

Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for August 7, 2019

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskens, Steve Flanders, Peter Griggs, Doug Hardy, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, John McCormick, Elena Mihaly, Gerry Plummer, Cody Williams

A new 50-foot-long bog bridge was recently completed on the upper Ballard Trail in a cooperative effort which included a) a grant from the Norwich Women's Club to the Land Management Council of the Fire District and b) work in placing and assembling the bridge by a crew from the Upper Valley Trails Alliance. Jim Faughnan and Bob Fiskens of this committee did much to facilitate the construction of that bog bridge.

Jim Faughnan recently replaced a broken board in the deck of the uppermost ("sluiceway") bridge on the Ballard Trail and reported at the meeting that overall that bridge was now in poor condition and would need reconstruction. David Hubbard said that the Land Management Council had funds for replacement of that bridge. The committee will hold a work session on Sunday August 18 to reconstruct that bridge. Participants are to meet at 8:00 AM on August 18 in the pulloff on Beaver Meadow Road near the upper end of the Ballard Trail and should bring work gloves, drinking water, and insect/tick repellent.

The new map/brochure prepared by the National Park Service for visitors to the Appalachian Trail in Norwich and Hanover was briefly discussed. [After the meeting it was learned that Betsy Maislin had received the boxes of the map/brochure for distribution in Norwich.]

On August 1, a site visit for the US Forest Service (USFS) was held in and near the Appalachian Trail Corridor as part of evaluation of a proposal concerning cross-corridor trails submitted earlier this year by this committee and the Upper Valley Mountain Biking Association to the USFS. Eleven participants in the site visit included three representatives of the USFS and representatives from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Green Mountain Club, the Upper Valley Land Trust, the Upper Valley Mountain Biking Association, and the Norwich Trails Committee; participants from Norwich were Steve Flanders, Nick Krembs, Cathie Redpath, and Brian Riordan. Steve Flanders and Cathie Redpath are maintainers for the Appalachian Trail in Norwich; Nick Krembs and Brian Riordan are, respectively, Chairs for the Norwich Trails Committee and Upper Valley Mountain Biking Association. It is anticipated that the next step will be for the USFS to report when they anticipate reaching a decision about the proposal.

Parking for trail access was discussed with special reference to the parking area for Cossingham Road Farm Trails. Gerry Plummer suggested that all online and other announcements about Norwich trails include statements about parking. Steve Flanders recently prepared a document on guidelines for groups planning to use Norwich trails. This document, which has been provided to the Town Manager for distribution to out-of-town schools and other organizations, recommends that groups using Norwich Trails not exceed 15 individuals. There was also discussion about the possibility of using barriers in lots to guide vehicles for efficient use of space; requirements for snow plowing may limit the possible use of barriers.

Steve Flanders has recently communicated with Dartmouth Outdoor Programs, and, as a consequence, the Gile Mountain Trail is no longer listed first in their online recommendations

for hikes; it is anticipated that eventually this change will also be incorporated in their print version. Additionally, Steve Flanders has recently prepared an electronic illustrated brochure listing 12 recommended hikes for the Upper Valley within a close driving distance from Hanover; these recommended hikes all provide fine views. Authorization for including these hikes has been obtained as required by the respective agencies responsible for those trails. Trail descriptions include parking arrangements and locations for carpooling to trails with limited parking at the trailheads. Although this brochure on recommended hikes in the Upper Valley is currently under an outside review and not yet available online, it is hoped that online access will soon be available. The Trails Committee very much appreciates the efforts of Steve Flanders in preparing this and other recent documents for the committee.

Cody Williams led a discussion about the potential for a future website or sites for the Conservation Commission (CC) and Trails Committee. There would be links with the town website which must continue to provide agendas and minutes. A new website could provide much information of use for town residents and visitors. Cost for a website would likely be no more than \$100 per year. The Trails Committee strongly supports having such a site. Steve Flanders volunteered to help Cody Williams as this project moves forward, and Gerry Plummer volunteered to help in establishing the new site.

The committee is very much concerned with promoting action towards replacing the collapsed bridge on Brown School House Road. Because of the necessarily protracted timetable for obtaining state grants, planning for a new bridge should be included when the Selectboard soon considers the next budget for the town. Representatives from the committee hope to meet this month with Town Manager Herb Durfee to discuss this topic.

Respectfully submitted,
George Clark