power transmission line.

Ecologically, the Appalachian Trail corridor provides habitat for a diverse array of plant and animal species. It travels through a forested landscape with an understory

³ <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2018-Plan.pdf> P. 9-10

⁴ <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Norwich-Plan-Draft-6-12-18-text.pdf> P. 11-17

Memorandum

of ferns and wildflowers to emerge briefly for expansive views on its path from Elm Street over Bragg Hill to the Jericho area and on into Hartford. The protected corridor is an excellent example of the Northern Hardwood Forest natural community and the related Hemlock Northern Hardwood Forest community. The area includes some important wetlands and an area of mesic forest, which is home to a number of rare plant species.

Town Trails. Norwich's trails and greenways provide a valued resource for citizens and visitors. A favorite bicycle and jogging route travels along the Connecticut River on the River Road and then extends north into Thetford. Another walking and jogging route for residents and visitors alike makes a loop on Route 5 south and Hopson Road, taking advantage of the open spaces of the Booth property and the Warner Meadow, both protected with conservation easements donated to the Upper Valley Land Trust.

The Milton Frye Nature Area adjacent to the Marion Cross School is readily accessible to school children and the general public close to the center of town. With interpretative stops, it helps to educate classes of school children and others, as well as to provide a peaceful respite. Trails owned by the town, leading to Gile Mountain (the highest peak in town) and to the Schmidt Preserve with its showy lady slippers (a rare plant species), provide access to other favorite spots in the fall and spring, respectively. Another resource, the Bill Ballard Trail, follows the Charles Brown Brook down the length of the Fire District watershed land.

A trail created by the mutual efforts of the Montshire Museum and the conservation commissions of Norwich and Hartford leads from the museum to Wilder Village. It and other Montshire trails – one for finding wildflowers and one along the Connecticut River – are valued assets.

Class 4 roads and numerous trails are used by hikers, bikers, horseback riders, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. Many are not identified on maps. Some roads and trails could be interconnected to provide a continuous network, both in Norwich and adjoining towns. Ways may be found to provide safe hiking and biking passage to the Huntley Meadow from the center of town.

Trails in Norwich with permanent easements or on public land are mapped and included in the Norwich GIS and are shown on Map 4. Opportunities to interconnect existing trails need to be explored. Other corridors of open space need to be identified and landowners encouraged to protect them, perhaps using the Appalachian Trail Corridor as a model and creating links to it.

Future Land Use⁵

....

- Be pedestrian, rather than automobile, oriented by providing sidewalks and trail connections, managing and calming traffic, and offering parking in a manner that maintains the aesthetic character of this historic center.

⁵ <http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Norwich-Plan-Draft-6-12-18-text.pdf> P. 12-8

Memorandum

Residential neighborhoods nearer the Village Business District should provide sidewalks and trails that allow residents to walk to school, shopping, services, transit stops and employment. Open spaces and parks should be preserved to protect important resources and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and a connection to nature....

DRAFT



Norwich Trails Committee (NTC)¹



Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association (UVMBA)²

Request to authorize four existing trails within the Appalachian Trail Corridor in Norwich, Vermont

I. Summary

Based on community input, the NTC and UVMBA request that the USFS authorize retention of *existing* trails that join or cross the AT at the following four places, shown on the accompanying map (Figure 1) in priority order, as follows:

1. *Dothan Brook Trail*—Joining the AT at **H** (foot travel only)
2. *Joshua Trail*—Crossing the AT at **J**, connecting with the Tucker Trail and Jericho Road (foot and bicycle travel)
3. *Meadow Junction*—Crossing the AT at **E**, connecting to Sugar Top, Sue Spaulding Road via TH 51 and Griggs Mountain (foot and bicycle travel)
4. *Griggs Mountain Trail*—Joining the AT at **F**, connecting to trails on Upper Valley Land Trust property (foot travel only)

All four trails are frequently used as part of hiking and running loops. The crossings at J and E provide a single-track way to guide mountain bike traffic across the corridor and minimize encroachment, elsewhere. The first three trails existed before the establishment of the AT corridor and have been in continuous use, since then.

We request *no new trails* and support the *closure of nine* other trail segments that were posted as unauthorized (about 70% of those identified).

This proposal requires no new parking capacity or other amenities, since the current facilities continue to adequately meet the needs of users of the AT corridor and are expected to suffice in the future.

We propose that the NTC will maintain the Dothan Brook and Griggs Mountain trails at USFS Hiker/Pedestrian Trail Class 1 and the UVMBA will maintain the Joshua Trail and Meadow Junction crossings at USFS Bicycle Trail Class 1. Signs would inform trail users of available routes and two gates would discourage the encroachment of unauthorized users.

This low-profile approach should continue to provide no adverse effect on the experiences of those walking the AT, yet afford wholesome and compatible means of recreation for Norwich residents and visitors.

