

## Minutes of the Norwich Trails Committee for April 9, 2020

Present: George Clark, Jim Faughnan, Bob Fiskens, Steve Flanders, Pete Griggs, Doug Hardy, David Hubbard, Nick Krembs, Jane Lemasurier, John McCormick, Sean Ogle, Gerry Plummer, Liz Russell, Brie Swenson

This was the first meeting of this committee to be held using Zoom technology.

Fallen trees blocking trails have recently been cleared by Doug Hardy on the Upper Ballard Trail and Brown Schoolhouse Road. Bob Fiskens reported that Parcel 5 Trail, although still muddy in places, is in generally good condition. Steve Flanders reported that at least one section of the eastern end of the Appalachian Trail in Norwich was recently free of fallen trees. The Blue Ribbon Trail still had a number of tree blockages according to the most recent reports. A few trees were down on the Connector Trail. Nick Krembs and Jim Faughnan recently sprayed gray paint over graffiti on the Gile Mountain Trail. In response to reported crowding and an excessive number of vehicles in the vicinity of the trailhead of the Gile Mountain Trail, Jim Faughnan spent some hours there but did not encounter the number of people reported there earlier. Brie Swenson reported that new signs advising on needed public health precautions have been placed on trailhead kiosks and at Huntley Meadow. The Upper Valley Land Trust is also placing signs for their trails.

The need for physical spacing between participants would be a primary concern whenever any trail work sessions are to be held for as long as public health directives remain in effect. Brie Swenson reported that dismantling of the ice rink on the Town Green had been done by family groups so as to maintain appropriate precautions. Among trails mentioned as needing work were the Converse Loop off the Upper Ballard Trail, the Connector Trail, and the Blue Ribbon Trail.

Alternative possibilities for trail management over an extensive wet area along the Heyl Trail close to Elm Street were discussed. A decision was reached to use unexpended funds granted to the committee to purchase materials for a bog bridge about 50 feet long to be constructed over that wet area on the Heyl Trail. No date was set for assembling that bog bridge, but the materials will be on hand. Some water control work such as ditching may also be needed when that bog bridge is constructed. It was advised that the bog bridge be built when conditions are drier than at present.

It was also pointed out that an existing bog bridge on the upper end of the Ballard Trail is failing and will need replacement in the relatively near future.

The committee scheduled a work session for clearing of the Converse Loop for Saturday May 9. Participants are to arrive by the head of the Upper Ballard Trail near Tucker Hill Road at 9:00 am and should bring their own tools, drinking water, and tick repellent.

Steve Flanders reported that grant proposals for a cumulative total of \$39,000 were submitted some weeks ago to four Upper Valley philanthropic organizations to support construction of a replacement bridge for Brown Schoolhouse Road. A number of committee members informally agreed to contribute funds to the Town of Norwich with specific designation for the Brown Schoolhouse bridge replacement. Donors are asked to advise Nick Krembs by email of the amount contributed so that by the next meeting a total of such funds contributed by committee members will be available as an aid in additional fund-raising efforts.

Steve Flanders and John McCormick are to be planning a series of walks for the public in the Discover Norwich Trails program of the committee. They are to report back to the committee at the next meeting.

The Woody Adams Conservation Project was briefly described.

The Trails Committee plans for its next meeting to be on Wednesday May 6 and again to be on Zoom. Committee thanks go to Brie Swenson for serving as Zoom Host for this April meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
George Clark