¹ See Appendix III A

² See Appendix III B

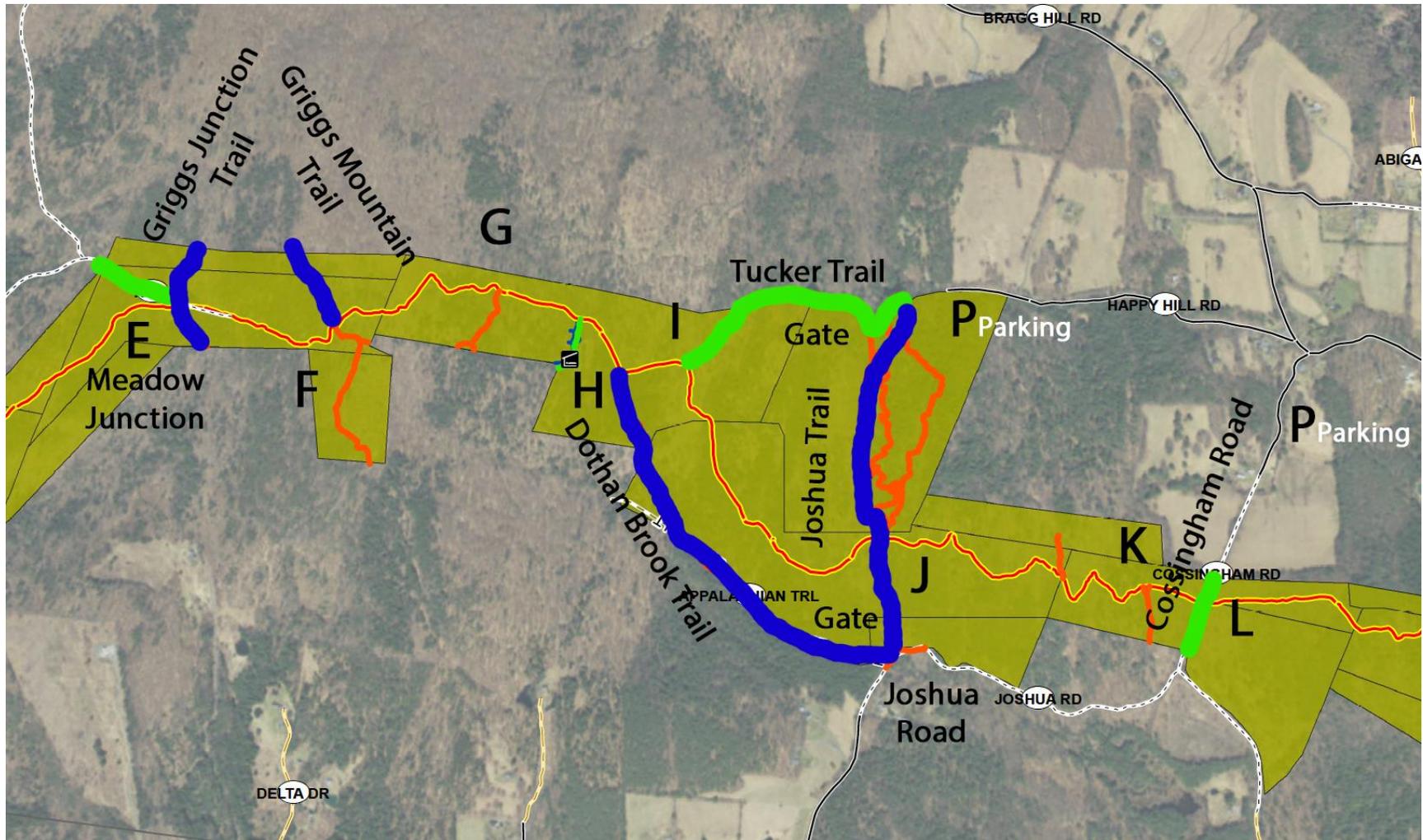


Figure 1. Map showing *existing* trails requested for approval (blue) that cross or join the AT at E, F, H and J

II. Request for authorization of four existing trails

A. Tabulation of community input

The NTC sought community input, regarding the proposed trail closures and received responses from 30 trail users during the period of September 2018 through February 2019, summarized in Table 1. These are the basis for our prioritized request.

Table 1. Specific mentions of trail crossings in public input

Junction	Crossing	Foot	Bicycle
A	Podunk Road (TH 49)		1
C	Burton Woods Road (TH 48)—lower		1
D	Burton Woods Road (TH 48)—upper		1
E	Meadow Junction	9	1
F	Griggs Mountain Trail	5	1
G	Old AT from former Happy Hill Cabin site		1
H	Dothan Brook Trail	12	1
J	Joshua Trail	10	2
L	Cossingham Road (TH 55)		2
M	Old AT remnant	1	

B. Connectivity within and outside the corridor

1. Hiking and running loops supported

The trails that join the AT at E and H and cross at J form valued recreational loops for hikers and runners into and within the corridor. Authorization of the Griggs Mountain Trail at F would allow a loop into adjacent trail networks, as shown in Figure 2.

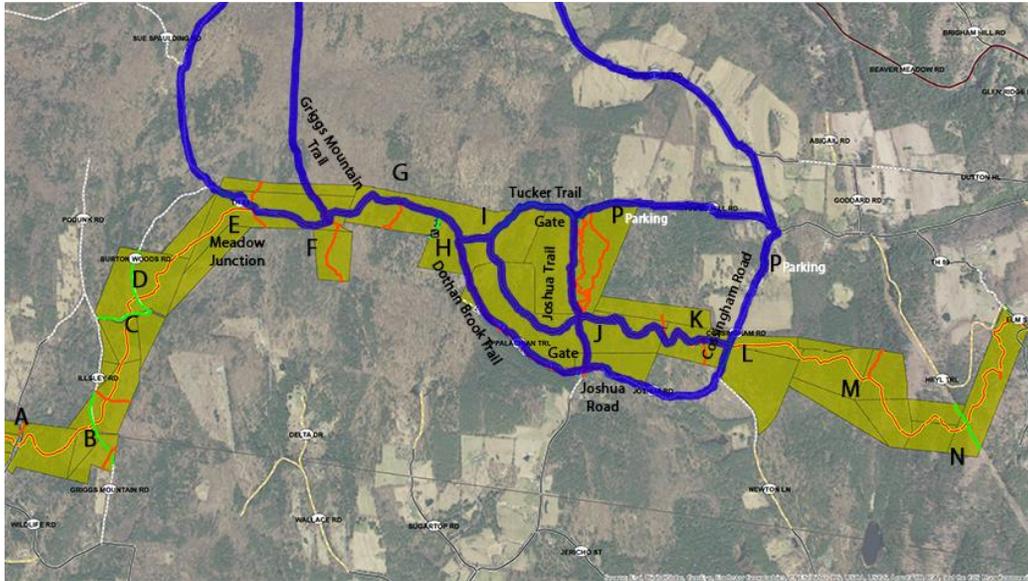


Figure 2. Hiking/running loops within the AT corridor and connecting to it

2. Mountain bike loops supported

Allowing mountain bikes to cross at E and J alleviates the problem posed by having the AT corridor *form a barrier* between popular cycling venues to the north and the south of the corridor. Figure 3 shows a *simplified* rendition of current, proposed and prospective (dashed line) single-track mountain bike routes around and across the corridor. Note that there are planned expansions of the mountain bike trail system on properties that are adjacent to the northern and southern sides of the corridor, *not shown* in Figure 3.

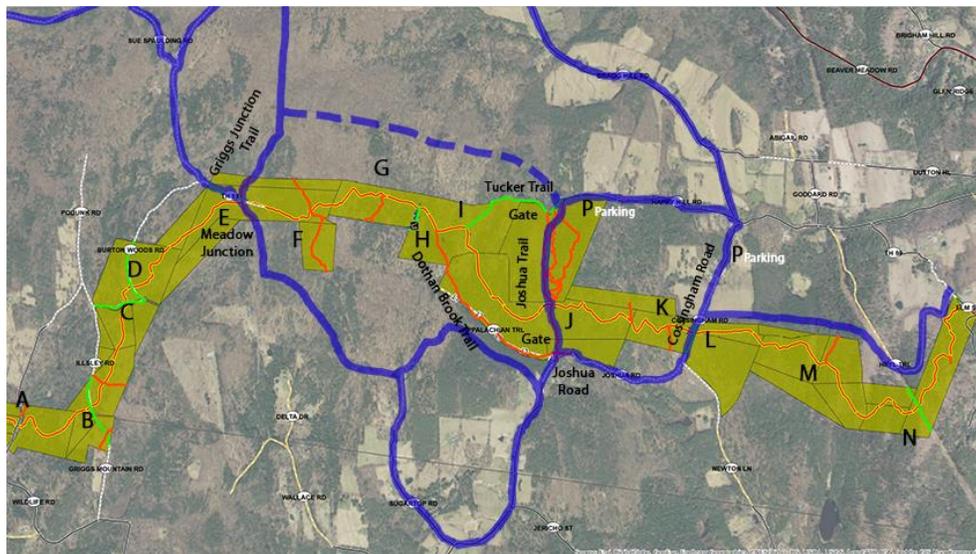


Figure 3. Existing (and prospective) mountain bike loops on either side and connecting through the AT corridor

C. Prioritized trails for retention

Authorized retention of the following trails should keep the AT corridor experience in character with how it has been for decades, be consistent with the anticipated stable population of the town, and preserve the wilderness experience of AT hikers.

1. Dothan Brook Trail

Description – The Dothan Brook Trail tees into the AT at intersection **H** from the south. It comprises two sections: 1) woods road from Joshua Road to a stream crossing of a tributary to the Dothan Brook where an unauthorized trail crosses Dothan Brook from private land, 2) thence it becomes a primitive trail until it reaches the intersection at H. It passes briefly out of the AT corridor onto a corner of private land.



Figure 4. Intersection **H**, looking south onto the Dothan Brook Trail.

Loop connectivity – The Dothan Brook Trail provides popular foot travel loops within the corridor that connect with the Tucker Trail and the AT northbound (Figure 2).

Trail class – The proposed USFS Trail Design Parameters for the Dothan Brook Trail would be for *Hiker/Pedestrian* (Trail Class 1), consistent with the status quo.

Maintenance – The NTC would be responsible for this trail.

Signage and gate – We propose signs at three locations.³ Signage at Joshua Road *in the direction of H* would say, “To AT, foot travel only”. Because there is encroachment by pickup trucks and other vehicles, entering at Joshua Road, *we propose a gate* at that point with “Trail Restriction” signage.⁴ Signage at the tributary stream crossing where a private trail exists comes to the opposite side of Dothan Brook would say, “To AT, to Joshua Road, foot travel only”. The sign near H would say, “To Joshua Road”.

Landowner agreements – Since intersection Joshua Road is already a public ROW, there is no need for additional landowner agreements, except for the brief crossing of private land, owned by Davis and Katherine Kitchel, for which an as-yet unsigned agreement is provided in Appendix D. That brief crossing can be avoided by a short relocation of this trail.

2. Joshua Trail

Description – The Joshua Trail leads from the Tucker trail via a narrow valley, over a ridge, down to intersection J, where it continues to Joshua Road as a primitive woods road, past an old barn foundation. The initial part of this trail skirts some wetland and the bottom part runs through rutted, wet terrain. In addition to the foot trail, are several interconnecting encroaching mountain bike trails to the north of J.

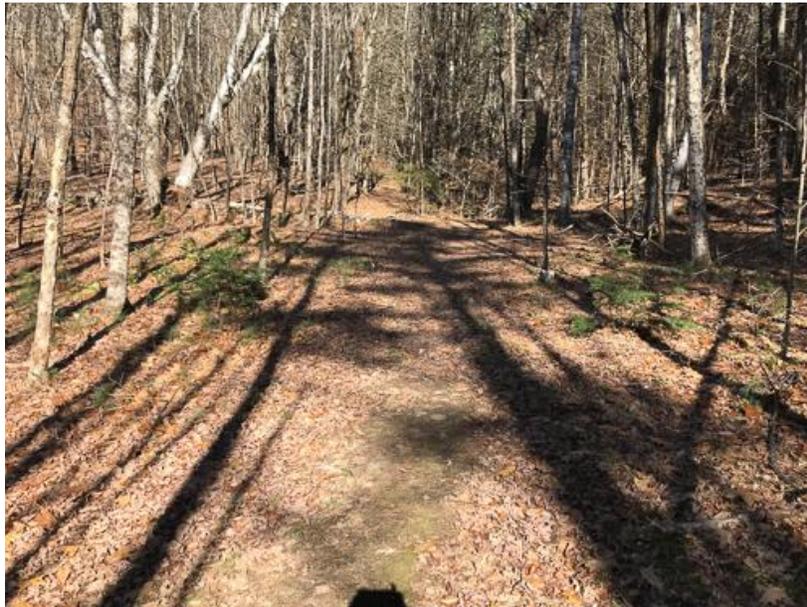


Figure 5. Intersection J, looking north along the Joshua Trail

³ Signs and Poster Guidelines for the Forest Service EM7100-15 Pp. 5A-17, 5B-1
https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3810021.pdf

⁴ EM7100-15 P. 6-10



Figure 6. Intersection J, looking south along the Joshua Trail

Loop connectivity – This trail provides looping opportunities for hikers via the Tucker Trail, the AT, and Joshua Road that are closer to the parking at Cossingham Road and Happy Hill Road (Figure 2).

For mountain bikers this trail provides a valued single-track crossing of the corridor to routes on either side, positioned between Cossingham Road (L) and Meadow Junction (E). The gates and signage should help prevent bicycle incursions onto and along the corridor, elsewhere (Figure 3).

Trail class – We propose USFS Trail Design Parameters for *Bicycle* (Trail Class 1) for this trail. These standards are consistent with the status quo.

Because both ends (at the Tucker Trail and at Joshua Road) of the current trail are wet, we propose *minor trail relocations* near both ends, which would be invisible from the AT, itself.

Maintenance – The UVMBA would be responsible for this trail.

Signage and gate – We propose signs at three locations. Signage at Joshua Road *in the direction of J* would say, “AT, Tucker Trail”. Signage near J would say, “Joshua Road, Tucker Trail”. Signage at the Tucker Trail would say, “AT, Joshua Road”.

Moving the gate on the Tucker Trail just beyond the top entrance of the Joshua Trail would emphasize the limits of cycle travel and channel bicyclists onto the trail. This, combined with the proposed gate at the entrance of the Dothan Brook Trail would provide a clear delineation of the authorized route for mountain bikes.

Landowner agreements – Since the intersections with the Tucker Trail and Joshua Road are already public ROWs, there is no need for an additional landowner agreement.

3. Meadow Junction

Description – Meadow Junction is the site of an intersection at E, which is crossed by three trails, which carry single-track bicycle traffic. Coming from the west is Town Highway 51 (TH 51), which is open to all forms of traffic and, as shown on town maps, leads part way up the AT. Coming from the north is a logging road, the Griggs Junction Trail. Going to the south is a historical town road, lined by rock walls, leading to the Sugar Top area in Norwich. During hunting season there is four-wheeler traffic along those routes and in winter, there is snow machine traffic. Horses cross here during the summer.



Figure 7. Intersection E, Meadow Junction, seen from the AT, southbound.

Loop connectivity – Meadow Junction accommodates a multi-use trail coming from TH 51 across to the Sugar Top area in Norwich. Loops through E are shown in Figure 3. There would be no additional impact on the AT hiker experience crossing at E or the level of traffic from other users to permit a multi-use connection to Griggs Mountain on the Griggs Junction Trail.

Trail class – The proposed USFS Trail Design Parameters for the multi-use crossing would be for *Bicycle* (Trail Class 1), consistent with the status quo.

Maintenance – The UVMBA would be responsible for this trail.

Signage – The existing signage⁵ would receive an additional panel “To Sugar Top”.

⁵ Existing sign reads, “Appalachian Trail, Happy Hill Shelter 1.0 mi, Podunk Road 1.6 mi. (DOC USFS)” on one panel and “Burton Woods Road 2.3 mi, Bragg Hill Road 2.0 mi.” on the panel in the crossing direction.

Landowner agreements – TH 51 is already a public ROW, so the only landowner agreements required for this intersection are for the southbound trail towards Sugar Top, owned by Nancy Cochran and Elliot Fisher, provided in Appendix D. A letter of qualified support is provided in Appendix D for the trail leading towards Griggs Mountain on the Upper Valley Land Trust’s Areson property.

4. Griggs Mountain Trail

Description – The Griggs Mountain Trail joins the AT at intersection F is near the crest of a shoulder of Griggs Mountain where the Griggs Mountain Trail leads northwards along the ridge. Coming from the south is a segment of the old AT, connecting to private trails on adjacent lands, which the NTC supports closing.

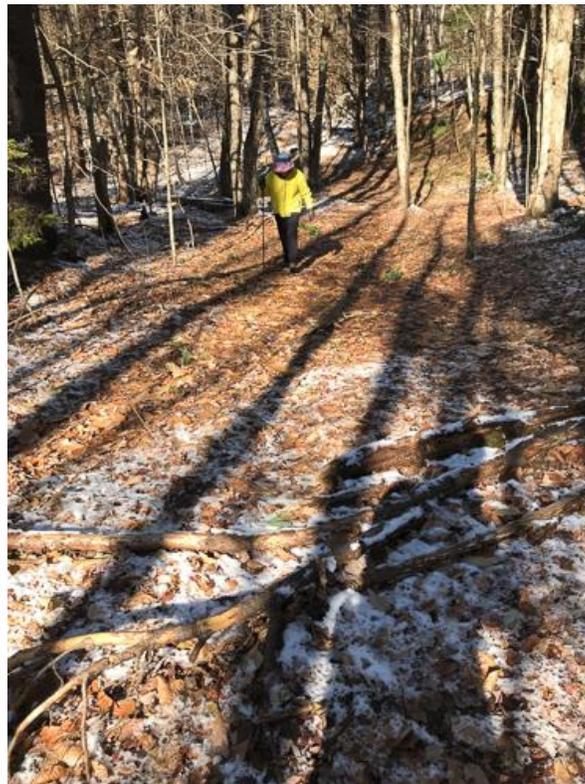


Figure 8. Intersection F, looking towards the Griggs Mountain Trail.

Loop connectivity – The Griggs Mountain Trail leading northwards from intersection F would accommodate foot travel only to provide hiking and running loops that encompass the Tucker Trail, the AT, Burton Woods Trail and Bragg Road (Figure 2).

Trail class –The proposed USFS Trail Design Parameters for the foot-travel crossing would be for *Hiker/Pedestrian* (Trail Class 1), consistent with the status quo.

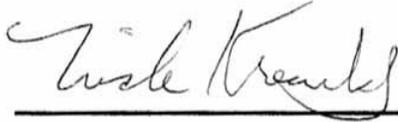
Maintenance – The NTC would be responsible for this trail.

Signage – Signage near F would say, “Griggs Mountain”. Signage at the entrance to the corridor would say, “Foot travel only”.

13 May 2019

Landowner agreements – A letter of qualified support is provided in Appendix D for the proposed trail leading into the Upper Valley Land Trust’s Areson property.

Dated this 13th day of May, 2019



Nick Krembs
Norwich Trails Committee
email: nick.krembs@gmail.com



Brian Riordan
Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association
email: brian.riordan@gmail.com

III. Appendices

A. The Norwich Trails Committee

The Norwich Trails Committee (NTC), established as a committee of the Norwich Conservation Commission, has successfully raised funds for trail work and partnered with other organizations to achieve trail-building goals. Partnerships throughout the years include the Norwich Women's Club Community Projects Fund, Parks and Recreation, Vermont Recreational Trails Program, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Vermont Youth Conservation Corp, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association, and the Norwich Department of Public Works.

The NTC has mobilized volunteers to develop new trails (Parcel 5, Blue Ribbon Trail, Hazen Trail), maintain existing trails (Ballard Trail, Gile Mountain Trail, Heyl Trail), and restore deteriorated trails (Gile Mountain Trail).

POC: Nick Krembs, Chair, nick.krembs@gmail.com

B. The Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association

UVMBA maintains and expands access to multi-use, non-motorized trails in the Upper Valley of NH and VT, including the towns of Lebanon, Hanover, Hartford, Norwich, Plainfield, and others. We are a volunteer, community-driven organization dedicated to being responsible trail stewards.

The UVMBA is the third largest chapter in the Vermont Mountain Bike Association and consistently has over 300 full members, 1,500 on our social media channels and well-attended trail work turnouts. We strive to support local communities as they increase MTB accessibility through education, advice, and camaraderie.

POC: Brian Riordan, Chair, info@uvmba.com

C. Trails for closure

We support closure of the following nine trail segments that were posted for possible closure (see Figure 1):

- Residual trail segments and encroaching side trails to the former AT between the site of the former Happy Hill Cabin (G) and the shoulder of Griggs Mountain (F). There are three segments here.
- The network of mountain bike trail encroachments between the AT (J) and the Tucker Trail. There are three segments here.
- The old woods road between Joshua Road and the AT near Cossingham Road (K).
- The remnant of the old AT that enters from the Heyl Trail (M).
- The encroaching part of the trail that parallels the AT corridor on its northern boundary (near M).

D. Abutter landowner agreements for connections

Figure 9 shows the properties abutting the section of AT that is relevant to this proposal. We include landowner agreements from properties C, D and F, which are described in connection with the proposed trails. This proposal asks for no infrastructure beyond that consistent with Class 1 trails and the signage described, which we understand sets no requirement on the duration of landowner agreements.

The attached landowner agreements cite 12 V.S.A. § 5794, “Limitations On Landowner Liability”.⁶

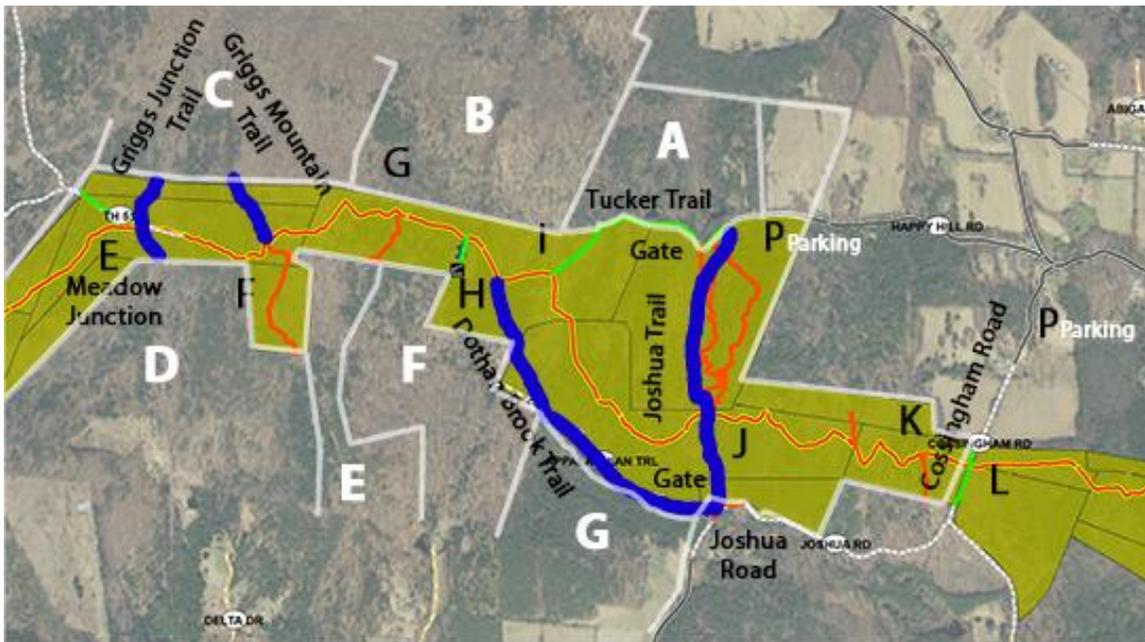


Figure 9. Key to abutting properties (with landowner agreements in **boldface**):

- A. Lang
- B. Rieser
- C. Upper Valley Land Trust Areson property**
- D. Cochran/Fisher**
- E. Wiggin
- F. Kitchel**
- G. Saemann

⁶ <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/12/203/05794>

13 May 2019

Landowner Permission Form⁷



Norwich Trails Committee
Tracy Hall, 300 Main Street
PO Box 376 Norwich VT 05055
802 649-1419



Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association
PO Box 339
Meriden NH 03770
Email: info@uvmba.com

Permission is hereby granted to the **Norwich Trails Committee** (NTC) and the **Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association** (UVMBA) to establish and maintain hiking and mountain biking trails upon property located 915 Wallace Road in Norwich, Vermont belonging to **Nancy Cochran** (landowner).

The trails shall be established and maintained in an area acceptable to the landowner, leading from the meadow junction of the Appalachian Trail onto the Cochran property, with the intent of continuing onto other private properties toward Sugar Top and Joshua Roads. No construction or major maintenance shall occur without the landowner's permission. Permission is further granted to members of the public to use the trail.

Permission extends for a period from May 1, 2019 until notice is received in writing from the landowner.

12 V.S.A. § 5794 is provided on the back of this form to inform the landowner of the protections of Vermont Law.

Dated this 5th day of April 2019

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Krembs".

Nick Krembs
Norwich Trails Committee
Phone: 802-649-1048

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Riordan".

Brian Riordan
Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association
Phone: 218-259-7099

Their duly authorized agents for the limited purpose of negotiating and entering Its duly authorized agent for the limited purpose of negotiating and entering into landowner permission agreements.

Signature of landowner or landowner's duly authorized agent.

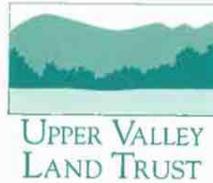
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Cochran" followed by the date "4/5/19".

Nancy Cochran
915 Wallace Road
White River Junction, Vermont 05001
Phone: 802-295-2381

⁷ (Facsimile—original on file)

13 May 2019

Upper Valley Land Trust Correspondence



May 1, 2019

Nick Krembs
1396 New Boston Road
Norwich, VT 05055

Holly Knox
Rochester and Middlebury Ranger Districts
99 Ranger Road
Rochester, VT

Dear Nick and Holly,

We are writing in regards to a proposal being developed by the Norwich Trails Committee concerning trails for pedestrian and mountain biking use that cross the Appalachian Trail corridor in Norwich, VT. It is our understanding that requests for USFS review of any proposed trail crossings must be accompanied by statements of support and permissions from the owners of the adjoining lands to be impacted by the crossings. We've discussed UVLT's objectives and concerns with each of you verbally. This letter is intended to provide written documentation as required by the USFS process as to UVLT's conditional support.

Generally, UVLT is in support of efforts to develop a connected system of trails that are sustainable, permanent and benefit the broad public. That is to say:

- a) We believe that investments of volunteer labor, materials and donated funds should be focused on trail corridors that are permanently protected and not at risk of future closure when landownership changes.
- b) We support careful planning for the carrying capacity of trails taking into account the habitats through which they pass and the environmental and ecological potential impacts of recreational use.
- c) We desire that our charitable efforts to create trails should be accessible to all trail users, not limited to those who live nearby. Therefore, we seek to secure sufficient, safe parking at trailhead locations.

All three of these objectives bear on our conditioned response to the work of the Norwich Trails Committee.

It is our understanding that there are two trail crossings proposed that would impact UVLT-owned lands. Neither of these connects directly from UVLT property to protected trails or public roads. In each case UVLT's approval of a crossing for pedestrian and bikes would potentially bring recreational users onto privately owned land that is presently unsecured. Jason will be working with the owners of these properties and, if feasible, we will obtain permanent trail easements.



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13 May 2019

The potential western crossing from our land involves a steep area of trail which is in need of evaluation and rebuilding/rerouting. Jason will be working with Craig Layne on the assessment and trail planning for that area concurrently with an initiative with the Norwich Conservation Commission relative to wildlife impacts of trail design and use.

Parking for access to the trails on our property would logically be from the Burton Woods/Bragg Hill Road area. We hope that it proves possible to locate parking for 2-4 cars in that location either by extending hardpack in the road right-of-way as a "pull off," or through arrangements with private landowner(s) to create "pull ins."

In sum, UVLT can support a proposal from the Trails Committee for the two trail crossings, provided that UVLT is able to obtain permanent trail easements on the connecting routes and provided that adequate parking is secured in the Burton Woods/Bragg Hill Road area. Further, UVLT's support for the western crossing is predicated on our determination that there is an ecologically and environmentally sustainable route for the troublesome section of trail, and a viable plan for building and sustaining it.

We feel that the discussion of trail crossings and the larger trail system has created an opportunity to enhance and protect recreational resources for the benefit of all, and we look forward to working with you to accomplish this.

Sincerely,



Jason Berard, Stewardship Director



Jeanie McIntyre, President

13 May 2019

Landowner Permission Form⁸



Norwich Trails Committee
Tracy Hall, 300 Main Street
PO Box 376 Norwich VT 05055

Permission is hereby granted to the **Norwich Trails Committee** (NTC) to establish and maintain a hiking trail upon property located on the southern border of the Appalachian Trail Corridor in Norwich, Vermont belonging to **Davis and Katherine Kitchel** (landowner) of White River Junction, Vermont.

The trail shall be established and maintained in an area acceptable to the landowner, leading across a northeast corner of the property. No construction or major maintenance shall occur without the landowner's permission. Permission is further granted to members of the public to use the trail.

Permission extends for a period from May 1, 2019 or until notice is received in writing from the landowner.

12 V.S.A. § 5794 is provided on the back of this form to inform the landowner of the protections of Vermont Law.

Dated this _____ day of _____ 2019

Nick Krembs
Norwich Trails Committee

Its duly authorized agent for the limited purpose of negotiating and entering into landowner permission agreements.

Signature of landowner or landowner's duly authorized agent.

Davis Kitchel
597 Sugartop Road
White River Junction, Vermont 05001
Phone: 802-295-1787

⁸ **Not yet obtained.** A short trail relocation would be indicated, if not obtained.

E. Conformance with USFS guidance

1. Comprehensive trail strategy

This proposal supports the Green Mountain National Forest Comprehensive Trail Strategy⁹, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. GMNF Trail Strategy checklist

Goal	Proposal
<p>Goal 1: Identify a sustainable trail system by recommending actions such as decommission, add, or alter the management of a trail.</p>	<p>Addresses authorization of four high-priority existing trails of long standing and the closure of nine trail segments.</p>
<p>Goal 2: Explore opportunities to connect Forest Service system trails with those on adjacent public lands, such as town features, State Parks, and National Parks.</p>	<p>Identifies connections to recognized trails on either side of the corridor.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Develop products/outcomes to assist trail managers with addressing future trail issues. Products that will be a direct outcome of this process include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) sustainable trail definition; 2) step-by-step process for evaluating future trail proposals; 3) updated Forest Service trail database; 4) recommendations for volunteer management; 5) analysis of public comments on trail management; and 6) recommendations for future trail management actions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Describes trails that have remained in stable condition for decades. 2) Coordinated with GMNF. 3) Consequence of updated database. 4) Supported by volunteer management (NTC & UVMBA). 5) Incorporates public comments. 6) Includes recommendations.
<p>Goal 4: Continue the collaborative public process with opportunities for feedback and information exchange.</p>	<p>Reflects a collaborative process with Norwich residents with multiple visits from GMNF representatives.</p>

⁹ https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3847201.pdf

2. Economic and environmental

This proposal responds to USFS proposal guidance on economic and environmental factors, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. USFS checklist for economic and environmental issues

USFS Question	Proposal
What are the anticipated use levels and can the proposal support those levels considering: sustainable trail design/location as well as support the infrastructure (parking etc.)?	Identifies little change in pedestrian use over past decades and into the future. Accommodates greatly increased interest from mountain bike users active on both sides of the corridor. Advocates low-impact (Class 1) trails. Existing parking infrastructure is sufficient for future needs.
Are there safety concerns and/or potential user conflicts?	There are no safety concerns that require addressing. Key to the proposal is de-conflicting mountain bike use with AT foot travel.
Does the chapter have enough volunteer labor to commit to long-term maintenance?	There will be negligible added maintenance effort required to maintain Class 1 trails, beyond the current and foreseeable capacities of the NTC and the UVMBA.
Short and long-term financial needs – what is the plan to fund the project? If the chapter is relying on grants, does the group have the capacity to write effective grants?	The costs of installing signage, a new gate, and moving an existing gate are within the proven capabilities of the NTC and UVMBA to achieve through grants or town appropriations.

3. Purpose and standards

This proposal responds to USFS proposal guidance on trail purpose and USFS standards, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. USFS check list for purpose and standards questions

USFS Question	Proposal
<p>What is the trail’s purpose and how does it meet new/greater demands, connect users to services and other attractions?</p>	<p>The trails requested for approval would provide continued enjoyment of hiking and running loops, both within the corridor and connecting to other trails in Norwich.</p> <p>Authorization of these trails would provide AT hikers with clearly delineated side trails to explore natural and cultural features along the trail.</p> <p>They address the greater interest from mountain bikers for access to areas on either side of the corridor and provide a controlled crossing that minimizes bicycle incursions along the corridor.</p>
<p>Does the submission indicate that the project would meet the Forest Service National Quality Standards?</p>	<p>The submission cites USFS trail standards for pedestrian and bicycle trails and proposes Class 1 design parameters for each, consistent with their long-sustained condition, which will have little effect on the experience of AT hikers and minimal impact on the ability of the NTC and the UVMBA to maintain the advocated trails.</p>